YOGA EDUCATION

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Dear Reader,

A devotee feels jealous watching God showering his blessings on a farmer who was praying but briefly. God does not answer the devotee why he selected a farmer and asks the self-proclaimed devotee to perform a very very difficult task. Upon the devotee’s return God asks how often the devotee remembered God. The devotee is surprised as his entire attention was on the task. Thereupon God explains how the farmer though involved in worldly life yet very sincerely prayed to God while others repeated the name of God very often but insincerely!

There is a difference between an action carried out by a thoughtless individual and one by a person who is fully aware and conscious of what he is doing, though externally the actions may look very much similar. The student of Yoga is conscious of his spiritual goal and while carrying out a routine act he imparts that vibration on the action. A sportsman does some physical exercise, he does it swiftly with an extrovertish attitude, with emotions and desires. The yogic practitioner doing his āsana is very sedate and subjectively involved in what he is doing, he does not look around for an applause, nor has he any immediate mundane goals. The yogi organizes his life consciously around spiritual objectives, but all activities are carried out against the larger backdrop of introversion, self-control and self-development.

We ordinary mortals, too carry on our usual routines but often these are carried out thoughtlessly. They become ritualistic, and mechanical. Apparently a busy executive dreaming of climbing higher, is seen sitting for a few minutes to relax, he appears very similar to a Yoga student performing śāṛṣaṇa, but the difference lies in the mentality of the two. The first one may occasionally reduce the time of his relaxation, hurry through it or even skip it in situations where other interests dominate. In case of the Yoga student this will rarely happen. He has set his priorities and will follow each of his duties very consciously and systematically.

As the saying goes a busy man has lots of time to spare, a lazy man has no time. The busy man has a clarity of his objective. The lazy man has none.

Yours in Yoga,
Editor.

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**BIOGRAPHY**

**NANDIN — A YOGIN**

A less known yogi who embodies extreme devotion to yoga is being described in this article.

THE Vyāśabhāṣya, dealing with the fructification of punyakarmāyasya refers to Nandin saying, “the young Nandīśvara (i.e. Nandin who assumed a divine body) was transferred from the human form into a deva” (2.12). In the bhāṣya on YS.2.13 he is also referred to as an example of a person having a karmāśaya causing two results, namely the span of life and the experience of pleasure and pain. The Bhāṣya means to say that Nandin assumed a deva-sarīra without leaving his human body (i.e. he assumed the divine body not after death but while remaining with the human body). This is why he is mentioned to exemplify the doctrine of jāyantara-parināma (mutation of the body and organs into a different species of beings) in Vyāsabhāṣya on YS.4.3.

Both the commentators on the Vyāsabhāṣya, namely Vācaspati and Vījñānabhaṭṭaśū inform us that the transformation of the body of Nandin took place when he was eight years old (on YS.2.13). As there is no mention of age in the Bhāṣya it may be presumed that the commentators came to know of this factor from other sources. It is quite likely that this source is the Purānic works (including the epics). It is gratifying to note that the Kāśikāhṛdaya of the Skandapurāṇa expressly states that the son of the sage Śilāda became Nandin at the age of eight by the grace of Śiva (11.106). The life of Nandin as depicted in the epics and the Purāṇas is going to be described here in brief. The exalted position of Nandin may be inferred from the fact that he is worshipped in the Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad in the Taittiriya Āranyaka (नवीकोरकम धीमागो). Most of the Purāṇas say that Nandin was the son of a sage named Śilāda, (Śiva-p. 3.6.49). This is why he is often called Śailādi or Sāilāda. He is also called Sālaṅkāyana, which is the name of his gotra (Liṅga-p. 1.25.3) vide Varāha-p. 144.167 also.
How the son of the sage Śilāda became a constant attendant of Śiva and assumed a deathless divine body has been described in the three Purāṇas, namely Śiva-p. 3.6-7, Liṅga-p. 1.42-44 and Kūrma-p. 2.41.17-42. It is stated in these Purāṇas that Śiva himself appeared as a boy having three eyes and four hands and he was accepted by his devotee Śilāda as his son. The sage called the boy Nandin as the boy gladened the mind of his father. As soon as the boy entered the house of his father, he left the inhuman form and assumed the human form. He practised penance and worshipped Śiva to acquire a long span of life. As a result of Śiva’s boon he became devoid of death, possessed lordly powers, became a constant attendant of Śiva and assumed a divine body with three eyes and ten hands. Devi Umā accepted him as her son and he was appointed as the lord of the gaṇas of Śiva. Afterwards he was married to Suvāsī, the daughter of the Maruts. On account of his possessing a divine body he was regarded as a (मन्यकरुणसिद्धि) deva (comm. on Āpastamba Dharmasūtra 1.2.11.3).

A somewhat different account is found in the Bṛhadharma-p. (2.4 Ch.) where Nandin is said to be a logician, disciple of the sage Dadhici and attendant of Śiva. He prayed Śiva to become his constant attendant which was granted. The Mahābhārata speaks of him as a divine attendant of Śiva (Sabhā-p. 10.34). The Varāha-p. vouchsafes the information that Nandin (son of Śilāda) acquired devahood without relinquishing the human body (213.69-71)—a view which is clearly stated by the Vyāsabhāṣya.

