

# Yoga Explained 15

## The Astral Body – 19 Elements

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Going on with our discussion of Yoga Explained; last time we discussed this subject we took up from a metaphysical standpoint the Physical Body. The Physical Body is one of the three coverings, so to speak, of the Soul, which prevents us from realizing our oneness with God. While we are in any, or all, of these bodies, or the consciousness of those bodies, we are separated from the Soul, or God. And so, yoga helps us, and all who practice, to remove, to remove these encasements so that we will feel ourselves one with God.

And so, just to review just a moment about perhaps, the important part of the Physical Body, from the Autobiography,<sup>1</sup> those who meditate regularly, although they know the Physical Body exists, and they are careful to supply it with its necessary 16 Elements, still they are not surrounded, and encased, and limited by bodily consciousness. That's the important thing. If you meditate regularly and supersede this physical consciousness, you will feel, begin to feel, the more subtle parts of yourself – the two innermost coverings, of the Astral Body – the Body of Energy – and finally, the Body of Thought, or Causation – the “Body of Ideas,” the Master calls it.

Just like, if you create something in this world, you first create it in idea; it might help you to think of it as thought. You create it in idea, and then you gather together the necessary energy to materialize that idea as the physical. And so, God did that with us. He took a part of Himself, made an idea of a miniature universe, and through the instrumentality of Life Force, or the Astral Vehicle, He projected that miniature universe as you and as me.

So, we have to reverse the process, that's all. And through yoga, step-by-step, return to God's Consciousness from which all things have come. In this vehicle it is called the Soul Consciousness. It is still God's Great Intelligent Consciousness. And so, the Physical Body – we are perhaps too familiar with it – sometimes gives us trouble. But we should remember this, that, if we do our yoga, do our meditations faithfully, realizing that God has come to us through

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<sup>1</sup> Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda, 1946 First Release.

the channel of our Master and Self-Realization, we will supersede this body which gives us so much trouble.

And in the Autobiography<sup>2</sup> on page 278, those of you who wish to read it once more: "He who knows himself as the omnipresent Spirit is subject no longer to the rigidities of a body in time and space."<sup>3</sup> The minute you meditate and go within, you supersede time and space, and the body does not have any of its weight, because then you are getting into a finer region – first into the Region of the Body of Energy.

And so, Master goes on, "Their imprisoning 'rings-pass-not'..." that is, these vibrations which we cannot seemingly pass through, they "have yielded to the solvent: 'I am He.'<sup>4</sup>" I am He, Blessed Spirit, I am He. That's the way to rise above them. We have to take it step-by-step. But when you feel that, and know that, then these bodies, so to speak – impediments – these "three rings," spoken of here, must yield, because they are nothing but God's Vibration; your own vibration of Soul, vibrating at a lower rate of vibration. And when you speed that up by being one with the Presence of God as a higher vibration, these lower vibrations must yield. And they do yield in your meditation. You know they yield; only you have to keep on until they completely give way to yourself as Soul – free and clear from all restrictions.

So much for a little review of the Physical Body. We all should know that we should feed it with vital food, and food that we can assimilate, and stick to those simple laws. But greatest of all, is to realize that the Presence of God within, is the greatest food, even of this Physical Body.

So, tonight, we come to the Second body, which is known as the Electronic, or the Astral Body – the Body of Subtle Energies. And in your meditations you see parts of that Body – fragments of it. Sometimes, you may see some of the Vital Parts, as the Spiritual Centers. And, surely, after some sincere effort you'll see the, the Spiritual Eye in the forehead.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, These page numbers are from the 1952 Revision.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 1946 Release, Chapter 30, "He who knows himself as the omnipresent Spirit is subject no longer to the rigidities of a body in time and space. Their imprisoning "rings-pass-not" have yielded to the solvent: 'I am He.'"

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

And so, this Body, the Electronic Body, is made up of 19 Elements. As the Physical has 16 Elements, the Electronic, or Causal...or Astral Body has 19. What are those 19 Elements?

First the 10 senses – 10 senses. Well, perhaps you've felt you had only 5; but you have 5 others: 5 of Knowledge, 5 of Action – 5 in which the current is coming inward through the sense of touch, taste, smell, and so forth; then going outward, through the voice and through the organs of locomotion. So that we have really 10 senses; 10 senses within the Astral Body, 10 Subtle Currents, each with a definite specific function to perform.

