

The Yoga



It is a proud moment for India that 21st June is declared as the 'International Yoga Day' by UN General Assembly. To celebrate this day and make it successful, we should first understand the meaning of yoga.

The word 'yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj' which means 'to connect' or 'to conjoin'. Thus the word 'yoga' means connecting individual self with the universal self. In Bhagawad Gita the word yoga is used in the sense of 'Path' (Maarga). E.g. Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Jyanayoga. These are the paths or the disciplines which one should follow to achieve the unity of individual self with the supreme self; which is also called as self-realization.

The definition of yoga, which we find in 'Asthangayogamarga' given by Rishi Patanjali is "Yogah Chittavritti Nirodha". Here 'Chitta' means mind and 'Vritti' means thoughts in the mind because of which mind remains restless. To gain control over this mind through the means of physical & mental discipline is called as Yoga.

In the Asthangamarga i.e. the Eight-fold paths suggested by Rishi Patanjali are Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Among which the first five are external means where we should try to gain control over our body so that it will remain fit and healthy to go to the next step of internal means where we have to follow subtle ways to discipline our mind.

It is needed to study, understand and to follow all these paths to achieve yoga in a true sense. Though Aasana is one of the important parts of these Eight-fold paths, yoga is not limited to Asanas. In Yoga, Yama and Niyamas are certain disciplines which are needed for the physical

purity and cleanliness; it also involves rules and regulations which are to be observed to inculcate self-discipline. Assanas are certain bodily postures, necessary for physical fitness. Pranayama is breath control which keeps body healthy. Pratyahar means controlling the senses and desires. All these are preparatory steps to bring mental control, which is achieved through Dharana (Concentration), Dhyana(meditation) and Samadhi (final step of meditation i.e. unity).

Thus we can say yoga is a healthy way of life which gradually takes us towards spiritual enlightenment.

References:

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