



N.B.K.R. INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (AUTONOMOUS)

HEALTH AND WELLNESS, YOGA AND SPORTS

Department of Physical Education

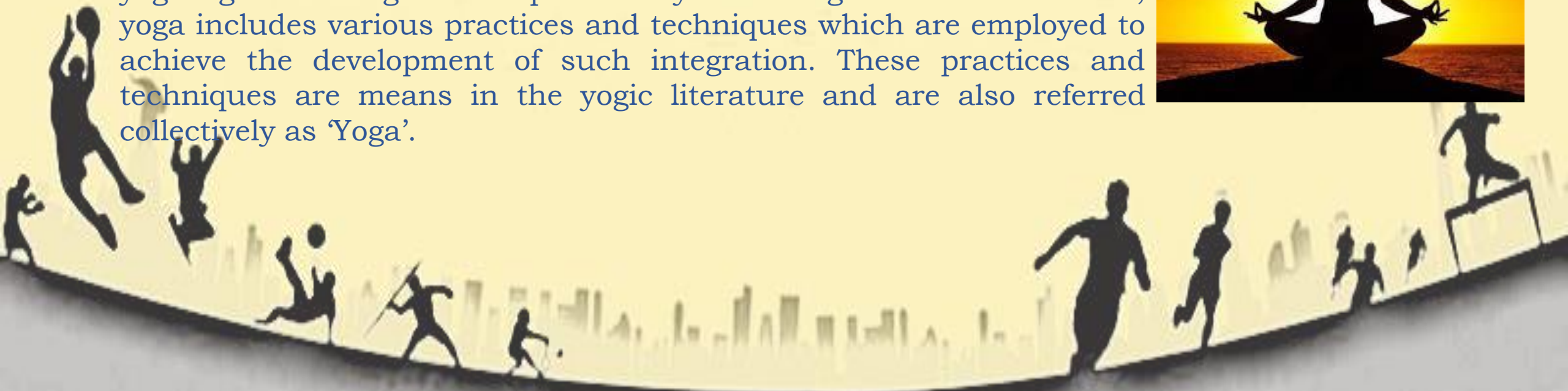


Unit - 02

Concept of Yoga

Yoga is a healthy way of life, originated in India. Now, it is believed to be a form of science accepted all over the world. The western culture is also accepting it as a healthy form of scientific exercise. Although the origin of yoga is obscure, it has a long tradition.

The word 'Yoga' is derived from Sanskrit root yuj which means 'join' or 'unite'. This may be taken as the union of body, mind and soul, and is used in the literature both as an end as well as means. As an end, yoga signifies 'integration of personality' at the highest level. As means, yoga includes various practices and techniques which are employed to achieve the development of such integration. These practices and techniques are means in the yogic literature and are also referred collectively as 'Yoga'.

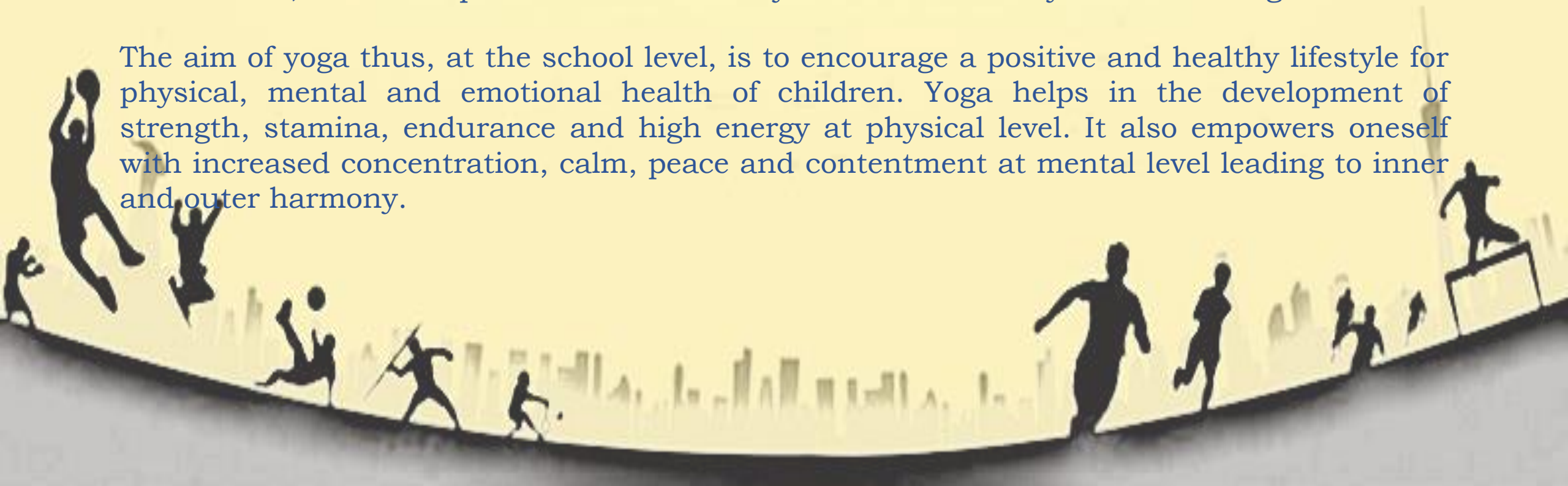


Importance of Yoga

Health is a positive concept. Positive health does not mean merely freedom from disease, but it also include a jubilant and energetic feeling of well-being with an amount of general resistance and capacity to easily cultivate immunity against specific offending agents.

