

# **Yoga Chikitsa – Yoga Therapy Origin, Scope and Practical Application**

**BY**

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Yoga Chikitsa is virtually as old as Yoga itself, indeed, the “return of mind that feels separated from the Universe in which it exists” represents the first Yoga therapy. Yoga Chikitsa could be termed “man’s first attempt at unitive understanding of mind-emotions-physical distress and is the oldest wholistic concept and therapy in the world. Western therapists are now approaching Unitive Understanding (Yoga) and wholistic therapies (Yoga Chikitsa) with “Yoga like practices.” Many of these Western practices are being absorbed into Indian therapies because our own Indian Therapists are not aware of the scope of Yoga Chikitsa and quickly take up these modern and often less practical but more costly therapies. Yoga is the loser when this happens, as all Western therapies are directed to the Western hedonistic concepts and vulgar materialistic ends or goals, rather than the spiritual concepts to be achieved through Yoga.

In this presentation I am trying to open up a wider view of Yoga and its application as a therapy by introducing some fifty-two sections of Yoga treatment that are acceptable within the overall concept of the Yoga Darshana, By expanding some of the sub-headings, I could have elaborated on the fifty-two major sections presented so that a total of 108 major and minor applications of Yoga Therapy and treatment are considered. Many of the present divisions or sections contain one or more distinct therapies but for sake of brevity, only 52 sections are considered. Many interested in Yoga Chikitsa will belabor or disagree with many of the general sections I have described. Others will state that there is no classical authority for Yoga Chikitsa, while still others will elaborate how difficult it is to use such an ancient science in practical application as a modern therapy. Indeed, it is difficult for three reasons: firstly, there is little information available to the seeking Yoga therapist on Yoga Chikitsa itself. Secondly, many therapists wishing to use Yoga Chikitsa are not personally involved in Yoga, and therefore, miss the real scope for Yoga Chikitsa in dealing with the problems of modern man. Finally, the patient of Yoga Chikitsa is a distinct problem. He wants to be healthy instantly...have an instant cure. That has been promised to him by popular, aggressive and all too misleading pharmaceutical advertisements, and the bias of modern physicians East and West to anything as “offbeat” as Yoga Chikitsa. Yet, there is no other hope for real cure of the diseases of man except with the wholistic method employed in Yoga Chikitsa.

Modern medical science enumerates some nearly 4,000 diseases and disorders of the body and mind in modern medicine and psychology. Yoga views this vast proliferation of diseases as a natural outcome of the stress and strain created by desire fostered by modern propaganda and the abuse of the body condoned on all sides even by religion, science and philosophy. Add to this the synthetic “junk food” diet of modern society and you have the possibility of endless disorders developing...even the extinction of man by his own ignorance and misdeeds. Yoga, a wholistic, unified concept of Oneness, is termed in Sanskrit “Adwaitam” or non-dual in nature. It suggests happiness, harmony and ease. Dis-ease is created when duality or “Dwaitam” arises in the human mind. This false concept of duality has produced all of the conflicts of human mind and the vast list of human disorders afflicting man. Duality-disease-is the cause of man’s downfall. Adwaita Vedanta, Yoga, and other wholistic concepts return man to his pristine, whole nature. Anything other than a Yoga concept leads only to human disorders.

All diseases, maladies, tensions, are manifestations of divisions of what should be man's complete nature, the Atman or Self. This Self is "Ease". A loss of "Ease" creates "Dis-ease". Duality is the first insanity, the first disease, the unreasonable thought that "I am different from the whole.... I am unique. I am me." The ego is a manifestation of disease. Only a distorted ego could feel alone, suffer from "the lonely disease", in a Universe, a Cosmos totally filled with the Self. It is of some interest to note that one of the oldest words for man in an Indian language is "Insana". Man is "insane". A return to sanity, "going sane," is the subject of real Yoga Sadhana and Yoga Abyasa. Yoga Chikitsa is one of the methods to help insane man back to the path of sanity. A healthy man or woman is known by the term-Yogi.

Because man has failed to maintain a unified view of himself in respect to Ultimate Reality, a harmonious blend of his personality in relationship to his hidden universality, he is anything but a Yogi. He can be described as a Rogi suffering from Roga, disease; a Bhogi, a seeker of Bhoga, hedonistic pleasure, and if he survives this role as either or both he can be considered little more than an "old Phogi" in his latter years. Good health, the absence of disease, involves a universal philosophy of life, an appropriate Unified Style of Living, and where necessary, proper, wholistic treatment for disorders which may arise as the result of past Karma. Indeed, it may be necessary to understand the role that one's personal Karma plays in the onset of human disorders and the ultimate alleviation or cure of these disorders.

