

Health from the perspective of five Kosha

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Abstract

Health is not just the absence of disease. It is a dynamic expression of life - how joyful, loving and enthusiastic you are - Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. Yoga, an ancient cultural heritage of India, understands health and well-being as a dynamic continuum of human nature, not just a "state" to be achieved and maintained. Yoga considers man a multi-layered, conscious being with three bodies or Sharira (Sthula-gross, Sukshma-subtle and Karana-causal) and a five-layered existence (Pancha Kosha) consisting of anatomical, physiological, psychological, intellectual and blissful layers. Yoga as a conscious lifestyle enables a person to achieve and maintain a dynamic Sukha-sthanam, which can be defined as a dynamic sense of physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Developing an integrated self and a healthy personality requires awakening and balancing all these five layers and properly treating imbalances using the various therapies mentioned in Yoga and Ayurveda.

Introduction:

A common man considers himself healthy unless he looks for it, For a teenager Health is good growth, For an athlete Health is enough stamina and skill to win games, For a teacher healthy can mean intellectual ability to read and write and educate others and a physically challenged person would see health as the ability to cope with one's disability and develop skills that enable an independent and valuable life and work. The World Health Organization defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". The condition of being healthy in body, mind, or spirit, and especially free from physical disease or pain (Webster). A healthy body or mind; the state in which their duties are properly and effectively performed (Oxford English Dictionary). Now the question arises, do we agree with these definitions? The answer is probably no, because it is not perfect and cannot be achieved. It is not

possible to achieve such a state, at least not for a long time. Moreover, this definition takes a static position, while life itself is not static.

So how do you define health? It can be said that "Health can be seen as the ability of people to adapt to the ever-changing demands and expectations of life" Stable and self-established is healthy. In other words, identifying a healthy person is not only about physical fitness, but more importantly mental fitness. I can't say I'm healthy, but I don't care about life. Enthusiasm for life shows how healthy you are. The body, mind and spirit are like a pedestal - even if any part is not working properly, our life is out of balance, which leads to poor health. Yoga is the link that creates harmony by uniting all three components (body, mind and spirit) into one. This harmony in turn exists to sustain life.

Yoga Vasishtha says "Manah Prashamanopayah Yoga Ityabhidhiyate", yoga is a handy trick to calm the mind.

A line from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, "yogas chitta vritti nirodha" refers to stilling the mind in order to experience Ultimate Reality and move toward Self-realization.

The concept of Yoga as mentioned in Gita is :

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।

तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्
॥ 50॥

The man of equanimity born of wisdom releases himself both from good and bad even in this life. Therefore strive for nishkama karma with an equal mind. Yoga is skill in action.

Yoga Heals on the Spiritual, Mental and Physical Levels. Yoga works on all three bodies: the physical body, astral body, and causal body. Each person has a physical body made of matter, an astral body containing prana and thoughts, and a causal body which contains the quality of spirit. The three bodies are made up of the five "koshas" or sheaths.

Yoga is purification. The purification process means one has to clean out the gross veils, all the maya sheaths (the koshas), in order to see through to the Self. This article emphasizes the importance of understanding the multidimensional benefits of Yoga in Health promotion and disease prevention.

THE FIVE LAYERS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

Vedic medicine of ancient India believed that man is a multi-dimensional/multi-layered being. In the "Taittiriya" Upanishad, it is described that man has five separate bodies/layers/sheaths called "koshas". Our physical body is just one layer of the many layers of energy that make up the body. The outermost layer is the physical body, which is impure and we feel it. The other four are subtle. They are in an energetic state and we cannot see them, but we can be aware of them,

understand them and develop these sheaths through practice. The five koshas or bodies that make up our being are: - 1. Annamayakosha - Food body 2. Pranamaya kosha - Prana energy or sheath of life energy 3. Manomaya kosha - Mental body 3. Vijyanmaya kosha – Wisdom body , and 5. Anandamayakosha - Blissful Body

ANNAMAYA KOSHA - This is the outermost layer, the gross physical body, representing flesh, blood, muscles and bones. It is nourished and supported by the food we eat "Anna", the so called Annamaya or food layer. We know this body best. Modern medicine understands and treats only this kosha - the impure body. It is said to be the most vulnerable kosha because it indicates deficiencies in other koshas. Hatha yoga asanas, Kshatriyas and our diet help develop and strengthen Annamaya kosha.