Yoga is one of the most powerful drugless system of treatment. It is having its own concept of wellness which has been scientifically understood and presented by many. Yoga can be adopted as lifestyle for promoting our physical and mental health. Yoga, if introduced at the school level, would help to inculcate healthy habits and lifestyle to achieve good health.

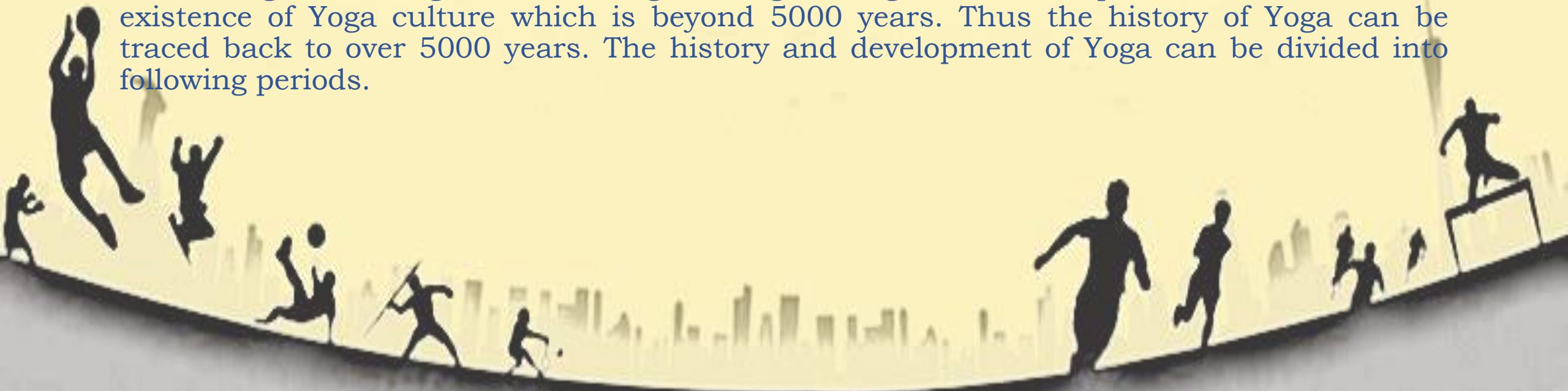
The aim of yoga thus, at the school level, is to encourage a positive and healthy lifestyle for physical, mental and emotional health of children. Yoga helps in the development of strength, stamina, endurance and high energy at physical level. It also empowers oneself with increased concentration, calm, peace and contentment at mental level leading to inner and outer harmony.



Origin and History of Yoga

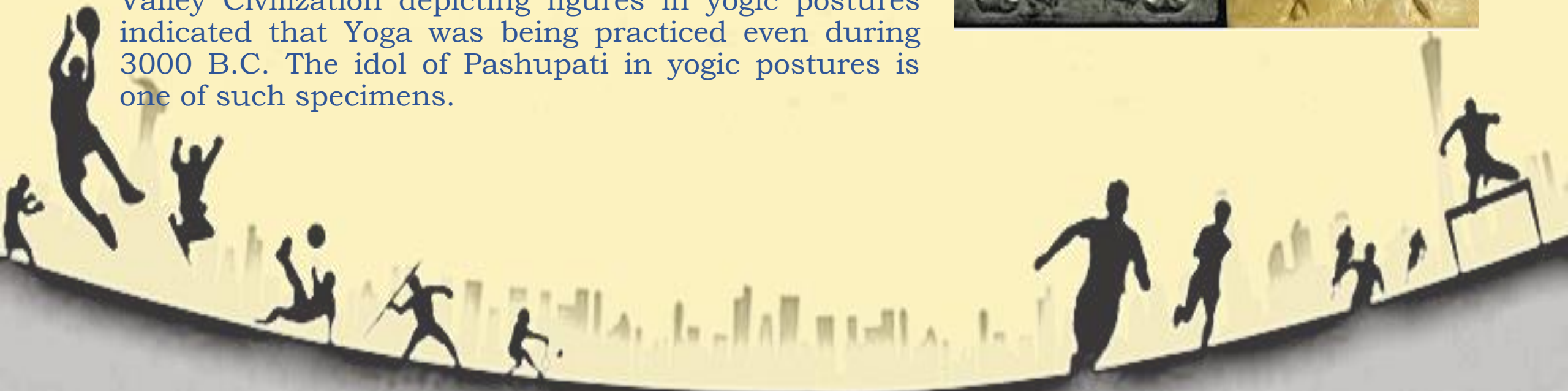
The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of Yoga originated thousands of years ago, long before the first religious belief systems were born. Yoga believes that suffering is a fact and avidyā (ignorance) is the root cause of all sufferings. Yoga has originated and been developed by ancient Indian rishis to overcome all kinds of suffering of human beings and its root cause. Yogic practices lead to health, harmony and total freedom. The ṛṣis and sages carried this yogic knowledge to different parts of the world including Asia, the Middle East, Northern Africa and South America.

Archaeological findings such as Yogi-like figure engraved on soapstone seal verified the existence of Yoga culture which is beyond 5000 years. Thus the history of Yoga can be traced back to over 5000 years. The history and development of Yoga can be divided into following periods.



Pre-Vedic Period

The history of Yoga can be traced back to pre-vedic period. The study of the history of Indus Valley Civilization reveals that the practices of Yoga was one of the significant features during that period. Yoga is being widely considered as an 'immortal cultural outcome' of Indus Sarasvati Valley Civilization—dating back to 2700 B.C., it has proved itself catering to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity. The stones seals excavated from the sites of the Indus Valley Civilization depicting figures in yogic postures indicated that Yoga was being practiced even during 3000 B.C. The idol of Pashupati in yogic postures is one of such specimens.