Modern science has failed to meet the demands of the needy of the world, whatever that need may be. Indeed, there is every evidence that man is much more ill than at any time in the past and this is especially true with chronic disorders, which have plagued us with crippling, refractory conditions that seem to defy the wisdom of science and modern discoveries. Perhaps it is time to look to the East, especially India, who already has proved to the world to be the mother of religions and philosophies and re-discovers the use of our Vedic Sciences of Ayurveda and Yoga Chikitsa. Ayurveda once employed Yoga-like technique as a part of its method of treatment. Yoga Chikitsa has drawn heavily from the science of Ayurveda. Ayuryoga, a coined term, would indicate a re-blending of the two, into Ayur Chikitsa of Yoga Chikitsa. In recent times, Ayurveda has been recognized by the World Health Organization as a practical medical system and Yoga Chikitsa has recently been accepted by the Government of India, Ministry of Health, as an indigenous Medical System. Together these two ancient Indian Sciences could alter the course of human suffering and more so, human evolution. While man suffers in mind and body, he distorts the Universe in which he lives through his view. Happy, healthy man would create a heaven here on earth.

Fragmentary knowledge of this vast system of medicine exists throughout various parts of India and many Yoga Experts already employ some form of Yoga Chikitsa in their Yoga centres. It will be necessary to gather existing information and knowledge together, or under a number of classifications for analysis and evaluation and certain diagnostic and treatment methods adopted. Treatment of physical, emotional and mental disorders should be kept within Yogic parameters. It is not wise to employ non-Yogic concepts or methods in Yoga Chikitsa. Existing centres, which include some well-established Ashrams, should be prevailed upon to sponsor Yoga Therapy courses of a degree and non-degree category. During the period of training, the Yoga Therapist or Yoga Physician should undergo strict Yoga discipline for greater understanding of basic Yoga concepts and precepts. Courses in Yoga Chikitsa should be broad-based and admit all categories of therapists regardless of caste, colour, or financial condition. The main criteria should be that the candidate has a deep desire for spiritual unfoldment along the path of Yoga and to serve suffering humanity through the science of Yoga Chikitsa.

Diploma graduates should be employed by Ashrams, Yoga Centres and Centres that could make use of a Yoga Therapy specialist. Ample funds should be made available to institutions training therapists on a professional basis. Yoga Chikitsa centres should be independent of and free from a-Yogic

influences, a-Yogic environment, and any a-Yogic manipulations from any source religious, political, or personal. Yoga Chikitsa training should be encouraged in India's widely advertised "barefoot doctor" medical system. Thereby, any of the objections made by concerned scientific groups would be overcome by the employment of Yoga Chikitsa on a National basis and to ensure that we bring about a vast change on the Indian scene. The slogan "Health for All by the Year 2,000" was an empty slogan, a mockery of possibility, an intellectual absurdity because Yoga Chikitsa was not part to play in the scheme of things.

The need for an indigenous, wholistic therapy in India alone would justify that Yoga Chikitsa be developed and taught in special institutions, Ashrams and Yoga Centres. That wholistic therapy is now popular in Western countries and particularly, North America is an extra impetus for those interested in Yoga Chikitsa to make valuable contacts with the West. The Government of India should be interested in allotting funds for Yoga centres already in existence for study and training in Yoga Chikitsa, but there need be no delay while awaiting Government sponsorship and assistance.

There are a number of Ashrams and Yoga Institutions in India now employing some form of Yoga Chikitsa and others investigating Yoga phenomena on a scientific basis for application as therapy. Most of the scientific research in India today is on the use of Hatha Yoga Asanas, Pranayama, and some form of meditation for the alleviation of distress conditions. Scientific appraisal has shown the wonderful possibilities of the practical application of many Yoga techniques as Yoga Therapy. Excellent facilities exist for study, therapy training, research in Yoga Chikitsa, and practical application of techniques at Yoga Chikitsa Clinics helping many patients back to health and happiness through the practical application of Yoga training and Yoga therapy. Ananda Ashram, the headquarters of Yoga Jivana Satsangha (International) has been conducting Yoga training courses and courses in Yoga Therapy since 1968 onwards.

Most of the therapies that follow are taught in the Six-Month International Yoga Sadhana Course.

# **Yoga Chikitsa – Yoga Therapy**

## **1. YOGA ANATOMY**

While Western medical anatomy deals with the concept of only one physical body, Yoga Chikitsa involves a study and consideration, if only conceptual, of the Pancha Kosha, Five Bodies of Man. Yoga Chikitsa must be deeply concerned with the study and knowledge of the psychic Chakras, Prana Nadis and Bindus, as well as an application of Yoga Chikitsa that takes in the consideration of many concepts not found in Western terminology. The study of Yoga Anatomy would borrow heavily from terms and concepts used in Ayurveda, Siddha Vaidya, Samkhya and Yoga.

