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How to Stop Tolerating Turmoil

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My satguru, Sage Yogaswami, used to say, "It takes a lot of courage to be happy all the time." Most people, it seems, would rather be miserable. Think about it. They go through life getting their feelings hurt, resenting this or that and hurting the feelings of others in an endless cycle of unresolved emotion, asking a torrent of unanswerable rhetorical questions. Take today's average family: it's a composite of troubled individuals.

Today, more than ever, parents everywhere are concerned about keeping the family together. I have found that the key is to keep the pranas flowing harmoniously. A true family is a clan of individuals who love each other, which means they are bound together by positive pranic magnetism. When sons-in-law and daughters-in-law join the family, their pranic magnetism intermingles and the family extends itself harmoniously if the jyotisha compatibilities are good, especially between the husband and the bride and her mother-in-law.

Last month we discussed how this magnetism is maintained--through the principle of "zero tolerance for disharmonious conditions"--and urged seekers to keep the pranas flowing within their homes in a positive, loving way. This means that if there is a disruption of the pranas, caused by interpersonal conflict--argument, angry words or worse--the matter must be settled among the individuals before they go to sleep, even if it means staying up all night.

What is prana? Prana is vital energy. There are three phases of the mind: instinctive, intellectual and superconscious. They comprise three different kinds of prana in every human being: instinctive prana, intellectual prana and refined, superconscious prana, also known as actinic energy.

Instinctive pranas digest our food and maintain the functions of the physical body. They also give rise to the emotions of fear, anger, jealousy and other base instincts. The instinctive energies affect the mind, emotions and behavior. Without well-developed intellectual pranas, the mind is ruled by the lower nature and easily influenced by others, often in a negative way. This is why children must be closely watched and guided during their formative years until their intellectual pranas develop in the form of good memory, discernment and willpower. The superconscious pranas bring through creativity, inspiration and intuition. These are the energies to be sought after and nurtured through various kinds of religious devotion and sadhana.

In nearly every home, all three kinds of prana are at work. Little children are functioning mainly in the instinctive pranas.

Students are in the intellectual pranas. Parents, hopefully, are functioning in the spiritual pranas, at least part of the time, drawing into the home the cosmic actinic rays of the soul, while balancing all three forms of prana within themselves.

It is the duty of the head of the house and his wife to take charge of all the three pranas within the home and cause them to work properly day after day after day after day. How do they do that? By prayer and regular, early-morning daily sadhana, bringing wisdom and other refined actinic pranas through from the superconscious mind. And when everyone is bound together with love, everything goes along fairly smoothly.

The older children and young adults in the family must be taught that it's their responsibility, too, to see that the pranas are all flowing nicely in the home, so the little children and babies are protected. Young adults, having just come out of the instinctive mind themselves, are breaking the barriers into the intellect, experiencing these new pranas and beginning to think for themselves. This is the time when elders can guide them into the zero-tolerance-for-disharmonious-conditions philosophical outlook. Youths who have have accepted the concept, tried it out and found for themselves that, "Yes, we do have control over the instinctive mind," and "No, it cannot run wild within our home, among our friends or in our associations with the community," are most respectful of loving relationships. They will be the ones to keep the flow of pranas harmonious.

Then the next step unfolds from within most naturally: zero

tolerance for disharmonious conditions within our own self. This brings us back to my guru's wisdom: claim the strength to stop being miserable, to stop tolerating turmoil inside yourself.

How is this accomplished? We have to boldly affirm, "I will not allow the instinctive mind that I experienced as a child to control me in any way. I will not allow anger to come up. I will not allow jealousy to dominate my thinking and make me feel inferior or superior to someone else. I will not allow fear to permeate my aura."

Then, each day before bedtime, settle all unresolved matters within yourself by performing the vasana daha tantra: "subconscious purification by fire." Vasanas are subconscious traits, impressions or tendencies. Dahameans to burn, and a tantra is a method, and the method is to write out clearly all problems that are vibrating in the subconscious, instinctive-intellectual mind. When the eyes see the problem in writing in the intellectual mind, the emotion attached to the difficulty diminishes. Then crumple up the paper and burn it in an inauspicious fire, such as in a fireplace, toilet or garbage can, to release these burdens from the subconscious and dispel the suppressed emotion as the fire consumes the paper.

This simple tantra removes the vasanas from the memory and emotional recesses along with the emotion, resentments, hurt feelings and misunderstandings. Soon the superconscious pranas will begin to flow, and our natural, peaceful self emerges and we may be left wondering, "Why was I ever bothered about that very small incident?"

What happens if we don't resolve matters within ourself before sleep? Those vrittis, those waves of the mind, which were disturbed by the experiential creation of the situation, will go to seed to erupt at a later time in life, perhaps many years in the future, or in another lifetime.

This daily mental maintenance, of course, requires discipline. It may be easier to simply drop off to sleep feeling angry, jealous, guilty, dejected or sorry for one's self.

Yes, zero tolerance for disharmonious conditions can be applied within oneself as well as among a family or a group of people. This practice can be establish in one of two ways. Start with yourself and then carry it out to others. Or start with your relationships with others, smoothing out the pranas when they go a little crazy, and then finally apply it to yourself when you are convinced that this is the way life should be lived.

Zero tolerance for disharmonious conditions is clearly the only way once one fully accepts the basic principles of the Sanatana Dharma: all-pervasive energy, cause and effect and coming back in a physical birth until all scores are settled.

Remember the inspiring words of the Atharva Veda, "Let us have concord with our own people and concord with people who are strangers to us. Asvins, create between us and the strangers a unity of hearts. May we unite in our midst, unite in our purposes and not fight against the divine spirit within us."