

THE WAY OF SADHANA

PRACTITIONER'S SERIES

LESSON 2

Dear Member

Greetings,

There is nothing quite so difficult to overcome than the bad habits we have unconsciously adopted and lived with for years. In most cases, we are unaware that many of our physical and emotional problems are directly caused by these unknown negative habits. Bad eating habits tend to surface more quickly because the results are more immediate. But breathing is something that we all do every moment that we live, and it's almost inconceivable to imagine that we have been doing it wrong all of these years.

The biggest problem is that we take our body too much for granted. We automatically assume that it will always do what we will it to do. If the time comes when the body no longer responds to our wishes, as we would have it do, we are at a loss to imagine what went wrong. Immediately, we assume that we have been invaded or overtaken by some outside disease not of our own making. We even blame the passing years for our debilitating weaknesses, not knowing that the organs and muscles that we carry around with us today are less than one year old. The substances of the body are continually renewing themselves. Therefore, we cannot lay the blame on old age. Years have nothing to do with it. The problem is not old age, but old habits. When we adopt negative habits, the new substances of the body modify themselves to fit the pattern of the negative habits. If the

old habit is negative, the pattern of the new substances will also be negative, and consequently, the whole physical system will reap the negative results.

When we were very small, our curiosity was immense and therefore, the physical body was continually creating EXCESS ENERGY to produce muscles and organs that would coincide with our mental energy. During our adolescent years, our curiosity was mostly directed toward the opposite sex. And these thoughts were largely responsible for the quick acceleration of sexual energy and the development of the sexual organs of the body. It is at this point in life that the male and female of the Human species begin to experience uniquely different results from their thought patterns.

For the male, the physical effect of sexual intercourse always remains a temporary gratification. The physical processes that take place within the body are also temporary. It is wrong to say that the sexual act is ever physically fulfilling. It may be momentarily pacified, but it is never fulfilled. All forms of extended creative activity must be found outside of the body. Therefore, all physical energy is directed toward outside accomplishments such as job, hobby or profession. But the end result is always something separate from the physical body. Even mental creativity is directed toward an outer manifestation. No matter what Man creates outside of his body, the end result is never totally satisfied. He may be proud of his work and temporarily gratified, but in Truth, it has never been intimate part of his physical being.

The female on the other hand, is not only capable of the same temporary gratification as man; she also has the ADDED BIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY THAT IS INTERNALLY CREATIVE. When sexual intercourse results

in pregnancy, the female body responds dramatically to an endless variety of Physical Pattern Changes. The internal creativity of normal pregnancy lasts for nine months. In that period of time, the physical body is experiencing changes that are more dramatic than any time in her life. Nearly all of her mental activity is focused upon an Awareness of what is happening inside of her body. Because of this, her Creative Will is largely focused internally. During the whole cycle of pregnancy, the woman's mental energy is creating many new Patterns of Physical Expression. With each day, the physical body's Divine Potential is renewed and expanded (the last word is not intended as a pun). The fact is that the female body is experiencing an EXTENDED PERIOD OF CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT within itself that far surpasses anything that the male body has ever experienced.

But we must not assume that the internal changes end with the birth of the child. As a matter of fact, the female body goes through as many changes after the birth of the child as she did during her period of pregnancy. The body must make many readjustments as it accustoms itself to a non-pregnant condition. But the re-adjustments will never totally return the woman to the exact physical condition that preceded the pregnancy. Each pregnancy produces permanent changes that result in different Creative Patterns than those previously experienced. This cycle of Creative Physical Change may repeat itself over and over again in a woman's lifetime.

While the male of the species generally experiences his last great Creative Physical Change at approximately 20 year of age, the female may continue to experience Creative Physical Changes well into her 40's and even beyond. Biologically speaking, we could even say that the physical body of man is completed sooner than the female body – but it never develops the

creative potential of its female counterpart. It is as if Nature has chosen to extend the physical development of the female to achieve the greatest assurance for the survival of the species. But regardless of whether a woman experiences childbirth or not, she still has an advantage over the male body. With each menstrual cycle, her body experiences a natural purification process that reaches far beyond the sexual organs. The “water retention” in the body acts as an added method to flush out the impurities in all of the organs and tissues of the body. These natural happenings, along with the woman’s extended years of physical development, may also play a great part in her ability to live longer than her male counterpart. From this, you may now understand how the Natural Creative Patterns of the body produce an on-going process of continual change and renewal.

Remember, we have been speaking about NATURAL PHYSICAL CHANGES in which the body creates many of its own future expressions. Willful Creativity is something else entirely. Both sexes are endowed with the added ability to MENTALLY INFLUENCE the normal patterns of the body. Positive thoughts will enhance the body’s natural processes, while negative thoughts can interfere with these same natural functions. Remember what we said in the beginning of the Lesson, bad habits are always a detriment to us. Not only do they rob the body of its Natural Harmony, they also weaken our ability to be Spiritually Creative. Regardless of the differences between men and women, the power of the physical body to maintain its own self-survival is limited. Without careful maintenance, the Natural Patterns of the body can quickly break down, placing it in jeopardy.

