



YOGA: PERSPECTIVE FROM AN HIV CLINICIAN

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THE YOGA OF MEDICINE

- “When you do the work that by your nature is your calling, you are worshipping the creator of all beings who is omnipresent, and thus you attain perfection.”

Bhagavad Gita (Sloka 18:47)

THE QUACK FROG

“ A frog once upon a time came forth from his home in the marsh and proclaimed to all the beasts that he was a learned physician, skilled in the use of drugs and able to heal all diseases. A fox asked him, ‘How can you pretend to prescribe for others, when you are unable to heal your own lame gait and wrinkled skin?’”

Aesops, 620 B.C.

The Quack Frog

- The Frog is a transformed creature from the primordial abyss and is a healer; the fox is simply playing his part as the trickster
- The Frog is not a quack but the fox moves from his ego (he/his culture defines the frog's wrinkled skin and lame gait as "disease")
- The Frog is a Quack because he moves from his ego
- The Frog is a Quack because he is telling the Fox what the Fox is not yet ready to hear

Is the frog a “quack” ?

- “With exceptional mental faculties, an individual can influence the mental state of other beings. This influence depends on the state of the recipient”. Bhagavad Gita Sloka 4.5-4.6

THE FIRST 5 LIMBS OF YOGA

“PHYSICIAN HEAL THYSELF”

Identifying the true self

- Allowing the healer to let go of moving from the ego (which desires to connect with the physical reality as a fulfilling experience)
- Allowing the healer to heal (the depth of the experience becomes important – rather than the perception of fulfillment)
- Identifying the Disintegrated Ego Unit- the cause of dualism (wants, needs, fears)

The First 2 Limbs of Yoga (Reaching a higher level of Presence/Self-Approval)

- Asanas (allowing the flow of energy within the body to proceed without blockage)
- Pranayama (Prana the life force, connecting the life force within with the life force without - through the breath)

Limbs 3-5 of Yoga - Dissolving EGO (I want), the I (Blame/Fault), ME (Fear) , MINE (Attachments)

- Yama (to take only what is necessary)
dissolving the MINE
- Niyama (attitude we adopt toward
ourselves) Dissolving the "Almighty I"
- Pratyahara (to withdraw oneself from that
which affects (nourishes) the senses)
Dissolving the ME

Identifying the EGO driven Disintegrated I, ME, Mine

- Moving from the ego – unidirectional movement from the I as the center supported by everything and everyone- root cause of incorrect comprehension, Dualism, and MAYA (Illusion)
- Ego defines our wants and motivation (personal desires) which is reinforced by external validation (and is therefore sought after)
- In the Disintegrated EGO model – reality is limited to the physical plane and is controlled by wants, needs (perceived habits/individual freedoms) and fears (incorrect perception of the senses)
- The I must balance the wanting Ego, the needy mine and the fearful me
- The I can implode or the I can survive by attributing fault and blame externally or through an “external force” guiding the ego to successfully obtain it’s wants (usually at another’s expense)

The Disintegrated Ego Unit (I ME MINE)



The Integrated self/Self (Yogic self) Correct Comprehension

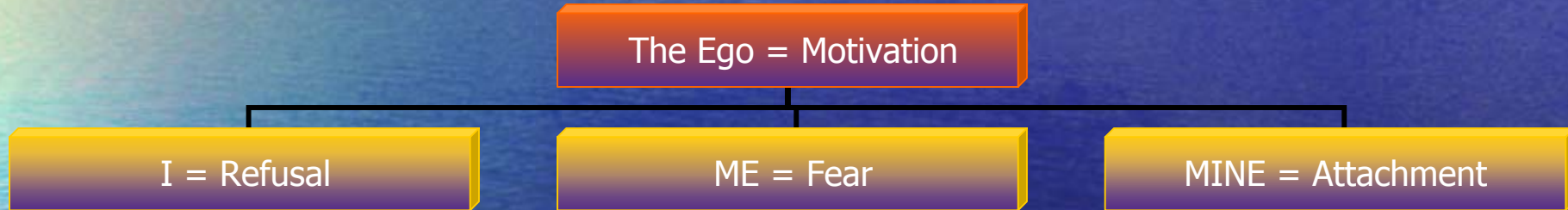
- Non-directional movement
- Non-dualism
- Identifying the self/Self (Atman) (I am not this body I am not this mind. I am the Perceiver of this body and mind)
- The self experiences the present
(The self is not controlled by the wants, needs or fears which existed in the past or are perceived to exist in the future)

