

Transforming Lives: The Vital Role of Mindfulness in Yoga Philosophy for Human Well-Being

Mrs Anu Kandhari

Head, Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Hindu College, Amritsar

Abstract

Indian Philosophy is to find the means to achieve the ultimate aim of human life. It gives theoretical knowledge and a belief that can be practised in life. It is, therefore, searching for truth and preferring a rational explanation of the essence of life. It also talks about the mind and its functioning. Some philosophers focus on the present moment to achieve self-realisation in life. In psychology, Mindfulness is a mental technique that man can use to focus on the present moment; it also has a vital role in the field of psychology and philosophy. It has also been practised in India since the Vedic period. The hymn of the Rigveda 10.58 talks of the need to focus on the present and not to wander the mind. Mindfulness meditation is also one of the most important parts of the Buddha's philosophy. It gives four noble truths and the eight-fold path to end sufferings and attain enlightenment in the phenomenal world. In Yoga philosophy, the mind is called *chit*, which means to know, and it emphasises *chit vritti nirodha* with practical implementation of yoga postures to attain *samadhi* by which man can achieve the state of mindfulness. Today, in modern times, man is facing a lot of problems in life. He always thinks about past memories and future plans of life. So, there is a need to focus on the present moment, and it can reduce stress and concentration and strengthen relationships in life. It is the method by which man can manage the stresses of different situations of life. This research paper will focus on Transforming Lives: The Vital Role of Mindfulness in Yoga Philosophy for Human Well-Being, which will give a solution to focus on the present moment by changing our thinking process of life.

Keywords: *Yoga philosophy, mindfulness, meditation, self-realisation and samadhi*

Indian Philosophy is to find the means to achieve the ultimate aim of human life. It gives theoretical knowledge and a belief that can be practised in life. It is, therefore, searching for truth and preferring a rational explanation of the essence of life. It also discusses the mind and focuses on the karma theory for self-realisation. To focus on karmas, man has to live in the present moment, which is called mindfulness in psychology, and it is a mental technique that man can use to focus on the present moment; it plays not only in the field of psychology but also in philosophy and it has been practised in India since Vedic period. The hymn of the Rigveda 10.58 talks of the need to focus on the present and not to wander the mind. Mindfulness meditation is also one of the most important parts of the Buddha's philosophy and gives four noble truths and the eight-fold path to end sufferings and attain enlightenment in the phenomenal world. Yoga is a spiritual school of Indian Philosophy which emphasises in bringing

harmony between mind and body. It is the also the school of mental discipline for attaining beatitude in human life.

The word 'Yoga' originated from the Sanskrit word *yuj*, which means to unite with the Supreme Being. This also implies body, mind, and soul—to achieve a balanced life. It means modifications of mental functions (*chittavrittinirodha*). The aim of yoga is to help the individual realize the self and attain enlightenment, complete freedom from the mind and its modifications. It is the union of one's soul with the Supreme soul.

In yoga philosophy, the vrittis of the mind can be controlled by the practical implementation of two means: constant practice and detachment. There are many impediments in the way to control the mind, and it can be achieved by following the eight-fold path of yoga. The eight-fold path of yoga are as follows: *yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana,*

dhyana and samadhi. *Yama* consists of five principles; *ahimsa* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacharya* (celibacy) and (*aprigrah*) non- hoarding. *Niyam* consists of five principles; *sauca* (cleanliness), *santosa* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity), *svadhaya* (self-study), *isvara-pranidhana* (devotion to God). The third is *asana* (posture), and there are different types of *asanas* in yoga philosophy and give the man to way for living a good life and These asanas refresh the body and unite with cosmic energy and encourage self-healing. Physical postures have a deep impact on reconstructing physical health and a direct impact on enhancing a calm mind. The fourth step is *pranayama*, which means the expansion of the life force and helps individuals infuse their bodies and minds with vital energy. *Pratyahara* means withdrawal of the senses and diversion of the sense organs from their natural sensuality. The sixth step is *Dharana* (concentration), and the state of *Dhyana*, the act of thought, remains a distinct and separate state of consciousness. The seventh step is *dhyana* (meditation), and in this stage, the mind begins to expand and touch the dimension of reality known as intuition. The eighth step is *Samadhi*, in which man has to transcend his mind and the realm of consciousness and it is the highest state of meditation in which man lives in the present moment and concentrates of mind for achieving the ultimate goal of life. Through meditation, man can free his mind of life's anxieties and stresses and realise spiritual consciousness.