The Rāmāyaṇa also speaks of Nandin in a few places. He is regarded as ‘another aspect of Śaṅkara’ in 7.16.5 and ‘an attendant of Śiva’ in 7.16.9. He is described as karāla (having a dreadful form), kṣaṇapīḷa (dark-brown in colour), vāmanā (with a dwarfish figure), muniḍ (with a shaved head) hravabhuja (having short arms) (7.16.8-9). It is said to have cursed the rākṣasa-king Rāvaṇa (5.50.2-3). The Rāmāyaṇa expressly states that Nandin had a face which resembled that of a monkey (5.5.23). It appears that the Rāmāyaṇic description is based on a different tradition about Nandin.

The teachings of Nandin are found (in versified form) in several Purāṇas. In the Liṅga-p. (2.55.3-58) Nandin is found to speak of five yogas, namely mantrayoga (repeated muttering of sacred syllables associated with meditation), spata-yoga (chiefly based on kumbhaka), bhāvayoga (taking refuge in Śiva with all the heart), abhāvayoga (the state in which ātman is realised as devoid of all things) and mahāyoga (the state in which the self-effulgent, pure and simple nature of the self is experienced), which are to be practised one after the other. The path of Yoga is said to be the central theme of the teachings of the Vedas and is called Pāśupata Yoga. The Yoga is said to be antyāśrama, a term found in the Śvetasvatara Up. 6.21 also.

The Devipurāṇa in its 10th Chapter (which has ten sections, each with separate number of verses) contain an elaborate account of Yoga, originally proclaimed by Nandin to Sanatkumāra, who in turn taught the Yoga to Nārada (10.1.1-6). Here we find a discussion on all the tattvas of Sāṁkhya (Ch. 2), the sādhamyā (common feature) and vaidharmya (divergence) of śvara, puruṣa and avyakta (Ch. 3); qualifications of persons eligible for practising Yoga and the duties of a bhikṣu (Ch. 4); places fit for yoga-practice and a few yogic postures, prāṇāyāma, results of prāṇāyāma and the muttering of sacred syllables (Ch. 5); eulogy of Yoga, ways of practising Yoga successfully, knowability of two-fold brahman, nature of śabda-brahman, characteristics of meditation (Ch. 6), method of muttering Om with necessary details (Chs. 7-8); characteristics of a steadfast (Yukta) person, mention of a few obstacles, viz. prātiḥba, etc. (Ch. 9); fixity and the realization of the most subtle entities (Ch. 10). It is stated here that there are two ways through which Yoga may be acquired, namely Śivasidhāntamārga and Vedāśtrāgama. That Nandin was a teacher and preacher of Śivasidharmas is repeatedly stated in the Kedārakhaṇḍa of the Skandapurāṇa (vide 6.194. etc.).

About the disciples, teachers and the places of practising austerities of Nandin we find the following pieces of information in the Purāṇas. The Āruṇācalakhaṇḍa of the Skandapurāṇa (2.3.25) says that Nandin received Śivayoga from
the son of Mrkanḍu (i.e. Mārkandeya). Sanatkumāra is said to be the disciple of Nandin (Saura-p 4.12). The Kapilapurī of Nandin is said to be situated somewhere near the Kailāsa mountain (Kūrma-p. 1.47-50). Nandin is said to practise austerities in the Nandīṭirtha (Kūrma-p.2.39.87) and also on the Japyesvara tirtha (Kūrma-p.2.41-17).

R. S. BHATTACHARYA

HEALTH

HEALTH IN ĀYURVEDA

There is much in common between Āyurveda and Yoga. We have an authority of Āyurveda giving us details.

The present social life is growing day by day more complex and mechanical on account of increasing ecological and industrial development as well as rapid variation in physical social environments. Consequently it has created many a problem associated with socio-economical, familial as well as health matters. Everybody desires to obtain fresh air, water, light, food, shelter, recreation rest, economical and social status and prosperous long life. For this purpose, one tries to face all types of calamities and discomforts. Life would be simple in deed, if our needs were immediately and automatically satisfied. But as we know there are many obstacles both environmental and cultural, they require sometimes extra efforts to fulfill the needs with satisfaction. If there is blockage of progress or defective adjustment to environment, along with irregular and unsuitable diet and wrong conduct, with foul environment, one can suffer psychosomatic disorders. In this way health can be disturbed in all dimensions.

Āyurveda has specifically emphasised that the health problems can be solved universally by all human being on the earth by the observance of the principle of Swasthaṭīṭa. The Swasthaṭīṭa is compounded from three words (i) Swa [represents possession or additions to one's own that is Āyu (life)] (ii) Stha represents stability of maintenance and means one who stands, therefore, Swastha, means one who enjoys normal health (iii) Vṛttā acting or playing one's part with deliberate selfnegation to observe strictly all duties of health, beneficial to life. Swasthaṭīṭa, thus helps one to obtain the goal of perpetual normal health so that every one can stand firm in carrying out his duties towards himself and society to lead healthy happy life. In this way Swasthaṭīṭa is the science, which teaches us how to live in a healthy happy self-sufficient

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