

Lesson 31

Impart knowledge of yoga,
This is the best form of charity
Because it removes ignorance
And all sorts of sufferings.
Provide medicine for the sick,
This is the second best form of charity.
Give food to the hungry,
This is the third best form of charity.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Psychic Symbol

Sleep and loss of awareness are the biggest problems in meditative practice. This state of unawareness is called *laya* in yogic scriptures. It is the chasm that has to be crossed in order to jump from the stage of normal perception to that which is beyond ... the transcendental. In Hindu scriptures this barrier is often called the 'river of death'. It is also called *baitarni nadi*, the river which Yama, the Lord of Death, crosses and takes people to after they die. This is symbolic and the word 'death' here has a special meaning. It means the death or removal of external sense perception, thoughts and unawareness. This river is that which separates normal states of consciousness from higher states. In order to know the experience of *dhyana* one must be capable of crossing this river. One must die to mundane experience. The best method is to adopt and use a psychic symbol.

The importance of a psychic symbol is, and has been, known in all mystical and religious systems throughout the world. This is the reason that there are so many deities, mantras, etc. They are all intended as a point on which the mind can be fixed to induce meditation. This is why idol worship is so widespread in the world. It is intended, though few realize it, to act as a focal point for concentration of the mind.

In the following discussion we will outline the significance and use of psychic symbols.

The barrier of unawareness

Every meditative practice utilizes something that the mind can grasp, on which it can take hold. It can be the breath, it can be a mantra. In *nada yoga* both gross and subtle sound is the object of awareness. In *kriya yoga* the object of awareness is a combination of breath, psychic passages, chakras, sound and so forth. In *ajapa japa* it is breath and mantra. Always one's awareness is fixed on an object or process. This is done for a good reason, namely that the mind naturally and automatically moulds

itself around objects of perception. In day to day life it does this continuously with various external objects and thoughts. It is the nature of the mind to form itself, pattern itself around something. Without an object of perception, one lapses into a state of unconsciousness. This also applies to meditative practices: the mind must be patterned into some form, whether it is breath, sound or whatever. If you do not do this then you will only fall asleep, gaining little from your practice.

Many people sit for meditation without fixing their attention on a specific object. They merely close their eyes and allow their mind to wander here and there like a wild monkey. They either brood about their problems or eventually fall asleep. Each of these states is far away from a meaningful meditative experience. One can practise like this for the next hundred years and gain absolutely nothing. There is a man who goes to the park every morning to practise meditation. He sits in perfect *padmasana* and begins to practise. Within five minutes his head slowly drops, his chin rests against his chest and he falls into a deep sleep. He stays in this 'state of meditation' for the next hour. Then at exactly six o'clock some sixth sense tells him that it is time to return home. He wakes up, yawns, unfolds his legs and finishes his practice. He is sincere, but because he does not fix his attention on an object during his practice, he falls asleep every day without fail and gains nothing.

Do not make this same mistake. Try to maintain continuous awareness of an object, breath or whatever in your meditative practice. Do not lose contact or you will fall asleep.

As one progresses along the path of yoga, this tendency to sleep seems to intensify. As your grosser problems are exhausted so you become more relaxed. The natural thing is to sleep. This is the barrier of unawareness, the hurdle that seems to be impassable. This barrier of *laya* is that which prevents people

diving deep into their being. It can be crossed only when you are ready and the method is to adopt and start using a psychic symbol. This is emphasized in many yogic scriptures and we are also emphasizing it here.

The protective screen

Actually this tendency towards laya is a safety mechanism. It prevents people prematurely delving into their minds and too quickly confronting subconscious fears, apparitions, neuroses, etc. This confrontation must occur in the path of yoga, but it should be slow. The mind has to be gradually purified and harmonized over a period of time. If there is sudden perception of a mighty flood of subconscious fears, then one will be overwhelmed by the negative contents of one's own mind. The laya is a protective screen. Only when much of the negativity has been exhausted from the mind can this protective screen of laya be crossed. Then the psychic symbol should be utilized.

