

Yoga Spirit Academy E-zine

Healing body, mind and spirit
with the wisdom of Yoga, meditation and Ayurveda

January / February / March 2017

Volume 10, Issue 1

Yoga and the Koshas by Janet W Parachin

Yoga and Āyurveda offer a comprehensive understanding of the human being, affecting both our potential for accomplishments and our capacity to heal. The human person is organized into five bodies known as *koshas* or sheaths. Only one is visible while the others are invisible. The invisible bodies are called “subtle” because they have profound energy. All five bodies work together and exert influence on each other.

The *koshas* are often described as nesting dolls with each one fitting inside the next. In the diagram they are shown as a series of layers contained within the human person. The most obvious layer is the one we can see, the physical body known as the *annamaya kosha*, “the body made of food.” Through the practice of Yoga we learn how to strengthen and balance the body, while the knowledge of Āyurveda enables us to eat the right foods for our doshic constitution.

The remaining four sheaths are subtle, invisible to the eye. Even though we can’t see them, we can surely feel their effects. Each sheath is more subtle than the next.

Pranamaya kosha is the next sheath, “the body made of energy.” In truth *prāna* is so much more than energy; it’s our very life force that gives animation and vitality to the human person. In Yoga we re-vitalize this sheath through the regular practice of pranayama, yogic breathing exercises. Āyurveda teaches how to conserve and strengthen

prāna through controlling *vāta*, and especially the air and space elements, in our life.

The next subtle body is called *manomaya kosha*, the first level of the mind. This is often called the emotional body because it is that part of the mind that reacts. We see this in our tendency to like or dislike, cling to or push away the things we encounter through our senses. In Yoga we have the ethical teaching of Sri Patañjali, who describes *yama* and *niyama*, yoga’s guidelines for the “dos and don’ts” of everyday living. Āyurveda offers multiple practices for emotional balance that include working with chakras, gemstones, aromatherapy and sound therapy.

Vijñanamaya kosha is the fourth sheath and the second level of the mind. It is usually referred to as the mental body. It is the higher mind that is alert and aware. Undisturbed by the fluctuations of the emotional body, it is the mind we access during meditation. In Yoga we can take steps to strengthen this sheath by practicing *pratyahara*, releasing all distractions, and doing concentration exercises, like candle-gazing. Āyurveda offers guidelines for making food and lifestyle choices that will support a calm, clear mind, such as avoiding intoxicants and surrounding oneself

Continues on page two

Yoga Spirit Academy
200-hour and 300-hour yoga teacher training
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Dr. Janet W Parachin, Director
918-261-9786
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Yoga Body Breath and Mind

Join Janet Parachin, Certified Yoga Teacher and Āyurvedic Wellness Consultant in discovering the role of the body, breath and mind in Yoga. All workshops will include postures, breath exercises and meditation. Receive 2 hours of Yoga continuing education per workshop.

Yoga Body on Friday, February 12, 6:00-8:00pm

What is the role of the body in Yoga? In Yoga we experience many different sensations—comfort, discomfort, stretch, pain. Through movement we discover what the body is saying to us and we learn to respond in appropriate ways.

Yoga Breath on Friday, March 17, 6:00-8:00pm

What is the role of the breath in Yoga? Prāna is the body's

vital life force. It needs to be strong, but always in balance with other forces in the body. Explore how to keep it in balance so that we always have enough strength and vitality.

Yoga Mind on Friday, April 21, 6:00-8:00pm

What is the role of the mind in Yoga? Learn why the mind is so difficult to control and find out how to steer it in the direction we want it to go.

\$120 for 3 workshops

\$45 for 1 in advance

\$55 at the door

Contact Janet at jparachin@cox.net or 918-261-9786 to register. Download a flyer at <http://yogaspiritulsa.com/Training-Workshops/Workshops>

Yoga and the Koshas *continued*

with positive, uplifting beings.

The fifth sheath is the most subtle and therefore the most difficult to “see.” *Anandamaya kosha* literally means “the body made of bliss,” so it is called the spiritual body. Our inability to see it does not make it any less real. Consider the blue sky which is always present, even though it is often covered up by clouds, birds, satellites and even darkness. We know the blue sky is always there, just like the bliss body. Yogic meditative practices remind us of our joyful birthright, especially So ham (I am That) meditation. And Āyurveda gives us the tools to live in harmony with the doshas and the seasons, bringing balance, enduring good health and happiness to our lives.

CALENDAR

March 11-12 200-hour yoga teacher training weekend

April 1-2 200-hour yoga teacher training weekend

May 20-21 Advanced Anatomy for Yoga begins

For more information please visit our website

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