

**THE SECRET OF HAPPINESS
or
YOGIC PHYSICAL CULTURE**

By yogacharya SUNDARAM

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Diet & Digestion, Raja Yoga , Sri Sundra Yogic Therapy or The
Marvels of Yogic Cure, & Tamil Books Ananda Rahasyam,
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Santhi Yogam, Sandhya Gayathri Japayogam,
Surya Namaskaram, Kandan Pugal,
Annayin Thiruvadi Malargal Etc.

FIRST EDITION **1928**

EIGHTH EDITION (Reveised) **2000**

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**Rs: 200/-
Postage Extra**

THE YOGA PUBLISHING HOUSE,

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

Yogacharya Sundaram of Bangalore started " SRI SUNDARA YOGASALA" , a healing center by the application of yogic methods of Indian Seers to relieve the ailments of the body and mind , during 1930. On 26th December 1994, Yogacharya attained Brahamapadam , at his 94th year. Since 1970, Ygacharya's Grand son, MrViswanathan, was helping Yogacharya to run the institution ' Sri Sundara Yogasala', Unfortunately Mr Viswanathan also passed away during 1996.

A.R. Balakrishnan, a businessman, and Managing Director of the 'GIRINATH' group of companies, Coimbatore, became desiple of Yogacharya during 1950, to get rid of his obesity, and imbalance of endocrinous system, and became normal with in a couple of years. Since then, Mr. Balakrishnan helped Yogacharya to Publish His Yogic Books in a befitting manner.

With the blessings of Yogacharya Sundram Mr Balakrishnan started GIRINATH YOGA CENTER on 25th May 1987. Since then, Sufferers take this Institution not only for authentic tution and coaching in theory and practice of Yogasanas, Pranayama, Bandhas Kriyas etc, but also look into this as a sure refuge for getting rid of chronic ailments where all other systems fail.

The Yoga publishing House Bangalore, in which, Yogacharya published his unieque Yoga Books,since 1930, was taken over by Mr. Balakrishnan, and is Publishing Yogacharya's, writtings in a befitting manner.

The publishers pray toYogacharya Sundaram,& Paramaguru, Sri Sri Paramahamsa Privrajaka Bikshu Sivaprakasa Anandagiri Swamigal to continue the Publishing of these marvelous works of Yogachary to the well being of the entire humanity.

Yours service in YOGA

The Yoga Publishing House,
" Girikripa" 462 Cross-cut Road,
Coimbatore 641012.

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The Secret of Happiness or Yogic Physical Culture

CHAPTER - I

WHAT IS IT?

VARIED are the aims of human existence. One man may live to eat. There are gourmonds who fritter their patrimony in pleasing the palate. Another strives to climb the highest rung of the political ladder. A third hunts after fame; while the fourth pursues wealth. And so on, these bubbles in Time and Space go in untiring search of the endless modifications of deceptive Maya. There is the Vedantin. His object is to realise Brahman - to achieve the hardest - Self Realisation - to complete the cycle of evolution.

Whatever the object sought after, the instrument of perception and achievement is the same. It is the God-given one, the human body. If this breaks down, the ambition, material or spiritual, is retarded. If it happens to be unfit, the pursuit is fruitless, nay, impossible. Do these seekers realise the value of this instrument, this human body? In the humdrum of life is a thought given to it? In many cases are the persons aware of the gravity of their blunder or neglect?

When wisdom dawns, when there is a set back in the smooth working of the human machine then tardy realisation cries halt to the faulty ways. One who feels his horse before the race, would win over him who sleeps. This applies equally well to the body. It should receive proper care. Knowledge of its working must guide the conduct in life. It is no sin to care for the body. The *pseudo*-Vedantin may say, 'forget the body'. This would only mean blaspheming Vedanta or be just like Satan quoting scriptures to serve his ends. There is no injunction in the Shastras to perpetuate drains and dungheaps in the

What is it ?

human system. It has to be respected and treated as a Godly gift, which it really is.