THE YOGIC self/Self = the
Perceiver of the Ego (I Want)/
Me / Mine



The Obstacles of Yoga

Directional Movement of the EGO (Incorrect comprehension)



EGO (I WANT/DEMAND)

- The Ego wants more and more and more because the ego becomes attached to what it thinks it wanted/wants/will want
- The Ego demands that others see it as right and just (depends on external validation/approval as doesn't truly believe that it is right and just)
- The Ego seeks acceptance as it is not self-accepting
- The almighty I, Me, Mine (The Ego thinks and acts)
- The Ego (I, Me, Mine) is always right
- The Ego (the "perfect" in the imperfect world) is separate from everything else (protected by a higher power)

Correct Comprehension of the Ego (Motivation)

- By steadily letting go of the fruits of his/her actions the yogi attains peace. But the unyogic person motivated by personal desires is bound by his/her attachments to the fruits. Bhagavad Gita Sloka 5:12

The Almighty I

- I am this body, I am this mind
- MAYA is the belief that the ALMIGHTY I can not be at fault. THE ALMIGHTY I MUST BLAME
- I am a good doctor because I take good care of my patients (my possessions)
- I am a good doctor because my peers/patients acknowledge this fact (external validation/acceptance)
- If only my patients would listen/follow directions/be adherent (fault/blame)

Niyama = Attitude we adopt toward ourselves (Physician Heal Thyself)

- Niyama is the dissolution of the belief that the I will self destruct if it finds internal faults (I am not this body I am not this mind)
- The Yogic I performs his/her job as a physician's dharma (doing one's duty to the best of one's ability)

Correct Comprehension of the “Almighty I”

- A person can rise up through the efforts of his/her own mind, or in the same manner, draw him/herself down for each person is his/her own friend or enemy

Bhagavad Gita (Sloka 6:5)

Me

- The Me reacts
- The Me is vulnerable
- The Me can not discern instinctive fear from illusionary fear
- The Me will cause the physician to “cover his/her ass”

Pratyahara = to withdraw oneself from that which affects the senses

- Pratyahara is the dissolution of unreasonable dislikes (fears) which are usually the result of painful experiences in the past connected with particular objects and situations
- Pratyahara allows one to discern instinctive fear from illusionary fear

Correct comprehension of ME

- Seeing the same in pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, in battle (life) – just for the sake of the battle (life) – then you will be sinless (fearless).

Bhagavad Gita 2:38

MINE

- The Mine attaches (this is my patient)
- The MINE possesses
- The MINE makes demands (I want this because it gave me pleasure in the past not because I need this today)
- The MINE is the sole axis around which the rest of the world revolves
- The MINE has an inner turf, it holds on to its treasured OPINIONS and FIXED HABITS

YAMA to take only what is necessary

- Yama is the decision to take only what is necessary (not to take (consume) more than is needed)
- Yama is the dissolution of attachment and demands
- Yama is the dissolution of fixed habits and opinions (perceived individual rights and freedoms)

Correct Comprehension of MINE

- By steadily and continuously practicing Yoga, the yogi wins over his mind and realizes the peace that is my (Atman's) nature. This in turn naturally leads to nirvana. Bhagavad Gita 6:15

Case Presentation

- 41 yo Asian MSM
- Dx HIV+ 1992, CD4 331, VL 19,174
- 4/92 Starts AZT, DDC added 7/92
- 5/94 AZT/DDI, moves to LA
- 6/96 Returns to SF, CD4 284, VL 123,229 on Combivir/CRIX (taking 2 tabs BID)
- 11/96 DDI/D4T/CRIX (TID) CD4 263, VL<500
- 10/98 CD4 144, VL14,000; begins DDI/D4T/CRIX/RTV
- 10/00 CD4 92, VL 33,000 Given DDI pediatric suspension (Genotype M46L,A71A/T,T215Y,V82T,L90M)
- 7/01 patient can not take ART, agrees to take Sep/Azith

Case Presentation (Patient's Ideal Drug Regimen)

- My Primary struggle is my busy work schedule. In the morning I am not awake enough to think about taking my medication. At work I am too busy and forget about taking my medication. Therefore, twice a day therapy will be extremely difficult for me to follow
- Large pills are the next challenge. I have gagged and threw up on several occasions
- Pills that do not have a coating and have an aftertaste. Regular size capsules work the best.
- The need to separate medications from meals. I do not have breakfast, I don't get to my lunch until 3 PM and I only take bites between tasks at work.

