CHAPTER III

THE PRESENT STUDY

The word ‘Yoga’ is perhaps older than the system of philosophy which goes by that name. The oldest use of the word ‘yoga’, as found in the vedic literature, (e.g. Rigveda X, 114,9; Atharvaveda VI, 91, 1) indicates a union of various things especially the horses or the bullocks. This is derived form the Sanskrit root ‘Yujir’ (Yujir- yoge) meaning ‘to unite’ or ‘connect’. In later times, however, another technical meaning came to be associated with the term, and this is derived from the same Sanskrit root but in ‘yuj’.- Samadhan sense indicating Samadhi - an integrated state. Both the meanings seem to be fairly common in the Sanskrit language even today. This does not, of course, mean that while the word ‘Yoga’ was being used (in the time of the Vedic Aryans) to denote simply a union, the facts about controlling and steadying the mind were themselves unknown. In the vedas we find clear indications that the Rishis and the Seers
were quite familiar with the highest state which is the goal of yoga. They used to achieve this through procedures described as dhyana, diksha, tapas etc. There are other numerous definitions of yoga but a few typical ones have been mentioned here to define the term.

The Kathopanishad (II,3,10-11) defines yoga as 'a state of steadiness and control of the senses, as well as the mind and the intellect, which, when attained, makes an individual completely faultless and unoffending'. Our minds are usually swayed away by the objects of enjoyment. But the mind of a yogi is not taken away by his senses, because it becomes free of the process of desire and hence remains steady in the highest state of yoga. It is customary in religious literature to look upon the world as a stream or an ocean of sorrow. However, beings, since birth till death, are supposed to be drowning in this ocean. It is in this context that yoga is mentioned in the yogavasistha (VI, 13,3) as a device that makes for reaching the other shore of the stream of sorrow. It is indeed true that a yogi is a person who is eternally
free of cravings and sorrows. That is because he comes to overcome ignorance once for all.

We find yoga defined at three different places in Gita, which is perhaps the most popular among the authoritative treatise on yoga. According to the first definition (Gita,II,48) yoga signifies a state of equipoise wherein opposites like success and failure make little difference. In second definition (II,50-5) it is stated that a yogi, who renounces the concern with the consequences of his deeds (that is, remains concerned only with action and not with the consequences), overcomes bondage forever. In the third definition yoga is defined as a state of separation from sorrow (VI,21-23). The Gita declares that when that state of happiness par excellence is achieved, there remains nothing else to be achieved, which may be greater than it, not even the greatest misery can ever disturb that state.

It may be said, however, that in all the definitions mentioned above, Yoga has been defined in such a high manner that it must be admitted that the goal of yoga is something that lies completely
beyond the reach of common man. The same difficulty would arise in the case of the definition of yoga as given in Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras (P.Y.S.1-2) which is supposed to be the most important text of yoga philosophy. Patanjali defines yoga as a state in which there is a complete elimination of the thoughts and modifications of the mind. Here, in the present study, yoga has been taken into consideration as a state as mentioned in the above definition.

**ASHTANGA YOGA:**

The yoga system regards moral and physical discipline to be indispensable preliminaries to spiritual progress. Yama (self control) and niyama (self regulation) sum up all that may be included under moral discipline, while asana (postural pattern) of the body and pranayama (regulation of breath) constitute the physical discipline. The regulation and control of the moral life; strict purity of both body and mind; truthfulness is deed, words and thought; abstinence from cruelty, stealth and sensual pleasures is thought as well as in deed; are some of the virtues that must be
acquired before one can aspire to attain the state of “Yoga”. The
strength of the body is to be gained by means of the various forms
of asanas (Postural patterns) of the body and regulation of breath
(Pranayama). Pratyahara and dharna – with drawal and
concentration or fixation- become easy to one who has acquired a
controlled will, through yama and niyama, a well disciplined
strong body through the practices of asana and pranyama. Dhyana
(meditation) comes as a result of repeated attempts concentration
and Samadhi ensues as the natural completion of the long
continued flow of meditation.

