

YOGATHERAPY AND STUTTERING

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INTRODUCTION

As a student of *Heaven on Earth Yoga Institute*, this essay is the final work required to be *IAYT*-certified as a yogatherapist and to be recognized as a RYT-500 by *Yoga Alliance*.

In this paper, I will first expose what stuttering is from a (para-)medical standpoint. I will describe it, explain its causes, give some relevant signs and symptoms, and then describe some of the most famous treatment methods given to patients by speech-therapists.

After that first part, I will then give a yogatherapy overview of stuttering. I will

explain the condition from a yogic perspective, and I will finally give some yogic remedies for the condition.

I/ FROM A MEDICAL STANDPOINT

a. Description of Condition

Stuttering is a communication problem, which can affect the speech. It thus only affects human beings and is so defined not as a disease but as a handicap.

Therapists describe this condition as successive speech accidents, often with pressure, which impair the flow of the speech. However, someone who suffers from this condition can stutter much less when acting (Marilyn Monroe used to stutter!) or reading for himself. Someone who suffers from this condition never stutters when speaking alone or when singing. We can say that there must be at least two people for stuttering to occur.

Today, in France, 5% of the children population stutter. It lowers down to 1% of the population in adulthood. This trouble affects three girls for five boys.

Stuttering is not linked with mental capacities. We know that intelligent people stutter the same way as not as such intelligent ones. Great leaders, as it was the case for Winston Churchill for exemple, may also stutter.

Stuttering very often occurs during childhood. One can start stuttering when learning to speak, around the age of 2.5 years old. One can also start stuttering when learning to read and write, at the age of 6 approximately. Stuttering may also occurs in pre-teen age, when a certain hormonal level rises. One cannot generally start stuttering as an adult (however, we will see exceptions in part II). In any cases, stuttering can occur progressively or suddenly.

We can say that one is not born as a stutterer but one become a stutterer because of some external causes (which we will see later).

Stuttering seldom ends by itself. In a group of four children who suffer from stuttering, three will stop without any help. But one will continue stuttering for life if not treated. Actually, the soonest we treat the condition, the soonest it disappears. If a child

reacts correctly to his trouble and if the behaviour of his parents to his stuttering is correct, the condition cannot become chronic, the child will stop stuttering. It seems mandatory for a child who stutters to be followed by a speech therapist, even if we know that the trouble could stop by itself. The therapist would teach the child and his parents how to act in case of speech accidents.

The result of stuttering can be disastrous. As a communication trouble, stutterers may be greatly cut off from other people. They must sometimes face a feeling of shame, a lack of confidence and/or a fear of expressing themselves (they are feared of the speech accidents that could happen). They also must be confronted with the ignorance of the condition surrounding people may have, with the fact that others may make fun of them.

b. Causes of Condition

There is no one cause that could explain stuttering. Indeed, we do not always exactly know why a person stutters. Meanwhile, we know where stuttering does not come from and we also know that several factors must be gathered during childhood in order that one begins to stutter. There are conducive factors, which prepare the ground for the handicap to appear, there are triggering factors, by which the handicap really appears, and there are lasting factors, which allows the handicap to become chronic. In less frequent cases, stuttering can occur after a disease or after a brain accident, more often during adulthood.

1. Where stuttering DOES NOT come from

- The tongue, which is the most useful part of the body to speak, is not linked to stuttering, even if once some used to think that its shape was a cause of it,
- The respiratory system (especially the larynx), even if it plays a role in the handicap, cannot be seen as a cause of stuttering.

2. Conducive Factors

- Genetic: If one stutters, he or she has got a three-in-four chance of having a child

who stutters,

- Suffering from psychological pains during early childhood,
- Lateness in the learning to speak process. 40% of the people who suffer from stuttering have learnt to speak later than the average.

