

Part I: Concept of Ahimsa according to Yoga and Spiritual Lore

Part II: Effects of Yoga on some aspects of Human Personality

By

Naveen Meghwal

ABSTRACT

Part I: Concept of Ahimsa according to Yoga and Spiritual Lore

Since time immemorial mankind has been in search of happiness and peace. As it has been seen through ages that however, man kind wanted peace and happiness; there are phases when the world has seen worst of times. The largest destruction happened in recent times was when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were hit by atom bombs in which thousands of lives were lost. This was the biggest ever loss for the humanity. This tragedy diverted world's attention towards world peace and non- violence.

This concept of non-violence and peace has been there for ages in Indian culture. In recent times it was practised by Mahatma Gandhi. He was one of the greatest leaders of his times he practised non-violence throughout his life. Many great seers throughout ages have brought this concept. Ancient Indian philosophies have made exclusive attempts and brought out exhaustive treatise on non-violence. For Jainism it has been the central core of their philosophy.

Non-violence is considered to be one of the basic moral values in Indian culture. Hence this dissertation has attempted to compile all the relevant literature from ancient texts on the "concept of *ahimsā*"

Conclusion

In this study the author tried to show *ahimsā* the path of non-violence in various great scriptures such as *Smṛiti*, *Veda*, *Mahābhārata*, *Bhagavad Gētā*, *Pātañjala yoga sūtras* and other yogic texts. And the author tried to keep the real picture of *ahimsā* in front of the people. In conclusion one can say that it is proved that all scriptures say that it is acceptable whether it is Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism

or other religions. It is firmly believed that if a large number of human beings around the world adopted *ahiàsä*, which includes both non-harm and compassion, as a virtue needed to form character that is reflected in attitude, we could curb conflict and violence and, perhaps, end war and terrorism. For it is attitude, i.e., one's state of mind, disposition, or habitual mode regarding life, that can either give rise to conflict and violence or not. It is the case that *ahiàsä*, as any virtue, must be developed and taught to the youth. The problem is, however, that the religious/philosophical traditions in the world are so varied. Thus, it is my belief that we must loosen *ahiàsä* from its "moorings," so that it will be compatible with other traditions. This is important, for as practising *ahiàsä* softens the "boundaries of the self," freeing it of any particular religious or philosophical tradition will soften cultural or national boundaries as well. So it is great virtue of human beings each and every human being should follow it.

Part II: Effects of Yoga on some aspects of Human Personality

The present study was conducted to find out the effect of yoga on some aspects of human personality. Total no of subjects were 80 who were assessed on personality inventory questionnaire (PIQ), Tridosas and General health questionnaires (GHQ), at the beginning and at the end of 30 days period during which all the subjects received training in yoga. The source of the subjects was a yoga residential camp. The PIQ is a measure of personality measuring the satvik, rajasic dimensions of personality. Each question has five choices such as 'very much', 'much', 'moderate', 'little' or 'not at all' the numerical score for these options are 4,3,2,1 and 0 respectively. The subject was asked to choose any of the option and to give response in a separate answer sheet. Tridosas questionnaire contains three parts of vata, pitta and kapha. Each part contains 20 questions and each question has 3 choices marked as 0, 3 and 6. GHQ has four sections i.e. somatic symptoms, anxiety/insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression; in each section there are 7 questions. Entire group showed a significant change ($p < 0.001$) in all the measures of GHQ. In Tridosas, the whole group showed a significant change ($p < 0.001$). In PIQ, satva is significantly changed ($p < 0.001$), whereas rajas and tamas showed not significant change ($p > 0.005$). Therefore this is a positive change on some aspects of human personality (Triguna, Tridosas and general health) after one month yoga training.

Summary and Conclusions

Yoga is a commonly practiced, mind-body approach that has components centering on '*Prāëäyāma*' (controlled deep breathing), '*Āsanas*' (physical postures) and '*Dhyānä*' (meditation) admixed in varying proportions with differing philosophic ideas. It is an age-old traditional Indian psycho-philosophical-cultural method of leading one's life that alleviates stress, induces relaxation and provides multiple health benefits to the person following its system. It is a method of controlling the mind through the union of an individual's dormant energy with the universal energy. It is well known that *yoga* is good for everyone hence this study aimed to see the efficacy of *yoga* for positive health in normal healthy volunteers.

The one arm study was aimed to determine the effect of *yoga* on some aspect of human personality by assessing *triguëa*, general health and *tridoña*, i.e. personality inventory questionnaire, general health questionnaire and triosha questionnaire. Out of 105 normal healthy volunteers 80 were selected for the study, age ranged 15-58 years, the mean age was 29.41(SD±10.04) All the subjects went through the same daily routine of *yoga* life style of the ashram. They were taught an integrated set of *yoga* practices including *Āsanas*, *Prāëäyāma*, Mediation and lectures on the concepts of *yoga* and its lifestyle.

They all had the same simple *sätvik* vegetarian diet. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were served in a group after a divine chanting of *mantra*. They learnt all the techniques of *yoga* practices included in the integrated *yoga* practices and practiced them regularly. The initial data was taken on the starting of the programme and the final data was taken on the 30th day of the programme i.e. at the end of the course.

The baseline data on all the variables were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$ Kolmogorov-smirnov test). After the data collection, the data analysis was done by SPSS 10.0 version. Comparison was done on pre and post values for all the variables by using wilcoxon paired signed rank test.

The results showed that somatic symptoms, anxiety/insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression, *vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha* and *satva* were found to be significantly different. Thus, the study has demonstrated that entire Group

had greater changes in general health, personality and *tridoña*, indicating that *Yoga* is a very good technique to attain positive change in some aspect of human personality.

Keywords: Yoga personality inventory questionnaire general health questionnaire