

PROCESS OF PURIFICATION IN TANTRAYOGA PRACTICES

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0.0 The human body plays a significant place in Tantra Sadhana. As long as there is pain and disease in the body so long one cannot practice anything. It is due to the discomfort what one feels while doing anything. So, one has to purify the body by which the mind also becomes pure afterwards. All types of diseases occur either in the body or mind. Hence the purification method is quite important. The impurities in the body are due to the deposits in various channels.¹ These cause various diseases which is the obstacle for *Tantrasādhana*. Hence, the body vessels and all the channels are cleaned by six purificatory rites (ṣaṭkriyās) mentioned by Haṭhayoga.

1.0 *Physical*

The accumulation of poison in channels is the root cause of diseases. The body regularly throws out these waste materials through urine, perspiration and excretion etc. The method prescribed in the Hathayoga tells how to remove waste materials out of the body. They are six in number as mentioned in the text-

Ṣaṭkriyāḥ śiṣyāḥ śikṣayitavyāḥ |
Ḥṛīḥ, śūbhrā, śūbhrā, śūbhrā, śūbhrā, śūbhrā | HP. II.22

such as- *Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trataka, Nauli* and *Kapālabhṅgi*. These kriyas clean stomach, colon, Nasalpassage, eyes, abdominal organs, and respiratory organs respectively. Let us analyse one by one-

(i) Dhauti: The term *dhauti* means washing. It is divided into four types namely: (a) *Antardhauti* 'internal cleaning', (b) *Danta dhauti* 'cleaning of teeth', (c) *Hṛīḥ dhauti*, 'cleaning of thoracic region' and (d) *Mulasodhana*, 'cleaning of rectum'.²

(a) The internal washing is further divided into, four types namely- i) *Vçtasçra* 'wind purification' ii) *Vçrisçra* 'water purification', iii) *Vahnisçra* 'fire purification and iv) *Vastrasçra* 'cloth purification'.

In *Vçtasçra*, the *Sçdhaka* should swallow the air to the stomach by closing the epiglottis till the stomach is filled with air. Then after moving the air in stomach slowly force it through lower passage. In *Vçrisçra* one drinks much water with salt (little) mixed and should shake the abdominal portion. Then vomit it by putting the finger at the root of the tongue. This is done in the morning with empty stomach. In *Vahnisçra*, a *Sçdhaka* should bend his trunk forward; hands put on the knees and deep inhalation are performed. Hold the breath outside as far as possible. While holding the breath, push the abdomen backward and forward. This process stimulates the entire portion with abdomen backward and forward. By doing this, the abdomen portions viz.- stomach, spleen, liver, pancreas, intestine etc. are stimulated. In *Vastrasara*, the elementary canal is purified which cover from mouth; pharynx, esophagus, stomach, large and small intestine and anus. Take a fine white cloth three inches wide and fifteen feet long. Wash it, then put it in salt water. Then swallow the one end of it little by little. Don't be in hurry. Slowly and slowly swallow one foot on the first day and then increase in the subsequent days. This is done in the morning with empty stomach. This is done to purify the abdomen and respiratory organs.

(b) *Danta Dhauti:*

It is the massaging of teeth with powdered earth or water till the impurities are removed.

(c) *H" d Dhauti:*

Put your index, middle and ring fingers jointly in the root of the tongue. Rub well and wash it again and again. This method of cleaning helps in bringing out impurities from stomach and lungs region.

(d) *Mula^oodhanam:*

It is the process of cleaning the rectum. By the help of the middle finger one should clean with much care and with water the rectum frequently. This removes constipation and indigestion etc.

digestion and over all increases sound feeling of well-being. It completely destroys all disorders and diseases in the abdomen⁵.