3. Triggering Factors

- Frequently moving from a house to an other,
- Becoming an older sister or an older brother,
- Starting school, kindergarten or primary school,
- Having socialization troubles,
- Enduring all kind of break-ups or sudden changes,
- Changing nursemaid,
- Enduring the acceleration of daily rythm,
- Enduring all kind of conflicts,
- Having one parent unemployed,
- Loosing landmarks,
- Enduring all kinds of deaths (member of family, friend, pet...),
- Lacking time with parents,
- Having earaches, particularly serous otitis,
- Enduring all kinds of tension (parents who are building a house, a brother or a sister being into a crisis period in the house, health troubles for the child or for someone of the family...).

4. Lasting Factors

- All the efforts surroundings people ask a child to speak properly, a child may also want to do forceful efforts by himself,
- A lot of pressure put on a child to learn things that should be taught later (hygiene, tidiness, politeness...),
- All kinds of denials a child could suffer from,
- Surrounding people having bad verbal or non-verbal reactions when a child

stutters,

- How a child reacts to these reactions,
- Having a limited communication in the family,
- Too many things to do are asked a child in everyday life.

We must remember that only one of these factors can not lead to stuttering and that sometimes a child can endure all of these factors without stuttering. Why it takes place is still a mystery.

5. Disease and Accidents Leading to stuttering

- Parkinson Disease can lead to stuttering. However, it is a different kind of stuttering because it does not go along with pressure and tension in the body as in « usual » stuttering. Parkinsonians do not become angry about their stuttering.

- A special kind of stuttering, called neurological stuttering, may occur after a cranial trauma, after a vascular cerebral accident or after a strong psychological trauma. More often when the person closely avoided death. This kind of stuttering does not usually last and often stops by itself after some days or after some weeks, especially if the person reacts correctly to his trouble and if he/she sees a therapist to re-educate his speech.

c. Signs and Symptoms of Condition

We can compare signs and symptoms of stuttering to an iceberg. There are all the things that we see and hear which tell us that a person stutters and many other signals we cannot notice as a non-expert in this condition.

I explain here both sides, as the two parts of the iceberg are of an equal significance.

1. The Upper Part of the Iceberg

We have seen earlier that stuttering is a trouble in the speech flow, which comes from successive speech accidents. Speech therapists say that it exists five kinds of speech

accidents: Syllables repetitions, blockages, lengthenings, freezings and spare words.

All of these accidents may come with some associated troubles which can be easily noticed.

Let's define all these terms:

- Syllables repetitions: This is the most famous accident. It is the one which is often moked. More often, the first syllable of the first word of a sentence is said several times. However, another syllable in any word may also be repeated. Sometimes, a whole word is even repeated. Someone who suffers from stuttering can repeat the syllable or the word from three to twenty times, in the same way. When this kind of repetition is the most relevent sign of the condition, it is called *clonical stuttering*.

- Blockages: The second more frequent accident are the blockages. In this case, the flow of the speech is like stopped by a word or by a syllable which cannot be said. A person who suffers from this condition is fully focused on his effort to let the word goes out from his mouth. More often, he would look aside or down, would try to help himself in turning his head or his chest on the side as if it would help with the pulmonary pressure. If all this does not help, the person would tense his head and his neck, we would notice his lips and shin shaking. Then, suddenly, the blockage ends and the word can be correctly said, along with the end of the sentence. Frequency of blockages is never the same. Sometimes, they only appear on the words the speaker is afraid of. The person can also be reluctant in saying a word if it begins by a special letter. Thus, for some, the letters "p", "t" and "c" are the most difficult to pronounce. For some others, it would be the letters "l" and "r", or some vowels if they are at the beginning of a word. All stutterings are different.

- Lengthenings: The third kind of accidents is the lengthening of some sounds, espically lengthenings of the sounds of vowels. The considered vowel can be pronounce for several seconds. It often comes with a raising tone of the voice. Sometimes, the letters "s", "v", "j", "l", "b", "d" and the sound "ch" (like in the word « chapati ») can also be lengthened. When this kind of lengthening is the most relevent sign of stuttering, it is called *tonic stuttering*.

- Freezings: Less often, the speech accident is a pause in the speech in which articulation, voice, breath and gesture seem frozen. The whole body looks stiff but a slight shaking of the lips (which are open) and light moves of the trunc reveal a big internal

pressure. It looks like the signals one can express when panicking. Freezings, like blockages, can happen frequently or sparsely. In between them, the speech can look completely normal. When this kind of accident is the most relevant sign of stuttering, it is called *stuttering by inhibition*.