The parable of the crow

It was the monsoon period. There was incessant rain and tumultuous winds. A crow was asleep at the top of a big tree beside a large river. During the night the wind was so strong that the tree was uprooted. It fell into the fast flowing river and was swept away. The crow, however, remained fast asleep. After some hours the tree was swept out to sea.

The wind subsided and the sun shone brightly. The crow awoke and decided to investigate its surroundings. All it could see was water. In all directions there was nothing but a vast expanse of shimmering water. It wanted to find dry land, but did not know in which direction to fly. Finally it decided to fly east. It did not encounter land so it then went west for an hour or so. Still it did not discover land, so it decided to fly south. It flew south, then north but still could not find any signs of land. Then it felt very tired, but suddenly realized that there was no place where it could rest. All it could see was water. The crow immediately thought of the tree. But where was it? Instead of looking for land, it now desperately began to search for the tree from which it had started. After some time and effort it eventually sighted the tree.

The crow was an intelligent bird: it learnt from previous mistakes and experiences.

Therefore, when it again felt strong enough to continue the search for land, it carefully remembered the location of the tree. It flew south and found no land, therefore it returned to the tree and rested. Then it flew in other directions, always with full knowledge of the position of the tree. Eventually, it sighted land. With a whoop of joy, it flew to the safety of the land and forgot the tree. The tree had served its purpose and was no longer necessary.

This story indicates the path that every sincere and serious sadhaka or yogic practitioner must tread. The crow represents the sadhaka practising meditational techniques. The ocean is the mind. The tree is the psychic symbol. The land is meditation. At first the crow tried to find land haphazardly without maintaining awareness of the position of the tree. It nearly got lost in the expanse of the ocean. In the same way, if a person tries to explore the mind without the help of a psychic symbol, then he will only become hopelessly lost - in a state of unconsciousness.

So be like the wise crow; choose a symbol that will help you to find your bearings if you lose your way. In order to reach the dry land of your being - that which is limitless, beyond time and space - use a psychic symbol as a guide.

The Ishavasya Upanishad

Large numbers of yogic-tantric scriptures proclaim the importance of a psychic symbol in meditative practice. Probably the briefest and profoundest explanation is given in the *Ishavasya Upanishad*. In slokas 9, 10 and 11 it emphasizes the importance of balancing ida and pingala, and the importance of karma and dhyana yoga. These three verses and their implications are described in our previous discussion - 'The Balance of Life'¹. The next three slokas 12, 13 and 14 are concerned directly with the use of a psychic symbol. The first relevant sloka can be translated as follows: "Those who worship the unmanifest reality enter into blinding darkness; those who worship the manifest enter into even greater darkness", (sloka 12) This verse has many meanings; we will confine our discussion to its implications regarding laya and the psychic symbol.

The sloka explains that there are two types of meditative practices. These are as follows:

1. *Sakara* (form) where one's awareness is fixed on a definite focal point or object. This is described by the term 'worship of the manifest' in the sloka. The object can be anything: the breath, a chakra, your deity, mantra, guru, anything. In fact, you can use any object that you can see both in the outer world and the inner world. The object can be a psychic symbol. Included in this group are practices such as kriya yoga, nada yoga, ajapajapa, japa and so forth.

2. *Nirakara* (formless) where one does not fix awareness at any definite focal point. In the sloka it is referred to as 'worship of the unmanifest'. It includes practices where one reflects on such abstract concepts as infinity, eternity, etc. It also includes those practices where awareness is allowed to freely explore the mind and psyche. One may encounter vast numbers of psychic visions.

How is it that both of these types of practices lead to darkness (ignorance and delusion)? If this is the case, what is the point of doing any type of meditative practice? The reason is that both sakara and nirakara meditative practices are means to an end. They are not the end in themselves. So those people who think that the meditative practices, whether on the manifest or unmanifest, are the experience, are deluded. Therefore, the upanishad explains that both methods can lead to ignorance. They must be practised, but as a means to something else. This point will become clearer as you read further.

