

AN OVERVIEW OF BREATHING EXERCISE (*vasiyogam*) IN SIDDHA CONCEPT- A LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The Siddha system is a unique and historical medicine system with strong philosophical foundation behind its medical science. According to siddhars, a healthy living indicates not only the physical health but also social and spiritual well-being which will remain as a tool to attain the “External bliss”. Yogasanam is the one of the method for attaining external bliss. The origin of yoga have been speculated to date back to pre-vedic Indian traditions as it is mentioned in rig-veda. So now-a-days, yoga is a part of education in the school itself.

KEYWORDS: breathing exercise, vaasi, saram, yoga, Siddha.

INTRODUCTION

Yoga means the union of our individual consciousness with the universal divine consciousness in a super-conscious state known as Samadhi. The first book of humankind, Rigveda, mentions about yogic meditation by the wise, while *Yajurveda* exhorts us to practice yoga for enhancing mental health, physical strength, and prosperity. Respiration plays a vital role in the normal mechanism of the human body. According to Siddhars, one can lead a healthy life by regulating the flow of air during respiration. The regulation can be done by practicing “*vaasiyogam*”.

DISCUSSION

TEN VAYUS(*dasavayu*)

Ten *vali* and *kaatru* are the synonyms. Though *vayuis* one, it attains ten names due to its place, functions etc. The *tenvayus* help to function the ten *naadis*. The ten *vayus* are:

Table1: list of dasavayus and their functions.

S.NO	VAYUS	FUNCTIONS
1	PRANAN	It appears from the middle of the head. It passes through <i>chitanaadi</i> and enters into <i>moolatharam</i> . Then returns through <i>naadi</i> and joins with <i>pingalai</i> , circles the entire skull and thus through the nostrils it helps for respiration. The functions of <i>pranan</i> are to help respiration. During this process of respiration, the inhaled 12 inches air enters in and only 8 inches of air is consumed. The remaining 4 inches are wasted (exhaled). It helps in digesting the foods taken. The respiration is 360 times per 24 minutes (<i>nazhigai</i>). For the whole day of 60 <i>naligai</i> (24hours) the number of respiration are 21,600. Its color is blue. The division of respiration is shown in table1.a
2	ABANAM (downward force)	<i>Apanavayu</i> is called as <i>keezhnokkukal</i> (air with downward force) in tamil. It comes out from <i>swathittanam</i> and helps to excrete fecal matters and urine. It helps in contraction and relaxation of the rectum. It carries the essence of food to various places in the body
3	VIYANAN	<i>Viyonavayu</i> is otherwise called as “ <i>paravukkaal</i> ” in tamil. It starts from the skin and spreads through all the nerves(72,000 in number) and from movable and immovable parts of the body. It helps stretching out and to bend of limbs. It helps in perceiving the touch feelings. Feeling touch or protects the body by disseminating food in proper places. It is milky in color.
4	UDHANAN (upward force):	<i>Udhanavayu</i> is called <i>asmelnokkukal</i> (air with upward force) in tamil. It appears from <i>udarakkini</i> and it nourishing the essence of food in proper places and does the work of mixing. It is silvery white in color.
5	SAMANAN	<i>Samanavayu</i> is called <i>asnadukaal</i> in tamil (the mediating air). It flows equally from the umbilicus to the legs and controls and maintains the <i>vayus</i> . It smoothens the six tastes, water, food etc, and distributed throughout the body. Its colour resembles the topaz.
6	NAGAN	It is responsible for higher intellectual functions. It brightens the intellect to learn all the arts and sciences. It helps to sing with pleasant vocal sound

		and in opening and shutting of the eyes. It rises the hairs intense look or horror. It is golden in color.
7	KOORMAN	It helps in yawning and closing the mouth. It is responsible for sharp vision. It starts from the mind and makes the eye lids to twinkle.
8	KIRUKARAN	It is responsible for the salivation in tongue. It secretes nasal secretion in the nostril. It induces appetite and helps in remembering things and causes a cough and sneezing, it is also responsible for taste sense.
9	DEVATHATHAN	It starts like an arch and causes laziness and to squeeze the body in laziness. Immediately after awakening from sleep, it gives languor. It helps in rotating the eye balls and is responsible for tolerance, temperament for fighting, argument and fury.
10	DHANANJAYAN	Third day after death it roars like an ocean and comes out of the skull by splitting it. It starts expanding from the nose and makes the whole body swell. Its color is blue.