The Culture of the physique or calling it by a more appropriate name, Physical Culture is essential to every human being. The West has made it into a Science and an art. It has not lost by it. It has no false tradition to misguide it. In its ancient days, there was muscle culture. Giants of muscle and bone lived in great number. The Gladiators and the Roman Cole-seum bear witness to the fact. But they lived sacrificing intellect, ethics, morality and religion - life at which cost was not worth living. Endurance and resistance to diseases they could not boast of. In fact, until recently, Physical Culture for the West meant muscle-building, manufacturing storehouses or artistic aspect. Thanks to Mr. Bernarr Macfadden and a host of other pioneers in the field of the newly risen Physical Culture creed, it has come to mean the real thing it ought to be.

Physical Culture in America and Europe is now utilised to produce better specimens of humanity in mind morals; yet it is far behind a system perfected thousands of years ago. A few of their best exercises could but be poor imitations of those contained in the ancient one. The attainment and maintenance of Health, the indispensable ingredient without which the human body could never function, yet remains there, as ambitions beyond certain reach through the best of their methods.

Who owns this system? Is the owner reaping its full benefit? And what is it? To the first the answer is India; the second, alas No; And to the last, the reply echoes through centuries of neglect - YOGA-ASANA. If India has not reaped its full benefits and does not occupy its merited place as the foremost country in the world, it is due to the fault of its citizens. Perhaps they would have continued to sleep and-the modern world might neither have known the system nor appropriated its remarkable benefits. But savants have risen, and chief among them are the authors of the "Yoga-Mimamsa" Journal, Lonavla (Poona). They proclaim from mountain tops the existence of this lore, far richer than Solomon's mines, and convince the modern sceptics and struggling humanity of its benefits, powers and utility.

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It is a curious name, this Yoga-Asana, wonderful as its sylvan inventors, the sages of India. Yoga is derived from the sanskrit root *Yujh*, to join. To join what-hand to hand, or worse, wealth to wealth? No; it is the joining, uniting of the individual soul in the Universal One-merging of man- consciousness in God-consciousness killing duality in the perception of the Omnipresent God-head. Engaging in this union is Yoga; striving to reach this end is Yoga. Asana is seat. Construing it widely, it means, posture or pose. Yoga-Asana is that system of poses which helps the merging of the individual in God-consciousness. This has to act through the God-given instrument, the human body. It perfects the human body, purifies it of all dross, diseases and defects, and prepares it for the rousing reception of spiritual powers-the final stage in becoming the God-man, the Jivan-Muktha.

This was the purpose of the Rishis in evolving this system of Yogic poses. They had to perfect the body, remove its defects, cure its ailments, give it vibrant Health, dynamic Health-Health, the equal of which *no other system in the world has given or could give*, than use it as a battering ram to storm the ramparts of ignorance and realise the treasure of God-consciousness.

Lucky for the world, the day the system was created? whatever the object of the sages the perfection of the human body as a means to the end of God-realisation-it is not against reason to use it as almost an end in itself. For those who were not born for anything higher, limited by fate or fortune, could they not utilise it as a system of physical culture? May not the curse of drugs and diseases be removed through this? Should not the suffering humanity be made properly the Trustees of this ancient secret unventilated to the world at large through centuries of hoarding and neglect?

Health is happiness. Happiness is impossible without health. Health is the most essential ingredient in human existence. Yoga Asana is the means to that health. It is this aspect of the system which very badly needs emphasising. These pages would necessarily be confined to the discussion of the Asana as a system of Physical Culture.

These are days when nothing is taken on trust. Faith, thanks to swindlers and pseudo-religious, is at a discount. Everything said and

done must be reasoned, scientific and supported by facts and figures. Conviction should percolate through the physical senses. Spiritual results could be experienced only through the spiritual self; but fain would the modern sceptic have the one proved through the other. Illogical enough; and it is beyond the powers of these pages! Proofs there are, thanks again to the “Yoga-Mimamsa” and the large number of Yogic students-proofs substantial and scientific to convince any rational being. The physiological, pathological and therapeutic values of this system are immense and have to be experienced. Even a mere reading is sure to convince; but if at the back of the conviction there is the will to practise, Yoga-Asana would be found true to its name and its authors.

CHAPTER - II

ADVANTAGES OF YOGA-ASANAS

Any one might combine a few movements and name it ‘My system’ - When money is found to boost it up by wide advertising, some misguided enthusiasts might be tempted to purchase and then after a few days’ trial give it up in disgust. Perhaps never again to be hoaxed by the thing ‘Physical Culture, The author of the ‘System’ gathers money and makes a comfortable living. But time discovers the truth.

