

The Contemplation on the Fourfold Great Essential

Please see how your own body is composed. First have a look into the physical composition. You stand, sit, lie down and walk, changing occasionally when you feel uncomfortable and inconvenient. Your body is always showing its manifestation of painful feeling which you rarely notice. Mainly your body is composed of fourfold Elements.

What are they? They are called four Great Essentials or Elements:

- 1.The Element of Earth (the Element of solidity / extension)
- 2.The Element of Water (the Element of fluidity /moistening / cohesion)
- 3.The Element of Fire (the Element of heat/maturing/ripening) and
- 4.The Element of Wind (the Element of motion /disintegrating/ uplifting).

Every Element has four qualities or dimensions, namely colour , odour, taste, and nutritional essence. So the four Great Essentials and these four qualities are inseparable and inherent in every matter. These Elements are not always well- balanced but sometimes are out of equilibrium. When the Earth Element is excessive the Water Element also becomes excessive in combination with it and if the Element of Motion is excessive then the Fire Element also increases in combination with it.

When they are in equilibrium they consolidate and support the whole body .While interdependent they are performing their respective functions and giving assistance to other dependant material properties such as the five faculties, physical vitality etc.

While we are standing still we can do so without swaying, falling down on the strength of the earth element while the other three elements are cooperating, namely uplifting , giving warmth, and cohering with other elements. In this case the fact should be noticed that our mind or consciousness has predominantly influenced them producing and changing proper postures. For every living being these fivefold elements are quite prevalent. But they are not permanent; they are changing from moment to moment with tremendous frequency. When you are observing the breath as it is coming in and going out the element of wind or motion is predominant, in the mean time the other three elements are also coordinating with it.

The Rocky Mountains which have been established by the four great essentials throughout the ages do not remain steady and still but are always changing, undergoing evolutionary processes of change, namely they are not neatly lying stratum above stratum. They have been crumpled, bent, thrust about, distorted, mixed together, then worn away and decomposed again after having melted down and remoulded and reappearing again in new forms and new chemical combination. So also when the disturbance of the earth element comes about in us we feel stiffness and inflammation in our body, especially, in joints and muscles, sometimes to the extent of some parts of our body paralysed.

Just as when a great fire broke out like bush fires in Australia then all plants and trees together with animals therein were burnt down to ashes, so also when the disturbance of the Fire Element takes place we feel the unbearable heat as though the body is being burnt in all parts.

Just as when an active volcano erupts all surrounding things disappear under lava, so also when the disturbance of the Fire Element comes about we feel as if our chest and stomach etc. were under the burning fire.

Just as when a great river, overflows its banks as in the case of River Mississippi in America and the Yellow river in China all living creatures together with vegetation and soil came to destruction, so also when the disturbance of the Water Element takes place we feel various kinds of stomach disorders.

Just as when such a windstorm as a hurricane, cyclone, tornado hits all villages and towns, strong magnificent buildings are demolishing, so also when the disturbance of the Wind Element takes place we feel various kinds of illness such as gastric disorder, heartburn and different forms of ailments.

In this way our body undergoes constant changes due to cold and heat, hunger and thirst, severe weather conditions etc. Although it is apparently growing strong and beautiful in our young age, yet it is actually changing, gradually decaying and enfeebling itself and yielding to the affliction of different and divergent diseases and lastly to the total dissolution or death. Likewise in the physical world whether it is inside or outside our body the same nature and process of change, transition and impermanence keeps endlessly going on.

Please contemplate on this real nature of your body as an object of meditation on the four great essentials. This kind of understanding will save you from unhappy feelings such as loneliness and depression.