- Spare words: Spare words are some unrelated words introduced in a sentence. They do not have any relevant significance in the sentence. What we call spare words can be composed of only one syllable or can be expressions composed of several words. Some examples could be: "well...", "anyway...". These words, or expressions, are always the same for the same person and can be said many times in the same sentence. They allow the speaker to make pauses. Pauses can be of a great stuttering factor for people who suffer from the condition. Those people are afraid of starting to speak again after a pause, that is why they introduce spare words.

- Associated troubles: These are the troubles one can hear, see or feel which go along with the speech accidents. The most frequent one is that a person who suffers from stuttering would not look at the person he is speaking to. Other troubles are the ones that go along with blockages. Moreover, this can go further. Stutterers may have respiratory spasms, their face can become red and can sweat, their eyes can shut strongly or they can wince. In the strongest cases, one can jump or one's eyes can roll upward... However, the kind of associated trouble is not linked to the level of stuttering one can suffer from. One can have his eyes roll upward with feeling a very slight stuttering at the same time.

2. The Under Water Part of the Iceberg

They are signs and symptoms one can have which can make suppose of the condition but which are not linked to the speech. Sometimes, someone who suffers from stuttering may not show any of the previous signs and symptoms but can avoid all of the situations in which he would have to speak.

For example, a child at school who knows the answer to a question would not answer it. A child who would be too quiet, who would almost not talk to his relatives or to unknown people. Someone who would not look at the person he is talking to. Actually, we can often think that shyness is implied, but it is here not the case. Some adults who suffer from stuttering, when receiving a phone call, wait for the caller to leave a message in

order to prepare a proper answer (which he could write and then read).

People who suffer from the condition usually set up some of such strategies to not show their handicap. Moreover, as they know that they can stutter on certain words with certain sounds, they would avoid to pronounce them and would try to find synonyms.

We also notice that children who stutter often have negative feelings like jealousy, sadness or anger. They can also be properly shy or overly excited.

d. Common Medical Treatments for Condition

In this section, we are going to see what are the most frequently given medical treatments for stuttering. As it is not a disease, the condition is not treated by any medicine but by different speech technics and general behaviours, which must be adopted both by the person suffering of the condition and by the surrounding people. Parents are very implied in the treatment of their child. They rather are para-medical treatments.

Very often surrounding people (parents, friends, teachers, employers, ...) have bad habits when they talk to people who stutter. We will first see what are these bad habits and their counterparts, and then see what can be done to improve the condition.

1. What NOT TO do with a person who suffers from stuttering and four good advices

- To pretend that there is no difficulty: This attitude leads the person who suffers from stuttering to forget the person he is speaking to,

- To become angry: If a person becomes angry at the person who suffers from stuttering, the only result would be that the stutterer will not speak anymore,

- To ask for some efforts, to make the person who suffers from the condition repeat a sentence: Stuttering becomes chronic when a person makes such efforts to speak, without taking the speech accidents into account,

- To give advices such as "Be calm!", "Take your time...", "Breath!", "Think about your sentence!". If we ask someone to think about his speech when he has to use it, the communication cannot be natural.

These are the four most common wrong attitudes we can observe.

What should be encouraged is the attitude of a conscious and active listener. When speaking to someone who suffers from stuttering, we should suggest him the end of the word or the end of the sentence he is trying to say. We should also ask him questions about what he is trying to say and suggest some answers to them, without any pressure but with no delay either. We are encouraged to speak of the condition with the person and we are encouraged to keep an eye contact with him all the time. These are the four main advises given by speech therapist to the surrounding people of a person who suffers from stuttering.

2. Proper Para-Medical Treatments

In this section, I will relate what are the main treatments given by speech therapists to make stuttering stop. I had the chance to follow Marie C., 32 years old, speech therapist for 7 years, during five appointments she had with Damien from February 2013 to June 2013. Damien is 12 years old, he suffers from stuttering since 2009 and is being treated for it since then. His father and his two brothers stutter too. In the description of the different treatments, I will thus give real examples from what I could observe during these appointments.