Vedic and Upanishadic Period

This period is marked with the emergence of Vedas.

There are four Vedas:

1. Ṛigveda
2. Sāmaveda
3. Yajurveda
4. Atharvaveda



During this period, the people relied on the knowledge of dedicated vedic yogis (rishi) to teach them how to live in divine harmony. The ṛṣis (seers) were also gifted with the ability to see the ultimate reality through their intensive spiritual practices. The vedas contain the oldest known yogic teachings called Vedic Yoga.

The Upaniṣads are the concluding portion and essence of the Vedas. The Upaniṣads are contained in the knowledge portion of Vedas. The concepts of yoga are widely available in the Upanishads. The Yoga in Upaniṣads describe the inner vision of reality resulting in intense self-inquiry. Jñāna-yoga, Karma-yoga and Dhyāna-yoga are the main outcomes of the Upanishadic teachings.

Classical Period

In the pre-classical era, Yoga was an incoherent mixture of various ideas and techniques that often contradicted each other. The classical period is defined by Maharshi Patanjali's yoga sutras, the first systematic presentation of Yoga. After Patanjali, many sages and Yoga masters contributed greatly for the preservation and development of the field through their well-documented practices and literature. The period between 500 B.C.–A.D. 800 is considered as the Classical period, which is also considered as the most fertile and prominent period in the history and development of Yoga. During this period, commentaries of Vyāsa on Yoga Sūtras and Bhagavad Gitā, etc., came into existence. This period can be mainly dedicated to two great religious teachers of India—Mahavir and Buddha. The concept of five great vows—Pañcamahāvrata by Mahavir and Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga or eightfold path by Buddha can be well considered as early nature of Yogasādhanā. We find more explicit explanation of Yoga in Bhagavad Gi-tā, which has elaborately presented the concept of Jñāna-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Karma-yoga. These three types of Yoga are still the highest example of human wisdom. Patañjali's Yoga sūtra besides containing various aspects of Yoga, is mainly identified with the eight fold path of Yoga. Vyasa wrote a very important commentary on Yogasūtra. During this very period, the aspect of mind was given more importance and it was clearly brought out through Yoga Sādhanā. Mind and body both can be brought under control to experience equanimity. Patañjali described 'eight limbed path' in order to attain Samādhi or enlightenment.

Post-classical Period

The period between A.D. 800–A.D. 1700 has been recognised as the Post Classical period, wherein the teachings of great Acāryatraya Adi Śaṅkaracārya, Rāmānujācārya, Mādhavācharya were prominent during this period. The teachings of Suradāsa, Tulasi-dāsa, Purandaradāsa and Mi-rabāi were prominent during this period. The Nātha Yogis of Haṭha Yoga tradition like Matsyendranātha, Gorakṣanātha, Caurangiṇātha, Svātmarāma Suri, Gheraṇḍa, Śr-inivāsa Bhaṭṭa are some of the great personalities who popularised the Haṭha Yoga practices during this period. This period is different from the first three since its focus is more on the present. At this point, we see a proliferation of literature as well as the practice of Yoga. A few centuries after Patañjali, a number of Yoga masters created a system of practices designed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life. They embraced the concept of physical body as the means to achieve enlightenment.

Yoga in Modern Period

The period between A.D. 1700–1900 is considered as modern period. This was the time in which great legacy of Yoga teachings was carried forward by prominent Yoga personalities like Ramaṇa Maharṣi, Rāmakṛiṣṇa Paramahansa, Paramahansa Yogānanda, Swami Vivekānanda, Swami Dayānanda Sarasvati and Sri Aurobindo. Their philosophies, traditions, lineages and Guru-śiṣya paramparā led to further the knowledge and practices of different Traditional Schools of Yoga, e.g., Jñānayoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga, Rāja-yoga, Haṭha-yoga and Integral-yoga, etc.

Yoga in Contemporary Period

Now in the contemporary times, everybody has conviction about Yoga practices towards the preservation, maintenance and promotion of health. Yoga has spread all over the world by the teachings of great personalities like Swami Shivananda, Shri T. Krishnamacharya, Swami Kuvalayananda, Shri Yogendara, Swami Rama, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, Pattabhi Jois, B.K.S. Iyengar, Swami Satyananda Sarasvati and the like. In the present scenario, Yoga has been accepted by the world as a boon to prevent lifestyle diseases and for stress management. Given the health problems being at the centre stage of challenges faced by world population, Yoga is considered mainly as a tool of physical and mental well-being. Considering the importance and potential of Yoga in health and well-being, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 11 December 2014 approved the proposal of the honorable Prime Minister of India, urging the world community to adopt an International Day of Yoga. The 193 members of UNGA approved the proposal by consensus with the record of 177 co-sponsoring countries, a resolution to establish 21st June as International Day of Yoga. This is the biggest recognition for Yoga by world community. On December 1, 2016, UNESCO inscribed Yoga in its list of intangible cultural heritages of humanity. Yoga Sadhana of all hues and colours is considered panacea for a meaningful life and living. Its orientation to a comprehensive health, both an individual and social, makes it a worthy practice for the people of all religions, races and nationalities. Now-a-days, millions of people across the globe irrespective of their age, gender, cost, religion and countries have been benefitted by the practice of yoga which has been preserved and promoted by the great eminent yoga masters from ancient time to this date. Yoga has united the world and brought the whole world under one umbrella to live in peace and harmony.