## **2. YOGA PHYSIOLOGY**

In Yoga Chikitsa, a wider knowledge of the physiology or function of the Five Bodies would be a necessary study and application of the workings of the various Koshas in harmony or symbiosis. A knowledge of the Trigunic nature, Vasanas, and Doshas, would be a necessity and most important, the effect of the various Pranas and the shutdown of body organs when one or more of the major or minor Pranas is not functioning. Yoga anatomy and physiology should be a compulsory study for anyone practising Yoga Chikitsa professionally.

## **3. YOGA PHILOSOPHY**

Yoga has a wholistic, universal concept of life and a very positive outlook on the spiritual evolution of man. Many consider Yoga Darshana to be more than a philosophy, rather an insight into the true nature of man and his relationship with the Universe. This relationship is important as the basic concept for Yoga Chikitsa. Real healing is likely to take place on a permanent basis only if the patient has a Yogic view.

## **4. YOGA PSYCHOLOGY**

Where Yoga philosophy leaves off, its practical application begins...this practical application can be termed "Yoga psychology". A psychological view of the use of Yoga Therapy is valuable to aid the student or patient to understand difficult practices or those which are difficult to understand in the beginning of therapy. Yoga psychology or Jnana Yoga can be equated with Vedanta for those taking up the psychological view of Yoga Chikitsa alone. It should be accepted that the Yoga concept of psychology or Vedanta be used in Yoga Chikitsa, and Western psychology and its terms should be scrupulously avoided. Western concepts do not in any way agree with the aim, goal or achievement according to Yoga psychology.

## **5. YOGA ASANAS ISOMETRIC STATIC POSTURES**

All classical Asanas of Hatha Yoga have some therapeutic value even when used alone, and even practised as a prevention of body disorders. Some of the Hatha Asanas can be slightly altered so that they can be used as remedial Asanas for the alleviation of some common physical disorders. Special consideration should be given to that group of practices best demonstrating Yoga Chikitsa ideals and goals that fall under the category of “Hathaats”, “Hathenas”, and “Hastikams”. It is possible that some Asana- like positions could be specially developed by Yoga Chikitsa experts to broaden the field of treatment through body postures.

## **6. YOGA KRIYAS ISOTONIC MOVEMENTS**

Yoga describes a Kriya as an activity where body movement, circulation of blood, circulation of nerve energy, or higher forms of energy conceived in Yoga Chikitsa, is manifestly demonstrated to take place. In this concept the term Kriya is associated only with activity done in classical Yoga Asana positions. The cleansing Kriyas belong under their own separate category and heading.

## **7. YOGA MUDRAS**

In Hatha Yoga, a Mudra is a special body position forcing activity of the involuntary muscular system to create reflexogenic feedback to associated glands, particularly the endocrine glandular system. The study of Mudras is as extensive as the study of any section or phase of Yoga itself, yet, with most Yoga teachers and therapists, is a subject rarely introduced to students or patients, but possibly the key to the most spectacular form of treatment available in Yoga Chikitsa.

## **8. PRANAYAMA**

There are at least 130 Pranayamas found in ancient and modern writings. Many of these breath-controls represent Yoga Chikitsa at its best, while some classical Pranayamas can be altered slightly to be used as a form of remedial breath correction routine. Breath-related disorders particularly respond to basic Pranayama training. The use of Kumbhakas and Bandhas should be restricted to the training of Yoga students. Rarely are these two aspects of Pranayama of any great value in Prana Chikitsa, but do represent practices associated with piercing through the Trigranthis, psychic knots, which could be considered a part of higher Yoga Therapy under certain circumstances.

## **9. ADHI PRANAYAMA**

Some Pranayamas of a higher nature can be used to induce deep relaxation and meditation. There is clinical evidence that healing takes place during “breath awareness relaxation”, and the resultant stress reduction suggests some Pranayamas have a special role to play in the correction of certain emotional / mental / psychic problems. Such Pranayamas should be taught only by a Yoga Therapy expert.

## **10. VYAYAMA YOGA STYLE EXERCISE**

Yoga Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras should in no way be considered in the same category as exercise or gymnastics. But, there is a group of legitimate body movements in the system called Vyayama where certain “thrusts, swings and sways” called Jattas and Jattis could form a group of excellent remedial exercises, and particularly where the patient is already familiar with such body-style movements. Many modern Yoga teachers are exponents of Vyayama, rather than Asana Yoga.

