

**Abstract No 40****A critical evaluation of modern trends in Yōgā****H.G.A.V.K.M. Kobbekaduwe**Special 3<sup>rd</sup> year, Department of Sinhala, University of Kelaniya[kobbekaduweanuradha@gmail.com](mailto:kobbekaduweanuradha@gmail.com)

The word “Yoga” is rooted in the Sanskrit word “Yuj”. Its meaning is “Unification of Jeewathma and the Brahmathma”. According to Hindu Philosophy, in order to achieve purification, one must be unified with immortal soul. There are several types of yoga. Bhakthi Yoga, ManthraYoga, GnanaYoga, KundaliniYoga, and Raja Yogaetc. RajaYoga which is one of Ashtanga Yoga (system which comprises Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi) is of central practice. The ultimate purpose of practice of theseAshtanga Yoga is attainment of liberation. While Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Prathyahara are external elements which have to be observed, they are essential for the success of the internal elements of Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. Yogasana is the manner of making the body relaxed and flexible in order to discipline the mind for the purpose of concentration. On the basis of primary sources it is apparent that at present what is meant by Yogasana is not the more ancient form of Yoga, but only the manner of making the body more supple, which is only one of the aspects of AshtangaYoga. This study examines if contemporary Yoga classes in Sri Lanka are in keeping with the original primary texts of yoga as Pathanjali Yoga Suthra and Hata Yoga Vidya. It is specially to be noted that current yoga classes in Sri Lanka are based on commercial purposes. What is visible today is that the method of disciplining the mind by mastering the body and its movements is used in order to earn money. Accordingly today’s practice of yoga is a distorted version of the yoga that was originally envisaged. The Yogasana which was originally aimed at providing the foundation for spiritual development has now been replaced by a practice which aims at more material benefits such as physical wellness, outward beauty and healthy living. This is to be scrutinized based on the contemporary yoga classes in Sri Lanka and the Original texts.

**Key words** - Yoga, AshtaYoga, Yogasana, Contemporary trend,