

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
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Prana and Types of Pranayama
Lecture - 73
Notes on Pranayama

[FL] welcome to the 16th session of our course Yog and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life. Today’s session is focused on Pranayam as the intervention for managing self. And we have already discussed that managing self is deeply connected to managing career as well.

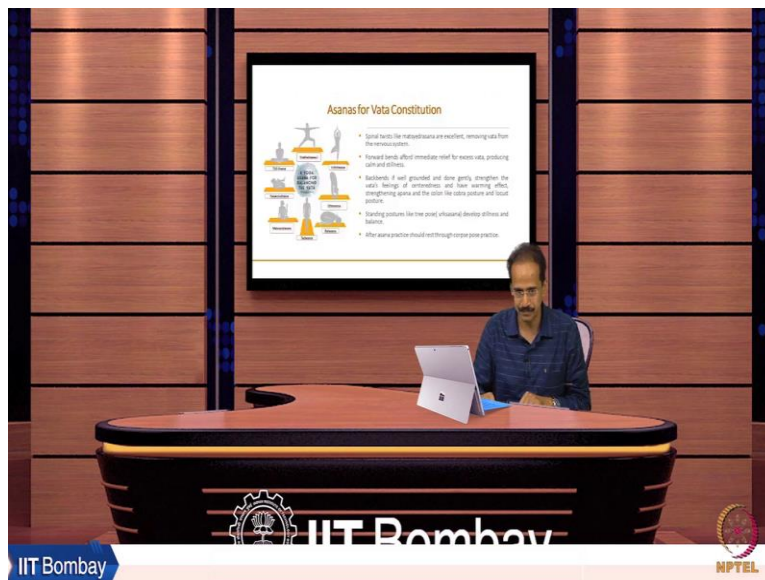
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QuickRecap: **Interventions for Managing Self and Career**

| Annamaya Kosh | Pranamaya Kosh | Manomaya Kosh | Vijnanmaya Kosh | Anandmaya Kosh |
|---------------|----------------|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Aahar (Food) | Pranayam | Yama, Niyam | Purpose | Dhyan |
| Asanas | | Chittaprasad | Karm Yoga | Samadhi |
| | | Managing negative emotion like Fearfulness, Dependence, Sentimentality | Dharma Dhyan | |
| | | Pratyahaar | | |

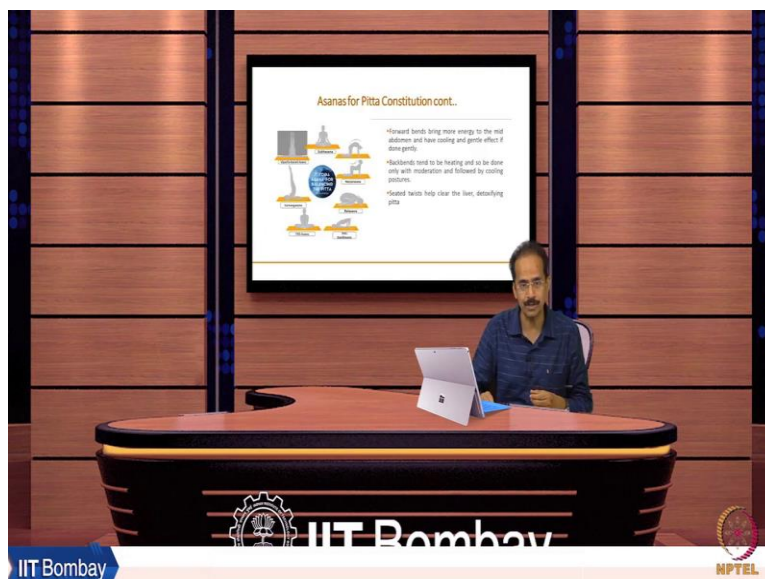
You can recall that we are looking at the interventions according to the different layers of self. So, in the previous sessions we looked at ahar that is food and asanas that is postures yogic postures as the interventions at annamaya kosh, as the physical aspect of self. Today in the same sequence we are going to look at pranayam which is intervention at pranamaya kosh as the pranic level of self. And in the sessions to come we will look at the interventions at manomaya kosh and vijnanamaya kosh.

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In the last session you might recall that we talked about asanas for the people with the different Ayurvedic constitution.

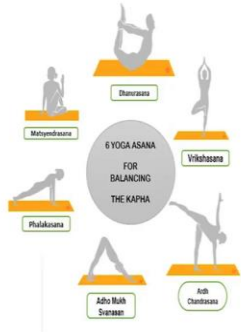
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There are different asanas are suitable for people with the vata constitution, people with the pitta predominant constitution or kaph predominant constitution.