## **11. REMEDIAL DIETARY REGIMES**

Yoga advocates a pure vegetarian diet made up of raw fruits, vegetables, and nuts, along with cooked grains, seeds, pods, pulses, and roots and leafy vegetables. Some Yogis use milk, butter, ghee, cheese, and yogurt. Eggs, animal flesh, fowl and fish are not recommended in Yoga Aahaara. Large quantities of roughage must be maintained in a healthy Yoga diet, avoiding refined grains and sterile sugar. Mitaahaara is a restricted diet and usually used for cleansing purposes, affording the body an opportunity to recuperate from over-eating or allergic reaction to foods ingested. Many digestive complaints can be eliminated by Mitaahaara alone. Yoga Chikitsa owes a great debt to modern research into the value of food stuffs and the application of knowledge of modern nutrition to a modern Yoga diet. In many cases on the Indian scene, there is not enough nutrients in the generally poor diet, so some knowledge of those foods found commonly in nature that value. Malnutrition can be overcome by a “meager diet” and the judicious use of Asanas, Kriyas, Mudras and Pranayama which have been shown to increase the absorption of food nutrients into the human system.

## **12. ANAAHAARA - FASTING**

Scientifically – controlled Anaahaara, fasting from food, is a highly recommended way to give a physiological rest to the body. In Yoga Chikitsa, fasting can form a valuable core of practices to bring about radical cures of refractory conditions. Anaahaara is considered a physical Tapas along with Mauna or keeping silence. A thorough knowledge of how to prepare for a fast, conducting the fast, and breaking the fast must be known for this excellent Chikitsa. Anaahaara is usually done on water alone augmented by many sessions of Pranayama daily. Some “pseudo-fasts” call for the use of fruit, or vegetable juices alone during the fast, such as the “Grape Cure” for cancer.

## **13. MAUNA - SILENCE**

Mauna can be termed “fasting from speech” and is as potent as fasting from food as a curative technique. It is sometimes recommended to be used along with physiological fasting and can be undertaken as a “serenity therapy” while still involved with public contacts or practised when withdrawing from society for a full nature-cure-rest.

#### **14. RELAXATION THERAPY**

Yoga has its own “Nishpanda” Kriyas to deal with tension, stress and anxiety, particularly, of a physical and neurological nature. Hatha Yoga Asanas like Shava Asana, the Corpse. Posture, and Hatha Kriyas, like Kaya Kriya, and Mudras like Mahabhedana Mudra, are specially created to deal with physical tension. Many Hatha Yoga Relaxation techniques are relatively unknown, even to popular Yoga teachers, and this field need to be explored for the good of students and patients alike.

#### **15. JNANA YOGA THERAPY**

Jnana Yoga Therapy has recently developed into one of the major schools of emotional, mental tension-relieving, psychological therapies. Concepts from Raja Yoga are also included under Jnana Yoga Therapy. In counselling, the acceptance of Yama, moral restraints, and Niyamas, ethical observances, is the basis of the ideal needed to overcome anxiety and stress. Along with some specially developed “Kriyas”, a new anxiety stress therapy is available to Yoga Chikitsakas.

#### **16. YOGA THERAPEUTICS**

There are some 104 Mala Shoddhana Karmas, Deha Karmas, Kramas, and Kriyas in the Yoga Therapeutic System, which also includes the traditional Shat Karmas, the Six Cleansers of Hatha Yoga. These therapeutics are mostly concerned with decongestion and the elimination of toxins. Some of the practices are : douches, poultices, packs, water cleansers, and massage therapy. Shanka Prakshalana, a complete cleaning of the alimentary canal including one aspect of liver drainage, and the Laghu Prakshali, gravity enema, must be included in this group of techniques. A thorough knowledge of Yoga Therapeutics must be part of the training of a Yoga Chikitsak. These practices represent the most natural form of treatment in the Yoga Chikitsa System.

#### **17. WATER BATHS AND DOUCHES**

There is a whole section of Yoga Chikitsa where water baths cm oil baths or baths using herbal extracts or packs is in vogue. Water, oil, and herbal preparations are also used in douches, poultices, and body packs. Classical texts describe some twenty-four Snaas or baths with various healing effects and some 108 Netis or Douches to clean the nine body openings and some 54 Lepas or Upanahas, packs and poultices. Many of these therapies are drawn from Ayurveda, Siddha Vaidya, and from Kerala Ayurveda.

#### **18. SOLAR, LUNAR AND AIR BATHS**

Yoga Chikitsa advises the use of many types of Snaas including natural baths : judicial use of sun bath, lunar ray bath, and exposure to the air. Glands particularly respond to this form of treatment. Modern Yoga therapists have also taken to the use of Ultra Violet lamps, heat lamps, cosmic ray and other artificial ray treatment, where sun, moon, and fresh moving air are not available. Sea bath treatment could also fall within this category.