Just like, if I touch that book, I know it is touch. Why? Surely not because the finger has the sense of touch in it – it hasn't. It has the end organ. But, from that end organ, through the nerve energy, that vibration is carried back to the Electronic Body, or Astral Body, where it is then *known* through the Electronic Body as "touch." It is transferred from that subtle energy of the Electronic Body, and it is coordinated in the Soul Consciousness, or the Causal Body – if you wish to call it that – as touch. But the mind projects it, and we think we touch it here [in the finger]. But really, you're touching it in your Soul within. And the final transformation is in the Electronic Body, made up of Life Force plus the Intelligence of God – Master calls them "Lifetrans." That is where the energy is finally coordinated as touch; same with taste, smell, hearing, and so forth.

And so, this Astral Body is very important, because all the senses are located there. Also your "karmic impulses" are in the Body of Energy. If you have a tendency, or any tendency which is undesirable, or you do not like it, if you can supersede the Astral Body, you will rise above that tendency which you have brought over from a previous life. And so, the battle to exterminate these latent impulses is carried on in the Second covering, the Electronic, or Astral Body of Light. That's why there is so much work to do in the Astral Body through the practice of yoga.

Yoga means union – union with Spirit within. Yoga means to yoke; to yoke your consciousness to that from which it has come – God's Consciousness. But, it has been attached to, first the Physical, then the Electronic, then the Causal Body. We have to unloose that attachment, so to speak, so that we can realize our oneness with God. That's what yoga will do. Not just Hatha Yoga or yoga – the various forms of yoga – but what I like to call "Salvation Yoga," Raja Yoga, which gives you oneness with the Presence of God within. That will give you Salvation. You may develop a wonderful body through Hatha Yoga, but unless

you follow through and know the Electronic Body behind the Physical Body, and then the Causal Body, and finally the Free Soul, you will not be saved, even though you practiced Hatha Yoga a million years. So, let us understand that yoga, real yoga, is that which gives us Salvation – gives us union with the Infinite.

And so, these 10 senses – 5 of Knowledge and 5 of Action – are, as I have said, not in the outward vehicle. Just as the, the physical reaction of light does not give us sense – the physical reaction of light in the eye does not give us the Sense of Sight; or the vibration which the ear receives known as hearing – the hearing is not there, but deep within in the Electronic Body. And also, just because there are certain vibrations from the flowers which strike the little Schneiderian membrane in the upper part of the nose, and we say, “That smells wonderful.” But it doesn’t smell wonderful *there* at all. It smells wonderful inside, in the Subtle Electronic Body. And so, that’s where the senses are located. That’s why the 10 Senses make up the first 10 Elements of the Electronic Body.

Then after that comes the 5 Pranas – 5 Pranas. Now, those are important subtle Electronic Currents within us which do certain things. Although we are not always conscious of these things, still they go on. And it’s a good thing, otherwise, we’d starve to death and wouldn’t be able to breathe, and all such things. But they go on. Why? Because in the subtle currents of the Electronic Body is the Presence of God.

And so, when you take a nice meal at the café, or any good café – of course they’re not as good as ours, but you know what I mean. When you take, have a good meal...is there any café as good as our café? No. So, when you do that, and you enjoy that, it isn’t outwardly that you enjoy it, but inwardly. And if you, as you enjoy the nice food there, or any nice food, as you enjoy it, if you take your attention from the outward thing – like the mushroom burger – and turn it inward, and feel in the Soul the enjoyment, then there’s no attachment to the mushroom burger. Although, we do hope you’ll come back for more! But still, your, we must save your Soul first. Otherwise what good is it? But, if we do both, if you have good food – mushroom burgers – and also, to enthuse you a little bit, to keep on with the yoga so that you save your Soul, that was the Master’s idea in having that café, and all cafés.

So, the 5 Pranas are subtle, remember this, Subtle Intelligent Forces within the Electronic Body – Subtle forms of Intelligent Life Force. People think that the Light which they see, or the parts of the Electronic Body which they see, are

inert, so to speak – just rays of Light. No! They are Intelligent Life Force. And that means in that River of Life, which makes up these 5 Subtle Pranas, is God's Intelligence. And so, when you take food, for instance, it's digested, and all of the elements of that food are distributed throughout the body as they should be in the right place. Why? Because God's Intelligence is in that River of Light. And so, those 5 Pranas constitute the next 5 Elements of the Electronic Body. There are 19 in all.

And so, just a word about the 5 Pranas; for instance the first is "Prana," which governs the breath. It is found in the region of the chest. It is Prana. All the Intelligent Life Force is sometimes call Prana. I think Sri Yukteswarji calls it Prana. But Master calls it Lifetronic Force – Intelligent Life Force. And that Intelligent Life Force in the region of the chest, in the heart region, is known as Prana. That's one of the 5 Forces, or these Intelligent Rivers of Life.