Classification of Yoga

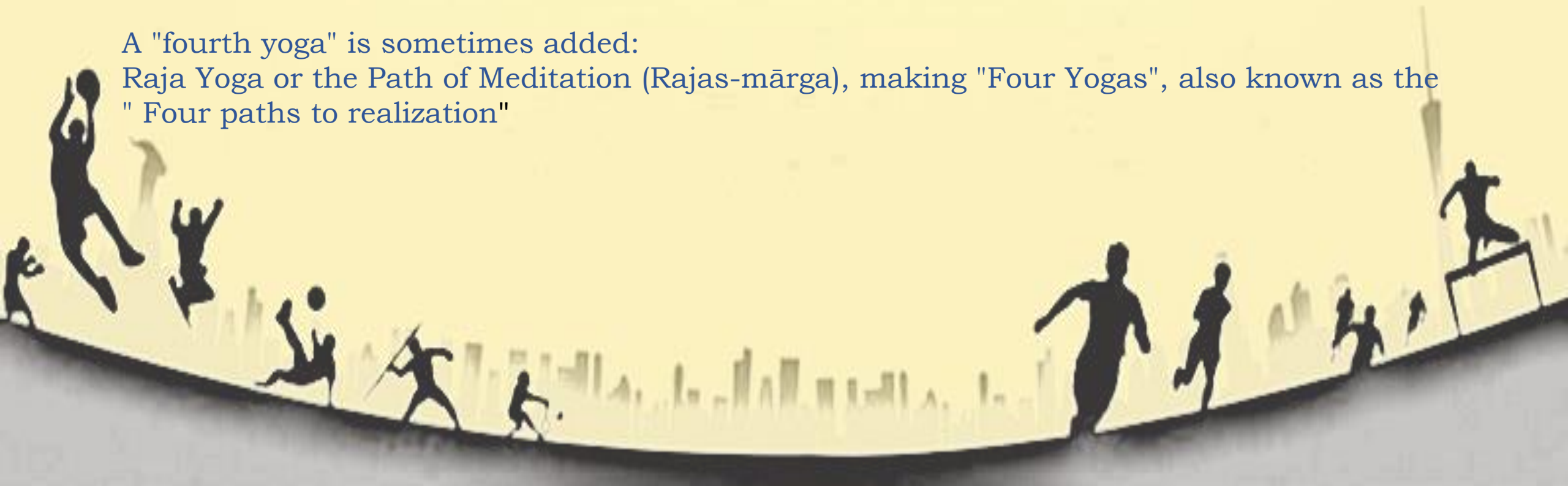
The Three Yogas or Trimārga are three soteriological paths mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita for the liberation of human spirit.

They are:

1. Karma Yoga or the Path of Action (Karma-mārga)
2. Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Devotion (Bhakti-mārga) to Ishvar (God)
3. Jnana Yoga or the Path of Knowledge (Jñāna-mārga)

A "fourth yoga" is sometimes added:

Raja Yoga or the Path of Meditation (Rajas-mārga), making "Four Yogas", also known as the "Four paths to realization"



Karma Yoga

Today karma yoga means path of doing duty and giving service without expecting reward. In this era Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Tulsi, Vinoba Bhave are unique examples. This is a path of endeavor, independence and self-dependence. According to Gita One should not claim right on the reward. It is opposite of bhakti yoga.

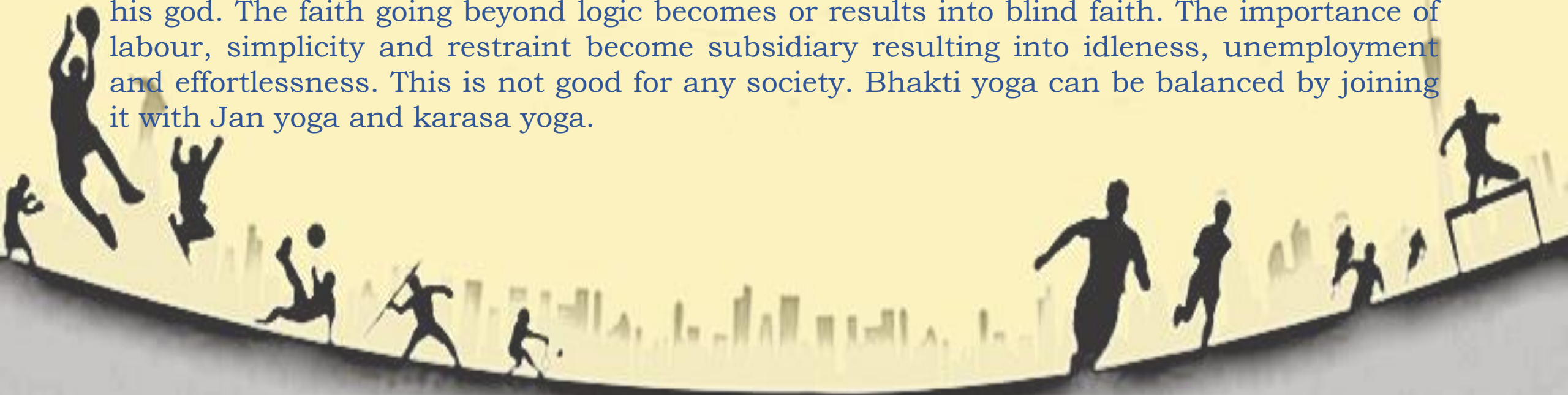
It has also its own limitations. There is a possibility of creation of emotion of arrogance in the person doing his duty. Here the endeavor is very strong but it is connected with the problem of arrogance. One has to adopt path of non-attachment to solve this problem. Everybody cannot follow this path of karma yoga because not getting reward may make him frustrated.

