

YOGA RESEARCH

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The Mystery of Prâṇa, PART II

We do not look upon all Yogic practices merely from the physical culturist point of view.

Yogis care little for the outer body and more for the inner body (Antaḥśarīra). At the cost of the outer body, a Yogi will be satisfied if his inner body is well developed.

This is the great difference in point of view between modern man and the ancient Yogis who would never forego the interior for the sake of the exterior. If they "join hands," so far so good, but if they don't, one must decide which is more important.

A materialistic man will never sacrifice the exterior for the interior. A spiritual man will sacrifice all.

That's why there is always a struggle in our social work.

Gāndhī was looking at things from a spiritual point of view, others from a materialistic one. A materialistic life does not sacrifice external benefits. Gāndhī was ready to sacrifice everything!

These two points of view have prevailed since the beginning: spiritual gain and material gain. They are known in the

Upaniṣads as Śreyas and Preyas. Preyas means dearer from a material point of view.

Pleasure and bliss are different from one another. Pleasure is worldly. We must sacrifice one for the other. The question is which must we sacrifice for the other?

In Yoga we believe in two principles: Prakṛti and Puruṣa (which is beyond all worldly qualities and which dwells in Prakṛti). It is like the charge in a battery. The charge is all over the battery – there is not the smallest part without the charge.

Puruṣa is omnipresent. There is not the smallest particle in Prakṛti without Puruṣa. That is why we call it all-prevailing, or the spirit.

Within the battery, the charge requires something to reside in – which is the zinc. For the spirit, it is the body. Zinc and sulphuric acid are not electricity; they are the vehicles of electricity.

Everything we see or imagine is not the spirit, but its vehicle.

Our body consists of blood, flesh and bones, and nourishes itself on something else inside. Even the last particle of Citta where there is no body present in its gross form, serves as the body of the spirit. As

the body is the residence of Citta, Citta itself is the residence of the spirit.

The absolute spirit is never seen, but it will be inferred by the things we come in contact with.

The most important governing element in the body is breath. We can live without food and water for a certain time, but not without breath – even for a few minutes.

What is breath? It is the manifestation of the inner Prâṇa that is coming out. We are coming in contact with it through the agency of the nostrils.

Prâṇa is governing still further. It starts in the inner space. At present our bodies are six feet high. Our Prâṇa is from head to toes. Fifty years ago we were minute things. Even in the embryo stage, when there were no nostrils, the breathing was there. The nostrils came afterwards. The gross form, breath, was also manifested afterwards. Until that time, it was growing in the dormant stage. As the body developed, this also developed, keeping in contact with the outer air.

So the breath governs after the body has taken place, and when the nostrils are developed. Before that, what we infer is Prâṇa.

continued

*Pleasure and bliss
are different from
one another.*



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but bad masters."*

Anonymous

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The Mystery of Prâṇa, PART II *continued*

That which is less manifested in the body is also governed by Prâṇa. Through its activity there are some minute secretions being secreted somewhere.

And who gives the impetus to the secretions? We are not aware of it. The gross results are the bodily secretions. But before they come out, there is a secretion inside. And who is the governor? The latent Prâṇa.

So breath governs from flesh to bone and Prâṇa governs still further, and this is the secretion which we come across in **Haṭha Pradīpikā**.

All the Sanskrit words meaning divine milk, etc. refer to some delicate secretion due to the movement of Prâṇa. Only the Yogis can see it. In an effort to describe it they must use a simile which in this case is milk, a word which we understand since it is part of our everyday lives.

So, Prâṇa goes still further, beyond the reach of our physical perception. On the basis of Prâṇa, the breath is taking place. It is the biggest agent of ours in the body. When Prâṇa becomes consciousness it is known as Citta. The evolute of Prâṇa is Citta Vṛtti, which activates Prâṇa and which in turn gives the impetus to our breathing.

A Vṛtti is the smallest activity which is begun in the Citta. Prâṇa moves and makes all other things move. Thus there is the gross – breath – Śvâsa, then subtle – Prâṇa, then – Citta.

We think that disease is part of our flesh and blood. Eighty percent of disease is not of our flesh and blood, however, but

is of the Citta. Patañjali clearly points out that the main root of all disease is Citta. Maladjusted Citta will give rise to disease.

Anger beginning in the Citta ends up by disturbing the entire system. Once that act of anger is started in the Citta, it gives such a violent movement that the whole body is shaken. With all the emotions brought under control, there is less possibility of disease.

Patañjali suggests that instead of taking medicine, it is best to take care of your mind first of all. Anger contains no germs, yet the whole of the body is aching, simply as a result of the stimulus of the Citta.

What is the cause of the anger? It is the ego in man which gives rise to morbid thinking. How can this be set aright? By right thinking. How can one do this? Not in the bizarre, but if one sits quietly.

Quiet is necessary. You must hit at the source, which means to calm the Citta.

Until this done, no medicine can give release. Prâṇa exists between the Citta and our gross body, and governs it by reflecting on the Citta. We cannot touch it, but we can infer it.

How do I control it? Through Prâṇa. It will reflect on the gross body and Citta.

There is a story in the Mahābhārata.

When Udhīṣṭar saw the death of so many people during the great battle, he said he didn't want any part of it. Kṛṣṇa took him to Bhīṣma. Bhīṣma said, "Whenever something comes to you, be it grief or anger, hold your breath, be in that pause."

After Kapālabhāti, what happens? The

whole of our lungs are ventilated. In the pause there will be relaxation. In a few seconds the anger will subside. This is because Śvâsa and breath are connected with Prâṇa and Citta.

So, diseases which are of long duration are always due to some perverted psychological attitude. Our expectations are not fulfilled. The mind gets a shock and that shock remains dormant and comes out in the form of disease.

According to Patañjali, in the real treatment of disease you have the right conception, and this can only be achieved through Prâṇa.

From a series of lectures given by
Swami Digambarji at Lonavla, INDIA,
beginning October 15, 1970.

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