In this challenging world, man is facing many problems at the individual and social level, and it is only through the eightfold path of yoga to reach the state of mindfulness because it is the journey from the lower self to attaining the highest state of life. It inculcates the values of non-violence, patience and truthfulness among individuals and is a pathway to a positive attitude and overall transformation in life. To create peace and harmony in the world, man must first discover peace and harmony from within himself, leading to a blissful state of life. The practice of a state of mindfulness helps to develop qualities like positive thinking, peace,

compassion, and the skills to face the challenges of life.



Fig 1.1

Yoga school focused on mindfulness, which is expanded by mindfulness meditation in the state of samadhi. These yoga practices emphasise attention to bring mental health and foster human well-being, such as calmness and concentration. Yoga school emphasises on samadhi state, which helps to develop the state of mindfulness in the life of individuals and the benefits are as follows:

Stress reduction: Practising mindfulness reduces stress and also helps individuals to achieve their goals and helps to manage the stress of life.

Improvement in working memory: Improvements in working memory appear to be an advantage of mindfulness.

Focus on goals: Mindfulness meditation affects an individual's ability to focus attention and achieve goals.

Cognitive and affective domain: Mindfulness meditation helps to develop individuals' cognitive and affective domains, which in turn helps them find solutions to life problems.

Improvement in life relationships: Mindfulness meditation can help improve relationships and the skill of communicating one's emotions to others. It also improves concentration, emotional intelligence and the ability to accept individual differences in opinions.

Other benefits: Mindfulness has been shown to enhance self-insight and in-depth thinking processes. It has many health benefits, including relaxation for the body and increased immune system.

The main emphasis in Yoga philosophy is on the all-around fitness of the body, including mental, social, emotional and spiritual fitness, which plays an important role in developing human personality. It helps man to focus on the present moment, keep his body fit and strengthen his mind, and gives him the power to face different situations in life. It leads to mental strength and calmness and helps release tension and relax the mind. It enhances personal power, boosts the immune system, increases the blood flow and helps in attention power, focus on goals and concentration on work. It eliminates stress in the physical body by activating the nervous system, balances blood pressure and improves the blood

circulation of the human body. It also helps to clear the thoughts of the mind, which increases the inner strength and promotes restful sleep of the individuals.

In this way, the eightfold path of yoga with a message to unite with the Supreme Being plays an important role in achieving a state of mindfulness in this challenging world. So, it is the best technique for releasing our frustration, stress and anxiety in modern life. It is the path of self-knowledge and self-realization and can be attained through positive thinking with the help of the eighth path of the samadhi state. This research paper has focused on Transforming Lives: The Vital Role of Mindfulness in Yoga Philosophy for Human Well-Being, which has given a solution to focus on the present moment by changing our thinking process of life.

References

- Atreya, J. P. (1985). *Mind and its Function in Indian Thought*. New Delhi: Classical Publishing Co.
- Dasgupta, S. N. (1978). *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*. New Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
- Raghunath, S. (1976). *The Indian Psychology*. Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.
- Sachdeva, I. P. (1978). *Yoga and Depth Psychology*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.
- Shukla, L. (2013). *Indian Psychology*. Agra: H. P. Bhargava Book House.
- Swami Abhedananda. (1983). *The Yoga Psychology*. Calcutta: Ramakrishna Vedanta Math.
- Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (2002). *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*. Munger, Bihar, India: Yoga Publication Trust.
- Swami Satyananda Saraswati. (2002). *Four Chapters on Freedom*. Munger, Bihar, India: Yoga Publication Trust.