One more limitation is that an immature follower may expect rewards in the form of position, name, honor, fame, accomplishment etc. This tendency can become cause of mutual conflicts which are fatal for healthy running of society and institutes. But the boundaries of karma yoga grow if the noble emotions of duty without reward, fulfilling responsibility, doing service only etc. get connected with it.

Bhakti Yoga

This yoga is based upon bhakti (worship), shraddha (faith) and samarpan (devotion). A devotee devoting himself to a god or a guru (teacher) worships him totally surrendering to him. He experiences oneness with him. Many Indian common people are found following this path. It is based upon emotions. The devotee believes that whatever he is doing is done by his god and not by him (the devotee).

Limitation of bhakti yoga is that many times without understanding the real purpose and the meaning the devotee neglecting his own efforts depends only upon or beg for the help of his god. The faith going beyond logic becomes or results into blind faith. The importance of labour, simplicity and restraint become subsidiary resulting into idleness, unemployment and effortlessness. This is not good for any society. Bhakti yoga can be balanced by joining it with Jan yoga and karasa yoga.



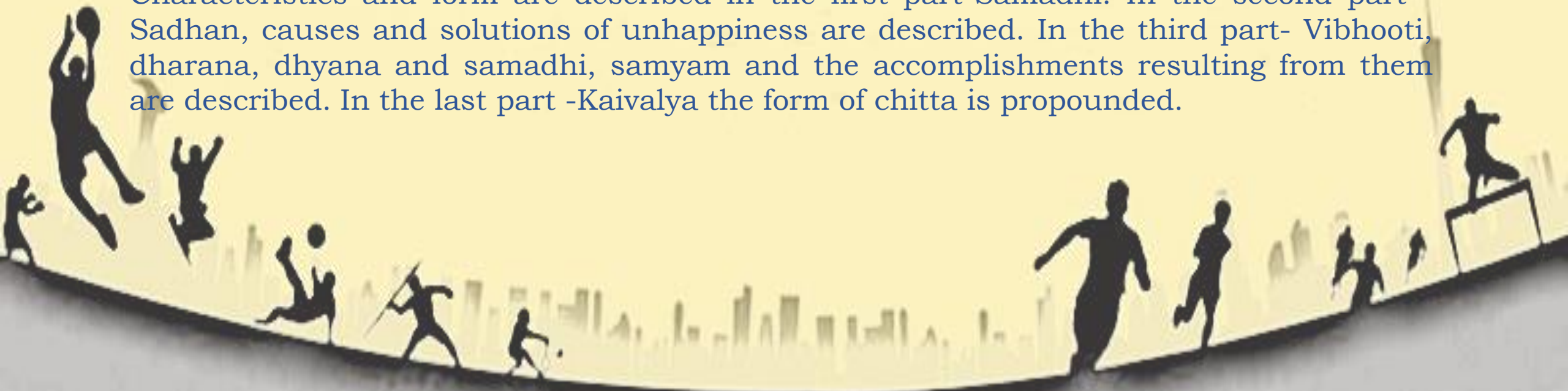
Jnana Yoga

This is a path of knowledge and wisdom. A wise man /knowledgeable man removing ignorance, wrong perceptions and illusions identifies self (sva), pure consciousness and the divine element. Accomplishment of Jnana Yoga is done by study and meditation. salvation is not possible without the knowledge of ultimate truth. The knowledge of ultimate truth can be obtained by mental and emotional growth and its purity. Listening and contemplation are its chief means. Mostly very intelligent persons take this path. Only people with inquisitive mind intent / tread on this path. In Jnana Yoga illusion and ignorance are considered as cause of all miseries and unhappiness. And to contemplate on these causes and to attain the ultimate truth is the right knowledge (jnana). Jnana Yoga is self realisation.

Jnana Yoga has also its own limitations. The person engrossed in Jnana Yoga is always lost in the knowledge and gets cutoff from the society. A common man cannot have that high level of intelligence to go for Jnana Yoga. Only intellectual study without emotional purity creates discussions, arguments and counter-arguments and insistence and quarrels. Too much of intellectual activity can effect the digestion and the body becomes weak. To keep away these limitations it is necessary to cultivate non-absolutism. Karmayoga or Hathayoga is necessary for healthy body.

Yoga sutras of Patanjali

The most popular book of Bharatiya spiritualism and yoga is Yoga-sutra of Patanjali (200 B.C.). In his Yoga-sutra he has done a beautiful collection and coordination of sadhana systems and concise, well-organised, logical and philosophical deliberation of intellectual techniques of past. Patanjali by means of only a few words reveals the growth/development of complete yoga path. Yogasutra of Maharshi Patanjali presents practical and experimental side of Sankhya darshan. How to attain reasoning intelligence? This is learnt from Yogasutra. This Yoga-sutra is divided into four parts. These are Samadhi, sadhan, Vibhooti and Kaivalya. There are total 185 sutra (verses). Characteristics and form are described in the first part-Samadhi. In the second part - Sadhan, causes and solutions of unhappiness are described. In the third part- Vibhooti, dharana, dhyana and samadhi, samyam and the accomplishments resulting from them are described. In the last part -Kaivalya the form of chitta is propounded.



Ashtang Yoga

There are eight parts of yoga; Yama, Niyama, Aasan, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana, and samadhi. The primary moral study is integral part of yama and niyama. They control the agitation / restlessness generated because of ragadvesh.

1. Yama: They are five.

1. Ahinsha
2. Satya
3. Asteya
4. Brahmcharya
5. Aparigraha

2. Niyama: The meaning of the word niyama is regular practice and maintaining vrata. They are also five.

1. Shauch
2. Samtosh
3. Tapa
4. Swadhyaya
5. Ishvarpranidhan

3. Aasan: It is that position in which the body stays comfortable. The body becomes very strong. Affection towards body reduces gradually. Capacity to bear happiness and unhappiness increases. The purpose of aasan is to prepare the body suitable for spiritual development.

