

YOGA (Union with Divinity) & AYURVEDA (Science of Life)

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Introduction

The ancient Indian scripture of the Bhagavad Gita, states that our body is the temple or field ('kshetra') of consciousness, while the faculty of knowledge within it ('kshetraajna') from the sixth chakra brings awareness or realization of our place within the creation.

Yoga and Ayurveda are founded in Sankhya philosophy as expressed by Kapila, Patanjali and Charaka, to describe the ultimate reality of existence and support the fulfillment of life's universal purpose: Self-realization. Together Yoga and Ayurveda aim to maintain a balanced state of healthy body, mind and consciousness, in order to fulfill this holistic life purpose of Self-realization or God-realization.

Sankhya philosophy enumerates the universal evolutionary descent from pure spirit into matter, through the law of cause and effect. The pre-existing energy, named as 'Sat Purusha', is sometimes translated as ultimate truth or pure awareness or God. Purusha is said to have willed itself into multiplicity, as expressed by nature, or 'Prakruti', also understood as the means of describing one's natural constitutional nature. Ayurveda and Yoga both rely absolutely on this Prakruti paradigm, along with the concept of 'Vikruti', the current state of health.

Purusha is infinite and immeasurable, while the Prakruti, the creation, is finite and measurable. Purusha is undefinable, unchangeable and expanding, whereas all creation is quantifiable, qualifiable, subject to change and involuting. Together Purusha and Prakruti express the universal intelligence of Mahat, whose purpose is to maintain cosmic order, thereby to identify disorder and engage the intelligence to restore order.

Commentary by the fifteenth century saint, Kabir, well-known to Indians of every religion, in his treatise on creation, the Anurag Sagar, described the first being as 'Adi', the mother, whose first offspring was also female, born of her womb. Therefore, mother nature is known as the primordial vibration, the first expression of divinity, the sound or 'Word' from which all matter precipitated.

Mahat as often described or translated as the universal or cosmic intelligence of order, which is said to have dispersed itself into an individualized expression of self-identity called 'Ahankar', or self-awareness of the three modes of expression: Satva (clarity, truth, light), Rajas (movement, relationship, communication) and Tamas (involution, dullness, darkness), well-understood in both sciences of Ayurveda and Yoga.

From Tamas guna, precipitated the five great constructing elements or 'panchamahabhutas' of creation, expressed as Akasha (space, ether), Vayu (air, sky), Tejas (fire, transformation), Apa (water, liquidity) and Prtvi (earth, solidity). These constituent elements express through their qualifiable dominance as the tri-dosha: Vata (dry, light, dispersing, subtle, cold, mobile), Pitta (hot, sharp, penetrating, liquid, oily, soft) and Kapha (heavy, cool, sticky, dense, spreading, thick). The tri-dosha are the mechanisms of homeostasis or balance in nature. They are interactive agents for absorbing change and preserving equilibrium. All Ayurveda therapies and Yoga therapies are based in this concept of the Tri-Dosha.

Vata dosha governs movements, joints, spaces such as ear canals, stereo gnosis of the skin and sensory structures/functions. Its principle site is the colon, but also governs the bones, nervous systems and respiration. Pitta dosha governs transformations such as digestion, assimilation, vision, hormonal processes and comprehension. Its principle site is the small intestine, but also governs the liver, grey matter and colour, etc. Kapha dosha governs lubrications such as joint secretions, gastric mucosal secretion and white matter. Its principle sites are the lungs and upper stomach, but also governs memory, sinuses and groundedness, etc.

All matter expresses through karma (action, behaviour) and guna (characteristic, quality), according to Sankhya. Please consider the following table of the 12 pairs of opposite qualities in the microcosm of each individual and the macrocosm or creation as a whole. These principles are also identified in each cell in various ratios, combinations and permutations, and are analogous to the 24 proteins of the DNA chain of modern genetics:

Hot	Cold
Light	Heavy, dense
Consolidating	Dispersing
Static	Mobile
Dry	Liquid, oily
Rough	Slimy
Hard	Soft
Subtle	Gross
Slow	Quick
Smooth	Dry
Sharp	Dull
Cloudy	Clear

From today, please take as your homework to identify these qualities in your everyday experience of life, both internal and external.

Sapta-Dhatu (7 tissues) Theory

Yoga and Ayurveda share the same understanding of the human body's design and function through the seven-tissue theory. The food we eat and thoughts we think circulate through the plasma ('rasa'), or lighter portion of the blood. Then after about 5 days of digestion and assimilation, the foods (20% influence) and thoughts (80% influence) precipitate into the subsequent tissue of the blood ('rakta'), which circulates the soul ('atman') and heavier blood particles such as fibrin, immune cells, red blood cells, etc.

