



Holistic Teachings of the Himalayan Tradition

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The Himalayan Tradition of H.H. Swami Rama is over 5000 years old and pre dates the monastic tradition of Adi Shankara. This is a living tradition nurtured in the cave monasteries of the Himalayas. To quote Swami Rama, 'The time has come for man to realize that he is not a body alone. He is a breathing being and a thinking being too --- a unique individual made up of complex emotions, appetites and desires.'

One is surrounded by the bounties of Nature on the outside. Deep within is the centre of consciousness, the source of love, peace, harmony and bliss. Man has become isolated from both Nature and the centre of consciousness and has therefore created external and internal boundaries that limit well-being and harmony. More important than the physical aspect of health is the mental aspect and the spiritual aspect is of greater importance than both the physical and mental aspects.

It has been estimated that 75 % of today's diseases are psychosomatic diseases. Stress leads to distress which in turn leads to dis-ease by weakening the immune system making one vulnerable to disease. Negative thoughts and turbulent emotions are injurious, whereas, positive emotions like compassion and contentment create healing vibrations.

Our personality is woven out of our habits which are the mental grooves of repeated actions. Actions arise from our thoughts which in turn stem from our emotions. With introspection, we can trace emotional disturbances to one of the four primitive fountains: Food, Sleep, Sex and Fear. If these fountains are not regulated and balanced, they create emotional disturbances and disrupt our peace of mind.



The holistic approach is to see the relationship between body, breath, senses, emotions, mind and the center of consciousness. A well-balanced diet of cleansing and nourishing foods, a moderate regimen of aerobic and stretching exercises, proper diaphragmatic breathing, systematic relaxation, contemplation and meditation, and selfless service can greatly enhance our sense of well-being, adding meaning and purpose to our lives and allowing us to transform our personality and expand our awareness of the interconnectedness of all life and thus bring us in direct touch with our divine nature.

Swami Rama never tired of reminding us that the only way to extricate ourselves from the suffocating coils of samsara and from the consequences of the inexorable law of Karma was to do our duties skillfully, selflessly and lovingly. He reiterated that stress was often the consequence of having to do what one disliked doing. As one could not always choose one's duties, one had to learn to cultivate love for one's duties.

Again, it is the lack of awareness of the interconnectedness of all created beings that has lead to strife and wars and ignoble emotions like fear, greed, jealousy and the like. If one could always remain aware that the same Atman, the same Consciousness, pervades all creation, then who would fear whom, who would be jealous of whom, when there is only One.

The ecological destruction wrought by man is related to viewing Nature as dead matter, insentient and inert. If the interconnectedness of Man and Nature were to be realized, if Nature were to be viewed as Mother Prakrti or as the Goddess Gaia, there would be less indiscriminate plundering of the bounties of Nature, preserving these resources, out of respect for the nurturing Mother as well as for the benefit of future generations.