Patanjali’s system of yoga seems to have been based on
scientific and keen observations made by the great seer (Maharishi
Patanjali) himself. He must have observed that the reason alone
cannot uproot the miseries and dispel ignorance, because working
in the surface level of consciousness, it cannot cope with the
permanent dispositions (samskaras) of the mind. It needed the
whole man to rise up and awake and fight against the dispositions
and permanent tendencies of the mind that are obstructive to his
best welfare. The discrimination(viveka) between cit and jana, between spirit and matter, can only result from infinite expansion of the physical and mental sides of the life. (i.e. surface consciousness). All such expansion, he must have observed, comes from methodical exercise and regulated control of all faculties and powers- potentially hidden in the individual man. His system, therefore, seeks to apply his knowledge of the factual truth e.g. that methodical and regulated exercise alone can yield expansion. Thus, he successfully, gave practical shape to the theoretical notions of spirituality the religious aspect. In order to fulfill this requirement, the system advocates regulated conduct, regulated exercise of the body and its vital processes, the methodical control of the will and slow but steady and gradual growth of reason, as the indispensable preliminaries in the form of Bahiranga Yoga and higher practices of Dharana (concentration) Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi as Antaranga (Internal Yoga) to the full and perfect spiritual development. It is emphasized that the physical, the moral, affective (emotional and social) and the intellectual sides of life are
developed simultaneously through adherence to the prescriptions and injunctions laid down in daily routine so as to attain all round progress. Regulation and control do not suppress, but expand and these are the only ways of expansion (of microcosmic consciousness to the macrocosmic level) and development of personality.

Patanjali’s system is suited to those in whom reason (Intellectual faculty) has not yet so well established as to have natural supremacy over lower rung entities (physical, moral, emotional). It may be considered as only preparatory discipline to the attainment of Jnana by those who, by way of their nature, are guided by reason. Samkhyaists and Vedantins are decidedly philosophical type of people who adopt “reason” alone, directly to have Tattava-Jnana (knowledge of the Reality and Truth of the entire existence.

**HOLISTIC HEALTH**

Health is perceived as a multidimensional process involving the well-being of the whole person in the context of the environment.
The definition of health which confines it to physico-psychosocio fields (dimensions) is incomplete and inadequate. Health is an integral concept which comprehends the totality of our being. True health must include not only physical fitness but also the simultaneous psychological and spiritual well being. In a broader perspective, the physical body of the human being is not important as emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Mind draws its power from the spirit, transmits it to all the body organs, and ensures their rhythmic and coordinated functions. Qualitative (spiritual) values of life like non-attachment etc do possess health enduring capacity in eliminating symptoms of mental and physical stress and strain (stress and coping). The 'perfect functioning' approach to health conceptualizes health:

(i) Biological: As a state in which every cell and every organ functions at optimum capacity and in perfect harmony with the rest of the body;
(ii) **Psychologically** - as a state in which the individual feels a sense of subjective well-being and of mastery over his environment.

(iii) **Socially** - as a state in which the individual's capacities for participation in the social system are optimal and

(iv) **Spiritually** - as a state in which an individual human being has an inherent urge for or is conscious of qualitative values of life which makes him transcend animal instinct behavior for the realization of higher truths of life and existence.

**DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF YOGA**

These are known different types of Yoga and although looking separate different in the beginning, they all seem to lead to the same goal of Mukti or holistic health. Various essential features of the important approaches or varieties of Yoga namely Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Hatha Yoga and Jnana Yoga are briefly discussed here.
Bhakti Yoga

This is perhaps the easiest of the varieties of Yoga, because it does not involve any highly technical and complicated procedures, nor does it call for any special intellectual capacity on the part of the student. It has a tremendous appeal to the common man, because it develops a feeling of security in the devotee (bhakta) who has a kind of reliance and dependence on the object of his devotion. It is based on the conviction that there exists a higher power (called God) that has wilfully created the universe, and that this power, which is all-powerful and merciful, may shower grace and mercy on the devotee, thereby protecting him from harms and evils. All that the devotee is expected to do is to make himself fit for obtaining the grace and mercy of God, the Supreme Creator, through devotion and the practice of virtue. The devotee aspires to become ultimately one with the object of devotion, resting eternally in peace and happiness with Him. The devotee surrenders all his motives and acts to the Divine Power, and renounces all responsibility towards the good or bad consequences of what he
does, in the name of the will of the Supreme. Devotion and faith are observed to play an important part in religion, and the devotee is usually a religious person, who is supposed to develop friendliness to all human beings, abstain from doing any harm to others, read religious literature, concentrate on the symbol of the Supreme, and so on. The widespread appeal of Bhakti Yoga is largely drawn from the element of simplicity, which is a characteristic mark of it.