Then the next, to give you the Sanskrit word, is "Apana," a-p-a-n-a. This governs excretions. And, of course, you'll find this Prana located in the region of the kidneys, intestines, and perspiration glands. Those things are those regions where the toxins are eliminated. It is because of God's Intelligence in this River of Light that makes it perform its duty as it does. And that's the Second Prana.

The third is "Samana," which governs assimilation. And so when you eat a nice dinner, what is it? What is it that separates those elements in the food, and, and directs certain cells to pick up the fats, certain cells to pick up the carbohydrates, certain cells to pick up the other elements, the mineral salts, and so forth? What is it that does that? It is this Intelligent River of Light known as the Samana, one of the 5 Subtle Electric Currents of the Astral Body, and that is located in the region of the navel, where the assimilation takes place. And it is this current that picks out the different elements from the food, as it, as it is digested, and takes it into the blood stream where it is carried throughout the body and distributed where it is needed.

Next we come to "Udana", u-d-a-n-a, which is that Subtle elu, Electric Current, one of the 5, which has to do with swallowing, or deglutition – you all know – swallowing. It's interesting to notice that about a third way down, if you don't go below that point, you can bring it back again, whatever happens to get down there. But when it gets below that, it's finished as far as bringing it back, except one by which we don't like to do sometimes. But why does that happen? Because of this Subtle Electronic Current which takes the bolus of food down

from below the upper third of the esophagus. That's why it is not under control of ordinary will, as these Subtle Electronic Currents are not.

Then comes the "Vyana," v-y-a-n-a, which governs circulation – the Vascular System. That is such an intricate thing that it's impossible to go into it at any length. The blood does so many things: it keeps us warm to a certain degree, no matter whether it's zero outside; and vice versa, in the summer, it keeps us, the blood at a certain temperature no matter how hot it is outside; and many things. It takes...carries the different elements which sustain our body; and there are other things which it does. So this particular current, Vyana, v-y-a-n-a, Subtle Electric, one of the 5 Pranic Currents, is a very important current.

And there, in a few words, you have just a little bit about the 5 Elements of the Subtle Body, Electronic Body – the Second 5. And that brings the number to 15 – 15.

And so, the next time you're out and it's very hot, just stop and realize, that even though it is sweltering, your blood is the same temperature as it always is, and its content is the same – same amount of sugar, and so forth is in it. That's the Intelligence of God in this 5<sup>th</sup> Pranic Current.

And so, I have said, that's 15. Now we have 4 more. The 4 more Elements of the Subtle Body are mind, intellect, ego, and chitta or higher feeling. Those are more subtle, you see, then even these 5 Pranic Currents. And there you have the 19 Elements of the Subtle Body.

It is the Subtle Currents of this Electronic Body which govern the function of our being and the life within us through the 7 Chakras, including the Supreme Center of the brain and the other 6 in the spinal column, and then the substations, so to speak. It is through them that this Physical Body is coordinated, and life, as we know it, takes place. And so, this Astral Body is very important.

Now, I think, tonight we'll stop with that, except for the references, and go on with it next time.

Now, I have a few references about this wonderful Electronic Body within us, which so wonderfully takes care of things in spite of all we do to obstruct its action, by breaking laws, and through ignorance of not living as we should, even though we think we are right sometimes. But ignorance, as Master said, is the

greatest sin. So, in spite of all these drawbacks, this Electronic Body has the Intelligence of God, and if we just help it a little bit by the practice of yoga, we will find that things will go along in a harmonious way, in a much better way, than as if we just drift, drift haphazardly, through this life.

And so, a few references, now, to coordinate what I have said about the Electronic Body – first, from our Bible from St. John, 7<sup>th</sup> Chapter, 38<sup>th</sup> Verse, as follows. I have just been speaking about the 5 Pranas, and in this verse we have a reference to those 5 Pranas: “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said...” That is, he who carries out his meditations and the practice of yoga so that he knows at least a little something about this Subtle Electronic Body; those who know that behind this Physical is a Subtle, Intelligent Electronic Body by the practice of yoga and meditation, he will know, “...as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”<sup>5</sup> Those “rivers of living water” refer to these different Subtle Electronic Currents, or the 5 Pranas. They are living waters; they are intelligent; and the energy is directed by God’s Great Consciousness and His Great Knowing Power.