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Yoga Postures for Kapha constitution



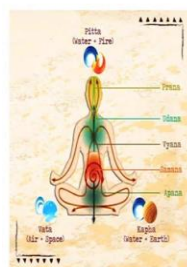
- Kaphas are prone to heart disease and high cholesterol, care must be taken not to overstain their hearts in any exercise program.
- Kaphas should be made to do stronger exercise than they like and must be taught to challenge themselves.
- Sitting asanas tend to increase kapha.
- Kapha must practice pranayama of a warming nature.
- Standing postures combined with movement and stretching.
- Backward bends helps to open chest and increase circulation to head, where mucus easily builds up for them.
- Forward bends, which tend to contract chest, are not good for them except when have emotional distress.

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Those who are registered for the NPTEL course they must have received a assessment link most of the registered participants I hope would have taken that assessment and must have got some idea what is their predominant prakriti or vikriti in terms of vat, pit, and kaph, what is the suitable food for them. And looking at this session they can also figure out what a what are the asanas most suitable for their prakriti.

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Notes on Pranayama



- Pranayama promotes emotional stability and prepares us for higher levels of Yoga and Positivity in life.
- Pranayama is the science of both the physical breath and its accompanying flows of subtle energy (prana).

Breath we all know. What is Prana?

Prana is life energy, carried within our breath is the bridge between the mind and the body. Pranayam is regulation of Prana.

Today we are talking about pranayam. Let us look at some of the basic the most fundamental aspects of pranayam. Why we are studying pranayam as the intervention? We are studying pranayam as an intervention because it promotes emotional stability at the spiritual level; it prepares us for the higher levels of yog and positivity in life. Pranayam has a very unique position in the ashtang yog yam, niyam, asan they are clearly bahir yog means you can observe them very clearly.

Pranayam is also bahir yog, but it is deeply connected with the antar yog which is prana pratyahar, dharana, dhyan and Samadhi. It is linked to breath, it is linked to breath and breath is a very interesting activity very intriguing activity in our body, you may say that what is so intriguing about breath that is probably the most fundamental aspect of life. Yes, that is very fundamental aspect of life.

But you know it is not involuntary activity, though we cannot live without breathing, but it is not involuntary activity, it is actually a voluntary activity. So, we know that nervous system has autonomous nervous system, which has sympathetic and parasympathetic part. And there is a voluntary aspect of the nervous system. This activity the call breathing it connects voluntary and involuntary aspect of nervous system.

So, it sits in the middle, it is a kind of a linkage of the human self or for that matter any organization any organism with the outside world. So, pranayam also is a science which deals with the physical breath and it also deals with, it is also about the subtle energy which flows with this breath. We all know what is breath; now there is another variable in the equation that is prana. What is prana?

So, if you ask what is prana to a yoga teacher or you look at the answer in the science of yog it is said to be a life energy. So, pran is the life energy that is carried within our breath and it is the bridge between mind and the body. So, pran is that which connects subjective and objective, mind and body. And pranayam is regulation of that pran.

So, pran is can be loosely translated as the vital force or vital energy. And that connects subject to an objective aspect of life; that connects body and mind. And we all know that definition of mind which we have looked at in the previous sessions does not identify mind as a localized phenomena, it is an information, it is a regulation system. And it is embodied system not localized to one part

of the body. That which connects mind and body is called pran. And regulation of that pran is called pranayam.

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Few Earliest References of Breath and Prana



Taittiriya Upanishad: Conflict between the intellect (vijñanamaya kosha) and the instinct (manomaya kosha) causes a disturbance in the subtle, life energy, or prana.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika: A solution for the imbalance in prana, through slow, deep breathing. It has been said that "when the mental state is disturbed, the life energy (prana) gets unbalanced and this leads to irregular breath; hence to regulate the mental state the yoga practitioner should regulate the breath".

Svara sarvodayam: Explains a svara system that uses awareness of nasal cycle and rhythms in the subtle body to help us understand when our mindfield is suited to particular activities. This also places human beings in a holographic context.

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The earliest references of breath and prana are found in Upanishad in the Hath Yog Pradipika and in a very old text Svara Sarvodaya. In the Taittiriya Upanishad it is said conflict between the vijñanamaya kosh and manomaya kosh that is intellect and the instinct causes disturbance in the subtle life energy or pran.

