

SIGNIFICANCE OF TRATAKA IN DEVELOPMENT OF EFFICACY AND SKILL

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Abstract : In this presentation significance of Trataka (steady gazing) which is a purification technique in Hatha yoga is explained with its method. How the method will help in development of efficacy and skill. The research finding by the institutes as regards benefits of Trataka and my own experience of teaching Trataka to various groups are explained. How the technique, if done daily, can improve concentration, memory, stress release and eventually balances emotions is explained. Technique of Jyoti Trataka (candle Gazing) is explained as External and Internal form of Trataka.

Keywords: Trataka , Development , Efficacy , Skill .

1 INTRODUCTION

EThis technique if done regularly will increase efficiency and output of any company by aiding in the development of skill and efficacy. I have experience of teaching yoga for more than Ten years and my main thrust has been Trataka.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

A skill is ability of person to do any task with predetermined result within given amount of time and energy. This skill can be personal, inter-personal or leadership. Personal skill refers to maintenance of healthy body, mind and energy system in a way which makes one feel better about oneself. There is good management of time. One is in good control of emotions. Person is with less stress. One has good listening and communication skills. One is always motivated and with great confidence. Skill is kind of better management of self and others.

YOGA AND SKILL MANAGEMENT

Yoga helps in harmonious development of body, mind and intellect and soul. Excellence in any work is Yoga. Yoga aims towards the purification, regulation and awakening of human potential.

Trataka is a technique of Hatha yoga. This branch of Yoga gives lot of importance to purification. There are methods of purification at body, energy, emotions and intellect. Impurity of mind leads to disturbance and distractions. All yogic techniques help person to achieve a blissful state. Yoga helps in holistic development of personality.

The technique of Trataka which is “pre-meditative” helps in many ways. There are many experiments and research work done on this subject by various yoga institutes like Kaivalyadhama and Bihar school of yoga. A sample of the outcome of the research findings from the papers presented at the institutes are as follows:

Review on research reveals that yoga training including Trataka has improved attention and

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concentration; it also has improved emotional control. Based on 100 clinical experiments, the results have indicated the usefulness of Trataka in bringing the repressed feelings, wishes, conflicts and motives to the surface of mind so that these emotions find their way out. The subjects of these clinical studies have reported relief and purifications of nagging emotional issues leading to relaxation.

Any field or any task simple or difficult needs attention. If mind is not focused at the particular task, the work will not be done up to the mark. Concentration of mind is must to progress in any field. Concentration is undivided attention. According to yoga, concentration is one-pointed awareness of mind. In the state of concentration, the mind is focused and is not aware of any other secondary things that surround the object of concentration. A concentrated mind is a powerful mind and a dissipated mind is a weak mind. In order to develop mental power one must develop a focused mind. If there is good concentration the learning becomes easy and one is able to recall what has been learned. Trataka is technique of Hatha Yoga which comes as such under cleansing process which helps to remove unwanted thoughts from the mind and after practice one is able to focus mind.

TRATAKA

Trataka is practice which is found in Tantra, Upanishads and Yoga. Similar kind of practice is also found in Hindu philosophy, in Zen and Buddhist philosophy. In this practice steady gazing is done on a particular object without blinking or moving of eyeballs. The practice of Trataka can be taken up progressively according to one's ability and inclination. Trataka aims to control the dissipation of the mind and becoming aware about the thought process of the mind.

As per Hatha Yoga Pradipika, chapter 2 verse 31/32 "Look with fixed eyes at a minute object with concentration till tears are shed is called Trataka by teachers" Also, "By Trataka all diseases of the eyes are removed and sloth etc are overcome. It should be carefully kept secret like a Golden Casket." As per Gheranda Samhita by practicing these – "netra roga vinashyanti" all the disease of eyes destroyed, 'divya drishti prajayate' clairvoyance is induced and 'sambhavi siddhi' which is spiritual benefit, is obtained.

One can choose any object for Trataka. One should choose object which naturally attracts one's attention and hold the gaze. Candle flame, Aum, God idol, Rising or setting sun etc serve as good objects for Trataka. Two main types of Trataka are Bahiranga Trataka and Antaranga Trataka i.e. external gazing and internal gazing. In External gazing focus is on an outer object and in Internal gazing the focus is on internal image. One can practice first external and then internal Trataka.