4. Pranayam: In pranayam one separates inhaling and exhaling, sitting very steady.

5. Pratyahar: In pratyahar the senseorgans are removed from their respective subjects and concentrated internally. Practitioner of these two can control his mind.

6. Dharana: Steadying of chitta in one place is dharana. This dharana, dhyan and samadhi can take practitioner up to the depths of the soul.

7. Dhyan: In dhyan chitta remains only on one subject. In the condition of dhyan there are distinct separate concepts of dhyan (the action), dhyata (the doer) and dhyeya (the goal is condition where there is cognition of one object only).

8. Samadhi: This-samadhi-is the aim and the highest step of Yoga. Patanjali has defined it: When doing meditation only the support remains, only the goal remains. Here the seer, the scene and seeing, the doer, the goal and the action become one. The difference between them vanishes There are two kinds of samadhi Samprajnat and Asamprajnat.

Physiological Effects of Yoga

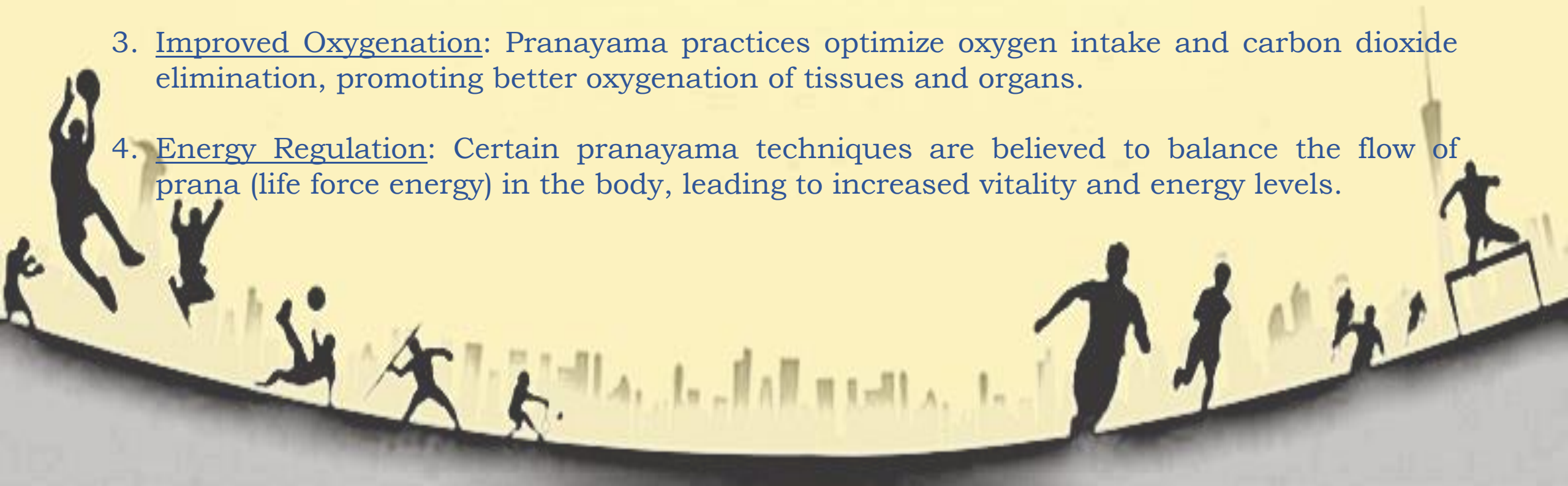
Yoga practices, including asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breathing exercises), and meditation, have profound physiological effects on the human body. Here's an analysis of how each contributes to physical health and vitality.

Asanas (Physical Postures):

1. Muscle Strength and Flexibility: Asanas involve stretching, bending, and holding various postures, which helps in increasing muscle strength and flexibility. Regular practice can improve joint health and range of motion.
2. Improved Circulation: Certain asanas promote blood circulation throughout the body, which can enhance oxygenation of tissues and removal of metabolic waste products.
3. Posture Correction: Asanas encourage proper alignment and posture, which can alleviate musculoskeletal issues and prevent injuries.
4. Balance and Coordination: Many yoga poses require balance and coordination, leading to improved stability and motor skills.
5. Stress Reduction: Engaging in asanas can trigger the relaxation response, reducing levels of stress hormones like cortisol and promoting a sense of calmness.

Pranayama (Breathing Exercises):

1. Enhanced Respiratory Function: Pranayama techniques focus on conscious control of breath, which can strengthen respiratory muscles, increase lung capacity, and improve overall breathing efficiency.
2. Stress Reduction: Deep breathing techniques activate the parasympathetic nervous system, inducing relaxation and reducing stress levels.
3. Improved Oxygenation: Pranayama practices optimize oxygen intake and carbon dioxide elimination, promoting better oxygenation of tissues and organs.
4. Energy Regulation: Certain pranayama techniques are believed to balance the flow of prana (life force energy) in the body, leading to increased vitality and energy levels.



Meditation:

1. Stress Reduction: Meditation induces a state of deep relaxation, reducing physiological markers of stress such as heart rate, blood pressure, and cortisol levels.
2. Enhanced Brain Function: Regular meditation is associated with structural and functional changes in the brain, including increased gray matter density in regions related to attention, memory, and emotional regulation.
3. Improved Immune Function: Meditation has been linked to enhanced immune function, possibly through its stress-reducing effects and modulation of inflammatory responses.
4. Pain Management: Meditation techniques can help alleviate chronic pain by modulating pain perception and promoting a more positive emotional state.

