

# YOGA RESEARCH

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## *Brahmacharya*

### Does It Give Longevity to Yogins? PART II

The first two arguments brought forth against celibacy point to the dangers of the accumulation of the internal secretions. According to the advocates of these arguments, the only healthy way to avoid this accumulation is coitus.

Really speaking, the semen – ordinary testicular secretion – discharged in coitus does not directly contain the internal secretion. The accumulation of semen, however, indicates the accumulation of the internal secretion.

If it can be shown scientifically that there are in Yoga healthier methods of avoiding this accumulation, the point against celibacy is lost. And if it could be further proved that these methods avoid accumulation in a way calculated to help longevity, it would logically follow that celibacy prolongs life.

Some of these healthier methods consist of the Yogic exercises Uddiyāna, Nauli, Aśvinī, Mūla-Bandha and Sarvāṅgāsana. We shall now proceed to see how these exercises help celibacy and prolong life.

It is to be noted that, even in the case of

ordinary persons, a part of the secretions of the sexual glands is taken up by the circulation through the lymphatic vessels and is used in building up the tissues at large. But the absorbing activity of the lymphatic vessels and the secreting activity of the sexual glands is disproportionate, the latter secrete much more than the former can absorb; and this leads to the accumulation of secretions. However if the lymphatic vessels can be made to work better and keep pace with the sexual glands there will be no danger of accumulation.

We have ample clinical evidence to show that this absorbing activity of the lymphatics can be increased in the case of the

genitals. A number of youngsters suffering from nightly emissions have found considerable relief with improved metabolism through these practices. The discharges decreased because of the greater absorption of the testicular secretions, and metabolism improved on account of the effect of the absorbed secretions on the tissues in general. It is to be frankly admitted that the relief is not to be solely attributed to the increased

action of the lymphatics, because other physiological effects of these exercises, and especially the reduction of extreme blood pressure in these parts, are also partly responsible for it.

But the following case leaves little doubt as regards the capability of these Yogic exercises to powerfully strengthen the absorbent system of the genitals. A young man of twenty developed hydrocele early in 1919. Competent medical advice suggested a surgical operation or at least a tapping as the only remedy. The gentleman could not act up to the advice and the disease grew worse. After suffering for three years he started the Yogic exercises referred to above. After some time he found that the disease had almost completely disappeared.

The explanation of the case is this. The lymphatic vessels of the scrotum becoming more active absorbed the fluid accumulated there, and further secretion was stopped by the other tissues being made more healthy. What happened in the case of the scrotum would also happen all over the genitals, because these exercises directly govern the nervous and muscular mechanism of these parts. Thus it would be clear that these exercises do promote activity of the lymphatics and can be made to absorb the testicular secretions, so as to avoid their undue accumulation and to help metabolism through the absorbed secretions.

But the matter does not end there. Even

*continued*

*The Yogins have a special advantage as they can make their absorbent system more efficient and thus keep their glands more active...*



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### ***Brahmacharya, PART II, continued***

without these Yogic practices, celibacy would not produce toxic effects nor would it deteriorate the sexual glands, if the celibate does not allow his nervous system to be wrecked by his impulses. The toxic effects referred to in the objection (a) are due to the impaired activity of the poison-eliminating organs which are very badly affected by strong venereal desires left unsatisfied. The ravages of such desires on the sexual glands themselves are too well known.

But the question is whether these sexual impulses can be avoided in celibacy. The answer is in the negative, if celibacy is enforced upon a person. But the answer is in the affirmative, if celibacy is voluntarily undertaken for a high religious or ethical ideal. It is the unsatisfied sexual hankering and not the accumulated secretion that is responsible for the havoc worked in celibacy.

The example of old bachelors and spinsters presenting haggard looks as shown in objection (d) has this one lesson to teach. (But) we know a number of religiously minded widows who had little sexual experience and who yet lived a very healthy long life.

The truth is that Mother Nature is so kind that she adjusts every function in the body; and the secreting activity and the absorbing activity are made to keep pace. The damage done by the suppression of the instinctive sexual desires is more than compensated by the advantages that accrue through absorption of the internal secretion.

Now only objection (c) remains, which declares that complete disuse may lead to atrophy of these glands. This is perfectly true in the case of persons upon whom celibacy is forced by circumstances, who take pleasure in taking excitants and in

keeping the genitals perpetually under high tension, who are terribly preyed upon by consequent worries, and who have wrecked their nerves by alarming exhaustion.

The experimental and clinical evidence that is adduced to support the objection (c) is entirely of this character and does not bear on voluntary celibacy practiced as a religious or moral ideal. We know two cases of highly religious widows who had lost their husbands soon after their marriage, who had no issue and yet in whose case menstruation continued till late in life. So also we know two bachelors who died after they had crossed the century mark.

This we think to be natural. The best hygiene of their minds avoided damage to the sexual glands, and their secretions being absorbed in the body, these glands kept up their activity. The truth appears to be that whenever the secretions are hygienically utilized, the glands continue their function. Whether the secretions are discharged in a coitus or they are absorbed by the lymphatics is immaterial.

The Yogins have a special advantage as they can make their absorbent system more efficient and thus keep their glands more active, avoiding the danger of atrophy.

To conclude, modern scientific evidence is perfectly reliable so far as enforced celibacy is concerned. The same would apply to pseudo-Yogins. But it is clear that celibacy would not only help real Yogins to lead a healthy life, but also would enable them to prolong it considerably.

— excerpted from —

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