

Benefits of Yoga practice and Study of Sanskrit – Two testimonials

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Customized correct yoga learnt from a tradition is Vital. Little yoga is futile and excess yoga is bad. It has been observed that Yogābhyāsa has the following benefits-

The practitioner's immunity will gradually improve and their energy level increases. Mind becomes calm and gives a sense of good feeling. Not only that, flexibility of the body improves and clarity also gets enhanced. Hence it is important for everybody to practice yoga. Chanting (and listening to the chants) is an important tool in yoga therapy (at KYM) and this is essential. It is essential as the benefits of chanting are innumerable. In order to chant, one should sit in a place and this inculcates discipline. Memory gets sharpened and one's capacity to breath is enhanced. It is known through the scriptures that the Vedas are the breath of the God – Apauruṣeya, loaded with a lot of healing properties. Just listening to the śabda gives a good feeling and establishes a link/connection with the entire lineage of teachers – the guru paramparā leading to ādiguru. Chanting or listening to chants relaxes and calms the mind. It releases the mind from the clutches of pain and establishes a hold with the akṣaras (letters) and svaras (intonation) thereby giving relief to the mind.

Reflecting the meaning of the mantras is considered to reduce the agitation of the mind as quoted in the 1st chapter 108th verse of Yogarahasya (a text on yoga by Nāthamuni.) *Understanding and knowing the meaning of the chants are desirable.*

Testimonies of 2 students of Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, given below, demonstrate how they have evolved by the sincere

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practice of Yoga and associated yogic practices like chanting that has a direct link with Sanskrit, how their faith in yoga helped them to solve their problems.

Testimony 1

A 35 year old pregnant woman, who had no flavor of yoga came to KYM to learn yoga to have a safe delivery. She states - "I realize that benefits of yoga are seen only with constant practice. Chanting helped me to focus and calm my mind. I also noticed a sense of well being for myself and those around. Breathing helped me connect with the life I was carrying within. I feel it also helped me to be calm and pay no heed to earlier irritants of my life. They no longer annoy me. On D-Day I woke up around 11.30pm with stomach upset. I woke up my husband and we waited for half hour convincing ourselves that it is a false alarm. It was not that. Quickly my husband woke up my parents and all of us felt extremely disoriented as there was still two weeks for my due date. Even at that time, I was actually able take charge of the situation and delivered my angel 20mins after reaching the hospital. Somewhere, the ability to focus helped me during this hour and everyone around me was amazed at my easy delivery. Few people who know me started mentioning "IT MUST HAVE BEEN YOGA" and promised that they would recommend yoga to all the mothers-to-be. I certainly would recommend it to anyone open minded enough and committed enough to stick to it".

Postpartum

"I miss my regular routine of Yoga which was my time with myself. I can feel the stress of daily life creeping back to my life."

Testimony 2 (of a yoga practitioner over 10 years at KYM)

"I was working in an IT company experiencing a lot of stress which showed in my body as ailments. Splitting headache,

glaucoma and a very restless mind (Vikṣipta state of mind) were the problems that I was facing.

My classes at the KYM were periodical and well structured. Because of my regular practice of Yoga after 3 months, I could see the positive effect at the physical level. Especially the eye pressure had significant improvement. After a long period of time, when I went for check up, the ophthalmologist was very happy to see my normal eyes and no signs of glaucoma. Yoga has become a part of my life!

While waiting for yoga classes at the KYM and on hearing the sounds of the chants, I started thinking, why not give a try at chanting? I joined chanting classes with the same teacher. The effects of sound helped me become alert and also correct my errors.

The continued education/class made me think why not I understand the meaning of the mantras/chants. So I just started learning Sanskrit. I have now moved to the second level in Sanskrit exams. As I progress in Sanskrit classes, by Gods grace, I can get connected to the superior self through the meaningful words and the beautiful structured language of Sanskrit language while chanting".

Conclusion

As evident from above two testimonies it can be understood that practice of yoga and Knowledge of Sanskrit has a positive influences in one's life. Sanskrit is important for those who desire to teach and study yoga. Further, most ancient yoga texts are written in Sanskrit. In yoga courses, people study anatomy and physiology, western psychology and Ayurveda. When this is the case, it would be most beneficial to include Sanskrit in Yoga courses.