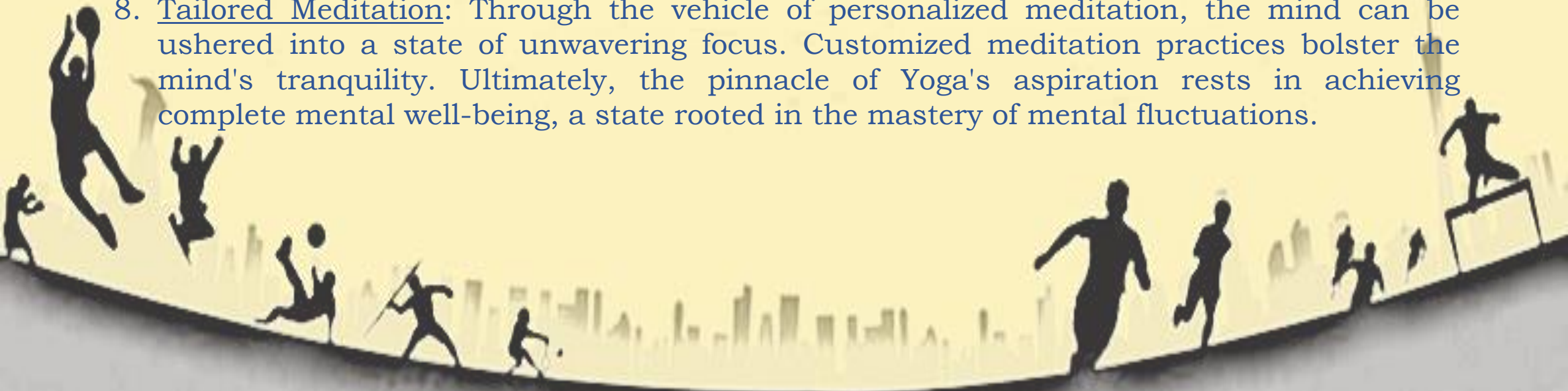
Overall, these yoga practices work synergistically to promote physical health and vitality by improving muscular strength and flexibility, enhancing respiratory function, reducing stress, and fostering overall well-being. Regular practice is key to experiencing the full range of benefits.

Stress Management through Yoga

A comprehensive blueprint for navigating stress and nurturing mental well-being emerges is embedded within the PYS 1:32- 39. Patanjali illuminates eight principles, guiding individuals toward a state of profound inner equilibrium.

1. The practice of a single principle: Addressing obstacles and their accompanying symptoms, Patanjali advocates the practice of concentrated attention on a single principle. This focused endeavor serves as a potent antidote to barriers obstructing mental well-being.
2. Cultivating Positive Attitudes: In connection with emotions of happiness, distress, virtue, and vice, Patanjali introduces the transformative qualities of friendliness, compassion, gladness, and indifference. By nurturing these attitudes, the mind undergoes purification, paving the path to serenity.
3. Breath Regulation: Mastery over the mind is attainable through the regulation of breath, involving controlled inhalation and exhalation. This practice resonates as a powerful method to govern the mind's fluctuation.
4. Engagement with Senses: Directing the mind's activity through sensory experiences stabilizes its fluctuations. By thoughtfully engaging with the senses, the mind achieves a newfound steadiness.

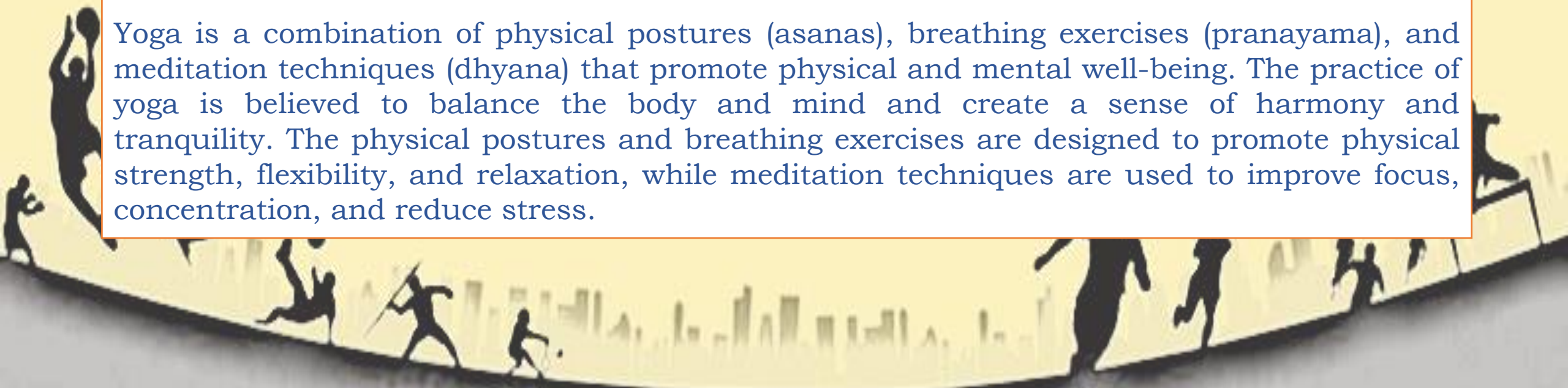
5. Transcending Sorrow: Accessing the luminous realm beyond sorrow, the mind gains mastery over its own turbulence. This transcendence serves as a beacon guiding the mind toward serenity.
6. Concentration on Dispassionate Persons: Imposing focus on individuals devoid of passion facilitates the mind's subjugation. Through this method, the mind aligns with steadiness.
7. Dream and Sleep Awareness: Providing the mind with insights into dreams and deep sleep fosters steadiness. Knowledge derived from these states nurtures the mind's equilibrium.
8. Tailored Meditation: Through the vehicle of personalized meditation, the mind can be ushered into a state of unwavering focus. Customized meditation practices bolster the mind's tranquility. Ultimately, the pinnacle of Yoga's aspiration rests in achieving complete mental well-being, a state rooted in the mastery of mental fluctuations.