*Table 1.a: Respirations in each aatharam

S.NO	AATHARAM	SPECIFIED LETTER**	RESPIRATION
1	Respiration in <i>moolatharam</i>	OM	600/ per day
2	Respiration in <i>swathittanam</i>	NA	6000/ per day
3	Respiration in <i>manipooragam</i>	MA	6000/ per day
4	Respiration in <i>anagatham</i>	SI	6000/ per day
5	Respiration in <i>visuththi</i>	Va	1000/ per day
6	Respiration in <i>aakkinai</i>	Ya	1000/ per day
7	Respiration in <i>naathaandham</i>	-	1000/ per day
	Total		21,600/ per day

“Solluvenmaanidarkunazhiondril,

Swasamathumunutrumbathakum,

Velluvenerubathayiramthan

Velanginirkumswasamathuaranutraga

Pulluvenkalaimoonrunaadimoondrai

Puzhalanamathiraiyumsepalagum

Malluvennaadiyathusariyaotil

Maanidarkupiniyumathumarungidathey”

“Naalondrikuerubathorayirathiaranuru

Nalamanaswasantheunthunirkum

Koolondripathinlaayirithinaanuru

Kuvinthamoolatharthukulodungum

Palondrielayurithiernuruswasam

Pazlinirpayinthidumendrtharigapinnai

Eloondriethanaiutchathithal

Eppothumbala rai erukalamae”

(YUGI

CINTHAMANI)

Thus, among 21,600 respirations, 14,400 respirations are consumed and the rest of 7,200 respirations are brought out as waste. Pranavayu is otherwise called *inuyirkkaalin* tamil (vital air).

Saram:

Saram is the movement of oxygen(Pranavayu). It flows into the nostrils by inhaling and comes out by exhalation. The flow of oxygen into the left nostril is called *idakali* and through the right nostril is called *pingalai*.

Table 2: list of breathing

<i>Chandra kalai(Idakalai)</i>	Breath of the left nostril
<i>Surya kalai(Pingalai)</i>	Breath of the right nostril
<i>Suzhumunai</i>	The place of union of the breath of two nostrils

The inhalation and exhalation don't take place simultaneously in both nostrils. In each nostril, the respiration takes place only for 2 hours. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The respiration takes place through the left nostril for two hours, beginning at 4AM every morning. Consequently, for every two hours, the respiration is changed from one nostril to another.

According to *avvaikura* etc, Tuesday, Saturdays and Sundays, respiration starts from the right nostril and at every two hours respiration changes from one nostril to another.

In Thursdays of waxing moon, through the left nostril and during the waning moon, through the right nostril, respiration starts at 4A.M. in the early morning and respiration changes from one nostril to other in every 2 hours.