There are many many different treatments, which are indeed techniques, which could be given by speech therapists. Some of them are rejected by most of therapists. For example, it is the case for the one which consist to teach a person who stutters to hurt himself badly each time speech accidents occur.

The following techniques are the latest ones used by Marie C., who is trained by a worldly well-know speech therapist specialized in stuttering. They are supposed to be the most efficient ones nowadays.

The most important point of all the appointments given is that they are all audio and video recorded. Like this, the patient can hear whether he stutters and if there are any related gestures. Damien sometimes uses to swip his forehead with his right hand when a blockage in the speech occurs.

Another important point is that the patient has to evaluate everyday his stuttering. He has to give himself a mark between one and ten (one is no speech accident, ten is many many accidents). At the end of an appointment, the therapist gives a mark for the

day too. They then compare their marks to each other's. All these marks make a graph at the end of the week.

These are the techniques used to prevent stuttering:

- Lengthening of the vowels: This is really the most used technique. The speech therapist asks for lengthening for two or three seconds each of the vowels in a discussion with the patient or in a read text. The goal is to slow down the speech. It does not lead to a "natural" communication of course but it helps a lot to prevent any speech accident when a person feels like he is going to stutter.

- Making pauses: Most often, the speech therapist asks the patient for marking pauses in a read text. The patient has to draw vertical bars (|) between words each time he thinks he could make a pause to improve the rhythm of the speech. Pauses should be made at each different information. Once the bars are drawn, the patient has to read the text with making two seconds pauses each time he sees a bar. Here too, The goal is to slow down the speech, stuttering occurs more often when people are trying to speak too fast. Another goal is to make the patient decide when the pauses should happen, as stuttering leads patients to make unwanted pauses.

- Speaking with hand gesture: This is a similar technique with pauses but it works in an usual speech (i.e. without reading anything). This time, each time the patient thinks he can make a pause in his speech, he does a particular gesture with his hand. During a pause, Damien has to gently hit the table with his hand and then to make a sort of wave with his hand. When the hand is stable, palm up, he can speak again. This is efficient but it is difficult to apply in everyday life. For example, children make fun of Damien when he uses this technique at school. The main goal is to make the patient focus on something else than his speech, here, his hand.

- Speaking with touching a strange material: Speech therapists have a lot of strange and weird objects made from different and non-usual materials and textures. They make the patients knead them while they speak together. The goal here is to relax the patient and to make him focus on something else than the way he speaks.

- Speaking like a robot: More frequently used specifically with little children, this playful technique has for a goal to speak in a different way, with a very particular rhythm and a modified voice. As it is like acting, the patient does not stutter when speaking like a robot. Obviously, it cannot be used in a normal speech but it has the advantage to please

the youngest patients.

- *Lidcombe Program*: This is the most efficient treatment used with the youngest patients who already stutters for six to twelve months. This treatment asks for the participation of one of the parents (only one of them). This parent has to play for a determined time everyday with his child. During this time the parent has to congratulate five times the child when he speaks well before notifying him there has been a speech accident, if there is any. He then offers the child to correct it (saying the word or the sentence again). If another speech accident occurs, the parent must not notify it to the child. He must congratulate him five times again before notifying any other speech accident. This treatment has been brought from Australia to Canada by Rosalee Shenker, who lives in Montreal. R. Shenker has since trained in this treatment speech therapists over Canada, USA and Europe.

We can notice that all these techniques have a common goal: To make the patient focus on something else than the words he is feared of. He has then to focus on particular sounds (1st technique), pauses (2nd and 3rd techniques), textures (4th technique) or his modified voice (5th technique).

The therapist may also ask for a mix of these techniques. For example, they may ask for speaking like a robot while touching a weird texture.

Therapists may also ask their patients for drawing themselves in different situations. Indeed, speech therapists have noticed that people who suffer from this condition usually see themselves not as a person but as a stutterer. Therapists aim giving their patients a more "human" view of themselves.