Experience is the best tester. The beneficial results of the system for ages, transmitted from Guru to disciple from generation to generation are the most welcome recommendation for adopting it. Is this the only test? Is one to wait a decade before he thinks of putting into practice anything new and useful? Certainly not! A knowledge of human anatomy, and the working of this most wonderful machine, and the effect of the exercises on the different muscles, glands, nerves, etc are sure to discover the best system of physical culture.

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It is no use developing only the muscles and neglecting all other important factors. Modern civilisation relentlessly applies the guillotine of the 'Survival of the Fittest.' The result is that human beings work more than they ought to. They get into pernicious habits. One day one may have to go without food, one may get a drench, work through the night or undergo the innumerable disturbing experiences which are so common in life. Their vital powers are slackened. They need very badly a recouping agency. Want of it is sure to ruin the system. This recouping effect, readjustment of the vital forces and the furnishing of a disease proof armour, in other words, Dynamic Health must necessarily result from the practice of a system of physical culture worth the name.

Many men and women are employed in sedentary occupations. In most of them the carbohydrate metabolism increases considerably. They get abnormally fat, pot-bellied. They suffer from an obese-heart. Obesity becomes their curse. In such cases, the system of physical culture must keep off superabundance of fat, reduce the carbohydrate metabolism to a reasonable level and keep the body slim and the heart active and free from fatty coverings.

The endocrine system is very important. By intemperance, debauchery, abnormal work and sufferings from any chronic disease, this system gets deranged, and one or more of its members get atrophied and cease to function. More is to come about this later. At present it is enough to know that the secretions of the endocrine glands neutralise the toxins, poisons produced in the body, keep the youth in man or woman and give health, beauty and adornment to the person. They are greatly responsible for the growth, stature and character of the individual. A system of physical culture must benefit the endocrine glands.

The nervous system plays an important part in the working of the human machine. Nerves carry impressions to the brain and convey order from there to different parts of the body. They control all movement, voluntary and involuntary. Paralysis of even a single nerve is enough to make the individual a useless member of society. When they act well and are healthy, disease can have no hold on the body. Diseases naturally destroy the nervous system. But when these

Advantages of Yoga - Asanas

nerves are well-stretched, properly toned up and bathed in necessary quantities of blood, the individual is safe from drugs and diseases. This toning and healthy condition can be had only through a properly constituted system of physical culture.

In most systems the brain is neglected. Requisite quantity of blood must flow constantly to the brain. It is the centre of human action, thought, speech, and existence. More often than not, physical development is made at the sacrifice of intellectual and the emotional. This is highly objectionable. The world needs a system which would pay attention to both and develop them side by side, the one aiding the other.

The physical exercises that are commonly to be had and are doled out in the crude *Thalims*, the old schools of Indian wrestlers and athletes, utterly neglect the importance of the circulatory system. The supply of fresh blood, the venous return, the effort of the heart to meet any demands and the mechanical advantages which could ease the heart or in case of its inability, to supply the wants, must all be facilitated through Physical Culture. If this is not done, the Physical exercises become simple movements and do not deserve the dignified appellation of 'A System of Physical Culture'.

What about the waste of energy in any particular system of exercises? Could the Individual afford it? Could these exercises be of universal application - to the weak, to the strong, to the invalid? And with conservation of energy and without undue strain on the heart can any systems boast of benefitting any desired organ? No muscular exercise has yet done it.

There are the systems of Kasaraths, bhaskis, grip-dumb-bells, light dumb-bells developers, weight-lifting, etc. Could any of these boast of showering, on its adherents necessary for a healthy and happy life? Perhaps a few of them can confer one or two of the advantages, but neither the West nor the modern East can boast of a single system of exercise which would confer all these advantages.

This unique merit is reserved to the Yoga-Asana. It possesses all the advantages detailed above and more. It tones up the muscles.

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it has stood the test of centuries. It benefits the endocrinous system most as no other exercise could do. It reduces fat, keeps the body slim. Blood circulation could be directed to any gland or organ of the body without undue strain on the heart. Yoga Asana is a system available for all-weak, strong or invalid. No physical culturist may neglect this system. The nerves are stretched and toned up. The brain cells receive copious bathing of blood. The superficial muscles of the body are stretched and well toned as the nerves. The Yoga-Asana automatically regulates breathing, steadies the breath and fixes the mind. it keeps youth in the body.