Meditative practice on one form (sakara) can easily degenerate into mere idol worship. This has happened throughout history in every part of the world. People have worshipped idols and deities without the slightest idea of the implications behind their worship. The same tendency can arise when one tries to fix one's awareness on one object in meditative practice, though possibly at a less obvious level. That is, one may utilize a deity, mantra, psychic symbol, etc. and start to build up intellectual concepts about it. The symbol will become an object of intellectual speculation and superstition instead of being the means to transcendence. It is this point that the upanishad is trying to explain when it says: "those who worship the manifest enter into even greater darkness." The purpose of fixing one's awareness (worshipping) on one object is to

go beyond the limitations inherent in the object, to something much greater. The purpose of the object is to lead to that which is beyond intellectual concepts.

Sloka 12 says: "Those who worship the unmanifest reality enter into blinding darkness." This refers to nirakara meditative practice. Many people recommend reflection on abstract concepts as being the best type of meditative practice. They say that one should reflect on reality as being beyond the mundane world of sense experience, but if one's level of perception and understanding is gross, then this type of meditative practice is a complete waste of time. Meditative practices on such themes as 'infinity', 'Brahman', etc. tend to degenerate into intellectual speculations not based on deep experience. This leads away from the path towards meditation. Thus the upanishad says if one does nirakara practices prematurely, then one will miss the straight and narrow path. This type of meditative practice has its place, but when a person's perception is very subtle.

This type of practice has to be in accordance with the nature and level of the individual understanding. This will be further explained shortly.

Nirakara meditation practices done prematurely lead to laya (unconsciousness and sleep). One is unable to penetrate the deeper layers of one's being. Thus the rishis who wrote the upanishad warn us to be careful, for this laya leads directly into the deep pit of delusion. First of all there must be intense sakara meditative practice in order to purify the mind, make it one-pointed, and develop the level of perception and understanding.

It should be noted here that practices such as antar mouna have their place in exhausting gross mental impressions in the earlier stages of yogic practice. It should be practised before both sakara (with symbol) and nirakara (abstract) meditative techniques.

Both sakara and nirakara practices lead to different experiences. This is explained in the subsequent sloka: "Meditation on the manifest (sakara) brings a specific experience; meditation on the unmanifest (nirakara) leads to a different experience. This is what the wise have told us." (sloka 13)

The upanishad indicates that sakara meditative practice leads to a specific level of

understanding and experience, while nirakara meditative practice leads to a different level of understanding. Both of them have their place in expanding consciousness as the next sloka explains: "He who knows that both the manifest (formed) and the unmanifest (formless) are really one overcomes death through the manifest (sakara) and obtains immortality through the unmanifest (nirakara)". (sloka 14)

This sloka indicates the purpose of all mystical and religious systems: perfect oneness - integration of the infinite with the individual. It indicates that one should eventually see the formless in all forms, and all forms in the formless. One should see consciousness in matter and matter in consciousness. But this understanding can only come after intense sadhana and the gradual awakening of wisdom through experience. It comes after the practice of sakara and nirakara meditative practices. It is the state that is described in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "When one sees eternity in things that pass away, unseparated yet separated, then one has pure knowledge." (v. 18:20)

Sloka 14 above indicates the order and means to be used on the path to wisdom:

1. One should adopt and utilize a psychic symbol or any other focal point for awareness (the manifest). Continuous practise of this type of meditation will eventually enable you to 'overcome death'. That is, it will lead you across the river of death - the barrier of unconsciousness. This will lead to perception of the deeper reality of one's being.
2. Then, having obtained this insight, there should be reflection and identification with the formless, the unmanifest (nirakara). Actually, this reflection will arise spontaneously - there will be no choice. Only at this time, not before, should there be reflection on those abstractions which are beyond intellectual understanding.

Eventually there will arise the unification of both the manifest and the unmanifest. The sloka says: "... both the manifest and the unmanifest are really one." That is, one will realize that, in the highest sense, the formed (manifest) and the formless (unmanifest) are actually one and the same. This state of consciousness is called 'immortality' in sloka 14.

You, the reader of this book, are almost certain to be at the stage of sakara. Do not,

therefore, do nirakara practices; you will only be led into laya. Firmly fix your awareness on a chosen focal point prescribed by the meditative practice that you are doing. After some time when you gain reasonable mental purity and one-pointedness, you can adopt and use a more subtle psychic symbol. This will take you deeper into your being. Leave abstract meditations for the future. Follow the wise words of the ancient rishis.

