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3. Yoga as Therapeutic Healthcare

Now Yoga, as both a restorative and preventative, is applied as therapeutic healthcare to help people with problems or poor health. Here the approach needs to be very different for each person. One person's potential to change their situation will be affected by their problem. Another person's problem will be affected by their potential to change their situation.

According to Traditional Indian Medicine, becoming known in the West as Āyurveda, those diseases that are chronic and cannot be resolved by medicine alone can be helped by using Yoga practices. Old Yoga texts also talk about the benefits of certain postures and breathing techniques in the treatment of disease.

Using these ideas it is possible, within a one to one relationship, to introduce personalised Yoga practices. These practices can both respect the problems or disease in the individual and support our intention to influence the way we are affected in similar situations in the future.

However all of us experience the dominance of our old ways when confronted with familiar situations. We would like to change but the old patterns are powerful and resist alternatives.

It even seems that sometimes what we would really like to do is to carry on exactly as before only without the troublesome symptoms accompanying our lifestyle. To ignore or block these symptoms through continual suppression is ultimately a futile path.

The process of our inner intelligence is such that it will let us know what needs looking at with increasingly strident messages. This means that the steps to ignore these messages must also intensify. Better to co-operate with ourselves before we are forced to by a more serious consequence.

In this respect Yoga as a therapeutic healthcare also presumes that we are willing to accept some responsibility within our situation. Here, with the support of a teacher, we can introduce and work towards sustaining creative changes in our lifestyle. This may also include, as well as specific practices, a review of those relationships which exacerbate our problems.

This approach is known as the Yoga of Rejuvenation and Prevention.

"As far as Yoga is concerned, we are concerned with the personality of the person, the mental aspect and the higher aspirations of the student. That is why Yoga has a lot to offer.

For the body Āyurveda is the solution. A good combination would be Āyurveda and Yoga.

My father used to do that. He would teach Āsana practice, or Prāṇāyāma or meditation (Dhyānam) and he would talk about diet and he would also give some Āyurveda medicine.

*He was treating not only the body
but the whole person with the help of this great combination."*

- TKV Desikachar

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