After about another 5 days, the digestion or metabolism transforms these cells into the expression of 'mamsa' or muscle, which is inclusive of all muscles and viscerae. After a further 5 days of metabolic influence, these cells mature from muscle into adipose or 'meda', which is inclusive of white, brown and yellow types of fat. The next 5 days of assimilation of nutritive qualities renders bone tissue or 'asthi', which includes cartilage, large and small bones.

The sixth important tissue level deserves its own paragraph and is termed 'majja' in Sanskrit, the language of Yoga and Ayurveda, and provides great insight into cell physiology, nutrition and healing, much beyond 'modern' medicine. Majja dhatu is inclusive of all nervous systems, eyeballs which are considered to be a specialized nerve to function as the mechanism of our main sense of sight, bone marrow, connective tissue or fascia, which records all experience of 'chitta' or mental oscillation, 'smrti' or memory and genetics, and the endocrine system. Majja

dhatu is responsible for intelligent cellular function of immunity, hormonal balance, reasoning, psychological health and choice-fullness.

The seventh and deepest, most protected tissue of the body is the reproductive system called 'artava' for the female system and 'shukra' for the male system. The combined metabolic function of all seven produces health of the body and its aura or electro-magnetic field, mind and soul in Yoga and Ayurveda.

'Prana' or life-force bridges these levels of being. Therefore 'pranayama' or yogic breathing exercises are an important means of maintaining the balance of life from birth to death. 'Prana Spandana' or cosmic vibration is the vehicle for alignment of the individual human with the whole of creation, and is experienced through the eight stages of apprenticeship to enlightenment. The concept of prana is well known to both sister sciences of balanced living.

All yoginis, yogis and Ayurvedists undergo a deep, detailed and lengthy study of the saptadhatu model of anatomy and physiology, to learn alignment with themselves and Sankhya philosophy. The yoga sutras (verses) of Patanjali are specialized scriptures on the nature and function of understanding, awareness, behaviour and choice, within the context of the law of cause and effect, and the Charaka Samhita (and other writings) bring the understanding of disease and wellness.

The Eight Limbs of Patanjali

The 'sutras' or verses of Patanjali present a detailed, specialized analysis of how to attain union with divinity and liberation from all suffering and delusion:

Yamas and Niyamas	Pro-Active Choices and Avoidances
Asana	Stretching Postures, Attunement with Nature
Pranayama	Breathing Practices to Bridge Body & Consciousness
Dharana	Focus of Attention
Pratyahara	Sensory Mastery
Dhyana	Sustained Absorption
Samadhi	Balanced/Transcended Mind
Moksha	Liberation from Delusion and Suffering

These eight steps of Yoga study are best accomplished under the guidance of a competent, living master teacher.

The Dina Charya of Ayurveda

Along with integrating these universal eight limbs comes the Ayurvedic guidance of how to use each moment of each day for accomplishing individual alignment with one's personal daily life. Sunrise and sunlight delineate active and passive cycles. Early morning between 3-6am is 'amrit vela' or the time of sweet nectar, when the seeker of truth is enjoined to perform meditation and its preparatory karmas (actions) of washing, stretching, breathing practices and meditation. This routine establishes satva guna as the dominant influence on the daily activities. Any householder can attain good health through the suggestions of the daily practices as taught in Ayurveda.

After completing one's morning spiritual exercises, oil can be applied to the body for about 30 minutes to help strengthen the seven tissues, emotional stability and immunity. Bathing with no soap, perhaps just shampoo, and preparation to don fresh clothing comes next. Food is prepared and eaten in moderation at the time of hunger. Beverages are suggested to be warm or hot, rather than below body temperature.

Next is going to the job, which is informed by one's God-given talents, abilities, preferences and pre-existing obligations. The job is to be performed lovingly and ethically to result in peacefulness and satisfaction.

One's main meal of six tastes is to be taken at the time of greatest hunger, about noon or so. Vata individuals may need to eat about 4 times daily, Pitta individuals about 3 times daily and Kapha people about twice daily. A yogi can eat once daily or perform fasting, but others are to follow these mealtime suggestions from Ayurveda to protect their most important metabolic function, their 'agni' or gastric fire.

Fruits are best taken as an afternoon or evening snack, depending on personal circumstances. Evening meditation has the purpose of sedation, to prepare the mind to empty for sound sleep.

Conclusion

Yoga and Ayurveda come from the same philosophical root; they are integrated and interrelated. Both touch all aspects of human life and share the same goal of liberation (moksha) from all suffering and delusion, in fulfillment of life's universal purpose of Self-realization and God-realization.

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Suggested Reading

Dina Charya and Rutu Charya, by Jaisri M. Lambert
Ayurveda, the Science of Self-Healing, by Vaidya Vasant D. Lad
Commentaries on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, by G. Fuernstein

This introduction to the vast sciences of Yoga & Ayurveda is to inspire seekers to devote their lives to inner study.