In addition, benefit of Yoga-Asana need not be restricted to the young or the old. Any one from 6 to 60 who is not decrepit, beyond redemption, may practise it. There is no limitation of sex. Girls and women would derive equal benefits as boys and men. It makes no difference whether one is a bachelor or married. But continence and avoidance of excesses are essential conditions.

India was once fabulously rich. But she is poor now. Her wealth is being drained away in millions by the day by foreigners. Naturally her children, sons and daughters of Mother India are poverty-stricken. They cannot afford the luxury or grip-dumb-bells, developers, weight-lifting apparatus and so forth. Perhaps the ancient sages had foreseen this era of distress. To learn and practice Yoga-Asanas, one need not spend much. The practice costs little. A blanket or cloth at the most and a few feet of level clean space are all the requirements.

When half-fed and non-fed people offer very easy targets for any lurking disease, and when through the curse of past foreign domination and poverty, doctors and drugs are out of reach of the many, the preventive and curative powers of the Yoga-Asana are immeasurable blessings. This would check the ravages of malnutrition and help the poor to bear their lot with minimum of sufferings.

Yoga-Asana can cure constipation, diabetes, piles, dyspepsia, idiocy, some types of sterility, seminal defects, impotency, leprosy, epilepsy, T.B., Asthma, Rheumatism, Nervous Debility, Diseases of the Stomach and intestines, obesity etc., When this system of

exercises can cure so many diseases its practice is an effective and preventive measure against these pests of humanity.

Physical Culture Religion

The ceaseless struggle of the survival of the fittest leaves little leisure for thought or care of the body. Worse still is the attention received by the science and technique of Physical Culture. The soul has no place in the strife. People relegate culture to that comfortable period of old age when the body and mind are incapable of manipulating even the worldly functions!

It is a great scramble and hurry-the life in this planet of ours. Human economy is of no value and receives little consideration. The far-off goal of human evolution is necessarily and naturally forgotten. The persistent goal is to amass and the ' how ' ' why ' and ' what for ' are immaterial.

With the less fortunate many it is a monotonous, prolonged wail from work to slumber, still worse, drink and poverty to tears! Nature, so sluggish with children to the rich, is munificent in its gifts to the poor. Where a single healthy child may relieve by its guiles the pangs of poverty, a dozen weakly shrimps, may more, come to accentuate misery. It is a life in the dingy hut or among the swarming cockroaches of a suburban flat. The day dawns and with it comes the cry for the daily bread, too hard to find! The work commences with 'the weaklings' wail and the growling gnawings of an empty stomach. The sun sets with the bickering for the hard earned bread and Nature bereaves the body of its anguish in irresistible slumber. The scarcely nourished being-can he find room for the culture of the physique and the soul amidst a life in hell on earth-God save it!

Perhaps it is phantasy; yet people nod when the poor are said to be blessed in the spirit better than the rich. It is common knowledge that the first sign of regeneration appears in the suffering and the upward lift from sordid things starts in the needy. The poor man may shrug his shoulders and smile in despair when you ask him to do this and that to maintain healthy. But tell him ' this is religion, friend-

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you must do penance in these forms, *tapas and asans*, that you might be elected to the Lotus Feet of the Omniscient One! Then perchance he lifts his head and soon follows you in the movements.

For, true religion has not lost its hold on the masses in spite of frauds in churches and temples. Man's makeshifts may mutilate 'the Purpose' but watchful. Divinity ever goes on setting it right. This is the difference-this between Yoga (Asan) and the purely physical strain advocated in so material a way by the West. The one appeals through religion for the highest perfection of body to attain the greatest realisation of Self and the other tries to penetrate through the senses and stops with examples of matter-of fact progress in the flesh and bone. Man is ancient and he knows that tremendous frames without that spark of love, clothed the tyrants through millenniums recurring.

