

MOVEMENT BREATH STILLNESS SENSATION

**All problems are emotional; all solutions are Spiritual; all experience is physical**". Problems occur through thinking: the problem and solution involve the past and future filled with worry or maybe hope. The solution usually entails some sort of agreement we come to, and a feeling of resolution. But what is actually meant by experience being physical?

We can think of physical sensation in regard to a headache or an injured body part. In both cases there are thoughts and emotional aspects as well. With every 'thing' we encounter there are thoughts, sensorial feelings, perceptions and emotions. Most people like the sensations that accompany bliss, clarity, calmness, and loving-kindness, and they don't want the pain of suffering from stress, worry, rage, obsessing, or anguish. As humans, we get to experience all of the above, but we create this cycle of pushing away feelings that are painful, while craving the joyful 'highs'; or perhaps a more mature person wants the feelings/sensations that accompany a calm, clear, accepting mind. This is why many people turn toward religion or want to learn to meditate.

In each moment there are numerous simultaneous sensations accompanying our thoughts and emotions. The activity all around and within us is all a part of the present moment. Each thought or thing is available in its individuality and in combination with a bigger picture. The physical experience of not just noticing the qualities of pleasure or pain, but becoming familiar with different nuances in different scenarios. We can learn to enhance or transform simply by accepting and observing them.

There is movement, and there is stillness, a stillness that is like wide open undisturbed space. We seem to find this silent space in gaps: between our inhale and exhale, or in between thoughts. Movement can be seen in shifts. We can become familiar with noticing shifts and gaps in our internal rhythms and sensations.

Every 'thing' we experience involves movement, and anything observable has duration ( a length of time with a beginning and end) and, stated differently, it takes time. A thought takes time and is neurological movement. It begins when we notice it, and ends when we stop it, or our attention is captured by something else. And with each thought, there are emotional feelings. We don't realize, that when we feel dread, jealousy or rage, there are a certain combination of sensations that occur in each scenario. No two are the same.

Learning to separate out the different aspects of our experience helps us to actually see things as they are. We are not our thoughts or inner rhythms or emotion, but we can become intimate with them. Masters bring our attention to the moon, and ask students to solve riddles like 'what is the sound of one hand clapping' or ask us to surrender, in order to stop our brain from comparing and projecting.

The world is alive with movement and pulsations, and our internal physical body is no exception. Movement and sensation are how we track energy or anything within us. A sensation is a group of cells doing something. When enough cells get involved, we feel it. The more cells involved, the bigger the sensation. A lot more cells are involved when you fall off of your bike than if you break off a fingernail. Fear and trauma also entail a lot of sensation, to the point of overload. Some sensations are coupled with a pleasant state of mind, and some the opposite. Our sensorial activity is influenced and usually created by our thoughts. An emotion cannot be perpetuated without thinking. When you are able to focus on the energy or sensorial quality of the emotion and remove the thought, transformation begins. Learning how to stop the dialogue mid-stream while being aware of the different forms of gripping and sensations is a skill that takes time to develop. Different aspects of our experience can be observed and held without wanting to change anything, where before, we wanted to change uncomfortable aspects into pleasant ones.

The breath is a perfect example. You are asked to follow the breath in many meditation techniques which is quite easy for maybe 30 seconds. Monkey mind is talked about frequently, so to make a long story short, the only way to truly 'stay' with the breath is to find ways to explore it and find it interesting. One way to begin to do that is to notice all of the different sensations and qualities of the breath. It's so strange that we identify our 'selves' with our thoughts, or our bodies, when perhaps our breath is the thing most worthy of identifying our self with, while establishing a sense of continuity. The sensorial qualities associated with the breath are diverse and numerous. The sharp sensations at the tip of the nose as the air comes and goes: the quality and duration of the inhale: the contrasting still 'pause' at the top of the inhale. Next comes the slow exhale and another silent 'pause' at the bottom. Then there's the rising and falling of the chest, the feeling of expansion, and all of the different sensations that come when we bring in concepts of floating, or adding a meaningful phrase like 'sat nam' or 'softening/letting go'. These concepts, like all concepts when we are paying attention, bring up many different sensations and emotional nuances. Notice the sensations that arise when self criticism rears its head: the charges in the belly, chest, throat or temple.

Through mindfulness and light concentration, things that are interconnected are seen in their unique individuality for the moment. With awareness, the field broadens to include everything, and then something jumps out, almost like a bubble moving toward us. We become an active participant in a very special magical show. The show that never ends. Namaste