

SIVANANDA YOGA VEDANTA CENTRE SINGAPORE

OCTOBER 2009 NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

Article: PRANA as electricity

Workshop: 10 Oct'09, Saturday, 2.00-3.30pm
Healing Yoga Practice for Menstruation
& Reproduction Health

24 Oct'09, Saturday, 2.00-4.00pm
Women's Comfort Food Cooking

Special Class: 9 Oct'09, Friday, 8.00-9.30pm
Satsang & Vedanta

23 Oct'09, Friday, 8.00-9.30pm
Yoga Asanas Variation Class

From Centre: 3 Oct'09, Yoga By The Sea

17 & 18 Oct'09 Centre Close

Wednesday and Sunday Class are back!

Happy Deepavali from Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre



PRANA as electricity-article

Your physical body is like a machine. It runs on two types of energy: chemical energy, which comes from food, and **psychic energy** (called prana) which comes from all objects we take in: food, water, air and sunlight. These are the basic sources of our prana and they are found everywhere in nature. Prana also exists in the vacuum of space, underground, and even in water. But is not a chemical thing, it is electrical in nature. Your body is a storehouse of prana, and the blood system (circulatory system) acts as a transformer, diverting the prana from the astral to the physical.

Yogis do not believe that the body exists merely because of physiochemical nature; to them it is basically electrical in nature. When the electrical connection from the astral to the physical is severed (like a battery disconnected from an engine) it doesn't matter how powerful the engine is, it cannot start. The impulses of prana travel through the astral to the physical through an astral umbilical cord at our solar plexus. When this cord is severed, no more prana can come to the physical body. If the prana comes in very small amounts then the body will be comatose (unconscious).

If you understand the electrical nature of four bodies, you will understand the purpose of **pranayama**. I will try to explain in modern terms, as some of the ancient terms are very difficult to grasp.

It is said that you can block the air in the Sushumna, in the throat region, in the stomach region, in the back region, in the ear region, in the eye region. Actually, how can you block the air in these places when the air which you inhale does not go into these places at all? That does this mean?

Actually, it is not a physical blockage; it is the diversion of energy from one source to another. In yoga, we call this energy "**prana**". The problem is that there is no English equivalent for this word, so it gets translated as "air". Even Indian yogis make this mistake when they don't know how to translate it from the Sanskrit.

I like to explain these ideas using analogies with electronic terms. Most of you are familiar with such gadgets as radios, cameras, and computers. There are three basic components common to all of them. Similar things exist in your body, but please don't take what I said literally; it is only to help you to understand how such things as locks work in the body mechanism. When you do **pranayama**, it will help you a great deal if you understand this. Three things should be understood:

1. Transformer, 2. Condensers and 3. Resistors.

Transformer: In electronic components there is always a source of power, usually a battery or household current. A small tape recorder cannot handle the 110volt current as it enters the house, so it must be stepped down to a lower voltage by a transformer, otherwise the components will burn up. (There are step-down transformers and step-up transformers for decreasing and increasing the voltage.)

Condensers (also called Capacitors) are storehouses of electricity. An example is the electronic flash in your camera. The electricity for the flash may come from a six volt battery, but that voltage cannot give enough light to take a photograph. What is needed are several thousand volts to create an intense light, so the energy coming from this small battery is stored up (it is not stepped up or stepped down) like reservoir and accumulated till it can create a powerful flash for a brief moment.

Resistors: Another concept in electronics that we should understand is that of resistance. We can increase or decrease the resistance to the flow of energy. Most impurities will reduce the electrical flow. An example is the ordinary garden hose through which water flows at specific velocity unless constricted by squeezing. The pump continues to try to force 16 gallons of water per minute through the hose, but when its capacity is reduced by constriction, the pressure goes up, and the water comes out more forcefully.

In our body, something similar to a condenser exists. Prana is like electricity but very subtle. All electricity flows through wires, and in our body it flows through **nadis** (or meridians in the Chinese system). The problem here is when I say nerve, many people understand only the visible type of nerve. The nadi is equivalent to the nerve in the physical body, but it may be called an astral nerve tube, as it exists not in the physical, but in the astral body. I will not be able to completely communicate this subject in electronic terms, but there does exist a similarity between a physical nerve and your astral nerve; they are counterparts. The difference is that one is visible and the other is not.