Choice of a symbol

There is a limitless number of psychic symbols. You can choose almost anything, but eventually you should use only one. This has been summed up very beautifully as follows: "All the visible universe is the Buddha (consciousness); so are all sounds. Hold on to one principle (one symbol) and all others are identical." (Huang Po)

Anything can be used as a point of concentration ... a deity, a mantra, a yantra, chakra, saint, yogi, your guru, a flower ... even your little finger. You can use absolutely anything that captures your whole attention. All these symbols lead to the same point. Ramakrishna, the great bhakta (devotee) even experimented with different symbols. He practised continuous awareness of Shakti, then Christ and so forth. He emphasized that they lead to the same experience and realization. Any symbol can be used, but there must be continuous awareness.

Certain psychic symbols, however, have been used for hundreds and thousands of years. They have been intimately associated with and utilized by religious and mystical groups. As such they have been invested with power. They have been firmly impressed on the collective unconscious mind, thus they have great inherent power to awaken changes in one's level of awareness. Some of these symbols are as follows: shivalingam², the mantra and symbol Aum³, a cross, yin and yang symbol⁴, a lotus, a rose and so on⁵. Though you can use anything as a psychic symbol a traditional symbol is highly recommended.

The biggest problem is choosing a symbol that suits your nature, a symbol that you can spontaneously identify with. If you already have a symbol, perhaps an *ishtha* (personal deity), then there is no problem. If you do not have any specific symbol then you will obtain it in either of two ways:

1. You will receive it from your guru either in formal *diksha* (initiation) or at a more subtle level.
2. It will spontaneously manifest itself when your perception and sensitivity become heightened. That is, you will get your psychic symbol when you are sufficiently receptive and ready.

In the second case you have to practise yoga, aspire, purify your mind and wait for the symbol to manifest itself. One thing is certain: when your symbol arises from your psyche and shows itself to you, there will be an explosion in your being. There will be no doubt about the identity of the symbol. It will overwhelm you. It may be a symbol that is widely known and utilized or maybe not; an integral part of the traditions of the society in which you live or something that seems completely alien ... it does not matter. That symbol which explodes into your field of perception is your symbol. It will be the boat which will ferry you across the wide and normally impassable river of unconsciousness. It is the form that will convey your perception deeper into your being, into the deepest dimensions of your consciousness.

Visualization

In preliminary practices of yoga the symbol can be an external object. Eventually, however, as your perception becomes more subtle, you should visualize your symbol internally. You should create an image in *chidakasha*, the mind-screen in front of the closed eyes. This inner image is more subtle and will take you much deeper⁶.

Most people have trouble maintaining a clear image of their symbol. Either they cannot visualize it or the image tends to fade away. Do not become frustrated, this is merely an indication of the state of your mind. It is difficult to visualize inner images with a disturbed mind; you will be able to think about it but not see it. As your mind becomes calmer you will find it progressively easier to visualize your symbol.

When your mind is silent, perhaps after doing *antar mouna* stage 5, then you will be able to maintain a fixed inner vision of your psychic symbol⁷. This leads directly to *dharana* and *dhyana*, but time is required. Do not expect this to arise overnight. Regular practise for many months and years is necessary.

Summary

When your mind is calm you should start to use a psychic symbol. You must formulate a pattern of consciousness which acts as a base on which you can fix your awareness. This is essential if you want to make headway in meditative practice. When an astronaut explores space, he always relates his position to the earth or the sun. It is the same with the exploration of inner space. One must relate one's awareness to a symbol. One must firmly anchor one's attention on a psychic symbol in the same way that a barnacle attaches itself to the bottom of a ship, or a leech that fixes itself to your skin. Your awareness, which normally drifts from one thought to another, must be centred around one form. All the different parts of your being have to be integrated. All the mental forces must be moulded around a symbol. When you can maintain unceasing awareness of that one symbol for a few minutes without displacement by other thoughts, then you will be launched into the state of meditation.

