

a special kind of effort. Restraining or Prāṇāyāma is retention of the breath. The mind can also be calmed or set by these methods.

(1) For calming the mind, it should hold on to something. Therefore practising breathing only without attempting to set the mind, would never result in calmness. Consequently if Prāṇāyāma is practised without Dhyāna (deep meditation) the mind instead of becoming calm would get more disturbed. That is why for every retention of breath, the mind should be made one-pointed with a particular thought with every inhalation. The Śāstras say that the breath should be joined to a conception of the void. In other words, when exhaling, it should be thought that the mind is vacant, has no thought in it. Exhalation with such thought fixes the mind; otherwise not. The effort with which breath is exhaled has three steps. First, the effort to exhale it slowly; secondly, the effort to keep the body still and relaxed; and thirdly, the effort to keep the mind vacant or without any thought. This is how the breath is to be exhaled. Then, to remain as far as possible in that vacant state of the mind is 'holding the breath'. In this method there is no effort to take in the breath, which will take place naturally, but it should be watched that the mind continues to remain vacant at that time also.

That the 'I-sense' is disentangling itself from the body and the 'I-feeling' in the core of the heart is moving on to the wordless, thoughtless state of concentrated 'OM'—this thought is possible only at the time of exhalation and not at the time of inhalation. That is why no reference has been made in the Sūtra to inhalation. In exhalation and retention of breath, the nerves of the body get relaxed and the mind gets into a sort of vacant, inactive state which is not possible at the time of inhalation. To practise this method, the breath should be exhaled with prolonged and appropriate effort. The whole body and the chest should be kept still and only the belly should be moved for the purpose of inhalation and exhalation. When this is practised assiduously for some time, a happy feeling or feeling of lightness spreads all over the body. Further practice is to be continued with this feeling, and when that