

Chapter 7: Harmony with the Body – Understanding *Sanyam* and *Swasthya*

In chapter 5, we have seen how a human being is co-existence of the Self ('I') and the Body. The Self is the conscious part or the sentient entity and the Body is the material or the insentient entity. We had also noticed that the human body is an essential instrument of 'I'. It is with the help of the Body that the Self explores and interacts with the rest of nature.

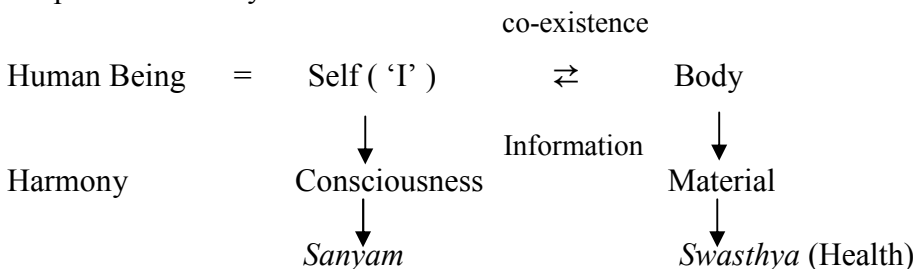
Our Body - A self-organized unit

The human body is a self-organized and highly sophisticated mechanism. We observe that the Body is made up of several organs and glands and the different parts of the Body keep working in a close coordination. The heart keeps pumping blood throughout, the lungs keep contracting and expanding, the blood keeps flowing. The various parts of the Body keep on performing their functions in a coordinated manner and that is why we are able to use our body in multiple ways with so much versatility. The body is made up of cells and each cell of the body is performing so many functions every moment. And the cells are so well organized that all humans have a definite shape and look. And each cell has a role to play in the overall working of the body. When you study your body, you find that each cell is self-organized and participating in the self-organization of the body.

All this activity keeps the Body fit for the use of 'I'. 'I' and the Body work in synergy as human being. Let us understand the salient aspects of this harmony between 'I' and the Body.

Harmony of 'I' with the Body: Sanyam and Swasthya

The harmony of 'I' with the Body is in the form of *Sanyam* on the part of 'I' and *Swasthya* on the part of the Body.



Sanyam: The feeling of responsibility in the Self ('I') for nurturing, protection and right utilization of the Body.

As I come to realize that the Body is my instrument, and that the Body needs to be given nutrition, protected from the environment and utilized to work as an efficient and effective tool for the right purpose, I become responsible to the Body. This sense of responsibility flows naturally and does not have to be imposed. Thus, there is no feeling of control or imposition,

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but a feeling of responsibility that is regulating the way we use our Body.

When I live with *Sanyam*, there is harmony among the different parts of the Body and the Body acts according to me as a useful instrument. Thus, we define *Swasthya* as having two elements:

***Swasthya* (Health) =**

1. The Body acts according to 'I',
2. There is harmony among the parts of the Body.

So, *Swasthya* is the condition of the Body where every part of the Body is performing its expected function. There is harmony within the Body and it is fit for use by the Self.

On the part of the Body, its being in harmony with 'I' is conducive to *Swasthya*- its fitness and readiness to serve 'I'. In fact, the word *Swasth* literally means being anchored to the Self, being in close harmony with the Self.

You will observe that there is a strong coupling between 'I' and the Body. If I am in disharmony, say in anger or stress or despair, it immediately starts affecting the Body adversely. It is now well established that there are many diseases of the Body that are caused or accentuated due to disharmony in 'I'. These are called psychosomatic diseases, such as asthma, allergies, migraine, diabetes, hypertension, asthma, heart failure, etc. On the other hand, when there is a strong disturbance in the Body manifesting in the form of severe pain, it distracts 'I' from its normal functions.

Now, one more thing can be observed. If there is *Sanyam*, health can be ensured. But if *Sanyam* is not there, a good health can also be lost. So, *Sanyam* is vital for the *Swasthya*. Try to work and include in your future plans. We plan to earn and save a lot so that we get well treated in a good quality hospital when we fall sick. But are we equally serious in ensuring *Sanyam*? We will discuss in detail about these in the following sections.

What is our state today?

Lack of responsibility towards the Body

We find that our lifestyles have become very busy and rushed and we are busy earning unlimited wealth ! We have ignored ensuring health for the body. We have increasingly started eating at odd hours, eating junk food, and are largely ignorant about the state of our body. We tend to look with contempt on any kind of physical work or labour. Instead we spend most of our time in trying to earn money and then spend on fancy gymnasiums! To add to this, we try to fulfil the continuous needs of the Self ('I'), namely happiness, by getting pleasant sensations from the Body (which as we have seen before is only temporary and may not be conducive to health). To retain the pleasant experience of sensation, we keep repeating it, thus, ignoring the fact that we are eating for the nourishment of the Body and not for happiness of 'I'. As a result, the Body is abused repeatedly and falls sick. One can easily see that there are all forms of ailments prevailing and increasing in our modern society due to our indulgence and addictions.