When choosing your symbol, bear the following points in mind:

- Your symbol can be external or internal. However, as your perception becomes more refined you should utilize a subtle inner psychic symbol.
- Your symbol should be such that your mind automatically identifies with it. That is, the symbol should attract and hold your attention without too much effort.
- Do not change your symbol. If you change it, then the mind will have to adapt to and mould itself around a new symbol. This takes time and effort.
- Try to develop the ability to clearly visualize a sharp image of the symbol in front of the closed eyes. With practise it should arise spontaneously.
- If you do not have a specific symbol, then practise meditative techniques like *ajapa japa* etc. where there is mantra and breath awareness⁸. When you are ready you will obtain a symbol.

The psychic symbol in kriya yoga

Kriya yoga is an all encompassing system. It leads the practitioner through perception of progressively more subtle layers of the mind. In the earlier *kriyas* (practices), one is aware of

more gross focal points of attention such as chakra trigger points, breathing and so forth. In the later kriyas, to be introduced towards the end of this course, awareness is fixed on more subtle inner focal points represented by symbols of the chakras. Then, in the final stages, one fixes awareness on the lingam. You do not have to choose any symbol; the final symbol arises spontaneously as an integral part of the structure of kriya yoga. This final symbol, the lingam, leads directly to dhyana.

Notes

¹ The Balance of Life: Book II, Lesson 23, Topic 1.

² Book II, Lesson 16, Topic 5

³ Book I, Lesson 12, Topic 5

⁴ Book II, Lesson 22, Topic 1

⁵ For a full list of more commonly used psychic symbols refer to: Book I, Lesson 8, Topic 6

⁶ Book II, Lesson 13, Topic 5

⁷ Book III, Lesson 30, Topic 4

⁸ Book II, Lesson 20, Topic 5

Hints for Kriya Yoga Practice

The following are suggestions that may help to improve your practice of kriya yoga:

Asanas: if you have time, try to include a few asanas before your kriya yoga practice. A good program is to do surya namaskara¹, shavasana², bhujangasana³, ardha padma paschimottanasana⁴ and ardha matsyendrasana⁵. These systematically loosen the whole body and can be done in less than twenty minutes. If necessary you can also practise the half butterfly⁶. If you do not have the time then it is not necessary to practise these asanas. Just make sure that you keep your body healthy by taking some exercise every day.

Aum chanting: chant Aum three times immediately before starting your kriya practices; that is, before vipareeta karani mudra.

Wash: if you feel drowsy during your practice then splash some cold water on your face. It is also a good idea to take a cold wash or bath before the practice.

Chankramanam: if you feel stiff and/or tired then it is well worth spending a few minutes doing chankramanam⁷. The kriyas are in a fixed sequence. If this sequence is broken and the mind allowed to wander, then you will lose the benefits. Chankramanam is a method of temporarily breaking the sequence, without losing awareness. Do chankramanam when and if you feel stiff.

If you do not feel discomfort then there is no need to stop your practice of kriya yoga; omit chankramanam. After practising chankramanam for a few minutes, return to your kriya practice and continue the practices where you left off.

Sequence: every time you practise kriya yoga you must start from the beginning. It is no good doing the first three kriyas one day, the next three kriyas on the following day etc. Also do not reduce the number of rounds in each kriya in order to complete more of the practices. Do as many complete kriyas as possible according to time available. It is better

to do four kriyas fully than to practise, say, only five rounds of ten kriyas.

Talking: try to avoid talking and contact with other people immediately after completing your practice program. Practise mouna (no talking) for one hour⁸. In this way you will be able to watch the mind, feel the shanti (calmness) and the benefits will carry into the rest of the day.

Sensitivity: after intense practise you may find that you are very sensitive . . . sensitive to the emotional blasts, negativity, psychic explosions and feelings of others. Be careful not to get bowled over. Try to remain detached.