## **19. MASSAGE AND FRICTION TREATMENT**

Anga Mardanam, Yoga Massage, falls into a number of categories which include dry massage, the use of various oils and herbal preparations, even oil and herbal baths, both before and after massage. There is a special “Yoga massage” where the Nadis, Bindu and Chakras, are dealt with in the treatment. The forms of massage include friction, percussion, pressure, pinch and squeeze techniques.

## **20. SPINAL MANIPULATION**

Yoga Chikitsa is the origin of Danda-Hasta Vyaapaara, a type of Eastern Chiropractic which includes the manipulation of the spinal column and other skeletal groups as well as muscle and sinew treatment. The extended, whole body postural manipulation is termed Hasta Vyaapaara, although the feet may be used in the treatment, and therefore termed Pada Vyaapaar. Bone Setting is a separated technique in Yoga Chikitsa.

## **21. POSTURAL MANIPULATION**

Deha Vyaapaara is the system in Yoga Chikitsa equivalent to Western Osteopathy. This system is also sometimes called Hasta Bhyam or Hasta Vyaapaara. It includes the setting of bones and joints, muscular extension and flexion, spinal traction, which includes methods of dealing with neck and lower back disorders, limb traction, and replacing prolapsed internal organs.

## **22. BODY REBUILDING**

This science includes Kayakarshanam, or an entire body rebuilding programme by external and internal treatment in conjunction with remedial Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras and Malashoddhana Karmas.

## **23. YOGA HYGIENE**

Yoga has a special system of hygiene, Aarogyavidya, to deal with the teeth (Danta); skin (Twach); hair (Kesha); and nails (Nakha). There is a special hygiene for the eyes, ears, nose and throat that may also be included under this general heading.

## **24. YOGA HEALTH REGIME**

Yoga, as well as Yoga Chikitsa, recommends Aarogya Pathyam, a particular “life style,” the by-product being “sane living”. There are specific rules for Yoga health and happiness.

## **25. YOGA SANITATION AND TOILETRY**

There is a specific training to be imparted about Aarogyakaram, the Yoga concept of hygiene and toilet training. The use of various herbal solutions in sanitation, like the use of evergreen needles and charcoal for sterilizing as well as the use of Sambrani, dhoop or incense and other disinfectants.

## **26. YOGA DIAGNOSTICS - ROGALAKSHANAM**

There are a number of ways by which stress and disease in the body can be diagnosed. These include :

1. Pulse reading;
2. Dermography, reading of the changes in the skin ;
3. Iridology, the reading of the iris of the eye ;
4. Observation of symptoms relative to Kapha, Pitta, and Vatta ;
5. Analysis of Lakshana (traits), Vasana (pre-disposition); Dosha (humours); Klesha (obstructions) and Ritti (manner);
6. Sputum, sweat, urine and faeces analysis.

## **27. YOGA PREVENTION**

This section of Pratirogyam or Nirodhakam would include the proper use of

1. Healthy balanced diet;
2. Proper sleep;
3. Rest and relaxation;
4. Healthy recreation ;
5. Construction hobbies;
6. This section could also deal with education to prevent impairment of the senses such as misuse of the eyes, ears, nose and throat ;
7. Training to retain good memory;
8. may also include technique in maintaining glandular health and the resultant sexual potency. Remedial techniques like Kaya Kalpa, rejuvenation, should be dealt with under a separate section.

## **28. YOGA REJUVENATION**

Kaya Kalpa is the Hindu system of cellular rejuvenation and Yoga Chikitsa employs a special combination of Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras, fasting, and urine therapy to achieve this end.

## **29. AUTO-URINE THERAPY**

Amaroli Chikitsa or Shiva Amrit Chikitsa is the use of one's own urine for internal or external treatment. The use of urine packs on external wounds and cancerous sores has been shown to produce spectacular cures.

## **30. YOGA SEX THERAPY**

Yoga has a unique approach to sexual control through Brahmacharaya Mudras and the control of fertility cycles and Yoga family planning by the adjustment of Ojas and Tejas (hormones and enzymes) through the use of the Shat Mudras, which are sometimes called Oli Mudras.

### **31. FERTILITY CONTROL**

Phaladatwa and Saphalatwa are two phases of human fertility control that could be considered as a part of Yoga Chikitsa. It has been scientifically shown that the use of the Oli Mudras can control female ovulation and the production of sperm in the male. Oli Mudras or Shat Mudras are : Vajroli Part I and Part II ; Sahajoli Part I and II ; and Amaroli, Part I and Part II. These Mudras should not be confused with Vajra Karmas from the cleansing system of Hatha Yoga sometimes known by the same names.