In our bodies, the impulse coming from the brain through the vagus nerve which controls the heart and lungs are all impulses called prana. Previously it was thought that the heart was not susceptible to voluntary control, that you could not control the heartbeat by concentration. Yogis can demonstrate that the heartbeat can be slowed down with concentration or by such practices as Jalandhara bandha. They shut down the flow of prana. We are not talking about physical prana, but psychic prana.

Thought can change your breathing rhythm as well as your heartbeat. Two important components of your body are together called cardiovascular system because they are inter-dependent. When the body needs extra oxygen, the heart rate goes up. In order to make the lungs pump faster you have to stimulate the muscles of the diaphragm and intercostals muscles. That is done by the brain. In an emergency, say you are running because a tiger is chasing you and you are close to exhaustion, the adrenal gland will, through adrenaline, give the heart an extra boost so that the lungs can breathe a bit faster for a short time. That's equivalent to the capacitor in electronic gadgets which I mentioned. Nature has given us the ability to escape from dangerous situations. This extra stimulation activates the adrenal gland which pumps adrenaline into the blood stream so that the heart gets a fast kick for a short time so that it can pump more oxygen to the muscles. Let us try to understand the cardiovascular system, to see how the heart rate and the breathing are interconnected.

There is a gadget called the polygraph or lie detector. Just as EEG test the brain waves, the polygraph measures the three basic components mostly connected to the autonomous nervous system, a system which is basically not under our control. Generally speaking, the autonomous nervous system is beyond our control, but yogis can control it. In the polygraph, the three basic components are; 1. To demonstrate and measure your breathing pattern, how many cycles per second you are breathing (normally we breathe 16 times per minute). 2. The pulse rate (normally about 75 or 80 per minute). 3. Galvanic skin response. Under our sweat glands there are nerves which carry sensory impulses.

Because the galvanic skin response (GRS), measured as coming from the sweat gland, will change according to your thought, it is one of the three basic components in a polygraph. When you check for GSR by putting small electrodes on the tip of the finger (for example), you can take this current coming out and amplify it so that you can see its pattern. That is also under the autonomous nervous system.

The polygraph technician also connects an elastic type of material from your chest to the polygraph so that you can see the number of times you are breathing, or what your breathing pattern is: shallow, long or disturbed. With normal breathing we inhale about 1500cc of air and exhale out the same amount very gently. However, when you breathing deeply, you can take in and out about 2000cc. At that time the impulse will be very strong. When you are mentally disturbed the breathing pattern will also change.

When all these components are connected to the polygraph, we observe three different

waves: breathing pattern, blood pressure, and galvanic skin resistance. After two or three minutes there is a normal reading. If suddenly the polygraph changes, it is an indication that the person has lied. An emotional upset will cause the breathing pattern to change from say sixteen times per minute to twenty-five or thirty times per minutes. This can go up or down. In extreme cases the breathing or the heart may even stop, as in the case of shock or some bad news. Also with good news: something very exciting-say you won five million dollars in a lottery-that could stop the heart also.

In such cases, you are over-loading the capacitor. Within a brief time, everything is short circuited. The voltage coming through the nerves becomes so powerful that it just short circuits everything: the heart and/ or lungs stop and there is collapse. So you see that your body is not different from an electronic mechanism.

The electronic impulse in our body is prana. This prana comes to the nervous system when it is stored by condensers and transformed by transformers. There are five basic types of prana: **prana, apana, udana, samana, and vyana**, as well as some minor pranas; the difference between major and minor pranas lying in the voltage. Even in electronic gadgets, some things need higher voltage so there are different types of transformers. In the body we call these transformers **chakras**. Various nerves come and go through the chakras. They are not physical nerves, but astral.

In the physical body, the places where these nerves gather at the spinal cord are called plexuses. They are a kind of junction like a telephone exchange. These plexuses correspond to the chakras. This is where the energy is stored up like a condenser, altered like a transformer and acted upon by resistors. All these things take place in the same area.

In most people, the transformers in their upper chakras are not completely opened up; maybe for highly advanced students they are partially opened. Or if there is a tremendous amount of impurity, it acts as a resistor. These variable resistors are automatically controlled by your thought as well as your diet. Everything is controlled by thought. According to the nature of your thought, your impurities will increase and decrease. For each of these three gadgets in your system: condenser, transformer, resistor, all are controlled by your mind.