1.1 *Mental Purification*

These six purificatory *kriyas* definitely help the *sadhaka* to cleanse the internal system as well as the mind there on. But the mental purification still needs to be done more intensely by a *sadhaka*. Now, he is fit for that and he has to do *pranayama* constantly without any break⁶. The *Gheraśa sahitā* mentions that sitting in *padmasana* and by proper salutation to Gurus, one has to do the purification of the *nasals* for success in *pranayama*. This *pranayama* helps in purifying the mind. By uttering the *Bija-mantras* one does this. Concentrating on *Vayu-Bija* i.e. *yam* let him inhale the air by the left nostril, by repeating the *Bija* sixteen times which is called as *pranayama*. Then he retains the breath for a period of sixty-four repetitions of the *mantra*, which is *kumbhaka* and then exhales the air by the right nostril slowly repeating the *mantra* by thirty-two times.

The *agnitattva* remains in the naval region. Raising the fire from that region, by mixing up with *prithvi-tattva* concentrate on the mixed light by repeating the *Agni-Bija Ram* the *sadhaka* draws the air by the right nostril with 16 times, retain it by repeating 64 times and removing it by repeating 32 times.

Then concentrating the gaze on the tip of the nose and contemplating the luminous light there, let him take air on the left-nostril by repeating *Bija* (tham) sixteen times, retaining it by uttering the *mantra* sixty-four times and exhaling it through right-nostril by repeating thirty-two times. While retaining the breath let him imagine that by looking at the light (moon) on the tip of the nose, divine nectar flowing from the internal region of that portion enters through his vessels of the entire body and purifies them one by one. Thereby, creates a feeling of stillness and free from all sorts of movements.

By the practice of these three *pranayamas* the entire channels (*nasals*) are purified which results in the calmness of mind. When one does it regularly he feels this for longer time. Hence, he does not feel any disturbance and all such impurities of the mind are removed⁷.

1.2 Prāṇaḥṛī:

Hence, *prāṇaḥṛī* plays an important role for mental purification. In *īvasvarodaya* Lord *īva* replies to *Parvati* as *prāṇa* is the best friend and brother of human being. Nothing is superior to *prāṇa*. Breathing is the gross form of that vital force or *prāṇa-ḥṛī*.

ānUEdna_ {_ī ānUEdna_gImY&
 ānUē:naoYwZpZpñāZōY&

prāṇaḥṛī is connected to both body and mind. The physical body is the gross and mind is the subtle. *Prāṇaḥṛī* is the link-between the two and hence very important.

The life is fully dependent on *prāṇaḥṛī*. As long as the breath continues so long as one lives, when it stops, the body and mind perishes. Hence, knowing the importance of *prāṇa*, even the Gods practice *prāṇaḥṛī*. When *prāṇa* is controlled both the body and mind are controlled. And hence every body should practise it.

~«nKno{n {Dē: nZāngEān: Y&
 A^yDPM\$ ^m^2 Vñm^2 nZ_ā`gV^2 Y&H.P.II.39

2.0 Conclusion

- (i) The human body is a miniature universe. There is sun and moon in the body in the form of *piṅgala* and *āḥ*. Over and above there is *suḥṛī*. These three channels are vital channels, which are essential for the purification.
- (ii) In the process both body and mind are involved and influences each other. Hence, one has to do carefully the purification so that he attains the desired result.
- (iii) This should be done in proper supervision of Guru otherwise the results may be fatal.
- (iv) This method of purification is mostly common in both yogic and Tantric traditions will little variations.
- (v) These practices still have a scientific background and liked by people which proves that all that what is in Sanskrit literature is not absurd which also throws light on our great cultural practices.

Foot Notes and References

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2. *Ghera² a sa¹hitç* - I.13
3. $\tilde{\text{O}}\tilde{\text{d}}\tilde{\text{,}}\tilde{\text{n}}\tilde{\text{d}}\tilde{\text{H}}\tilde{\text{S}}\tilde{\text{a}}\tilde{\text{n}}\tilde{\text{a}}\tilde{\text{M}}\tilde{\text{v}}\tilde{\text{a}}\tilde{\text{n}}\tilde{\text{g}}\tilde{\text{S}}\tilde{\text{^}}\tilde{\text{m}}\tilde{\text{;}}\tilde{\text{Y}}\tilde{\text{S}}$
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7. *Ghera² a sa¹hitç*- pp- 42-43
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