### **32. YOGA FAMILY PLANNING**

It would be an ideal situation if the world could be introduced to the Yoga concept of Family Planning. Truly spiritualized families would be the result. Yoga Family Planning involves keeping to special observances according to Cosmic Rhythms, body cycles (bio-rhythms) and spiritual festivals. A number of India's leading Yoga teachers and their Ashrams teach some system of Yoga Family Planning. This is a field in which much research could be done for the benefit of Mother India and the world.

### **33. HERBS, MINERALS AND STONE THERAPY**

Yoga has borrowed heavily from Ayurveda and South Indian Siddha Vaidya and even Unnani, the Muslim system of medical alchemy. In the preparation and use of herbs (Aushadhi), metals (Dhatu or Loha) ; stones, both precious and semi-precious (Ratna, Shila and Shilajit). Basmas or fired powdered compounds and stones. Sometimes this same material is used as Dhoop (incense) for insufflation through the nostrils. Seeds. (Bijas); fruit stones (Ashthi) and green or dried pods (Bijakosha) are used both in medicine, and like and Rudraksha and Tulsi seeds are strung on Malas and worn around the neck.

### **34. ACUPRESSURE**

The Yoga System of Bindu Manvaahanam or Manvanharanam is the oldest system of Acupressure in the world and has been much borrowed by Chinese and Japanese modern system. The Yoga system is far superior in every way to modern systems.

### **35. ACUPUNCTURE**

The Chinese, Japanese and Koreans have borrowed heavily from the Indian system of Bindu Prerana or Pratodan Bindu or Acupuncture. In the classical Vedic and Ayurvedic system, only four points of the body were invaded by sharpened instruments or specially prepared needles.

### **36. YOGA HEALING**

There are a number of systems within Yoga Chikitsa which lead to either physical healing, Pinda Upashama, or psychic healing, Andha Upashama. Yoga healing is also known as Yoga Kushalam and includes water healing (Jalam) ; magnetic or Pranic healing (Prana) ; Mantric healing (Mantra) and psychic healing (Adhyatmikam.) So called “spiritual healing” would involve the use of Prana. Mantra and Adhyatmika techniques. A separate section of Chikitsa is used for exorcism, the relief of psychic possession.

### **37. RELIEF OF PSYCHIC POSSESSION**

Psychic possession is an admitted phenomena in Hindu culture. An entire science involving Mantra, Yantra, and Tantra has been evolved to deal with Bhutapasaaranam or mental disturbances associated with this phenomena. Native medicine of India has evolved a number of techniques known as Duri Kriyas which may be scientifically employed in Yoga Chikitsa. Care must be seen that ignorant superstitions do not enter into this otherwise valuable science.

### **38. MANTRA YOGA**

The Yoga of Sound Vibration is the use of archaic Sanskrit Runes and Dhoons in some sections of Yoga healing : to ward of psychic phenomenon, for exorcism, or for purely speeding up the vibration of cells to the healing vibration level.

### **39. YANTRIC BIO-RHYTHMS**

Yantra is the study of an archaic Vedic-based science and its application of Rita Yuga (Cosmic Rhythms), Dharma Yuga (Solar Bio-Rhythms) and Karma (Personal Reactgive Bio-Rhythms). There is a section in Yantra which helps to understand the construction of consciousness and this section may be taken as a separate study in Yoga Psychological Therapy.

### **40. YAGNA AND YATRA THERAPY**

The Vedic concept is that Yagna and Homa Puja and other forms of ceremony have a curative value and that Yatra or holy pilgrimage has a beneficial effect. Many people conduct religious ceremonies and go on a pligrimage for a return of health or other boons.

#### **41. YOGA COUNSELLING**

The Yoga system of psychological counselling, Upadesham, is literally on a Guru / Chela basis. There are three ways in which counselling is done :

1. Direct counselling where instructions are given on a personal level. This system is used both in Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga where the teacher points out certain defects in the Karma and the way by which this can individually be rectified.
2. Indirect counselling, such as that afforded by Satsangha, the company of the wise and where a person hears certain stories with a moral and ethical base and is able to apply this to his own circumstances.
3. The study of the Shastras or the scriptures which would include UPANISHADS, BHAGAVAD GITA etc. These offer ways by which one can alter one's psychological circumstances by right thinking and right living.

#### **42. BHAKTI YOGA**

There is a distinct role to be played in health and well being by the use of devotional faith, worship and meditation which would include religious study, Bhajana and Kirthana singing and the use of an Isha Mantra or a personal Mantra given by the Guru.

#### **43. ASTROLOGICAL MEDICINE**

There is a distinct system of astrological diagnosis and treatment termed Astro-Medicine Nakshetra Vidya, deduced from the time and place of one's birth and calculating the movement of celestial bodies and changing times and seasons. This can be a separate study within Vedic medicine, but it is a valuable tool in Yoga Chikitsa. Some Gurus use palmistry, phrenology, numerology, and other psychic sciences for medical diagnosis and treatment.