But the waste is of vitality, whether in the rich or the poor. It is of the most essential nerve energy. The incessant ambition worry for 'the morrows'; the tireless search into secrets of Nature; except the steady contemplation of God, lead to endless waste of the precious nerve-energy, the degeneration of the nerve-aura, *tejas*, resulting in the complete break down of the whole nervous system. The endocrine glands are perhaps the foremost to react and create functional defections. This is an inevitable fruit of the present civilisation. The doctrine of the survival of the fittest leaves no room for any alternative form of progress. 'Live or let live' is quite good in theory but often in the matter-of-fact world it is shoved into a corner like a dead snake. He and She are therefore always 'on nerves'- for, it is a struggle for the powerful minority to clutch evermore and the weak majority to hold on the shreds. Both these do not find time and the latter the heart also. Both waste the same type of energy.

The remedy must therefore have a two-fold advantage. It must be one that would directly regenerate the nervous system and need a minimum expenditure of time and energy. In whom the struggle has told, the panacea in addition must straighten off benefit and stimulate the endocrine system. If the same would give calm and peace of mind also by its effect on the nerves, there would be nothing

like it. But when it possesses a tinge of religion and the pathways to meditative and realistic philosophy-it would be the very thing necessary for the suffering humanity-for, both the rich and poor alike suffer, though in different ways.

CHAPTER - III

A FEW SUGGESTIONS TO THE BEGINNERS

The best frame of mind calculated to give beneficent results is to approach the Asanas with reverential faith in their potentialities for good. Even when only physical results are desired, it would be much soothing to the mind to treat this practice as a preliminary stage for spiritual realisation. Before commencing, a calm meditation of the lotus feet of the Guru (preceptor) for a minute would bring progress and confidence. When there is no preceptor in person, the Eternal Guru, Guru Brahma, must be visualised as a shining light, in the space midway between the eye-brows, in a two-petalled white lotus, where the Tantrics would have the Ajna Chakra. Then commence the practice in the order given below;

1. Bhujangasana: The Cobra pose
2. Salabasana: The locust pose
3. Dhanurasana: The bow pose
4. Paschimothanasana: The posterior stretching pose
5. Halasana: The plough pose
6. Mayurasana: The peacock pose
7. Sarvangasana: The pan-physical pose
8. Matsyasana: The fish pose
9. Sirshasana : The Topsy-turvy pose
10. Viparitha Karani : The Inverted action
11. Ardha Matsyendrasana : The Spine Twist
12. Yoga Mudra : The Replacing exercise
13. Padahasthasana : The feet and hand pose
14. Thrikonasana : The Triangular pose
15. Uddiyana : Abdominal Suction
16. Nauli : Rectus Isolation
17. Savasan : The still pose

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There is a difference of opinion as to the best time for doing the Yoga-Asanas, The Editor of the Yoga-Mimamsa Journal advises the evenings. These Asanas require much stretching and bending. In the mornings the body may not be very responsive, fresh from bed. It may be stiff and a beginner would find it hard to pose perfectly or even pose at all. But in the evenings, the body having undergone the labours of the day and been in frequent movement, would more readily respond and the results atleast to the beginner would be encouraging.

It is a fact that the body is more responsive and pliable in the evenings. But there are disadvantages also. Distinctly experience shows that the benefit to the system is neither so marked nor great as when the Asanas are done in the mornings. The mind also is jaded, strained or otherwise unsuited to practise such a system of physical culture as the Yoga-Asana. Besides, the food that we take wants at least 7 or 8 hours for digestion and passing from the stomach to the rectum, through the alimentary canal, while nutrition is absorbed into the blood. Every Asana more or less, sets up vigorous peristalsis. And in a major portion of the cases, the evening exercise would commence 2 or 3 hours after lunch or 3 or 4 hours after a good meal. In the result food will be hurried through the intestines without full benefit to the system through the absorption of nutrition. Asanas done in the morning give one unwonted energy, buoyance and elasticity to go through the day's work. This is a matter of experience. There are many students who testify to the fact. In the mornings, an interval of 9 to 10 hours would have elapsed after the last meal. The stomach and the smaller intestine would be empty. Absorption of nutrition would have been completed, and the waste matter in the outer colon and the rectum is ready to be evacuated. The vigorous peristalsis that is set up assists in the work of thorough emptying of the colon contents. It has also to be noted that asanas in the morning ensure a more complete evacuation of the bowels than when they are done in the evening. A man who does the poses in the morning completes them better in the evenings and gets greater success with more difficult poses. But one who is practising only in the evening, may not do even half as well in the morning; For officials, workers, students, etc, morning would suit their leisure.

