

## OBJECTIVES OF YOGA

Today the breadth of techniques taught in the ancient scriptures are not found in any single school of contemporary yoga. The traditional schools, in which these techniques are preserved, are unfamiliar to many modern and western yoga practitioners. Today's hatha yoga generally consists of practices originating from traditions less than a hundred years old. Traditional methodologies are often changed and adapted, slowing progress. The goal of yoga is enlightenment and the shortest way to reach this goal is by practicing all limbs of hatha and raja yoga using the time-tested traditional methodologies. This is the principle on which Traditional Yoga is based.

The aim of Traditional Yoga is to restore an understanding of the relationship of the different limbs of yoga and to present this knowledge in its original, whole and undiluted practical form for the benefit of all practitioners and teachers. Both hatha yoga (the science of body) as given by the Nath gurus and raja yoga (the science of mind) as given by Patanjali.

Yoga education can supplement school and university education. It can prepare the students physically and mentally for the integration of their physical, mental and spiritual faculties so that the students can become healthier, saner and more integrated members of the society and of the nation.

Yoga education helps in self discipline and self-control, leading to immense amount of awareness, concentration and higher level of consciousness. Briefly the aims and objectives of Yoga education are:

- 1) To enable the student to have good health.
- 2) To practice mental hygiene.
- 3) To possess emotional stability.
- 4) To integrate moral values.
- 5) To attain higher level of consciousness.

All these objectives could be dealt with in an integrated manner.

Yoga education could help to equip oneself with basic knowledge about one's personality, to learn to handle oneself well in all life situations, to learn techniques of gaining good health, to develop a discriminative mind capable of knowing the real from the unreal and to face the dualities of life with equanimity.

Yoga education can enhance all the activities of the students, be it academic or sport or social. Yoga techniques provide improved attention in studies, better stamina and co-ordination for sports and a heightened awareness and balanced attitude for social activity.

Yoga education can be integrated in school education during the time set aside for P.T. but in a calm and quiet place creating the proper atmosphere for its proper study and practice.

Clear concepts are necessary in teaching Yoga. Yoga practices can be built around concepts like conditioning (preparation), synchronization, concentration, relaxation, self-reliance. (These have been elaborated in "Teaching Yoga" - a publication of The Yoga Institute. Yoga teaching/learning should be experience based, i.e. the student should gain direct experience of the subject taught. Here the skill and knowledge of the teacher come into full play. A dedicated and dynamic teacher can create an atmosphere for learning. The teacher should have a deep experience of the concept he is teaching. Moreover, he

can teach only what he knows. The teacher should have good rapport with the students. The teacher should be trained and experienced in knowing the physical and psychological needs of the students in various age groups. As Yoga deals with life and learning, these concepts should be integrated into life situations through various methods available to the teacher.

As the Yoga teacher gains experience, he may have to acquire skills of a counselor for the problems the student faces at the physical, psychological and spiritual levels of his personality. Counseling can be done during the time allotted for recreation.

Teachers and parents should acquaint themselves with Yoga; they could attend a short introductory course on Yoga. This will help them to understand the special needs of a student practicing Yoga.

The course of Yoga for the student should be well formulated in terms of contents, aptness and graded so that what is learnt earlier works hand in glove with what follows. Practices should be progressive – from easy to difficult; ideology should only be explained students of a later class who are mature to understand it.

An ideal number for a Yoga class is 20 students; if there are more in number, one assistant would be useful. It is difficult to handle large numbers in a Yoga class – the teachers could lose contact with the students and the Yoga class in turn mechanical.

As Yoga experience is subjective – any mechanical means of evaluation may not provide a good guideline. An experienced teacher can notice the progress of a Yoga student through his behavior and through his life activities. The Yoga Institute has worked on all aspects of Yoga education and through its pioneering efforts, it has provided the finest training for Yoga education teachers.