Development and Nutrition of Annamaya Kosha

To develop Annamaya Kosha proper diet should be followed. It consists of a sattva diet, like a vegetarian diet, which nourishes the body in the best way. It gives inner strength and also conveys synergy. Consuming a tamsik diet consisting of meat and alcohol weakens a person's inner strength and transfers energy to the people around them. Annamaya Kosha can thus develop by correcting normal eating habits, eating proper food and physical exercises like; walking, running, yoga asanas etc.

PRANAMAYA KOSHA-Pranamaya Kosha is the Pranic or life energy body. The word "prana" is the term used for pranic energy stored through breathing. Breathing is not just oxygen, it is Prana, the carrier of vital energy. Pranaperme permeates the physical body, moves through it and is the source of physical life. Without prana, the body would be lifeless. It controls the growth and functioning of our body. Thanks to prana, blood circulates, food is digested and impulses travel from the body to the brain

and back. "Prana is behind the functioning of our karmandriya - the five functional organs of the body - feet, hands, vocal chords, urinary and excretory organs.

Pranamaya Kosha Development and Nutrition:

To maintain health, it is important to direct and control Prana. According to Ayurveda, health problems start at the energy level before the body level. Furthermore, Pranamaya Kosha is the refined air and food that people breathe and eat. The lungs and intestines give Pranamaya Kosha the essence of air and food. Thus, in this way Prana is refined so that it (Prana) refines our body and mind. This is how Pranamaya Kosha can develop:

- Practicing Pranayama or many other breathing exercises that contribute to the excellence of Pranamaya Kosha.
- Asana practice with breath awareness.
- You can spend more time with activities or people that hold your soul.
- Practicing silence and meditation or chanting calming mantras.

MANOMAYA KOSHA - Spiritual Mantle. It is about the mind and its thought process. These are the actions and reactions of the physical body that are supported and fueled by thoughts, feelings and emotions. It works through the five senses and causes likes and dislikes

Development and Nourishment of Manomaya Kosha

By developing Manomaya Kosha one can improve the mental health of people. An ideal diet for the mind or Manomaya Kosha is a calming atmosphere, good relationships, interesting pursuits, a fun and healthy environment. Meditation and routine introspection gives better energy to the mind. Calming mantras play an important role in balancing the Manomaya Kosha. These mantras also act as a spiritual tool for optimal functioning of the Manomaya Kosha. Studying good books, literature, stories from ancient sources, essays and all other related sources is crucial for success in Manomaya Kosha. In short, Manomaya Kosha can develop through:

- A healthy and harmonious environment that can positively influence the sensory world.

- Meditation and chanting of mantras.

- Reading motivational and value-based literature.

- You can spend less time on activities that distract or release negative energy.

- Practicing good intentions and turning energy into synergy.
- Practice of silence.

VIJNANAMAYA KOSHA - It is the layer of wisdom, the sheath of INTELLECT. "Vijnana" means wisdom or subtle knowledge. It is a higher intelligence that includes knowledge, discernment, intuition, conscience and will. One who understands the functioning of this kosha or body, changes his thoughts and actions accordingly, faces the reality of life, stays away from illusions, worldly temptations and attachments, renounces all negative qualities and renounces the ego. Such a person reaches the highest level of wisdom.