A Few Suggestions to the Beginners

If the Asanas are done in a room, there must be plenty of fresh air. In a dry hot country, where no chill winds blow, open air is preferable. In a very cold country, where heat engendered is immediately absorbed by the atmosphere, it is best to do under a covered space, when necessary with wollen sweaters or cotton banians on. Freedom from noise, mosquito bite and flies, bad smell and other disturbances help concentration and bestows much benefit. For the loins longoti; kaupinam or wrestlers tights as seen in the illustrations is the best.

A bath after asanas followed by breath control (breathing exercise), a little of contemplation or meditation (Gayathri) finished by a Namaskar (Prostration dips) would keep one in the pink of condition and exuberance of health.

Intemperance of every form must be avoided. Drink (alcoholic) should be abandoned and smoking reduced to the minimum, if it could not be avoided to begin with. Snuffing is a disgusting habit and persons addicted to it should clean their nostrils with cold water prior to commencing the Yoga. Snuff-student are finding the habit leaving them due to the practice of Sirshasana.

“Be with caution, hold” is the advice given by the Yoga-Mimamsa Journal to the students of Yoga. Never be put down by the tales of dangers of Hata Yoga. The danger in practising Yoga-Asana is much the same as in walking the street. If one is careless and rushes indiscriminately in the middle of the road, he is bound to come to grief in the heavy onrush of traffic. Similarly if the student, over-anxious to get quick results goes out of the way, or strains too much, or over-exerts before the body gets accustomed to the strain, he must blame only himself and not the Yoga-Asana. Regular practice, graded according to capacity, is what a student must have for progress and perfection. Reading over the techniques given, now and again, would help to correct mistakes and attain good results.

Milk is a valuable food and should be taken in fair proportion. Tamarind and chillies ought to be given up altogether. Lime fruit could take the place of tamarind and a little pepper that of chillies. Plenty of butter milk is good for the body. Generally, all irritant diets

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such as hot and fried stuffs should be avoided. Fruits and fresh vegetables should form a wholesome variety in the daily diet, if the cost could be afforded. Two meals and one tiffin, with nothing between, are enough. Wheat may be freely used according to the means of each individual.

Boys addicted to masturbation and unclean habits must forget them and the Asana would act as a sedative and help them in their task. Married people should restrict their sexual intercourse to the minimum possible. It is impossible to suggest any limit. But continence is essential in every respect. For what is recouped through the Asana would be lost by abnormal indulgence.

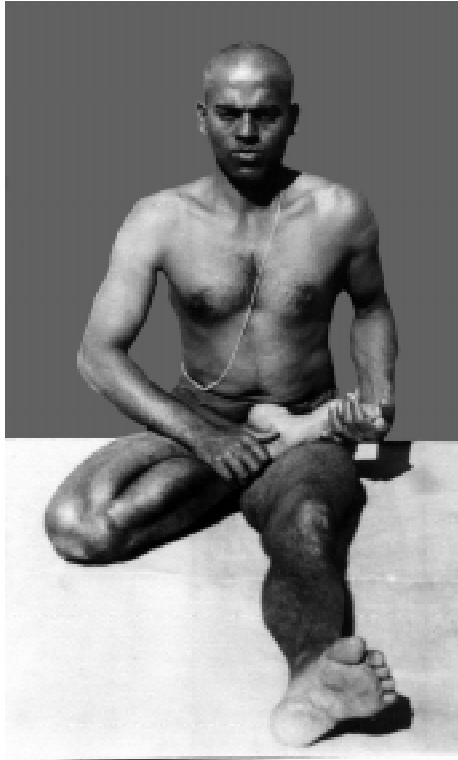
Doing Asana must become a regular habit as eating and sleeping.