Damien was once asked to draw himself when he stutters. He drew a chained man, like a prisoner. His chains linked the man to the word "stuttering"...

All along these techniques, speech therapists usually work on relaxing their patients. They have noticed that people who stutter are often stressed or anxious and ask themselves a lot (these points are of the greatest importance in the yogic approach).

Therapists offer usual relaxing techniques. Marie C. often asks Damien to breathe slowly and to relax his shoulders. She also asks him to put both of his feet parallel on the floor; this was especially of a great help one day when Damien stuttered more than usual. It may happen that Marie spends all the session to properly relax a patient, with the help of visualizations or meditation (she is a Vipassana meditation practitioner). She also puts

some essential oils in her office in order the patients to smell a relaxing fragrance.

II/ FROM A YOGIC AND AYURVEDIC STANDPOINT

a. The Yogatherapy View and the Chakra Focal Points of Condition

In this part too, I will help myself with what I could observe during my appointments with Damien in order to give a yogic vision of stuttering.

I also had the chance to follow as a Guinea pig, Stephane, 43 years old, the chief cook of a well-known restaurant.

As I have already said earlier, speech therapists have noticed that people who suffer from stuttering are often nervous and anxious. I have met several people who use to stutter and they always have the same kind of profile: They are nervous, they speak a lot, they are rather unorganized, they seem to think to one thousand things at a time.

I can with no doubt link stuttering with an excess of the Vata dosha. It is obviously a problem of movement in the speech, which often goes with an excess of unconscious movements (Damien swips his hand on his forehead, others would hit repeatedly the floor with their feet for exemple). This is also confirmed that Parkinsonians may stutter, Parkinson disease is a Vata disorder according to Ayurveda.

The sub-dosha implied in this condition is Udana Vayu, the upward flow of prana, which is responsible of the expression and of the speech.

This diagnostic is confirmed by several facts:

- Damien suffers from a rare bone disease (glassbones disease) which makes him brake his bones very easily. Vata is the responsible dosha for the bones. Damien makes steady unconscious movements with his hands and feet. He is very curious: He reads books about anything, he loves watching the news and to talk to adults. He knows many things children, even adults, usually do not know. Damien is thin and of a dark complexion. He has a Vata shaking tongue and a Vata pulse. However, I could not do a proper doshic assessment with him.

- Stephane is thin too and tall. He is interested in many things too (cooking, he is a shiatsu expert, a great karate practicionner...). When he speaks, he changes of subject

every now and then. He has difficulties in meditating and shows a Vata mind. However, his doshic assessment reveals a Kapha prakriti.

- They both have extreme difficulties to relax their mind.

Chakra wise, I would say that the four firsts chakras can be implied in the condition, whereas the fifth one always plays a role in stuttering.

- Muladhara is not functioning properly when people do not see themselves as a person anymore but as a stutterer. When they think life is to be lived as a handicapped person who cannot express himself properly.

- Svadhistana is not functioning properly when people feel helpless, when they think nobody cannot help them to be free of stuttering (for exemple, the chained man drawn by Damien), when they see themselves as abandoned people (for exemple again, Damien does not live with his mother), or when there is a form of cruelty (some people hurt themselves badly thinking that this would prevent them to stutter).

- Manipura is implied in the condition each time a person has some unconscious gestures when stuttering. Manipura is responsible for such non-dangerous bad habits. Manipura is also responsible for the shyness someone who suffers from stuttering may feel.

- Anahata is implied in the condition when someone does not get the love he needs or the love he has the right to receive (for exemple, Damien does not receive the love of his friends who make fun of him and he does not receive the love of his mother who does not live with him). Furthermore, Anahata is also responsible for the anxiety one can feel. For that, Anahata is almost always implied in stuttering, as the condition goes along with nervousness and anxiety.

- Vishuddha, which is located in the throat and which is responsible for a correct expression, is always implied in the condition. Furthermore, Vishuddha is also responsible for the quietness and the peace of the mind - two of Vishuddha's Vrittis - someone who stutters usually lacks of.