Development and Nourishment of Vignanamaya Kosha

Like Manomaya Kosha, Vignanamaya Kosha can be developed through meditation and practice of yoga asanas. Development of Vignanamaya Kosha also includes activities such as discussions, analysis tasks, project preparation, book reviews and also interviewing famous people. Deep peace can be felt through freedom of thought, speech and action. As you continue to practice yoga, small changes will occur. Mantra meditation and self-awareness help tremendously in the development of this Kosha. Thus the Vignanamaya Kosha is developed by:

- Liberation of this Kosha; because the Vignanamaya Kosha is internal to the body and is hidden. So to experience this Kosha we have to release it.

- After liberation from the Vignanamaya Kosha, riding on the wings of detachment (Vairagya) and wisdom (Viveka) is perfected.
- The further development of Vignanamaya Kosha requires the realization of icchashakti

(willpower), Kriya shakti (passion for work) and gyaanshakti (intellectual power).

- Harmonious environment, satvic food, meditation and goodness also help to develop this Kosha. Vigyanamaya Kosha is the layer that allows one to transcend oneself and be aware of one's colleagues and even other members of the community, country and even the world. When the Vigyaanmaya Kosha is healed, the special powers of the body start working. A person whose Vigyaanmaya awakens becomes:

- More telepathic
- Able to read and influence the thoughts of others
- Healer - where his words can heal or cure many problems and even diseases

ANANDAMAYA KOSHA - 'Ananda' is a Sanskrit word meaning joy, happiness. This is the most subtle layer without explanation. It is the core of our being. It is spiritual. This energy layer is closest to cosmic light and truth. When this kosha is awakened, we feel happy. We experience pure joy, rapture and joy. We forget the existence of our gross body and mind and are taken to the highest plane of our being. We become one with the divine and experience nothing but happiness and bliss.

Awakening Anandmaya Kosh

Anand Maya Kosha is attained after understanding or developing the other four shells. Devotion and faith in God gives us the path to Anandamaya Kosha. True knowledge, also known as wisdom, helps gradually develop the Anandamaya Kosha. Awakening of Anandmaya Kosha can be done through the following practices:

- Seva: This refers to selfless service where one can feel empathy for other beings
- Bhakti: It is devotion to God. The practice of bhakti unites the hearts of all other divine beings.
- Samadhi: Deep meditation that opens our heart to our own divine nature that lives within us and our soul. Thus, when all the

koshas are well developed, refined or awakened, one can experience a true sense of harmony between the inner self and the outer world. This harmony gives people a sense of happiness, peace and happiness. Here the inner self realizes the presence of God (the infinite being) and thereby becomes free from the cycle of birth and death. diet, kriya, relaxation exercises and yogic words are used to work on the Annamaya Kosa level and remove the physical symptoms of diseases. The somatic phase is characterized by organ dysfunction. At this stage we begin to recognize the condition. This phase can be correlated with pranayama and this kosha can be treated with pranayama. The psychosomatic stage involves an increase in symptoms, including the physiological symptoms that characterize this stage. It can be correlated with manomaya and pranamaya koshas. Pranayama (energy management through breathing) techniques are very effective at this stage. The stage of the psychological manifestation of the disease, where yoga practice is characterized by mild but persistent stress-related behavioral symptoms such as irritability, sleep disturbances and other minor symptoms. This phase can be correlated with Vijnanamaya and Manomaya koshas. Practicing yoga techniques (Asana, Pranayama, Dharana, Dyana, Kriya, Mudra, Bandha) at this stage is very effective. The state of health returns to normal and the sleep becomes regular, deep and refreshing. Bringing the happiness of our Causal Body (Karana Sarira) called Anandamayakosa into all our activities is the key to a very happy and healthy life. It also brings out our innate healing powers which are the perfect cure for our ailments.