CHAPTER - IV **PADMASANA** **(The Lotus Pose)**

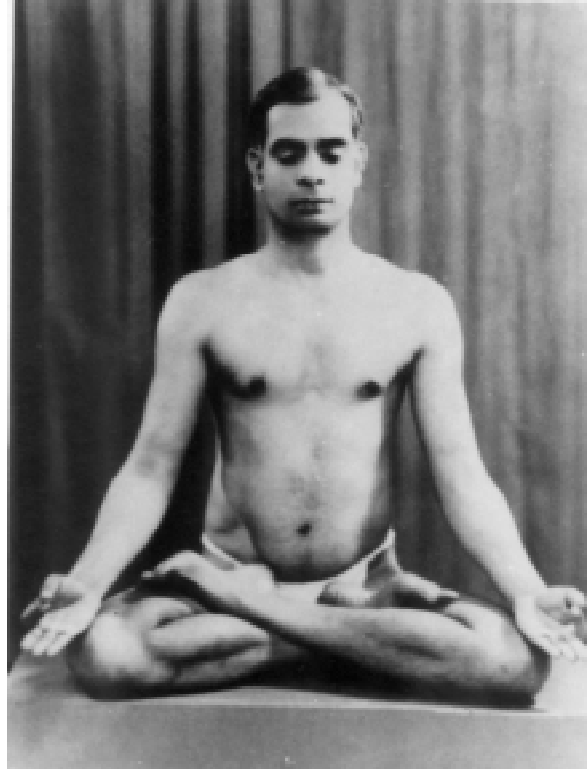
Look at the Lotus! The heart flowers; the mind enters an aesthetic grove. The charm of the vision, alchemises into fragrance. It is not mere smell; it is an experience. The beauty of form is there. But there is something else transcendental!

This **PADMASANA** - this Lotus Pose! how rightly the Yogis of Bharath have termed it and so aptly! Supposing one were not a learner, he could do it with ease and sit in comfort. The mind seems to transcend petty turmoils. The calm obtained seems to breathe fragrance. That feeling of wellbeing - where does it originate? Is it purely physical or only mental, or both? Perhaps there is also emotional balance!

As in the mysteries of higher Yoga, words fail to denominate the experience in Padmasana. Come, learn it and be at ease in it! Then one may feel these words have been inadequate to express the experience!



1. PADMASANA-1st Stage



2. PADMASANA (foot lock picture-2)

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Is this simply a thing of crossed legs? Then this crossing the legs seems to be worth more than a mere physical effort. The back is erect. The face is square and facing the front. The eye lids automatically drop to half close; and one would fain like to forget the watch.

Stiff knees, stiff ankles and stiff hips melt as one practices and they also offer resistance. Start this pose! Sit with both legs stretched preferably with the back to the wall if hips are stiff. Catch hold of one foot and pull it over the opposite thigh. (See picture 1) Then catch hold of the other foot and pull that over the folded thigh. Sit erect and with hands as in Padmasana (Picture 2). Remove legs one after the other and repeat, till comfort is attained. one can sit not only for minutes but hours.

Yoga classifies certain poses as fit to sit for prolonged periods for realisation of higher Yoga, the preliminary for which starts in Japa or a repetition of a name or string of letters with spiritual significance.

For worthwhile reasons, this Padmasana has been given special place and special position in this book. If there is a good wish to be conveyed to a friend, then say,

“ Wish you a good Padmasana! ”

CHAPTER - V

BHUJANGASANA

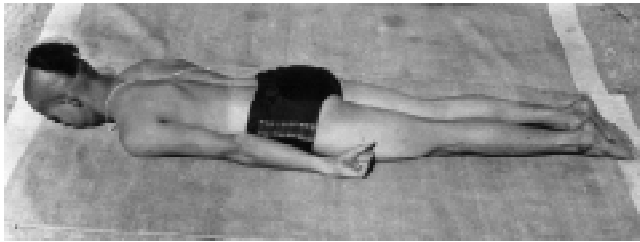
One who knows the A,B,C, of physical culture pays much attention to the spine. He recognises its importance. On its elasticity and health depend on the vitality and youth of an individual. The stiffness of the back-bone means old age. This factor has come to be well-realised in the world of physical culture. Any modern treatise on this subject devotes some attention to this important member of the body.

Need one ask why? Through the spinal column passes the aerial of nerve action and sensations, the spinal cord. Its defection means partial paralysis of the human body. Various nerves take root to the spine. In the muscles lying on either side is imbedded the sympathetic nervous system. So youth of the spine is all in all for the life and functions of the body.