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Tendency for Medication when we are unhealthy

Our focus today seems to be more on “fighting germs in the body” than on helping the body restore itself to its natural state of harmony. We end up consuming a lot of harmful substances in the name of medicines. In fact, today we are focusing a lot more on what to do if we fall ill. We are building hospitals and inventing new machinery rather than focusing on ensuring health of the body so that we do not fall sick or become unhealthy in the first place! It thus becomes important for each one of us to become aware of our own body and its needs and how common, simple medication can be used for simple ailments.

Polluted air, water, food...

We have polluted our environment today and it is directly or indirectly harming us. There is contamination in the air, water, soil, plants and we are responsible for it. Our food has become impure. Due to heavy use of chemical fertilizers, pesticides and a lot of pollution, our food has all kinds of toxic contents in it. The air we breathe in, is polluted by various chemicals released from industries and vehicles, while our water is also polluted due to chemical effluents, etc.

What is the way out?

We will surely agree that the state today is not desirable. We would not like to continue with this state and that means we need to find the way out. As a proposal, we need to work for the following two things:

- a) To understand and live with *Sanyam*
- b) To understand the self-organisation of the Body and ensure health of the body..

Understanding and living with Sanyam

To ensure harmony with the body, we need to take into account the following:

- **Nurturing of the Body**

While selecting food for the body, I need to make out the elements which make a complete food so that it gives required nutrients and energy to the body. The process of taking food, digesting it and throwing out the unnecessary part is also important. Thus the following also become a part of our program:

- **Ingestion:** The first thing we do after taking the food in the mouth is that we chew it. There are certain elements in food that get digested only after it is chewed well. This also helps to simplify the work of the organs further down in the digestive system.
- **Digestion:** Once swallowed, the digestion of the food starts. We will not go into details of digestion here as you might already be aware of it from your previous lessons in Biology. But on the basis of understanding of the harmony of the Self with the Body, we can see that the food needs to be eaten only when we feel hungry. The choice of food has to be such that it is easily digestible and the food needs to be taken with proper posture (body) and in the right quantity.
- **Excretion:** Once the food is taken and the nutrients are absorbed, the unnecessary or undigested part needs to be thrown out. This is also very important. If not done properly, it starts to adversely affect the body and causes multiple problems in the Body.

- **Protection of the Body**

The second issue is the protection of the Body. The clothes and shelter we choose for protection need to be such that they ensure proper interaction of the body with the environment. The right amount of exposure of the body to the air, water and sun is required to ensure its proper functioning.

To ensure the health of the Body, we need to take care of the following- i) Ahar-Vihar, ii) Shram- Vyayam, iii) Asana-Pranayam and iv) Aushadhi-Chikitsa. We have already discussed about Ahar (Food), et us now discussed about the others.

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- **Proper upkeep (*Vihar*) of the Body:** When we work, the Body gets tired. When we take rest, the Body becomes fit to work. But again, there is a limit to the amount of work and rest we need. We also need to ensure proper time, posture and ways to work and to rest. We need to provide hygienic conditions for proper functioning of the Body. These issues are included in the upkeep of the Body.
- **Labour :** Labour is another requirement. It means employing the body physically for production and maintenance of physical facilities. The labour we do helps each part of the Body to function properly.
- **Physical Exercises:** You are aware of physical exercises. While doing labour, some parts of the Body may get stressed much while others may not get employed to that extent. With exercises, we can employ all the parts of the Body in the desired way.
- **Asan-Pranayam:** This is another way to keep the Body function properly. In *Asanas*, we give the body proper postures by sitting or lying, and in *Pranayam*, we ensure regulation of the breathing.
- **Treatment of the body:** When the Body gets hurt, or is in disorder by either misuse or because of the adversities of the environment etc., there is a natural tendency of the Body to heal and come back to its desired state of health. We only need to facilitate this process, and not suppress it. Thus, when unpleasant sensations come from the Body indicating disorder, they are to be properly interpreted and attended to.

With all the care we take, the body may require treatment at times. There are several approaches to ensure this. It may be that just by going without food for some time, the Body gets cured. Right choice for food may also help. The treatment of the Body can be done by proper exposures of the Body to air, water or sun too. Use of herbs or medicines may also serve the purpose. Here one thing to understand is that, the system of the body works in a self-organized way and I only need to facilitate the self-organization of the body by arranging for material things. One thing to take care about is that while curing the Body of one problem, we need to choose ways which do not give rise to other problems.

Sometimes, I may need to go for surgery of the body too.

- **Right utilization of the body (*Sadupyog*)**

Right utilization of the Body as an instrument necessitates understanding the purpose for which this instrument is to be used. Normally we tend to believe that the Body is an

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instrument for sensory enjoyment, which is not correct. We also happen to use our Body to exploit other human beings or rest of the nature which is also not right utilization. It is important to realize that the human body is an instrument to facilitate right understanding and its actualization in life.

