

has to be practised. At first, the ability for the practice of suspension comes on after a long interval of time. But later it becomes frequent. When the lungs are full, or much contracted, suspension does not often take place; in that case, only the external and internal operations are possible.

External operation, internal operation and suspension—these three forms of Prāṇāyāma practised according to the observations of space, time and number, gradually become long and subtle. Among them, observation of the spread over in space is the first stage. Space has to be taken in two senses—external and internal. From the tip of the nose to the point up to which the flow of breath is extended, is the external space. Inside the body, the movement of air up to the heart region shows the internal space. Starting from the breast the entire body from the top of the head to the soles of the feet, also constitutes internal space.

Prāṇāyāma practised with observation as to how far the flow of the exhaling air from the tip of the nose can be shortened, is called observation of external space. This gradually weakens the exhalation. That is, Prāṇāyāma performed with the intention of making the movement of the breath gradually milder is called Prāṇāyāma with the observation of external space. The internal space has to be perceived by feeling. When the inhaled air enters the lungs, it should be felt in the breast. This constitutes Prāṇāyāma with the observation of internal space.

Taking the breast or region of the heart as the centre, when the air is inhaled, it has to be felt that a feeling of touch is spreading all over the body from about the heart, and during exhalation the touch is being gathered and returning to the heart region. In this way it is necessary in the beginning to regard the whole body (specially up to the soles of the feet and the two palms) as the space under observation. This purifies the nerves, and the faculty of feeling spreading throughout the entire body becomes unobstructed, that is, the Sāttvika faculty of sentience is gained and therefrom a comfortable feeling is felt, throughout the body. When Prāṇāyāma is practised with such feeling of comfort, it produces good result. Failing that it may make the body ill.