Thank you for your attempts to work with me on the appropriate regimen. Please know that I am trying my best. If our next attempt is not successful I suppose I will just leave it up to God's will on what will happen next.

Case Presentation

- 11/01 TVF/DDI/KAL BID
- 1/02 CD4 26 VL 238,000 (KAL 3 qd)
- 4/02 CD4 31 VL 68200 (not able to take ART agrees to Sep/Azith)
- 11/02 CD4<20 VL 50,400 TZV,TFV,KAL
- 12/02 not able to take meds
- 1/03 misses appt.
- 3/03 calls office SOB, cough, fever Admitted ICU respiratory failure
– Pulm PCP, KS restarted on ART
- 4/03 able to take ART with Ativan, Zofran VL<50
- 5/03 VL 1065 – states “just a blip”
- 6/03 CD4 23 VL 5650
- I will only take my medicines once a day

Case Presentation

- The patient is given a new form to readdress his concerns
- He is encouraged to take his medications with Ativan and Zofran
- The patient agrees to take TZV, TFV, KAL once a day

How do you feel about yourself
now?

- I am tired of looking and feeling sick

How do you feel when you take the Medications

- Stomach feels bloated
- Medicine tastes awful
- Feel weak
- Medicine makes me cough
- I feel like a sick person

What are the reasons you miss taking medications

- Busy with other activities at work
- Do not want others to see me taking my medication
- I think about death when I take my medications

Case Presentation

- 8/03 feeling better VL <75
- 9/03 feeling stronger VL 135
- 10/03 "things going great" VL 277
- 11/03 still nauseated VL <75
- 12/03 feeling well VL <75

The Disintegrated Ego

(My patient is doing well so I am a
wise and a good doctor)

- Egoism is the identification of the Seer with the instrument of seeing.
(2Pantanjali Sutra6)

The Yogic Healer: Physician Heal Thyself (I am not this body and I am not this mind)

- EGO = I Want (acceptance/things/external approval)
Asanas/Pranayama = dissolving false motivation.
I teach a person what he or she can accept at the time, not what my ego thinks would finally be best for them.
- I = Niyama - dissolving refusal/denial. I focus on the process in the present moment.
- Me = Pratyahara - dissolving fear. By doing my duty to the best of my ability I remain centered in the experience itself
- Mine = Yama - dissolving attachment/demands. I observe the process and no longer demand a particular outcome for myself or my patient.

Case Presentation

- Patient seen in office 1/04
- Nausea persists
- Complains of after taste
- Missed medications a “few days” over the holidays
- VL 13,766

Case Presentation

- 2/04 Nausea/vomiting remains a problem
- has started seeing a psychiatrist
- Finds medications physically repulsive
- Has to split meds (bid) as too nauseated on a qd regimen
- CD4 63, VL 5048

Case Presentation

- 3/04 Psychiatrist not helpful, acupuncture herbal remedies not helpful, can't take meds; overwhelmed, depressed; work interfering with taking meds; feels out of control
- 5/04 Agrees to go out on disability
- 6/04 not able to focus on taking meds CD4 40 VL 194,739
- 7/04 spending 2 hours looking at meds but not able to take them; Discuss T20 as NNRTI naïve- will not consider injecting meds
- Misses next appointment; arrives 1/2 late for following appointment – reschedules for following day
- 8/04 Not able to sleep, crying; discusses feelings of being HIV infected in his early 20s; agrees to attend T20 support group and agrees to consider new ART regimen – given referrals to 2 study centers to discuss options CD4 57 VL 111,371

The YOGIC I

- The unenlightened do things with attachment. An enlightened person does things with the same zeal, Arjuna, but without attachment, and thus guides others on the path of selfless action.
Bhagavad Gita 3:26

Case Presentation

- 9/04 Patient comes to the office to thank me for the care I have provided over the past 14 years
- He has attended a T20 support group
- He realizes that he needed to make a complete change in how he is dealing as a long term survivor with AIDS
- He has been compliant over the past month on an NN/T20 based regimen and is under the care of a new physician
- He hugs me and promises to keep me posted

Yoga = Bliss

- Every thought (function of the mind) and action (function of the body) becomes an offering (function of the spirit), for I am the Perceiver of this body and this mind.

Conclusion

Yoga is a path on which one transforms in the eternal now

- I am given
- I have
- I offer