YOGA EDUCATION

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PRANA AND DISEASES

The relation of the external bhutas and the internal parts of the body is considered from point of prāṇāśakti.

The assuming of a body by the ātman (self) is one of the most important doctrines propounded by yogins. Ātman is immutable, bodiless and has no limit. It is the jīva (ātman associated with antahkarana) that is enveloped with gross or subtle bodies. This antahkarana has three subdivisions, namely buddhi intellect, āhankāra (ego) and hṛdaya (also called manas) having their respective functions as prakāśana, āharaṇa and vidhāraṇa (cognition, conation and retention). This antahkarana is further developed into three groups of external organs (bāhyakaraṇas known as the jñāṇendriyas, karmendriyas and prāṇas (sense of perception, action and bioenergy), each group having its own viṣaya (object) known as prakāśya, kārya and dhārya. The aggregate of the internal and external organs may be treated as an upādhi of ātman. In this paper we are especially concerned with the dhārya (retentur) viṣayas and the prāṇas.

This upādhi remains without any activity in the state of pralaya, for the viṣayas—the exciting cause of the organs—become dissolved in their cause and thereby they loose their power of creating uparāga (sensation; vide Vyāsabhāṣya 1.7) in the organs. The antahkarana devoid of all kinds of external distractions and being overpowered by the tamoguṇa inert quality, remains in a suspended state in the state of pralaya. At the time of creation the aforesaid three kinds of viṣayas appear with their specific character (i.e. līna viṣayas become grāhaya) and the three groups of organs utilize them according to their power.

The jīvas who appear in the created world are endowed with dehadhāraṇa sanskāra (potencies that create the body) and being compelled by this sanskāra they, taking the external objects with the help of their prāṇa-indriya, transform the dhārya-viṣayas as their body. It is the chief duty of the prāṇa-śakti to deal with the external matter for the sake of the body.

Their common function, known as vidhāraṇa, comprises construction (nirmāṇa), development (vārdhama) and maintenance (poṣaṇa) of the body.

The bodies are of various kinds, but they are governed by the following principles:

1. The material of the body must come from the external object.
2. Every ‘body’ is capable of being left by the jīva.
3. In the aforesaid three functions of prāṇa, manas plays a good part.
4. Not only the functions of the sense organs and motor organs can be checked, but also the imperceptible functions of the prāṇas can be put under control with the help of yogic exercises.
5. In comparison to the jñāṇendriyas and karmendriyas, the prāṇas enjoy greater control over the body.
6. The organism must be in consonance with the development of the inner organs of a sentient being. By analysing the body one can ascertain the state of development of the organs of a sentient being (वर्तमानस्तुष्णम् च सच्च सत्त्वानुवृत्तम् च वर्तमानम्).

The external material which is transformed into a body by the activities of the prāṇas is called viṣeṣa in the sāṃkhya-yoga literature. All kinds of sthūla and sukṣma gross and subtle bodies are made of this material. Both the sthūla and sukṣma sārīras being made of the same material (i.e. viṣeṣa) must be understood as bhogāyatanas, though the former is not held as such by some modern scholars. This sukṣma sārīra has even its own dimension and it possesses the properties of the bhūtas, viz sound, touch colour etc. in their fine form. This is why these sukṣma sārīras are not perceived by ordinary eye, though in reality these sarīras are not out of the province of the bhūtas.

The sukṣma sārīra (subtle body) is different from the mātā-pitrja body (biogenesis). The viṣeṣa which has two broad
divisions viz. sūkṣma śarīra and mātapityaśa śarīra, is the same as the five manifested mahābhūtas in an intermixed state. Each of these bhūtas has its own seats in a body (vide Siddhasiddhāntasamgraha 1.38-41 and other works on Nāthayoga, Svarodayayoga and Hāṭhayoga) and the qualities of these bhūtas affect these seats internally. The secret connection between the body and the bhūtas and the internal parts of the body, is one of the most important doctrines propounded by yogins, and the relation is to be known by all who want to avoid prajñāparādha or to follow Swasthavṛttta.

A study of the yogic works reveals that the following relationships are to be understood fully if any body wants to achieve perfect mental and bodily health:

1. The relation of one organ with the other of the same group e.g. the relation of ear with eye, and the like.
2. The relation of one group of indriya with another group of indriyas, e.g. the relation of the sense organs with the motor organs or with the prāṇas.
3. The relation of one organ of a group with the organ or organs of another group: e.g. the relation of ear with organ of speech.
4. The relation of organs with objects.
5. The relation of internal organs with external organs.

**FAITH**

Faith is like a mother that nourishes the child in its growth. Faith is in fact the positive aspect of disinterestedness, that is considered by all as the first essential of self improvement.

“For others, it (trance) is to be preceded by faith, enthusiasm, memory awareness and ultimately the intellectual excellence.” Yoga Sūtra: Chapter 1, Sūtra 20.

What is faith? It is a mysterious quality. Within each of us there appears to be a capacity and a need to accept some power which helps to sustain us in our lives. This power varies according to the development of an individual. It may be a belief in one’s own abilities, or possibly in some person or form of government; people also may change their faith.

But at some point in our existence, it seems that this concept of faith takes on a greater meaning. In my own life, I had to accept the limitations of my own thinking about the world. I had attempted to manipulate people and events to suit my own wishes only to realise eventually that the process of life going on around me was too large to permit me to control it. Faced with this failure, I came to a temporary halt. The old ways of functioning were of no use; therefore what was to fill this vacuum.

At this point, the first question was—“Is there any purpose to life?”. Some think it has no purpose and that it is a series of obstacles which have the effect only of harassing them. But such people have little attraction, for the effect of their thinking leaves them sad and negative. On the other hand some take a very positive view. They see life as a teacher. The situations which it provides are to help them grow and to gain in wisdom. In some manner or other we have all met this type of individual. As a result of this sort of thinking, they overcome problems and retain a quality of cheerfulness.

Eventually, I believe all of us reach the conclusion that the positive response to life is the only one. In fact it seems natural