B. Yogic Remedies for Condition

As we have just seen above, a full yogic treatment with Ayurvedic advises would always include remedies to lower Vata, especially Udana Vayu, and to balance Vishuddha

chakra. We would then adapt the treatment to the person depending of his feelings, giving remedies for the other chakras if needed.

A full yogic treatment would include yogic remedies such as asanas, pranayamas, meditation technics and mantras along with Ayurvedic remedies such as diet, phytotherapy, aromatherapy, colortherapy and oleation.

As a full treatment, I would suggest a Vishuddha balancing sequence of yogic remedies (prayanamas, asanas and meditation technics) in the morning, and depending on the condition, another chakra (1st, 2nd 3rd or 4th chakra) centered balancing sequence in the evening if needed. Ayurvedic remedies should be followed all along the day.

WARNING: As stuttering is a Vata disorder, we have to correctly adjust the asanas and the pranayamas we make the patient practice according to the condition. The general energy should be kept firm, even and consistent. The enthusiasm should be moderate and sustained. The body has to be kept calm, relaxed and centered. The asanas have to be done slowly and without undue or sudden use of force. Abrupt movements must be avoided. The breath has to be deep, calm and strong; inhalation (through the nose) should be emphasized. The mind has to be calm and concentrated, grounded in the present moment. If any pain, stiffness, anxiety, insomnia or constipation occurs, the practice is improperly done.

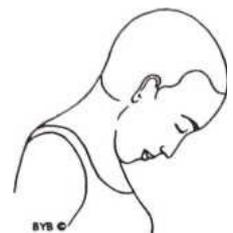
Let us see what could be those yogic sequences. We will then compare them to what a famous guru prescribes for the condition. Finally, we will see what Ayurveda can bring us to fight against stuttering.

1. Exemple of Vishuddha balancing sequence

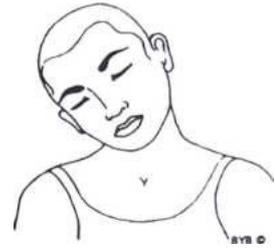
Practice in this order:

- Breath awareness focusing on the sensations in the throat area for two minutes,
- Ujjayi Pranayama (victorious breath) for two minutes,

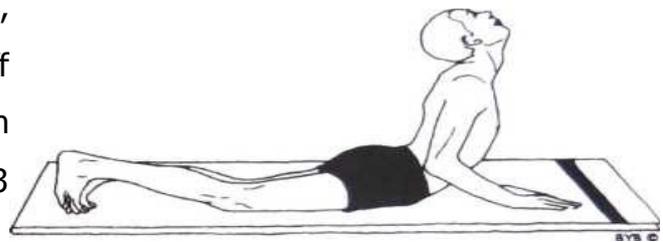
- Greeva Sanchalana Stage I (vertical neck stretch) for 1 minute,



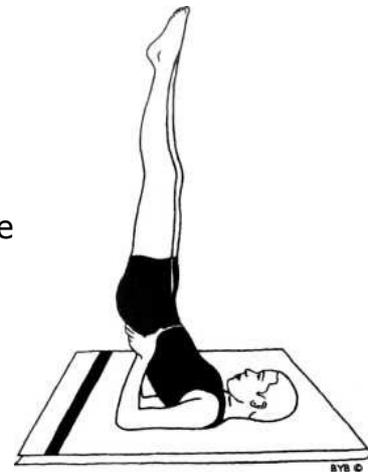
- Greeva Sanchalana Stage II (ear to ear neck stretches) for 1 minute,



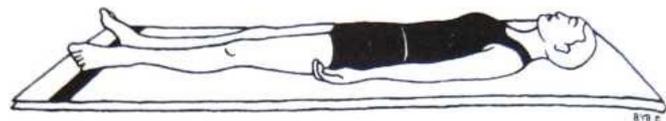
- Bhujangasana (cobra pose), inhaling when lifting the head and chest off the floor, pausing the breath, then exhaling when going back to the floor, for 3 minutes,



- Vipareeta Karani Asana (inverted pose), may be done with legs up a wall, for 3 minutes,



- Savasana for minimum 2 minutes,



- Chant the mantras "**RAM, HAM, AIM**" (see the Ayurvedic remedies section for further explanations), seated with Akasha Mudra, for minimum two minutes.

