

Body Purification in Hatha Yoga

Purification of the body means that whatever is not properly usable for the body's function—both in terms of what is received from outside and the impurities created in the body—should be properly discharged. (The main concern is the cleansing of the alimentary canal, since other organs are significantly more difficult to access. The alimentary canal needs plenty of care and attention.)

It is a fact that chemical bodily impurities arise and are not always fully discharged. These gross chemical impurities, regardless of whether they are formed within or introduced from without, do prevent the normal function of the body. When this is so, certain symptoms develop as a reaction to the accumulations of toxins, along with an urge to throw these out of the body. Everybody is endowed with the power of resisting disease. Disease is that complex of symptoms which develop within the body when the power of resistance is overcome, strained beyond the toleration-point. There, a reaction arises in the form of symptoms, called disease. All this occurs while the body functions at the gross level, and with the mind functioning at the sensory level. One is able to control the accumulation of poisons formed within or introduced from outside only to a point situated within individual toleration. That is to say that, up to a certain limit when the body is relatively healthy and the mind functions normally and unhampered at the physical level, there will be no disease symptoms.

So-called perfect health results in making the mind free and thoughtful at the sensory level. When health is established, one enjoys a mind that is vital, forceful, enduring, constructive and intelligent. This is when the body is purified to that limit at the gross level. Of course, this will certainly not transform an unusually dull person into someone intelligent, but an excellent physical condition may prove beneficial in many ways as regards mind control.

This interrelation is generally ignored, and yet controlling this kind of poison has a deeper meaning, seeing that it actually reacts on the mind. Most people feel that it is enough to enjoy fair physical health and a joyous and strong mind at the sensory level. However, as soon as one wants the mind

to climb above the sensory level, a new situation arises along with a new challenge with respect to body and mind relationship. The fact that the cleanliness of the body proves sufficient at the sensory level will prove quite inadequate at a higher level. Blood may be chemically clean at the sensory level, but far beyond it, with a mind operating at a higher level, it may prove unsuitable, since the global body-vibrations there will be found too gross when the mind is to operate above the sensory. This circumstance, namely the need of super-purification lest the bodily vibrations cause interference, is generally ignored. Purification has its levels.

The word "vibration" may be misunderstood here; a better choice of word might be "motional." Every part of the body is moving, though not at the same rate and frequency, but in coordination, which results in a global motion. Taken together, all individual motions (the motions of the heart, the alimentary canal, the lungs, the fluid circulations, etc.) produce a sum total of motions, which will be quite satisfactory at the sensory level if the body is in a perfect state of health.

However, when the mind is to be raised above this level, even perfect physical health will still prove too gross. Therefore, Hatha-Yoga explains how one can build up a perfectly healthy body at the gross level, and evolve far beyond. Though concentration commences at the gross level, concentration itself stands at a higher level. It actually starts at a level that is situated above the sensorial, at the point where the summation of those motions will prove too gross. Modern methods of laboratory blood analysis are still insufficient to detect all impurities that will prevent one from elevating the mind, but these subtle impurities may be detected by observing their reaction on the mind when it is in a state of concentration.

Refined and higher thoughts will not come forth properly when the body is insufficiently purified. However, the summation of all activities above the sensory levels can be directed, controlled and adjusted. There, the mind is not so much affected by the disturbances that occur at the sensory level. On the other hand, above the sensorial field, these disturbances will arise immediately if impurities still linger. Hence the importance of Hatha Yoga, though this is so little understood.

A reversed action, or motion, only operates above the sensory level. The motional pattern there is entirely different from (and even opposite to) sensory level patterns. Body alone cannot exhibit it spontaneously, but it does in another, reversed and entirely altered motion. The reaction does not

reach the physical level before such reverse motions are initiated, but it is there in the physical that the summation of all motions is altered. It is at the gross level that bodily motions can be started and adjusted so as to blend with the reverse motion.