**ASTHMA**

One of the major ailments afflicting mankind is asthma. It is an allergic condition leading to bronchospasms. It is believed to run in the family. Asthma often begins in childhood. A child has bad attacks of cough accompanied by breathlessness.

During an attack, the patient suffers agonies: he pants, wheezes, coughs, expectorates — all for a litre of oxygen which cannot pass through the air passage constricted by swelling and sputum.

Such attacks alternate with symptom-free periods. There is practically nothing that cannot trigger an attack: hot, cold, wet weather, pollen or dust (that is why many get an attack when they go to bed, triggered by the dust from the pillow), everything and anything.

Sunshine, cold water for bathing or drinking, flowers, fruits, vegetables, even milk may be taboo. The body becomes weak, unable to stand any kind of exertion. Even taking a rest or sleeping becomes impossible and the nights are spent sitting in a corner because the attack may come if the patient lies down. Even excessive emotions can be dangerous.

There are plenty of drugs for asthma, but they give only temporary relief, if at all. The constricted air passages are dilated, but once the effect of the drug wanes, the attack starts again. Thus, it becomes a life-long agony.

Asthma is not a disease that can be cured: it is the reaction of the body to certain foreign matters. The answer lies in strengthening the system. Experiments conducted by many institutes have shown that Yoga may help those with a prolonged history of asthma.