#### **44. YOGA DARSHANA CHIKITSA**

A study of the Vedas, Vedanta, Tantra, Jnana, and Raja Yoga suggests that certain conclusions which are diagnostic can evolve out of these Insights. There are definite, distinct treatments associated with various schools of Hindu thought, especially Jnana Yoga-the Yoga of Wisdom, Raja Yoga-the Royal Yoga of mind-over-body control, and adaptable therapies from Veda, Vedanta, and the Tantric system. These systems are much preferred to treat sensitive, orthodox Hindus and it can be easily seen that Raja Yoga concepts and therapy is readily accepted by youth of all countries suffering from emotional and psychological problems. Both Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga Therapy is based on Yama-morality and Niyama-ethics, as well as the broader application of Ashtanga Yoga. These techniques are preferred to crude, ego-centric system of Western psycho-analysis and psycho-therapy.

#### **45. YOGA THERAPY**

It is possible to “pick and choose” from the 52 broader headings that fall under Yoga Chikitsa, producing a systematic, workable therapy for many physical, emotional, and mental conditions. Any form of Yoga Chikitsa should at least embody the Hatha Yoga system of Asanas, Kriyas and Mudras, Malashoddhana Karmas, and Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga counselling. Any deficiency in this limited system can be counteracted by the inclusion of any other Yoga or Yoga-like techniques.

#### **46. MAUNA AND ANTARA MAUNA**

Mauna is taking to silence, not speaking, a Yoga Tapas, while Antara Mauna is a meditative-like technique allowing one to enter into a state of deep profound “inner silence”. Both are termed “serenity therapies” and are of independent value to modern man suffering from disturbed senses and chaotic mind. It is possible to make these two into separate and distinct therapies where required.

#### **47. EENT THERAPY**

The Yoga Kriyas and Malashoddhana Karmas offer a special therapy for the cure of eye, ear, nose and throat conditions. Special eye drills are used in a separate therapy with scientifically proved results. Yoga Therapy could be modified to deal with almost any condition afflicting man, but it should be noted that “prevention is better than cure”. In the field of EENT Kriyas prevention should be advocated before congestive conditions result. The Yoga Therapy system of eye exercises may be considered a separate system of therapy. It is the most comprehensive approach ever devised for the correction of problems of sight and perhaps the best known in the West of all forms of Yoga Chikitsa.

#### **48. YOGA EYE THERAPY**

It is estimated that 90 per cent of all eye problems are psychological in origin or from simple misuse of the eyes. The eyes respond very well to the Yoga system of eye therapy which involves decongestion of the eyes and eye sockets, a retraining of the muscles associated with the eyes, and remedial eye drills. Yoga Eye Therapy is one system where it can be easily shown how psychological tension affects the eyes and its use could be one of the greatest contributions of Yoga Chikitsa in modern times.

#### **49. YOGA GLANDULAR THERAPY**

Yoga offers the only complete system of endocrine glandular therapy, Adhimasam Chikitsa, on a non-drug basis in the world today. Also called Granthi Chikitsa, Yoga Glandular Therapy offers some answers that modern Western Science is searching for in its pursuit of the studies of endocrinology and endocrine therapy. The human glandular system is distinctly affected by Mudras in particular. Glandular Therapy may also hold the secret of the cure of distressing conditions like leukemia and other forms of cancer.

## **50. BONE SETTING**

Yoga Chikitsa and the Hindu system of medicine offer a most spectacular method by which the skeletal structure can be set and reset and even fractured bones knit together in healing, taking a very short time for the healing to take place. Known as Trudithashisamdha Kriya, this system is in vogue amongst many South Indian Hatha Yoga specialists as well as “Barefoot Doctors” of folk medicine.

## **51. ANXIETY AND STRESS THERAPY**

Yoga Abhya Sadhana Chikitsa has a particular application for the reduction of anxiety and stress. This system employs various techniques from a number of Schools of Yoga like : Asanas, Kriyas, Mudras, Pranayama, Relaxation Techniques, evolved within Jnana Yoga Therapy and Raja Yoga Therapy. Two distinct system have evolved. One, dealing with tension-relaxation or Spandha-Nishpandha Kriyas that belong to the physical therapy of Yoga Chikitsa, while a second aspect termed Chintaa Chikitsa deals with psychological anxiety and stress. The psychological therapy field is also known as Manastaapa Chikitsa and employs Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga therapy as well as the broader use of Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation). Some therapists employ Pratyahara (sense withdrawal) as a special technique. Other therapists even advocate “pseudo arousal” of Kundalini Shakti as a therapy. At least one therapist argues that Samadhi Therapy is a possibility. It is generally accepted that Kundalini Shakti should not be aroused except by those in total Yogic health, and that Samadhi or Cosmic Consciousness demands all other systems to be in perfect harmony. Terms like Kundalini Therapy and Samadhi Therapy should be discouraged on the basis of Yoga spiritual concepts alone. There are other legitimate techniques which can be used to obtain therapeutic results without the misuse of Adhyatma Yoga.