The Great Spiritual Teachers of the World constantly reminded us that the body is the Temple of the Soul, and that as such, we are responsible for its maintenance. If we allow it to be filled with negative habits, its service to

us will be limited. But if we replace negative patterns with Creative ones, we then increase its ability to be an asset to us.

In your last Lesson, you were given two Exercises that involved two forms of Breathing Movements, of which there are five in all. When Western Students are first confronted with these five Breathing Movements, they have a tendency to assume that they are too simple and too much alike to be of any importance. But this is not true. The differences may appear very subtle, but the results that they produce are dramatically different. The Science of Breathing has generally been ignored in the West, simply because the Exercises are of such a nature that they do not excite the imagination or appear to be earth-shaking. Because of this, many Students impatiently read the material and put it aside thinking that they already know what it contains. But simple observation and intellectualization can be very deceptive. Let me give you an example.

An uninformed person might look at a typist or a concert pianist, and assume that all that is required to achieve the same results is to learn the keyboard by heart. It never occurs to them that the fingers manipulating the keys have to be trained to respond instantaneously to the wishes of the professional. Learning the keyboard is easy, but training the muscles of the hand can be a difficult and complicated process, requiring extensive exercise until each finger and each muscle of the hand responds automatically when called upon to do so. The hand may even be endowed with all of the movements it is forced to make, but it was never trained to perform the sequences that it is now called upon to do. To master this type of professional control cannot be achieved by mere intellectualization. It requires long practice and Direct Experience.

The same is true with the five kinds of Breathing Movements. The body is already capable of performing all of the movements. But because of a lack of direction, it has never been called upon to perform these movements in a sequence of Total Harmony. This is why it is important for you to practice each Breathing Movement until you are able to feel it – and experience it responding instantaneously to your Will. Long before you are able to do this perfectly, you will already be experiencing tremendous changes in your physical and mental well-being. Breathing should not be simply a method by which we supply the body with oxygen. Instead, the movement of the lungs and the passage of the oxygen through the body should be a Grand Symphony of Life's Constant Renewal.

EXERCISE 77

Stomach Breathing

This form of breathing is much more complete than either of the two Exercises you have already received. Its value has long been recognized all over the World, and it has been taught under the names of "Abdominal Breathing" or "Diaphragmic Breathing." All of these names suggest the muscles and organs required to perform this Breathing Movement successfully.

As we have said in previous Lessons, the diaphragm is a thin partition of muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdomen. In Stomach Breathing, the diaphragm is used in a totally different way than it is used in Chest Breathing (See Exercise 76). Instead of pulling the diaphragm upward as in Chest Breathing, you must now direct the diaphragm downward so that it presses upon the abdominal organs and forces them out of the way

slightly. This will allow more room for the lungs to expand. When the diaphragm pushes upon the stomach and intestines, there will appear to be a swelling in that area of the body. It may even look as if the breath is really going into the stomach, but of course this is not true.

According to the Ancient Mystics, this lowering of the diaphragm gives real freedom to the lungs and enables it to supply a greater quantity of Prana to the body and brain. Besides increasing the health of the body, Stomach Breathing also has a tremendous affect upon our mental concentration. It sweeps away the chaos and confusion that we often carry around with us without ever knowing it.

The correct way to practice Stomach Breathing is as follows: When the breath is INHALED, the diaphragm should be directed toward the stomach and intestines, causing them to protrude slightly. As a result, the lung cavity will be enlarged – the breath will be deeper – and more oxygen will be taken in. When the breath is EXHALED, the diaphragm is drawn upward into the lung cavity, pushing out the remaining air.

Remember, when you inhale the stomach will move outward. When you exhale, the stomach is drawn in. It is not as simple as it sounds. Try it for a series of five breaths and you will notice that you have the tendency to reverse the pattern. It may even be helpful to you if you place both of your hands on your stomach while you are doing this Exercise. This will allow you to feel the movement and know whether you are doing it right or wrong. Remember . . . Inhale – stomach out . . . Exhale – stomach in . . .

The results of Stomach Breathing are many. Anyone suffering from intestinal disorders such as poor digestion or constipation will experience a

marked improvement in a very short time. It is also beneficial for the liver and other organs in the abdominal region. When we inflate the lungs with a larger quantity of air, this also acts as a stimulant to the heart. Stomach Breathing also firms the muscles in the abdominal region. NOTE: STOMACH BREATHING IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR ANYONE SUFFERING FROM HERNIA.