This is an important issue. I need to ensure that I use my Body for right behaviour and work. When I do so, it has favourable effects on the Body. On the other hand, if I use it for acting in opposition with other human beings or nature, like quarrelling, fighting, hitting, it has adverse effects on the Body.

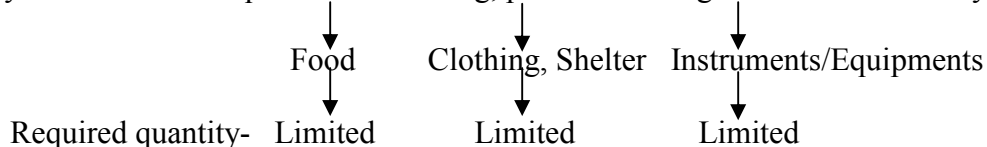
I also need to arrange for equipments/ instruments for right utilization of the body. They increase the efficiency and capacity of the body.

Correct appraisal of our physical needs

We discussed about prosperity in chapter 3. There it was proposed that prosperity is the feeling of having more than required physical facilities. Having discussed about *Sanyam* and *Swasthya*, we now understand that physical facilities are meant only for the nurturing, protection and right utilization of the Body. And the quantity of physical facilities required to fulfil each need is limited. Understanding the harmony between the Self and the Body also enables us to adopt an appropriate lifestyle. And it enables us to assess our physical needs correctly. As discussed earlier, this is a pre-requisite for moving towards prosperity.

We can see that:

Physical Facilities required for nurturing, protection & right utilization of Body are-



It can be seen that required quantity of Physical Facilities for the above purpose is limited.

As already discussed, the feeling of prosperity has two elements-

1. Appropriate assessment of the physical needs with their required limited quantity, &
2. Ensuring availability/ production of more than required physical facilities.

Thus with the understanding of harmony of 'I' with the Body, one can correctly do the appraisal of the need for physical facilities.

One way of appraisal of needs is given below:

- Find out how much of food you consume everyday, every year. Find out how much food is consumed in your family everyday, every year. Is this limited, or unlimited?
- Find out how much place you need to live to ensure good health, i.e. what is the need for shelter. Is this limited or unlimited?
- Now find out how many clothes you need in a year. Is this limited or unlimited?

With the understanding of the need for physical facilities under the three heads, you can see the limit for each and evaluate whether you have more than required. You will see that you already have most of the physical facilities, more than required.

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Do this exercise for yourself. Do you feel prosperous now?

You will note that just by understanding the need for physical facilities for your body, you can be prosperous in a moment, if you already have more than the limit you have assessed. On the other hand, if one doesn't explore the need for physical facilities, he can never be prosperous, whatsoever be the amount of his possessions!!! Try to internalize this.

The way to ensure availability of physical facilities is production, about which we will talk later in this book.

Thus, when we look at the needs of the body, it becomes clear that the need for food, clothing and shelter is limited. We have a common misconception today that our “needs are unlimited”. However, on considering the needs of the body in order to maintain health, it turns out to be limited. If you look around in nature, it turns out that in nature, the availability of facilities is more than our needs! As long as we are looking at the needs of the Body for health, there is enough in nature already for all of us! Example: There is more wheat grown in the world than we can eat, more oxygen/air than we can breathe and more water than we can drink! Its only when we see that the availability is more in nature than the limited needs of the body and this can easily be fulfilled, there begins to be a possibility of prosperity.

Today, we have assumed our needs to be unlimited (by confusing ‘I’ with the Body) and hence keep running after “unlimited amounts”. We even fail to see that the word “unlimited” means “having no end”, and hence, try accumulating endlessly! Thus, this becomes a mad race. If we are able to see the simple point that there is a difference between the needs of the self and the needs of the Body, and the needs of the body are limited, then there is the possibility of prosperity for each one of us. Else, if the needs are unlimited then there is not enough even for any ONE of us!

Summary of the chapter

- Human being is co-existence of the Self (‘I’) and the Body. There is exchange of information between ‘I’ and the Body. ‘I’ is conscious while the Body is material.
- I have the feeling of *Sanyam* for the Body and the Body has *Swasthya*. *Sanyam* is more basic to *Swasthya*.
- *Sanyam* is the feeling of responsibility in the Self to ensure the nurturing, protection and right utilization of the Body. *Swasthya* has two elements, one that the Body acts according to the Self, and secondly there is harmony between the parts of the Body.
- The need for physical facilities for nurture, protection and right utilization of the Body is limited.
- When we evaluate our state today, we find that we are not completely responsible towards taking care of the Body today. We tend to go for medication in place of ensuring the health of the Body Even the air, water, food, etc. that we consume are no more fully suited to health.
- We need to understand and live with *Sanyam* to ensure health.
- With the clarity of the needs of the Body, prosperity can be understood, felt and

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