Hatha yoga is a preparatory process of yoga. The word “ha” means sun, “tha” means moon. “Hatha” means the yoga to bring balance between the sun and the moon in you, or the Pingala and Ida in you. You can explore Hatha yoga in ways that take you beyond certain limitations, but fundamentally, it is a physical preparation – preparing the body for a higher possibility.

If we want to do kriya yoga, we always prepare people with Hatha yoga because without the body being prepared, it will not be able to take higher dimensions of energy. It will break. It is just like if your pipe is not ready and you pump in too much force, something is bound to burst. So Hatha yoga, so to speak, could be taken to be preparation of the pipe.

There are other dimensions to this, but to put it simply, just by observing the way somebody is sitting, you almost know what is happening with them. If you know yourself, if you have observed yourself, if you are angry, you will sit one way; if you are happy, you sit another way; if you are depressed, you sit yet another way.

For every different level of consciousness or mental and emotional situation that you go through, your body naturally tends to take certain postures. The converse of this is the science of asanas. If you consciously get your body into different postures, you can also elevate your consciousness.

The practice as you see it currently – the mechanics of it – is simply of the body. You have to breathe life into Hatha yoga, otherwise it will not become alive. This is why, traditionally, there has been so much stress on a live guru – to make it come alive.

After 20 years of yoga entering the West and becoming popular, despite it being taught sometimes in ways that leave much to be desired, still, the health benefits of it are undeniable, wherever you live and whatever you do.

Right now the number of people practising yoga is growing in a big way. This could be simply because the scientific community is slowly beginning to recognise the depth and dimension of what Hatha yoga is. But if improper, distorted kind of yoga spreads, in 15 years’ time, scientific studies will clearly come out and tell you in how many ways it is harmful to human beings, and that will be the downfall.

Therefore, it is important that we bring back classical yoga as it was. It is also important that, in a very balanced way, all aspects of yoga are addressed as one unit. Otherwise, if you work with just the body, it is only preparatory in nature. So there is really no division as such. Yoga is a union of all steps – cultivating the body, breath, mind and the inner nature.

If Hatha yoga is taught in a proper atmosphere with a certain sense of humility and inclusiveness about the whole process, it is a really fantastic process of shaping your system into a fantastic vessel, a fabulous device to receive the Divine.

There are certain dimensions of Hatha yoga which are almost absent in the world today. It is there in some places, but generally in the known places, it is absent. I would like to bring back those dimensions. It is a very powerful way of living. Power, not over somebody else; it’s all about power to access life.

For details of Inner Engineering/ Isha Yoga programmes in your city log on to www.ishayoga.org or call 0422-2515300.