

Hatha Yoga Is a Spiritual Path

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As it is taught in modern America, hatha yoga, most often called simply “yoga,” is incredibly effective as exercise. It is a powerful tool for maintaining health, strength and youth. Most Americans are interested in being strong and healthy, and especially interested in staying young or young looking. Thus, media attention focuses on the incredible physical benefits of yoga, all of which are true. Yoga relieves back pain, panic attacks, headaches, allergies, PMS, anxiety, arthritis, constipation, high blood pressure, stress, and more.

However, this understanding of yoga is very limiting. It is like going to a gourmet restaurant and ordering potato chips and soda. Though you become more fit and flexible when you practice yoga; that is not all you get. You will also enjoy a better attitude, more mental clarity, better ability to focus, and greater happiness. You will live your life against a background of inner tranquility that guides and supports you in every situation. And you will have access to a deeper and more profound level of your own Being.

Yoga is actually an ancient mystical tradition, which teaches the mysteries of life. It opens the doorway to your inner essence of Truth, Light, Joy and Love. Once you tap into this infinite source, your whole life is transformed. You shine with inner love and joy that you feel and know with your whole being. It fills your body, mind, heart and soul. You understand the meaning of life and you live it with every breath. You see the light of divine consciousness in every person and every situation. Your life becomes the vehicle through which grace and blessings flow.

So, the question arises, “You get all of that from stretching?” The answer is “Yes and No.” Yoga is not just stretching, nor is it merely another form of exercise. Yoga is a highly sophisticated means of working with your body to accomplish a higher purpose. It is similar to the difference you experience between jogging for your health and jogging for world hunger. Yoga exercises clear and open your body so that you can hold the ecstatic states of enlightenment.

The ancient tradition of yoga includes yoga poses (asana), breathing methods (pranayama) and energy seals (mudra). It also offers guidelines for daily living (yamas and niyamas) and focusing practices (dharana). You can progress to mastery of the energies of your senses (pratyahara), meditation (dhyana), absorption into your own inner ecstasy (samadhi), and even beyond that to enlightenment. All of these practices include a range from the very easy to the more subtle and profound.

One of the simplest and most effective things yoga teaches is to learn how to sigh. Right after a thorough, heart-felt sigh, there is an incredible feeling of stillness. This stillness transcends the world of space and time. It gives you an immediate taste of your own inner potential. Yoga is the science of maximizing that potential.

Yoga also offers study of the ancient texts that describes the nature of your own Being. It includes the science of sound, the inspiration we get from enlightened Masters of all traditions, and the opening of your heart to the divine presence that is always both within and outside.

In Svaroopaa Yoga, we work with the body for your specific purpose of having this inner experience. Everything we do, from the easiest to the most challenging, is for the higher purpose that is yoga itself. Yoga philosophy is embedded in everything we teach, just as joy should be embedded in every moment of your life and in every part of your body. Only then will you unlock the mystery of the meaning of life.

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