Idakalai(left)-Moon

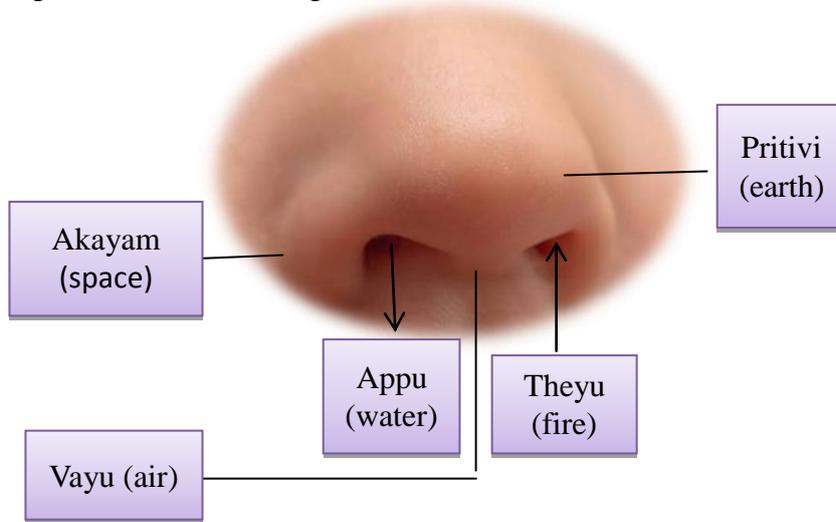
Pingalai(right)-Sun

Evenly the respiration passes through the two in turn, and all the five boothas.

Table3: list of panchaboothas, their symptom of flow and period of flow

S.NO	PANCHA BOOTHAS	SYMPTOMS OF FLOW	PERIOD OF FLOW
1	Pritivi (earth)	It will reside in the nostril percussing it.	36 minutes
2	Appu (water)	It descends downwards.	30 minutes
3	Theyu (fire)	It ascends upwards	24 minutes
4	Vayu (air)	Near the bridge of the nose	18 minutes
5	Akayam (space)	Without touching any part it	12 minutes

Fig 1: flow of air through nostrils



DETERMINATION OF LIFESPAN BY REGULATING SARAM:

Table4: life span of individual

S.NO	CONCEPTION OCCURING WHEN SARAM PASSES THROUGH	LIFESPAN OF INDIVIDUAL
1	all the five boothas	100
2	Four boothas	80

Manthiram indicates the simple yoga particles otherwise called *Attangayogam*. They are:

1. *Iyamam* (good conduct)
2. *Niyamam* (good deeds)
3. *Irukkai* (sitting postures)
4. ***Pranayamam* (a practice of saram)**
5. *Prathyakaram* (controlling the senses)
6. *Moochadakkaldharanai* (control of mind)
7. *Dhyanam* (controlling of self, silent, meditation)

8. *Samadhi* (vision of one's self)

PRANAYAMAM

Pranayamam means, inhaling, exhaling and withhold the vital air. If it is employed scientifically, oxygen will enter through the six vital regions of the body (*Atharam*) and strengthen them. It controls the mind without oscillation, brightens the intellect and makes the body immortal. Finally, It gives the status of the Almighty.

Further, it is said that if the respiration is perfect three the *naadi*(*thathu*- that governing soul and body) namely, *vatham*, *pitham*, *kapham* will be in their proper ratio and hence there will be no illness.

For human beings, the respiration will be 360/ 24 minutes. So, in 24 hours the respiration will be 21600. *Kalai*(3), *vaayu*(3) and *naadis*(3) combine together to form the *mathirais****of *naadi*, if the pulse is perfect.

By the function and combination of three *kalais*, *vayus* and three *nadis*, the function and the proportion of the three pulses(*nadi*) are determined.

If the person practices *Pranayamam*, he will always remain as a youth mentally.

*21600 respirations take place in a day. Out of it, 14400 respirations are sent inward and contract in the first vital region (*moolatharam*) of the body. 7200 respirations is wasted. If the quantity of oxygen wasted by 7200 respirations are utilized by practicing *pranayamam* (breathing exercise), one can live long without disease, old age and death.

In *gnanasaranool*, and *sivayogasaramit* is explained thus:

Those who practice *Pranayamam* should sit in the posture of *padmasanam* or *siddhasanam*. He should control and concentrate his mind on *pranayamam* and *otiyabandham* etc. Following the *undhi* region under umbilicus which is said to have been bestowed with grace, all the 72000 nerves and vessels throughout the body.