This morning and mandatory sequence is about fifteen minutes long and can be taught to beginners. If one wants, modifications can be done to make the sequence more challenging. Fifteen minutes seems to be a time that everybody can spend practicing everyday. If the sequence is too long it can be discouraging for people who are not used to yoga; shorter, it would be useless.

2. Examples of balancing sequences for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th chakra

As for the balancing sequence for Vishuddha, the following sequences should last for a minimum of fifteen minutes.

I do not detail here all the poses and breathing and meditation technics as these sequences are optionnal. You will find in the bibliography a list of books which can help to correctly teach all the sequences.

ॐ Balancing Sequence for Muladhara:

- Breath awareness: Focusing on the sensations in the legs and pelvic floor,
- Breath counting: Equal breath with a 4, 5 or 6 ratio,
- Bhastrikasana,
- Baddhakonasana,
- Utthita lolasana,
- Savasana,
- Meditation: The patient has to focus on what he is besides his body and besides all the labels he identifies himself with.

ॐ Balancing Sequence for Svadhsthana:

- Breath awareness: Focusing on the sensations in the hips, pelvis and lower abdomen,
- Bhramari Prayanama,
- Namaskarasana,
- Eka Pada Rajakapotasana,
- Savasana,
- Meditation: *Metta Meditation*.

ॐ Balancing Sequence for Manipura:

- Breath awareness: Focusing on the sensations in the abdomen, especially around the navel,
- Bhastrika Pranayama (slow and not too strong as it can badly Vata),
- Agnisara Mudra,
- Padahasthasana,
- Ardha Matsyendrasana,
- Savasana,

- Meditation: *Vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam* (Cultivate the opposites).

ॐ Balancing Sequence for Anahata:

- Breath awareness: Focusing on the sensations in the chest area.
- Dirgha Pranayama,
- Bhujangasana,
- Karmasana,
- Savasana,
- Meditation: *Inner Light Meditation*.

3. The Bihar School of Yoga Recommends:

It seems important to me to look at what a famous guru would recommend to fight against stuttering. Swami Satyananda was the founder of *The Bihar School of Yoga* which is a place where yoga and yogatherapy (Yoga Chikitsa in Sanskrit) is taught to the highest level. It is the first university of yoga in the world and the longest cursus there lasts for twelve years. They have a traditional and rather oriental approach toward the therapy.

In "*Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*", by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, which is one of my yoga bible, we can find the following technics to fight against stuttering:

- Asanas include: Greeva Sanchalana (neck stretches), Simhasana (the Lion Pose), Matsyasana (the Fish Pose), Supta Vajrasana (the Sleeping Thunderbolt pose), Navasana (the Boat pose), Mayurasana (the Peacock pose) and all the balancing poses (like Vrikasana, the Tree pose).
- Prayanamas include: Bhramari, Ujjayi, Sheetali and Seetkari,
- Meditation in general is advised, along with Yoga Nidra and mantra chanting.

We can notice here that all the asanas recommended by Swami Satyananda are known to be very effective in reducing Vata. That confirms our initial diagnostic.

We can also notice that these asanas work on all the first five chakras.

Pranayamas are also essentially Vata reducing ones.

We can thus conclude that the treatment I suggest in the introduction of this part comes out from the same vision and is rather relevant.

4. From an Ayurvedic Perspective

As Yogatherapy includes in many ways some Ayurvedic remedies, and as I am a certified Ayurvedic Life-Style Counselor, I have to relate what are some usual remedies for stuttering besides what we have seen earlier (asanas, pranayamas and meditations technics are also parts of Ayurvedic remedies).

As already said before, Ayurveda sees stuttering as a Udana Vayu disorder. The first and easiest measure to apply would be to follow an anti-Vata diet (*see Appendix*).