EXERCISE 78

Side Breathing

Side Breathing is used mainly to develop both sides of the lungs so that these parts that have been neglected for so long can function properly.



SIDE BREATH

Side Breathing is also called "Bird Breathing," because birds appear to lift their wings slightly when they need an extra supply of oxygen. The procedure for this Exercise is quite simple. (See Illustration). In fact, Side Breathing is merely an extension of Stomach Breathing. The only difference is that we re-position the arms to expand the sides of the rib cage. This is done by raising the right arm and placing the right hand on the back of the head. While holding this position, we take five Stomach Breaths.

Now lower the right arm and raise the left arm in the same position as before. Take five more breaths and then relax. You have now completed all of the movements necessary for proper Side Breathing.

TREATMENT NUMBER FOURTEEN

Stomach Breathing can be done while one is lying down, standing or sitting. When combined with Side Breathing, it becomes a very effective Treatment for the improvement of lung disorders, plus heart and intestinal ailments. It is also an effective remedy for restlessness and insomnia. This method was developed by the Ancient Taoists of China and is still very popular among Asian people.

If a person is bedridden, the Treatment is as follows. The patient is directed to lie on their back, with the upper half of the body in a semi-sitting position. Two firm pillows underneath the back and shoulders will give ample support to the upper body. The buttocks and legs should be horizontal and relaxed. Direct the sick person to raise both arms so that the hands meet over the head. The pillow under the shoulder should be wide enough to also support the weight of the arms in this position. Now direct the person to breathe with the Stomach Breath. If necessary, place one of your hands lightly on the abdomen as you direct their breathing. The breath should be slow and even. Do not expect the sick person to breathe as deeply as they would if they were well or standing. The sole purpose of the Treatment is to introduce an even flow of oxygen into the system. Above all, the patient must be totally relaxed. Let the person breathe normally for approximately 10 or 12 breaths – and then direct them to do ONE STOMACH BREATH. By spacing out the Stomach Breath, the sick person's energy output will be kept to a minimum and they will be able to maintain a relaxed condition.

There may be times when you wish to practice this Treatment on yourself. Remember, the breath sequence is as follows: 10 or 12 normal

breaths followed by ONE STOMACH BREATH. Repeat the procedure 8 or 10 times. Once the Breathing Exercise is complete, the person should be allowed to relax and fall asleep in that position. This Treatment reduces the pressure on the body and fills a larger area of lung space with greater amounts of Prana that can be Willfully directed toward the ailing areas of the body.

The same Treatment can be given while the patient is sitting in a soft comfortable chair. However, the legs should be propped-up slightly and the back should be tilted at approximately a 45-degree angle. The pillow in back of the shoulders should be positioned so that the head and neck are at the same angle as the spine. DO NOT ALLOW THE CHIN TO SINK INTO THE CHEST. This will only result in cutting off the proper flow of breath. Whether the patient is sitting or lying down, the same procedure should be followed in both cases.

EXERCISE 79

Complete Breathing

The term "Complete Breathing" refers to a combination of the various Breathing Movements that we have already described. The Complete Breath brings into play the entire respiratory system; as the chest cavity is increased in all directions and every part of the lungs perform their function at a peak of efficiency. Complete Breathing results in a greater quantity of air entering the lungs, and for this reason, it is also called the "Perfect Breath." After all of the other Breath Movements have been mastered thoroughly, you will find that you will be able to do Complete Breathing

without any effort. The Complete Breath is not a forced or abnormal thing, and should always be done in a relaxed manner.

Stand erect, inhaling through the nose; Inhale slowly, first filling the lower part of the lungs. This is accomplished by moving the diaphragm downward until it exerts a gentle pressure on the abdomen. Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out and stretching the rib cage forward and sideways. The final movement of the breath happens just before you exhale. The diaphragm and the abdomen are drawn in slightly, forcing the air into the highest part of the lungs.

At first, it may seem as if this breath consists of three distinct movements. But after you have practiced for a while, you will discover that the movements are continuous and uniform. Your first efforts may seem like a series of broken movements, but after a while, the Complete Breath will happen in one Harmonious Pattern.

Breathe in slowly-and exhale slowly – holding in each breath for a few seconds before you exhale. Try to exhale as much air as possible, and then relax a few seconds before you begin again. In a few days, you will be able to perform the complete breath almost automatically. Remember, this is an Exercise and you are not expected to go around all day breathing in this manner. You can practice the Complete Breath whenever the opportunity arises. Two or three times a day should be sufficient to keep the physical system in good condition. But remember, the Complete Breath should be a Willful one, directing the Divine Energy of Prana to serve you and purify you.

At the beginning, you may find it a little difficult to acquire the Complete Breath. But remember, “practice makes perfect,” and when you

have once acquired it, you will never willingly return to your old physical condition again.

May the Peace of God Surround You and Guide You.

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