When sense of sight is concentrated on one object the focus becomes very powerful, other senses also becomes internalized; the state of 'pratyahara' which is internalization of senses is experienced. When internal Trataka is practiced it leads one to go in to 'dharana' which is the first step of meditation in Patanjala Yoga. Initially one may practice on candle flame as when one focuses with open eyes, the subsequent internal gazing which are on the after-image happens easily.

BENEFITS:

Benefits of Trataka are manifold. I have been practicing this technique since many years and I am sharing my experience and experiences of my student.

At physical level when Trataka is practiced tears roll out which purify eyes and remove excess heat. It cures defects of the eyes. When Trataka is done with breathe awareness breathing becomes rhythmic. This relaxes body and mind. A state of peace is experienced. Holding of image for long time makes Mind introverted which reduces fluctuating tendency and leads to focused state. Energy is saved as there are no unwanted thoughts. It improves Concentration and memory power. This improves work efficiency and confidence. Feelings of happiness, contentment and satisfaction are experienced. Complete absorption in a single perception will lead to withdrawal of contact with the external world. As many thoughts will pass in front of eyes it is easy to observe these thoughts as witness. And after some practice, these thoughts will fade away. At intellectual level when there is clarity of thoughts one is able to make correct decisions. Trataka certainly develops all six higher faculties of mind which is reason, memory, perception, will power, intuition, and imagination. Mind gets sharpened. Trataka improves grasping power and increases intelligence. It helps in having good sleep and reduces stress. Trataka is the process by which several brain centers are awakened which are dormant.

Trataka helps one to become aware of one's problems as memory power increases by that the roots from where the complex is formed is known. As one goes to root of the problem it becomes easy to remove. However this may create sensitivity sometimes if the problem manifests too rapidly one should seek expert advice. It is therapeutic in depression and anxiety.

As per different texts, Trataka may be helping to energize pineal gland and stimulate third eye. The

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psychic power of telepathy, clairvoyance and thought reading may be obtained. But one should not practice for such purposes. Mental energy which is dissipated in all directions is focused by fixing gaze at one point. This energy can be directed towards some useful end whether material or spiritual.

WITH TWO MINUTES OF DAILY PRACTICE ONE CAN START AND GRADUALLY INCREASE THE DURATION.

Trataka definitely helps one to go into meditation. So those who find meditation difficult are seen to do so easily after practicing Trataka. Trataka improves concentration and will power. Strong will power helps in keeping regularity in practices and learning to say 'no' to temptations, not with frustration or unhappiness, but with a healthy positive attitude.

WITH ALL THIS BENEFITS ANY ONE WILL APPRECIATE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRATAKA.

Based on my own experience corroborated by the research findings of other Yoga Institutes, I am of the opinion that the HRD of any company can use Trataka practice in its office for increasing efficiency and output of the employees.

METHOD OF JYOTI TRATAKA (CANDLE GAZING)

A candle should be placed in front of the eyes at four feet distance. One can do this while sitting on the chair or in meditative sitting posture like Sukhasana (easy pose) or Padmasana (lotus pose). First eyes will be closed for half to one minute. After that one should first start gazing at the base of candle stand then slowly moving the gaze towards the wick of the flame. One should gaze in relaxed manner. If tears appear it's a good sign which will wash impurities of eyes. After sometime eyes should be closed and focus should be on the after-image, if it appears. One can do more number of rounds say three to five rounds. Then after closing eyes, palming is done. There should be smooth and effortless gazing done. After some rounds of practice with expansive awareness one should collect all the details of the flame such as color and shape of the flame with aura around it. Then observe the aura expanding more and more and see the small light particles around the flame. Recognize the subtle change achieved by this de-focusing. After one minute of de-focusing, gazing is done on flame. Slowly eyes are closed and after-image which is bright spot is focused in the centre between the eyebrows. When image disappears one should do palming. Then sit quietly for some time and feel deeply relaxed and comforting effect of practice. Feel the silence and relaxation for some moment. Then gently drop hands down.

PRECAUTIONS AND CONTRA-INDICATIONS:

Do not practice Trataka on unsteady flame. It should be practiced in a dark room with good ventilation. People with visual problem should place object at correct distance so double image is not seen. Expert advice should be taken while practicing technique. People with glaucoma and epilepsy should not practice on candle flame or sun.

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