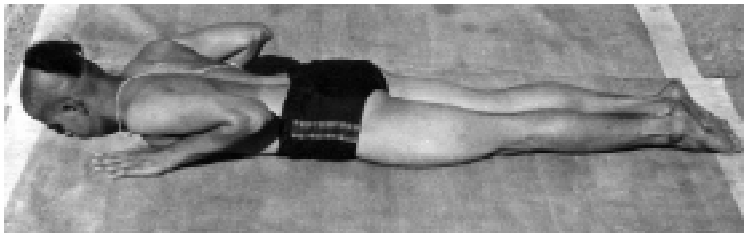
The clarion call is therefore sounded by the Western physical culturists to 'youthify the spine'. All honour to them and may they meet with success! But they would do well to come here and learn what India has to teach. They would know first that the cry for youthifying the spine was started thousands of years ago, when as civilised countries their lands had no existence. This cry had come from bookless sages experimenting without laboratories and vivisection. Secondly, they may learn humility as well as useful lessons in physical culture. For their best innovations in scientifically modulated exercises may never equal these which have been left by the Indian sages for posterity-for the benefit of humanity.

This statement is no exaggeration. A scientific analysis of Paschimothanasana and Halasana has been given in ensuing chapter. The physiology of these poses proves what elasticity and health could be given to the spine by their practice. A further lesson to the same effect consists in Bhujangasana, Salabasana and Dhanurasana.

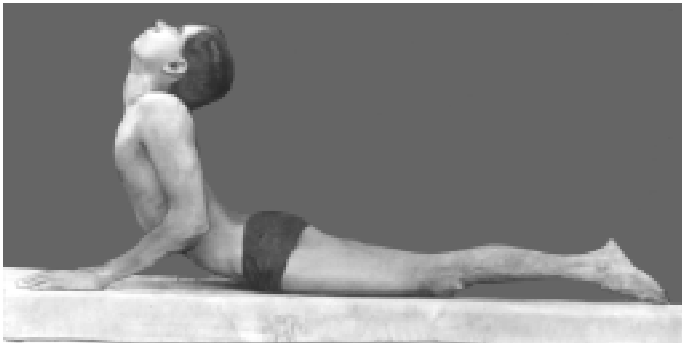
The Secret of Happiness or Yogic Physical Culture



Picture - 3 BHUJANGASANA (1st stage)



Picture - 4 BHUJANGASANA (2nd stage)



Picture - 5 BHUJANGASANA (Final stage)

Bhujangasana

Technique:- The perfected pose is shown in picture 5. The student first lies face down on a spread with all the muscles completely relaxed picture no-3. Then he places both his hands on the ground, palms down just beneath the shoulders and elbows up as shown in the picture-4. Then he lifts the head up and backwards **breathing out** tilting the chin. He contracts the deep and superficial muscles of the back and bends the spine backwards and raises it gradually. The pressure on the spine travels downwards from the

For further details: Refer the Book
“The Secret of Happiness
or
Yogic Physical Culture”

CONCLUSION

The body is the instrument for Existence, Perception and Realisation. Everyone must be able to spare some useful time to spend on this body. It is ignorance to say that one has no time to attend to one's body. No man, who is really energetic and physically conscious, will say this. The fact is not that one has no time but one is physically lethargic. What is the use of all efforts, ambitions, study and amassing of wealth, if during and at the end of this process one finds that life is ebbing out of his body and he is becoming a physical wreck? Unfortunately, the India of today is lacking very much in physical consciousness. Foreign domination has brought in its wake physical weakness and want of effort. In Asanas, Indians have inherited a precious heritage of physical wealth.

This heritage, to the millions of modern India does not exist. It should be the effort of every thinking person to practise this system and spread it to his neighbours, friends and relations. No better service can a man do either with his money or his leisure than by inculcating this system of physical well being to men, women and children. There is a set of people who will neither do themselves, nor allow others to do Asanas. These people criticise destructively and mock at those who attempt physical reforms. They flaunt before them dangers which are non-existent and imaginary. Those people are doing a disservice to their country and committing a crime against humanity. Unfortunately, this type of person makes no effort towards health and vitality and will certainly not have studied the literature about the system. These are best avoided. Every man must start his life with health and strength. He must stick to these two things and attempt other things in life taking care always to see that these two precious possessions are never weakened or destroyed.

May the all intelligent, all pervading Omnipotent Being bless every one who attempts this path with health, strength, vitality, long life, happiness and peace!