Effects of Yoga on Mental Health

Mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being. Mental health disorders such as depression, anxiety, and stress affect millions of people worldwide, leading to a significant burden on individuals and society as a whole. The conventional treatment for mental health disorders usually involves medications and psychotherapy. Therefore, alternative therapies such as yoga have gained popularity as a complementary treatment for mental health conditions. Yoga is an ancient practice that has been used for centuries to promote physical and mental well-being.

Yoga is a combination of physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), and meditation techniques (dhyana) that promote physical and mental well-being. The practice of yoga is believed to balance the body and mind and create a sense of harmony and tranquility. The physical postures and breathing exercises are designed to promote physical strength, flexibility, and relaxation, while meditation techniques are used to improve focus, concentration, and reduce stress.



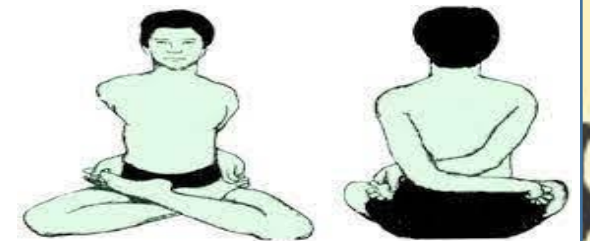
ASANAS

There are innumerable asanas. Some of the asanas useful for curing ailments and maintain good health are as follows:-

Padmasana: Padmasana or Lotus position is a cross-legged yoga posture which helps deepen meditation by calming the mind and Alleviating various physical ailments. A regular practice of this posture aids in overall blossoming of the practitioner, just like a lotus; and hence the name Padmasana.



Baddha Padmasana: The word “Baddha” denotes the idea of locked or bound in Sanskrit. The name indicates that while performing this asana, the practitioner is going to find that certain parts of his or her body is going to get locked up firmly. This can solidify the posture and lead to steadiness of the physical body.



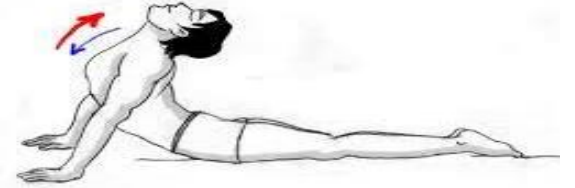
Trikonasana: Trikonasana, also called triangle pose, is a foundational standing pose in yoga that strengthens and lengthens the hamstrings and groin while also opening the shoulders and stretching the hips. The foundational posture is named for the triangle shape your body makes as you bring your bottom hand to the floor and keep your feet grounded during the move.



Gomukhasana: Gomukhasana stretches your entire body, your shoulders and arms, your ankles, hips, thighs and back. In the pose, the folded legs are said to resemble a cow's mouth; the elbows form the shape of a cow's ears. It's a pose that allows you many opportunities to explore the symmetry of the body.



Bhujangasana: Bhujangasana is the Sanskrit name for a popular yoga asana, otherwise known as Cobra Pose. It is a gentle backbend, most commonly performed as part of a Sun Salutation, in which it can be used as a less strenuous alternative to Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward Facing Dog). The term is derived from two Sanskrit roots; bhujanga, meaning "serpent" or "snake" and asana meaning "seat" or "posture".



Halasana: Halasana, also known as plough/plow pose yoga, is an inverted pose of the body that is usually performed at the end of a yoga session. The word "hala" means "plough" in Sanskrit, and "asana" means "yoga pose". Halasana is known as the plough pose because the final position of your body resembles the shape of the plough/plow (a farming tool).



Shavasana: Shavasana is the pronunciation of the Sanskrit word “savasana.” It’s a resting and restorative pose, or asana, typically used at the end of a yoga session. The Sanskrit word actually means “corpse pose,” because students practicing this pose lie face-up on the ground, arms and legs comfortably spread, eyes closed. The purpose of the pose is to calm the mind and body, releasing stress and grounding the body.



Sarvangasana: Sarvangasana or shoulder stand is a yoga pose wherein the whole body is balanced on the shoulders. ‘Sarv’ means all, ‘anga’ means part of a body, and ‘asana’ is posture. As the name indicates, Sarvangasana influences the functioning of all parts of your body. This asana is highly beneficial in maintaining the mental and physical health and is also referred as ‘Queen of asanas’.



Surya Namaskara

1. Stand straight, with spine erect and shoulders relaxed. Your feet are hip-width apart. Your knees are straight but not hyper-extended and your arms are relaxed next to your body.
2. Breathe in and reach with your arms up and backward.
3. Breathe out and bend forward, placing your palms on the floor, outside of your feet.
4. Keeping your hands there, inhale, and bring your right leg back as far as possible.
5. Hold the breath and bring your left leg back .
6. Breathe out and drop your knees, chest, and forehead to the floor.
7. Breathe in and scoop up.
8. Breathe out, curl your toes and push the hips up.
9. Breathe in and bring the right foot forward in between your hands.
10. Breathe out, and keeping your hands where they are, curl the toes of your left foot and step your left foot forward, next to your right foot.
11. Breathe in and reach with your hands out and upward.
12. Bring your palms down in front of your chest, then return to the beginning position.

