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## **Hindrances to Progress on the Path of Yoga- Languor**

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In working and cultivating a spiritual path and practice, individuals run up against various states of mental and physical being, generated from within as a result of their conditioning and habits.

These characteristics may also have an hereditary aspect to them, as studies have shown that states of being can be transmitted along family lines, from mother and father to children.

They are conditioned into us because of our lack of mindfulness of them and a lack of guidance in these things by our family, culture and society.

In fact, as the country, culture and society progress materially, there may be elements in the environment that strengthen the tendency to these characteristics.

These states of being can be referred to as being obstacles, hindrances or impediments on the path of life and spiritual cultivation.

In the philosophy, path and practice of Yoga they are known as antarayah.

Buddhism also refers to these hindrances in its philosophy, path and practice and conceptualizes them as nivarana, which means to hinder or to obstruct.

The paths and practices of Yoga and Buddhism have as among their objectives the intention to weaken and alleviate these hindrances from our mental and physical being so we can cultivate a more wholesome and skillful way of life.

A closer examination of the hindrances and obstacles show that their presence in our lives obstructs us from leading a balanced and wholesome life, whether one works a spiritual path and practice such as Yoga or Buddhism or not.

Languor is a mental state characterized by inertia, dullness, and heaviness.

It equates to the hindrance on the Buddhist path known as torpor.

When the state of languor or torpor is part of our being, associated states of consciousness are manifested frequently. None of them are skillful or wholesome, conducive to progress in life or on the spiritual path.

These include impatience, carelessness and an uncaring attitude, frustration, a critical nature and an inability to concentrate. Individuals may also exhibit traits such as excessive shyness and introversion. They may be sullen and show signs or rebelliousness or defiance from time to time. They may get easily attached to others or situations where they do not have to put forth much effort.

Related to this, the mental heaviness that languor induces may make it difficult for them to cultivate and maintain relationships with others that are built on sharing and commitment and caring. They may look for sensually pleasurable experiences to escape from their state, such as watching television excessively, or drugs and drinks. If they do not have a partner, chronic masturbation based on excessive sexual fantasizing may have become a habit in their life.

When we are in the throes of languor, everything seems like a burden or challenge to us. It can lead to deeper states of mental morbidity, including depression.

When we look at the hindrances of Yoga and Buddhism, we can see that the way to attack or tackle them is similar in scope and practice. The idea is to weaken them, through various actions and practices, leading eventually to their alleviation.

These involve things such as meditation practice, Hatha Yoga practice, morals and ethics practiced on both a mental and physical plane, and attention to habits regarding diet, sleep and our leisure activities.

More specifically, other avenues and ways to deal with languor or torpor can include the cultivation of a new routine, especially after work and on the weekends, that involves the active engagement of the mind and consciousness, such as reading, cleaning, or creating as opposed to those habits that lead to passivity in the mind, such as watching television.

Something simple, such as cleaning the house or rearranging the room involves an engagement of the mind in a process of thinking, deciding, and reflecting.

Keeping a journal may be helpful in cultivating a more active consciousness, with attention to editing what has been written for sharing with others.

Sharing with others in an open and trusting way is also important.

So is moderation in eating and sleeping.

Experiencing fresh air and sunshine on a daily basis, perhaps by walking in the park, on the beach or in a quiet and open area near ones home is also helpful.

The regular and daily practice of the postures that make up Hatha Yoga is especially beneficial in dealing with and overcoming this state of being.

We can move to a more active state mentally when we have healthy relationships with others, who can engage in conversation that is refreshing and enlightening, instead of geared to gossip, backbiting, criticism and complaining.

This hindrance is a difficult one to deal with, because when it is a deeply ingrained or embedded part of our being, it is hard to overcome.

Other hindrances, such as doubt or carelessness, suggest that there is a thought and physical process that is actively engaged in living and searching, and can be fine-tuned through experience and the cultivation of faith.

Languor makes it hard to get up and get going. We have a difficult time putting forth enough effort to get to a state where we are experiencing the benefits of our path and practice, and without constant guidance or hands on instruction, we can easily give up or fall back into our old state.

This who are in this state may also be reluctant to continue to practice, criticize the practice, or look for excuses to not continue with the practice.

Individuals such as this might benefit from staying in a meditation center or an ashram for an extended period of time.

If ones state of languor is excessive, one may have a difficult time living and working in the society, and be dependent on others and medication to deal with their problem.

Individuals such as these will not be in a position to grow from Yoga or Buddhism until their problem has been rectified to some extent, perhaps through the combined use of medication and therapy.

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