



Yoga Practice and Study was seen by Krishnamacharya as three threads

- Firstly Śakti Krama or Yoga Practice as a means of Power

Yoga can be used to link the body and the mind. It is the ability to achieve something through intense physical and mental effort or Śakti Krama through either Śikṣaṇa Krama (Practice with No Compromise) or Sṛṣṭi Krama (Practice for Children).

For instance, to cultivate and maintain a state of concentration or to develop the body and the breath through refinement of various postures and breathing techniques. The consequences are power over and within the body and the mind.

As such, Yoga can be seen as an art and offers a fascinating and helpful pursuit for many people looking to develop these qualities.

"What good is the sword of wisdom (jñāna asinā) to cut away the chains of illusion (avidyā), if the holder is too weak to bear it."

- T Krishnamacharya

Traditionally this aspect is only a means towards a more important goal.

- Secondly Adhyātmika Krama or Yoga Practice as a means of Self-inquiry

Yoga can also be used as a tool for a deeper understanding of ourselves by inquiring both into and beyond what we view as the everyday self, its actions and its motives or Adhyātmika Krama (the Journey towards our Essence).

Here Yoga can be utilised to appreciate and sustain a quality of attention. This attention offers a space that can allow our actions or especially reactions to be less influenced by the more usual patternings within the mind.

"True liberty is what relationship you have with your habits."

- T Krishnamacharya

With a more sensitive and consistent attention we can lessen the effects of our conditionings. As a consequence we can experience a deeper sense of well being and have the potential for action with greater awareness within our life, work and relationships.

Yet we all experience problems, poor health or illness from time to time.

- Thirdly Cikitsā Krama or Yoga Practice as Therapeutic Healthcare

Yoga, as a restorative support and preventative healthcare support, can be a healing therapy to help us work at changing or anticipating the effects of problems and illness in our lives or Cikitsā Krama, through Cikitsā Krama (Restorative Recovery), or Rakṣaṇa Krama (Preventative Healthcare).

Here the approach must be different for each person as our potential to practice Yoga will be affected by the problem, or the problem by our attitude towards working with it.

Also according to traditional Indian medicine those diseases that are chronic and cannot be cured by medicine alone can also be helped by using Yoga techniques. So Yoga can be used as a support alongside other forms of treatment.

Utilising Yoga concepts it is possible, within a careful Individual Yoga teaching, to introduce practices that both respect the problems or illness and support our intention to reduce their negative effects in the future.

*"The patient must be his own doctor, must observe himself,
use his own intelligence and find the right tools.
Fundamentally, the solution is in the patient's discernment.
No one can understand for the patient."
- TKV Desikachar*

However, practicing Yoga as a therapy also presumes that we are willing to accept responsibility for making changes within our own situation.

These three aspects of Yoga practice as power, self-inquiry and therapy, are mutually supportive in helping to maintain physical health, psychological vitality and spiritual purpose within the commitment and challenges of life, work and relationships.

*"Suffering is the starting point for the Yoga journey of four steps from:
the symptom (duḥkha or suffering);
through to the cause (avidyā or illusion);
to the path (kaivalya or independence);
to the means (aṣṭāṅga or 8 limbed path) for viveka or discrimination.
This fourfold process is at the heart of Yoga, Āyurveda and Buddhism."*

- Finally the study and practice of Yoga entails

Yoga is a deep training in a specific methodology that requires a commitment to explore through our personal practice. This means a core commitment as a student to a personalised and developmental Yoga practice as the experiential reference.

"Yoga is a process, rather than just a collection of techniques."

It is a methodology that offers a depth of tools, rather than just a breadth of tools, however the tools also sit like Russian dolls in that one must be opened before the next reveals itself.

Amongst the fields that can offer a developmental structure for the content and process of a personal practice Sādhana, or 'means' for the student to explore the notions of self and non-self, are:

Integrative development through Study and Practice of the following components:

- Āsana Practice and Theory
- Mudrā Practice and Theory
- Prāṇāyāma Practice and Theory
- Dhyānam Practice and Theory
- Adhyayanam (chanting as learning or meditation) Practice and Theory

This needs to be supported by a Personalised Textual and Oral Study Sādhana involving:

- Experiential application of the practice and theory principles in the Haṭha Yoga texts.
- Experiential application of the Yoga Psychology principles through the Yoga Sūtra.
- Guidance with linking other Indian texts to Yoga study and practice.
- Experiential study of the core energetic, constitutional and lifestyle principles in Āyurveda.