Now in Zechariah, we also have, in the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter, we also have a few references to this Electronic Body within us. There are references in Revelation to it, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Chapter, 10<sup>th</sup> Verse<sup>6</sup> on, of which many of you are familiar, but also in Zechariah we find the references to this Electronic Body, or to these living currents of Life Force, intelligent currents of Life Force.

And here we read in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> Verses one or two things which I’m sure will interest you: “And the angel (*sic*) said unto me, what seest thou?” That is, the devotee was meditating and he was seeing aspects of the Electronic Body within him. But they’re spoken of differently to, so as to hide the knowledge, which was necessary at that time, except to those who knew. “...And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, and a bowl upon the top of it, and seven lamps thereon...” (*Sic*) Now, the bowl refers to the Supreme Lotus at the top of the spinal column, and the candlesticks are the Chakras in the spinal column. And that is what the devotee will see, if you dive deep enough, you will see these various things. The seven centers are the places

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<sup>5</sup> St. John 7:38, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

<sup>6</sup> Revelation 1:10, “I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,”

<sup>7</sup> Zechariah 4:2, “And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof.”

of accumulation of Spiritual Energy, and one which most everybody can see, if they'll try a little is the sixth center, which is reflected at the Christ Center, here, [at the point between the eyebrows] or the Medulla Center. And then, if you go deeper, and lift your gaze through Spiritual power, you can see the Supreme Center at this point [between the eyebrows]. In fact, you can see all the Chakras at the point of the Spiritual Eye. And so, here we have a reference to that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Verse.

Then it goes on: "And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and one upon the left side (*sic*)."<sup>8</sup> That refers to the, for those of you who know a little bit about anatomy, the sympathetic nervous system – the ganglia of which are on each side of the spinal column – or that part which is spoken of in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Verse, "candlestick all of gold." But that is a subject all by itself, and we'll take that up a little later.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> verse, then I said, once more, "...What are these two oli...these two olive trees on (*sic*) the right side of the candlestick and upon the left thereof?"<sup>9</sup> Still, they were called olive trees, just to cover it up, so to speak, so that it wouldn't be known promiscuously – and in those times they had to do that.

"And I answered again, and said, What be these two olive branches through which the golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?"<sup>10</sup> (*Sic*) That verse is very intricate. And just to say a word or two about it, that the word for oil and energy – the Sanskrit word for "oil" means energy, and the "golden oil" means Spiritual Energy. You can see at the different chakras the Golden Vibration, and that refers to Spiritual Energy of these different Chakras, and the sympathetic nervous system, because that goes into the deep spine, and there it ends in the deep spine in two tubes. And it is that Energy which is gathered through the sympathetic nervous system, taken in through the Spiritual Eye to the deep spine which is spoken of in this particular verse; in meditation, if you keep at it, you can know these things to be true.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 3<sup>rd</sup> Verse, "And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof."

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 11<sup>th</sup> Verse, "Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof?"

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 12<sup>th</sup> Verse, "And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oil out of themselves?"

And finally, in the 14<sup>th</sup> Verse: “And then he said, these are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.<sup>11</sup>” “Earth,” in discussing this with the Master, he pointed out “earth” referred to the Body in this case. And it is through these two tubes coming out of the deep spine that this Spiritual Energy takes care of the Body, and carries the Christ Consciousness, which is the Lord, to every cell of the Body. So these scriptural passages, although they are deep, still, if you meditate, they’re simple, because of God’s Intelligence in us we can understand them. So much for the Bible.

Now, from the Hindu scriptures, we have a reference about this Subtle or Electronic Body – the Astral Body made of Lifetrans, of which I have spoken, and remember that Master calls them “Lifetrans.” The Hindu scripture will call them “pranic energy.” It’s the same, same thing.

And on page 415<sup>12</sup>, we have a reference which I advise you to read: “You have read in the scriptures,” Sri Yukteswarji went on, “that God encased the human soul successively in three bodies – the idea body,” just like in Genesis, “...God created heaven and earth...and they were without form and void.<sup>13</sup>” The Idea Body, the Subtle Body, secondly – or the one we are speaking of tonight – and the Physical Body, of which we spoke of last time. “On earth a man is equipped with his physical senses. An Astral being works with his consciousness and feelings in a, and a body made of lifetrans,<sup>14</sup>” or this Subtle Life Force in which is God’s Intelligence. And you can see parts of that, and you will be fully conscious as you see it, and you will realize that’s the vehicle that you are using, when you supersede this Physical Body.