## **52. GENERAL YOGA REMEDIAL THERAPY**

Yoga Chikitsa as a modern therapy should embody many or all of the fifty-two sections detailed although it is possible that a therapist may specialize in one or more limited types of therapy at the expense of the others. A Yoga Therapist may employ techniques from other systems of Alternative Medicine only when required. But, if the term Yoga Chikitsa is used, it demands that Yoga be the major consideration. Yoga is the most complete system of Naturopathy anywhere in the world today. This ancient system is so modern that it qualifies as the only really “wholistic medicine” and therapy in vogue in the modern world. Yoga concepts must be taught to students and patients and those being treated must be introduced to the practice of Hatha Yoga Asanas, Kriyas, Mudras, and Pranayama. Yoga Therapy without the support of Yoga practices would be a contradiction of Yoga.

### **SPECIAL NOTE**

As Yoga Therapy is a complete system within itself it need not draw from any other source. Yoga Chikitsa requires little or no equipment, paraphernalia or gadgets, whereas the popular Alternative Medical System require very expensive equipment and lead to costly charges for students and patients alike. Yoga Therapy can be evolved on a broad-based system with little expense or outlay on the part of the therapies which are popularly included in Alternative Medical Systems are being included as Yoga Therapy by some therapists. In some cases these practices could be used to advantage, but with others, they actually detract from Yoga Chikitsa and their use should be otherwise discouraged. Yoga

will always be the loser in the mind of the patient when modern, popular, attractive therapies are offered as an alternative to Yoga Chikitsa. Ayurveda, Siddha Vaidya, and other Hindu medical concepts are usually quite compatible with Yoga Chikitsa. Some Alternative Systems that may be included with caution are: Naturopathy, Naprothy, Homeopathy, Unnani Therapy (Use of Vitamins, Minerals, Protein Tablets etc). Sporting Exercises, Body Building (Bullworker, Weight Lifting), Eurythemics, Aerobic Dancing, Hypnosis (It should be noted that Yoga is de-hypnosis), and may other alternative medical therapies.

## SUMMARY

Yoga Chikitsa is a remedial medical science as old as the concept of Yoga itself. There is only one disease duality. Its cure is a return to Universal Oneness. However abstract this Dwaita-adwaita concept may be, it must be the basis of Yoga Therapy as well as Yoga itself. Yoga Chikitsa should not be separated from the mainstream of Yoga proper or it will suffer the fate of most divided sciences. Yoga Chikitsa without Yoga is an absurd anomaly. Yoga Therapists must be deeply involved in a Yogic way of life themselves and be a very fine example of morality and ethics as taught in Ashtanga Yoga or Raja Yoga. As Yoga Chikitsa is considered a modern alternative medical system, it must truly offer an alternative life style to that of modern hedonistic medicine. If Yoga Chikitsa is used only within the materialistic medical systems of today, it will fail. At a recent world Conference of Alternative Medical Systems, it was most obvious that the participants involved were not following an alternative life style but were involved in most materialistic fashion with their “fad” and their personal conduct was certainly no indication that the therapist had adopted an Alternative Life Style, Rather, the misuse of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and sexual vices were no ample display. If Yoga therapy is introduced into such a scene, it will suffer a fate that will lower the prestige of Yoga and the aims in general of Yogic Life.

The first and most important Yoga in Yoga Chikitsa must be the Union of the therapist and his own Yoga Sadhana with the greater concept of Yoga as Universal Oneness. This is likely to produce the most important quality of a Yoga Therapist, that is, his ability to heal. Yoga Chikitsa is not just a group of techniques to be taught to and employed by anyone. The basic requirement of a Yoga Chikitsak is that some quality of healing is already present in his life and being. The final stage of Yoga Chikitsa is the Union of therapist and patient. This will require a Yogic view to be aware of the fact that healing comes from within the patient and is only educed by the therapy and the therapist. Truly, Yoga Chikitsa could become the must sought after system of healing in modern times.

Much time will have to be spent with each patient or subject and the patient must receive basic Yoga concepts and Yoga training from the therapist in what should be a teacher-pupil relationship, rather than a healer-patient relationship. The Yoga Therapist must encourage his patient to take to a Yogic-life-style so that the healing gained is permanent and not transitory one. At least 52 separate sections of treatment are outlined in this presentation. Perhaps even more headings or sections could be devised.