**Karma Yoga**

This is the Yoga of Gita, as Lokamanya Tilak would have us believe. Karma in Sanskrit means action and this variety of yoga derives its name from the fact that even after attainment of the goal of yoga, i.e. jivanmukti, one does not renounce the various acts themselves. It is said that bondage is caused by the cravings and desires that are associated with an act, and that one can be free of the binding effect of any act if one does the act without associating himself with the consequences. It is not the acts themselves that bind an individual, but rather the attitude or intention involved. A
karma yogi behaves with indifference which is the product of cessation of desire and an awareness of the real significance of happenings in the world. Karma Yoga thus involves doing one’s duties without any reservation and without the craving that one should get this or that benefit for his acts. This attitude is indeed very difficult to cultivate, for most of us have their mind usually swayed away by the imaginations of the pleasures that our acts may possibly give rise to. We thus always have an eye on the future improvement in our position, prestige, power and so on. We usually do various things in order to become more important in the society we live in, we always happen to aspire and crave for achieving something that others cannot achieve, we always want to have something more and better than what our neighbours and friends have.

A karma yogi behaves in life with all such mental activity having been stopped completely. But his lack of attention on the goal does not make him dull or inefficient in whatever he may be engaged in. On the contrary, he devotes his full energies towards
good action, because his energy is not dissipated by hankering after this or that pleasure. A karma yogi is a man of the happiest behavioural adjustment within himself, as well as with the surrounding world. He does not pursue pleasure but pleasure follows him in whatever he does.

Jnana Yoga

This is supposed to be the yoga of the intelligent or the superior few. All other varieties of yoga are believed ultimately to lead to this kind of yoga, in which one comes to look at everything in the world as it is, without any ignorance and bias. This is supposed to be achieved through a continued practice of a strenuous mental discipline and virtue. This variety is also called Raja Yoga, because it is the highest variety, so to say, or the yoga that presides. Perhaps it is the variety which Patanjali has described in his Yoga Sutra. He has said that it is made of eight parts, five of which are said to be external, and three internal. Yama and Niyama, that is, the first two parts, are concerned respectively with what habits a student of yoga should avoid (e.g. harming others,
peaking lies, stealing, gathering wealth unnecessarily, etc.) and what habits he should positively cultivate (e.g. cleanliness of the body and mind, contentment, devotion etc.) Asana and Pranayama, which are respectively the third and fourth parts in Patanjal's system, are dealt with elaborately in Hatha Yoga. The fifth part, namely, pratyahara, indicates a withdrawal of the sense organs from the objects of enjoyment. The next three parts consist of a process of progressive mental concentration. Patanjali argues that through a faithful and intense practice of these eight parts of yoga for a sufficient length of time, a student of yoga can wash away all the impurities of his body and mind, so that he attains knowledge which ultimately liberates him from bondage and ignorance. This yoga is also called Ashtanga Yoga, because of the fact that it is made of eight parts. It is also sometimes called Dhyana Yoga, because of an emphasis on mental concentration. We find a lucid description of this variety of yoga in the sixth chapter of the Gita. It is usually this yoga that is implied whenever the Yoga stands alone without any qualification.
Hatha Yoga

This is perhaps a comparatively later development among the varieties of yoga. It is made of four parts, namely, Asana, Pranayama, Mudra and Nadasandhana. Swatmarama, an old authority on this yoga, declares in the Hathayoga-Pradipika, that Hatha Yoga is the staircase which leads a sincere student ultimately to the goal of Raja Yoga. It is supposed that a practice of the techniques included in this yoga brings about a union of what are called the sun and the moon in our body. The moon is situated in a region above the hard palate, and is believed to exude a fluid which percolates down, and is swallowed by the sun, which is situated near the navel. It is due to the swallowing up of this elixir by the sun, that we are said to suffer from old age and death. Hatha Yoga, in short, is a way of tackling these two, i.e. the sun and the moon in our body, so as to bring about a union of them.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Knowledge is not enough for health and to come into being. One may excel in knowledge of various kinds and may still be very
unhappy. Wisdom certainly includes knowledge of the world as one of the components. But what is important is not so much knowledge of the world as knowledge of the self or self-knowledge. Self-knowledge or atma Jnana was given the highest place in the religion and philosophy of the past. It involves enlightenment regarding the goals of life. Science does not include the aim or goals of human life in inquiry. And without the clear idea of it, perfect health and happiness are not possible to achieve. Health and fitness have been recognised as foundation to all sorts of pursuits in life essential for the spiritual progression. No doubt, the development of science and technology has added a lot to the comforts and luxuries of life of modern man, at the same time, has been robbed of his robbed physical health, emotional stability, mental peace, and ultimately the spiritual growth.