So yogis go directly to the mind to change the pattern. According to the nature of the pattern of your thought, the voltage will be increased or reduced. If the voltage increases, then the energy goes to a higher chakra. If you reduce the voltage (make your thought very gross with only sensual and sexual thoughts), then the energy goes only to the lower chakras because the voltage is not sufficient to lift to the higher chakras.

Remember that neither thought nor prana are in the physical body. They are in the astral body and according to the nature of your thought, the prana flows in the physical body. When your thoughts are very gross, the prana or electrons coming to the physical body will be lessened since there is too much resistance. Also, a physical nerve cannot take a high, powerful thought, so there may be a shut-down of the prana to a certain extent. The nervous system which is impure cannot transmit high voltage. Sometimes a sudden

shock to the mind will even shut off this flow of prana. Sometimes this current is slowed down to such an extent that you are like a living corpse, in a state of coma.

The ultimate purpose of **Hatha Yoga** is to escape from the lower voltage and move to a higher voltage.

-Excerpt from the Hatha Yoga Pradipika the classic guide for the advanced practice of Hatha Yoga with commentary by Swami Vishnudevananda-

Satsang & Vedanta-Friday Night Special Class

Date:

Friday, 9 October 2009

Time:

8.00 – 9.30pm

Venue:

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre
21B Bukit Pasoh Rd, Singapore 089835

Fee:

Free of charge

Program:

- 30 minutes silent meditation
- Kirtan Chanting
- Introduction to Vedanta / Philosophy of Yoga
- 4 Vedas and their subdivisions
- 6 schools of philosophy
- Stages of human life according to the Vedic system

Teacher:

Janaki



Healing Yoga Practice for Menstruation & Reproduction Health-workshop

Date:

Saturday, 10 October 2009

Time:

2.00 – 3.30pm

Venue:

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre
21B Bukit Pasoh Rd, Singapore 089835

Fee:

\$20,-/person

Using class pass for Sivananda Yoga Centre's Students

Program:

- Learn to practice a specific sequence of yoga postures to release tension during



menstruation and to improve the overall health of the reproductive system
- Print-outs of the yoga asana sequence will be provided to facilitate home practice

Teacher:

Ong Ju Lee

RSVP:

Please email to info@sivananda.com.sg
or call 90679100 / 98386704 to register.

Yoga Asanas Variation Class-Friday Night Special Class

Date:

Friday, 23 October 2009

Time:

8.00 – 9.30pm

Venue:

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre
21B Bukit Pasoh Rd, Singapore 089835

Fee:

Using class pass for Sivananda Yoga Centre's Students

Program:

- Open for intermediate and advanced students
- Each class will focus on the variations of different asanas

Teacher:

Janaki



Women's Comfort Food Cooking-workshop

Date:

Saturday, 24 October 2009

Time:

2.00 – 4.00pm

Venue:

Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centre
21B Bukit Pasoh Rd, Singapore 089835

Fee:

\$25,-/person

\$20,- for Sivananda Centre's Student

Program:

Learn how to prepare simple, delicious, vegetarian meal for women's health.
Contain high calcium, iron, fiber, omega 3 & 6 and good for reproduction organ

Menu:

- Asparagus tahini salad
- Mung bean drumstick leaf soup
- Almond rice
- Ginger milk custard dessert



Teacher:

Sumukhee

RSVP:Please email to info@sivananda.com.sg

CLASS SCHEDULE–from centre

Time	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
9.30 - 10.30 am						Satsang	
10.00 - 11.15 pm							Beginner
10.45- 12.00pm						Open	
12.30 - 1.45 pm						Beginner	
5.00- 6.15 pm					Gentle		
6.30 - 7.45 pm	Beginner	Open	Beginner	Open	Beginner		
8.00 - 9.15 pm	Open	Beginner	Open	Beginner	Special Class		

Description:**Satsang** = 20 mins silent meditation, followed by Bhajan and Arati.**Beginner** = work on coordination between breathing and basic postures; gaining flexibility.**Open** = intermediate to advanced students practice together (not suitable for beginner).**Gentle** = gentle stretching to slowly bring back flexibility and strength. Suitable for elderly or overall stiffness.**Special Class** = check at www.sivananda.com.sg for program details.

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