And by consciously breathing, by observing our breathing we can regulate pran. And in this way, we can resolve the conflict between the intellect and instinct that is a teaching in the Taittiriya Upanishad. Hatha Yog Pradipika being the text of yog itself elaborates this idea in much greater depth. So, what it says that it is a solution for the imbalance in pran.

It also recognizes that imbalance causes, imbalance happens in the pranic level. And the solution to address that imbalance is through slow and deep breathing. It has been said that when the mental state is disturbed the life energy or prana gets unbalanced and this leads to irregular breath.

Hence to regulate the mental state the yog practitioner should regulate the breath. So, Hatha Yog Pradipika as it is said to be the text of about 11th century, it is much more sophisticated, much more elaborate in terms of what practice to be followed. We also remember that Hatha Yog

Pradipika enumerate 84 asanas. So, very elaborate description of the practices is given in the Hath Yog Pradipika.

There is another very old text there is one similar text called Svara siddhant and this text which is being referred here is called Svar sarvodayam that gives most elaborate explanation of breath and how it is connected to our life energies and how it is connected to the different types of activities of life. So, it explains that svara system uses awareness of the nasal cycle.

So, the distinction between the chandra nadi, surya nadi, right nostril breathing and left nostril breathing that distinction is the basis, that is a one of the fundamental tenets. And it explains things in great detail. What it says that a svara system uses thus awareness of the nasal cycle and rhythm in the subtle body to help us understand when our mind feel is set able to particular activities.

It actually explains that right nadi or the right nostril breathing increases or energizes our sympathetic nervous system, it does not use the word sympathetic nervous system, but it explains that a right nostril breathing or right is responsible for enhancing our blood pressure, enhancing our temperature and the bodily activities within. The left nostril breathing reduces the temperature, reduces the speed of the breathing and has a calming effect.

Since this has a calming effect and chandra moon is connected to and it is it symbolizes the calming aspect of cell it is called chandra nadi. And surya nadi which is connected to the right nostril and right nostril breathing, it is related to the sympathetic system as mentioned earlier, that is called surya nadi.

When chandra nadi is on, when chandra nadi is active, activities related to imagination, working with the space, meditation those things are useful when the chandra nadi is active. When a surya nadi is active more active engagements, some action outside work, solving some mathematical problems these are best done whenever surya nadi is active.

Likewise, it explains so many activities in great detail. So, very interesting science is there behind the breathing itself, behind the nasal cycle and that is deeply connected to pranayamic

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Few References from Other Wisdom Traditions

“Physical events can be looked at in two ways; from mechanistic and from the energetic standpoint”.

Jung in Mayor (2010) in Fundamentals of Alternative and
Complimentary Medicines, 4th Edition

Ex. Ka Ancient Egypt, ruach (Judaism), ki (Japan), mauri (Maori),
rlung and rsta (Tibet), qi and jingluo (China), pneuma and phlebe (Greece)

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Or we can also say it is a bedrock of the pranayam. So, there is a chapter in the fundamentals of the alternative and complementary medicine in the 4th edition currently the 6th edition is running. This chapter on the vital energy starts with a quote by Carl Jung, what it says that “Physical events can be looked at in two ways; from the mechanistic and from the energetic point of view”.

And from this quote this chapter starts and elaborate on the idea of vitality, idea of life energies in various cultures. It gives example for if I remember correctly at least 17, 18 cultures. And what are the correlates of pran exist in those cultures these are few example for example, like in the Ancient Egypt there is a concept of Ka which is very similar to notion of pran. In the Judaism rock is the notion which is very similar to pran.

In Japan there is a notion of ki that is reflection of the vital energy which is similar to pran, in Mauri culture the name of pran is also Maori. So, you can say you can see the similarity of the Mauri and Maori which is the culture developed in contemporary place called New Zealand.

That is also there this concept is also there in that culture. Then there are some cultures which have much more sophisticated understanding about this life energy. So, they not only talk about the life energy, they also talk about the channels through which life this life energy flows.

So, in the Tibetan tradition it is called rlung and rsta. Rlung is the energy rsta is the channel through which this energy flows. In the Chinese culture very old culture it mentions about qi and jingluo, that is again the synonymous of energy life energy and the channel through which it flows. And in the Greece also there are terms like pneuma and phlebe. Pneuma is a reflection of energy and phlebe is the channel through which it runs within our body.

So, you can see that notion of pran may look elusive or very subtle, but it exist in almost all cultures. There are many other examples on this slide we have mentioned only these 5, 6 examples. But this chapter anyone who is interested to look at the cross-cultural aspect of life energy and or pranayam they must look at this chapter.