Health and peace within and about oneself, has perhaps been the greatest mark of Yoga. It is therefore, that Yoga can be of utmost utility to an individual whose mind torn, as it is, between conflicting desires, seek to attain health, peace and happiness.
Thus, the main aim of the present study is to study the Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali in relation to holistic health. The objectives of the study are:

- To study the concept of Ashtanga Yoga in relation to holistic health.
- To study the Patanjali’s approach to holistic Yoga.
- To study the Patanjali’s approach to Yoga in relation to health.
- To study the modern approaches to Yoga in relation to holistic health.
- To suggest and recommend an integrated holistic daily routine out of Patanjali’s Yoga for healthy living in consideration of modern trends.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Since the very beginning of the tradition of yoga in the hoary past, there have been emerging newer ideas and concepts and these fresh interpretations with advancement of time as a result of different paths treded and variety of experiences gained by Indian seers and saints of yore for the realization of the ultimate truth behind the
mystery of the existence of universe and their own position in relation to its other aspects. Vedas are the earliest records of ancient Indian culture. These are regarded as uncreated and eternal. The sources of various approaches to the realization of the Reality or truth are found scattered in all of them. Later, the knowledge of these approaches seems to have been consolidated and classified into Samhitas, Brahmanas and Upanishads representing Karma, Upasana and Jnana margas (paths) respectively. It is believed that these were followed by the emergence of vedangas and upvedas, sruti and smarta literature. Next, the authorship of Mahabharat including Bhagwat Gita, Puranas and Brahman sutras is credited to sage Vyasa earlier to different systems of philosophy which flourished in justification of their approach to self-realization simultaneously. Thereafter, Ayurveda, Tantrism, Buddhism and Jainism opened a new epoch in the history of Indian thought and civilization. Round about this time “Patanjali” had the credit of presenting the systematically graded course of the discipline of Yoga based on the ideas prevalent and the experimental realization
of his own. Last, but not the least important is voluminous literature of commentaries produced by other eminent authors interpreting the original texts.

Yoga is not merely a philosophy or highest “State of Being” but also a practical discipline that makes an individual competent to achieve the highest end of itself. It is considered to be universal discipline that has been adapted to some extent or the other by almost all the Indian religious sects and philosophical systems as a graded course based on experimental realisation of the spiritual goal.

The vast literature on Yoga including original works as well as a number of commentaries on each of them is mostly in Sanskrit. Hence, it is not only out of reach of majority of the common people but also not understandable to the higher strata of intellectuals and scientists unless they are well versed in the ancient language. Today, their translation in many languages, specifically in English, which is considered major international language, are also available. However, it has been noted that there
are certain technical terms in Sanskrit, which have not exact equivalent in other languages. Secondly, some terms of Sanskrit have been found to have different meanings in different contexts and these are likely to be misinterpreted and may not convey the correct message to the reader as desired. Another difficulty that confronts most of the people interested in Yoga is that the traditional concepts and definitions have not been explained in operational language so that they can be grasped and assimilated easily. Again, there are statements here and there in whole of the literature which appear contradictory to each other in spite of the fact that these are made either in different contexts or are sometimes made in accordance with the level of progress made by Sadhakas (practitioners) having divergent constitution and calibre. Last, but not the least important is the fact that different interpretations given by the different commentaries on the same subject have created a sort of confusion among the common people and need explanation in explicit language of the common people by synthesizing these ideas. Hence, in view of the common man's
problems mentioned above, the present study will help to know various concepts of health and fitness found in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra and in the modern context. This will certainly help the people to know and adopt the ways and means restoring and promoting health in modern era. The present study will also help common man to know the implications of the modern approaches to Yoga as well as the claims of classical and modern approaches to bring about transformation in respect of the life of an individual and also the means through which these goals could be realized.