Discussion

For a deeper understanding of the effects of yoga on health promotion and disease prevention, we discuss the five Koshas in detail. In the Taittiriya Upanishad, the concept postulated and elaborated by the

Pancha Kosha of the 5-layered existence of all of us is found to be the most comprehensive concept of human existence, which is in no way incompatible with the modern systematic approach of the human body. It is more generalized and comprehensive and thus can have a physical body [Annamaya Kosha] and the following three layers in the Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Koshas, which are called subtle bodies in Vedanta and spiritual tradition. Fifth Kosha Anandamaya Kosha is the causal body from which all other layers arise. In this way we got a comprehensive and specific perspective on human existence as a basis for yoga therapy. From the point of view of modern medicine, disease is considered a dysfunction of organs and systems, which can be caused by congenital defects, external atmospheric factors such as allergens, toxins, pollutants or infectious bacteria. Modern science recently recognizes that another important cause of illness can be a factor of internal imbalance, such as mental agitation, emotional disorder or mental conflicts that cause stress reactions. Yoga concepts of disease can be found in a treatise called Yoga Vashistha. According to this text, today's diseases like asthma, diabetes, hypertension and anxiety are called Adhija Vyadhi (diseases due to stress) which originate from the Manomaya Kosha - the astral layer of our existence. They result from our actions, which are driven by our emotions [our strong likes and dislikes] rather than what is right or wrong. Often at this point we respond to our feelings—the pull of our feelings, knowing full well that we are resisting what is right. In Ayurveda, this is called Prajnaparadha - a mistake at the level of inner consciousness. It is this push against the "right-cosmic law" that causes the imbalance, the Manomaya Kosha disease called Adhi. Adhi in the astral layer, if not corrected, brings imbalance at the level of the Pranamaya Kosha, which manifests itself in shaking, imbalance and rapidity of breathing. This,

in turn, creates stress reactions that lead to autonomic and endocrine imbalances that lead to bodily ailments known as Vyadhi. Such diseases are called Adhija Vyadhi or Vyadhi coined by Addis. Anadhija Vyadhi also includes other diseases like infections and injuries which are physical in nature and can be effectively treated by the modern medical system. Since the Adhija Vyadhis are multi-dimensional, we should not treat them only with physical symptomatic treatment. All humanity must be cared for. And only then can there be lasting cures for our modern problems. The answer lies in the integrated approach of yoga therapy, which offers techniques to solve the problem on both the gross (physical) and subtle levels. Yoga exercises help balance all five koshas to restore perfect health. Annamaya Kosha practices include yoga poses, Shitileekarana Vyayama (Jatts or relaxation practices), yogic diet and Pranamaya Kosha Yogakritas - breathing exercises, breathing kriyas and pranayama. In the Manomaya Kosha, practices include meditation, devotional sessions, and joyful meeting, while lectures, counseling and satsangha correct perceptions of the goals and objectives of life, which form the basic conceptual root of an individual's lifestyle. Karma yoga and atonement to nature are practices that help stabilize the Anandamaya Kosha to bring happiness into our lives. Kosha development leads to overall personality development. This development starts from the Annamaya kosha and moves towards pure consciousness, constantly releasing the five sheaths that cover it. The metaphor used here is that of an onion; The five layers covering the core of our heart are compared to the layers of an onion. So the body, opinions, emotions and rational knowledge are the only layers that cover the centre of our soul.

Conclusion

Today, more and more doctors are moving towards a holistic approach to health and healing. They talk about mind, body and

spirit. We understand that the human body is not just the physical body with which we identify. It is part of a complex system consisting of the mind, emotions, attitudes, will and spirit of a perfect human being. So not only our physical bodies need to be taken care of, but our mental state and spiritual progress are equally important to our well-being. Yoga is a systematic method for developing the physical, mental, social, intellectual, emotional and spiritual parts of a person's personality. Pancha Kosha theory is a way to transform and transcend from the lower self to the higher self. Yoga can help control and

prevent infectious and communicable diseases by improving a person's resistance and immunity and improving hygiene. To ensure general health, all these ways to keep the membrane of our body in good condition. Disruption of one affects the other because the five envelopes work together with each other to form a unified whole. Awakening and strengthening these koshas is important because they provide a road map that smoothly removes us from physiological causes; to our psychological and spiritual selves and thereby help us live a healthy, happy and peaceful life.

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