Then he goes on: “A causal-bodied being remains in the blissful realm of ideas.” Above even the Subtle Electronic Force; that’s where the Causal Body is. “My work,” Sri Yukteswarji said, “is with those astral beings who are preparing to

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 14<sup>th</sup> Verse, “Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the LORD of the whole earth.”

<sup>12</sup> Autobiography of a Yogi, 1946 Release, Chapter 43, "You have read in the scriptures," Master went on, "that God encased the human soul successively in three bodies-the idea, or causal, body; the subtle astral body, seat of man's mental and emotional natures; and the gross physical body. On earth a man is equipped with his physical senses. An astral being works with his consciousness and feelings and a body made of lifetrans. A causal-bodied being remains in the blissful realm of ideas. My work is with those astral beings who are preparing to enter the causal world."

<sup>13</sup> Genesis 1:1-2, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit. Autobiography of a Yogi, Chapter 43.

enter the causal world.<sup>15</sup>” But the thing is what we are pointing out, is that we have three bodies which encase the Soul, and we have to supersede them.

Then there’s a footnote – Sri Yukteswar used the word “Prana.” I have translated it,” says our Master, “as Lifetrons.<sup>16</sup>” And this Electronic Force – creative Lifetronic Force – is not blind. Atoms are blind alone, but when the energy motivates and moves the atoms, or the different cells of our body, then the cells are not blind, because of the Life Force which motivates them. That’s the point he is bringing out.

So much for references from the Hindu scriptures – and I have one more from the Bhagavad Gita,<sup>17</sup> which refers to the fact that to see the, these Elements of the Astral Body, requires the Third Eye. You cannot see them with this [physical] eye. I wish you could. But you can’t. But you can see them through the Single Eye, which is the Presence of God within us.

And to substantiate that, just from the Bhagavad Gita, just one word, on the 11<sup>th</sup>, in the 11<sup>th</sup> Discourse, the 8<sup>th</sup> Line: “But verily,” says Krishna to Arjuna, “thou art not able to behold Me with these, thine eyes; a (*sic*) divine eye I give unto thee. Behold My sovereign Yoga.<sup>18</sup>” And so, yoga is important, yoga is very important, because the Intelligence of God is in the Forces which you are handling through yoga. That’s why God responds to the devotee and will open his Spiritual Eye.

Finally, just a word of inspiration to leave with you from the great Nanak, Guru Nanak, one of the greatest of the Hindu sages: “He alone is the Lord, Beloved, with all the rest, strung to His love strain.” God is; and all these bodies, and all these different manifestations, do not be attracted to them, but stick to the Lord, for it goes on to say: “The true devotees, the dutiful devotees, let wealth and power-supernatural have attraction for others.” The true devotee does not stop for these powers. He wants God and God alone.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Footnote, “Sri Yukteswar used the word prana; I have translated it as lifetrons. The Hindu scriptures refer not only to the anu, "atom," and to the paramanu, "beyond the atom," finer electronic energies; but also to prana, "creative lifetronic force." Atoms and electrons are blind forces; prana is inherently intelligent. The pranic lifetrons in the spermatozoa and ova, for instance, guide the embryonic development according to a karmic design.”

<sup>17</sup> The Bhagavad Gita or the Lord’s Song, translated by Dr. Annie Besant, 1939

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 11<sup>th</sup> Discourse, 8<sup>th</sup> Line, “But verily thou art not able to behold Me with these thine eyes; the divine eye I give unto thee. Behold My sovereign Yoga.”

And finally, on the next verse, it says: "Union and separation," that's all, "Union and separation are the two paths He hath ordained." God has ordained two paths. You cannot serve two masters; "Oneness with God, Unity with God, or separation from Him." One is God – Truth; and the other, separation is the original sin – is delusion. As long as you're in the delusion you haven't the unity of God's Presence. This is from one of the greatest saints. "Union and separation are the two paths He hath ordained." Whatever you do, meditation or your work, take God with you. Otherwise you will feel separated from Him.

"The account rendered..." that is, whether you are in union with God, or separated from Him in anything you do; "The account rendered determineth the respective share." That is, the effort you put in to take God with you in every action, to feel God alone, or not to do, to do that, determines how much of God you really know and take as your own. That's why Master said, "I want Thee, O, God. I want Thee, O, God that I may give Thee to all."

And so, this, these words of the Guru Nanak are very inspiring. And we should never forget, we shouldn't feel, "Oh, that's too much for me." It is not, because we are made in the Image of God, and as His children, He will not deny us.