Ayurveda would also recommend the use of lotus seeds (5g of lotus seeds powder mix with each meal). Dates mixed in milk should also be taken in the morning.

The smell of the essential oil extracted from calamus is the best to regenerate the power of speech.

Chanting a comforting and securing mantra like **RAM**, the fifth chakra seed mantra **HAM**, along with the mantra **AIM**, which is especially good for speech problems, is strongly recommended by Ayurveda to treat stuttering.

It is advised to wear clothes which combines warm colors like gold, red, orange and yellow with moist and calm colors like white or whitish shades of green or blue. Too bright or flashy colors and too dark colors can aggravate Vata.

Emerald is supposed to be a gem which, once wore into a piece of jewelry, gives a better power of speech.

A person who suffers from stuttering should also take warm (but not too hot) baths after having received a massage done with a lot of sesame oil. This to help to reduce Vata.

CONCLUSION

As far as I could see, medical treatments of stuttering do not really erase any speech accidents but rather prevent them to happen. It seems that the psychology of the person is not always taken into account.

However, I recognize that I have seen many improvements during the sessions I

attended with Marie C. and Damien. The medical treatment is clearly successful as it allows the patient to live a better life and this is the most important point.

Yogatherapy would focus more on the feelings of the patient and on the origins of the trouble (i.e. Vishuddha imbalance and excess Vata). This may have the effect to really erase the condition, but, at the time I am writing this essay, I am not experimenting such a given treatment for enough time to prove it. In my opinion, a yogic treatment for stuttering would give real results after a couple of months of practice. Ayurvedic remedies often take as much time to be felt.

Speech therapists are very important in case of emergency, they are able to give immediate release of the condition. The technics learnt during a session can be directly applied in everyday life. But they remain technics and the true self of the patient remained unchanged. Obviously, the patient feels less anxiety because he is be able to speak more efficiently, but his nervousness may remain deeply anchored.

Yoga therapists cannot replace speech therapists though, but they can be of a great help in lowering stuttering.

For a better treatment of stuttering, which would improve the condition both quickly but deeply, medical practitioners (i.e. speech therapists), should work in combination with yoga therapists.

APPENDIX : VATA REDUCING DIET

For Vata people, it is advised to have three meals a day along with two snacks in between.

Here is a list of food they should and should not have in their diet :

FRUITS

YES (in moderation, soaked if dry)

Most fruit is good: apricots, bananas, cherries, dates, figs, grapes, grapefruit, lemons, limes, mango, papaya, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapple, plums, pomegranate, oranges, raisins, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines

NO

Dry fruit generally, apples (raw), melons, cranberries

VEGETABLES

YES (cooked)

Beets, bell peppers, carrots, cilantro, hot peppers, Jerusalem artichokes, mustard greens, okra, onions (cooked), parsley, radish, sweet potatoes, winter squash, yams

MAY CAUSE DIFFICULTY

Alfalfa sprouts, artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, cucumber, eggplant, green beans, peas, potatoes, spinach, squash, tomatoes, turnips, zucchini

NO

Too much raw vegetables generally: mushrooms, lettuce

GRAINS

YES

Basmati rice, brown rice, oats, wheat

MAY CAUSE DIFFICULTY

Barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, rye

NO

Dry grains, granola, corn chips

BEANS

YES

Mung

MAY CAUSE DIFFICULTY

Aduki beans, black gram, chick peas, lima beans, peanuts, tofu

NO

Fava beans, kidney beans, navy beans, pinto beans, lentils, split peas

NUTS AND SEEDS

YES

All nuts and seeds are good except in excess, particularly almonds and sesame seeds

OILS

YES

All oils are generally good, particularly sesame, almond and ghee

DAIRY PRODUCTS

YES

All dairy products are good, particularly those that are sour, buttermilk and kefir

SWEETENERS

YES

All sweeteners are alright in moderation and in the right food combinations

CONDIMENTS

YES

All condiments are good including spices, salt, pickles and vinegar

ANIMAL PRODUCTS

All animal products are generally good for grounding Vata, but are deranging to the mind; fish and eggs are better than meat in this regard, chicken is better than red meat.

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