Among the ten vital *nadis*, the important basic three *nadis* namely *idakalai*, *pingalai* *Suzhumunai* are induced by *apana*, *prananandsamanavayus* and will be converted as *vali*(*vatham*), *azhal*(*pitham*) and *ayyam*(*kapham*) pulses and all these things can be seen by a practitioner of *saram*.

METHODOLOGY

PROCEDURE OF PRANAYAMAM

One who practices pranayamam should practice it during eating, sleeping and even during copulation and at all times. The method is to inhale through the right nostril(16 mathirai) upwards, suppress the breath for 32 mathirai and then exhalation for 16 mathirai. The same practice should be continued, starting from the left nostril and vice versa. In due course, if it is practiced to stay the chanting of mantras(*Na Ma Si VaYa*)**. The practice of pranayamam through the right nostril will be beneficial.so it is necessary to lie down on the left side while sleeping has been emphasized.

****MATHIRAI*: The time taken for blinking one`s eyes or for snapping one`s finger(as a unit of time) is called one mathirai.

Table 5: steps in pranayamam, their process, mathirai, deities, chanting of mantra.

S.NO	STEPS IN PRANAYAMAM	PROCESS	Mathirai	Deities	To chant the mantra "OM SIVAYA NAMA"
1)	POORAGAM	the inhalation of the vital air from the atmosphere	16	Brahma	2 time
2)	RECHAGAM	the suppression of the vital air inhaled for sometimes and then to be exhaled.	16	Vishnu	2 times
3)	KUMBAGAM	the suppression of the vital air inside	32	Rudra	4 times

ASANAM (SITTING POSTURE):

Sitting in *padmasanam* or *siddhasanam* is suggested. Sitting on the skin of deer facing north or yoga mat, controlling and concentrating the mind and restraining the senses and wearing *ottiyabandham* is essential for practicing pranayamam is advised.

ADVANTAGES OF VAASI:

"Manangatinalalloyogamkittum

Magathanaganamadhudhanaeeidhum

Sinangatinalallothavamkittum

Sithiyettumeidhumadasivamumeidhum

Dhanangatinalallovaramaimatum

Saarvanajegajalavithaieidhum

Kanangatumarivalloguruvaeaasaan

Kaimuraisyaiseidhukonduarivilkoodae.enaku”

(SUNDARAANANTHAR ATHEETHAM 71-50)

- 1) For any achievement, mind control becomes on essential. If mind is controlled ultimately it will lead you to attain *Gnana(supreme knowledge)*.
- 2) With the practice of vasi, there is a possibility to get all benefits. If vaasi is controlled, the and will be in control.
- 3) All the five sense organs and senses won't be deviated to the earth by desires.
- 4) It helps to maintain physical and and mental health.
- 5) The three evil passions inherent principles namely *anavam* (self-will), *kanmam*(dual deeds) and *mayai* (inherent evil or personified maker) can be eliminated.
- 6) *Thavam*(power of self mortification) can be achieved.i.e , it can be possible to live according to the will-*attangayogam* and *attama siddhi* can be achieved.
- 7) The state of siva can also be attained. Due to the flourishing of wealth, poverty will leave.
- 8) The solid wisdom can be achieved. The wisdom which is called “*sivarajayogam*” .
- 9) It decreases the sympathetic nerve supply and stimulates the parasympathetic nerve supply in nervous system⁴.
- 10) It decreases heart rate and blood pressure^{[5][6]}.
- 11) It also increases physiological functions in our body^{[7][8]}.
- 12) It helps in preventing cardiovascular diseases^[9] ..

CONCLUSION

As the palindrome word “Å¡°ç” denotes “°çÅ¡” (THE ALMIGHTY). This is considered as one the important way to attain Lord Shiva. Still now-a-days, many people considering “*vaasiottam*” as an superstitious belief. They consider suriyakalai (pingalai) for begining good deeds.This paper helps in understanding the thasavayus and their functions, procedure of vaasiyogam and its benefits. By following the pranayama all can lead an healthy living.

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