Notes

¹ Book I, Lesson 5, Topic 2

² Shavasana: Part I - Book I, Lesson 1, Topic 5; Part 2 - Book I, Lesson 2, Topic 8

³ Book I, Lesson 4, Topic 2

⁴ Book II, Lesson 19, Topic 3

⁵ Book I, Lesson 10, Topic 4

⁶ Book I, Lesson 1, Topic 3

⁷ Topic 4 of this lesson

⁸ Book III, Lesson 30, Topic 4

Kriya Yoga Practice

KRIYA 8: MANDUKI MUDRA (FROG ATTITUDE)

The word *manduki* means 'frog' and *mudra* means 'psychic attitude'. This kriya is therefore known as 'the frog psychic attitude'. In figure 1 of the accompanying picture we have shown the traditional sitting pose of this kriya. If you use a little imagination you will see that it does resemble the sitting position of a frog.

This practice is also widely called manduki kriya.

Scriptural references

In the *Bhagavad Gita* it says: "Let him (the sadhaka) hold his body, head and neck erect and motionless and gaze at the nosetip without looking elsewhere." (v. 6:13)

This verse describes both nasikagra drishti and manduki mudra, since they are very similar. The purpose of the practise is to make the mind one-pointed, calm and receptive.

Manduki mudra is mentioned in the *Gherand Samhita* (v. 3:57-58); and also in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (v. 1:53) under the name 'bhadrasana'.

The art of nose tip gazing

The purpose of gazing at the tip of the nose is to calm the disturbances and fluctuations of the mind, at the same time to balance ida and pingala, in this case to bring balance between extroversion and introversion. This is exquisitely and lucidly described in the Chinese scriptures called *Tai Chin Hua Tzung Chili* translated by Wilhelm: "What then is really meant by this? The expression 'tip of the nose' is very cleverly chosen. The nose must serve the eyes as a guideline. If one is not guided by the nose either one opens the eyes too wide and looks into the distance so that the nose is not seen, or the lids shut too much so that the eyes are not seen. But when the eyes are opened too wide, one makes the mistake of

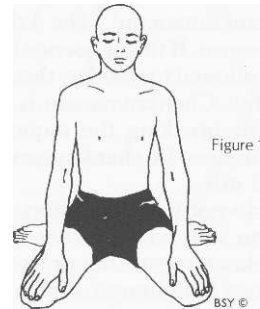
directing them outwards, thereby one is easily distracted (by outer events). If they are closed too much, one makes the mistake of letting them turn inwards, thereby one easily sinks into a dreamy reverie (lost in thoughts; unawareness). Only when the eyelids are lowered properly, halfway, is the tip of the nose seen in just the right way. Therefore, it is taken as a guideline ..."

Thus there is great significance and reason behind nose tip gazing. It balances the ida and pingala and leads to awakening of sushumna. It therefore leads directly to meditation if it is perfected. This is the reason for nose tip gazing in manduki mudra.

In Sanskrit, nose tip gazing is called nasikagra drishti or agochari mudra¹.

Sitting position

The sitting pose for manduki mudra is called *bhadrasana* (the gentleman's pose). There are three variations as follows:



1. *Traditional method*: this is a difficult practice, to be done only by those with very flexible legs. The method is as follows:
Sit in vajrasana².

Place the feet so that they point in opposite directions and away from the body (see figure 1). Separate the knees as far as possible without strain.

Let the buttocks rest firmly on the floor.

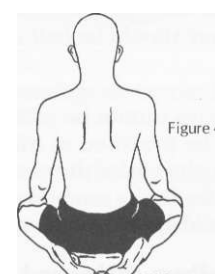
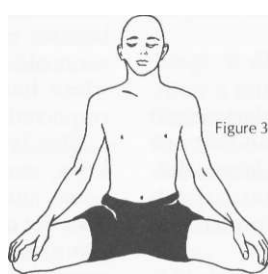
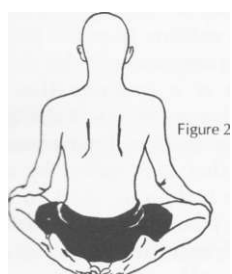
Pace the hands on the knees, palms downwards.
Hold the spine and head upright.
This is the final pose.

easier and is more widely used by people who practise kriya yoga. The technique is the same as method 1 except that the feet point towards each other with the soles facing upwards. The buttocks should rest on the floor. This method is illustrated in figure 2 and 3.

As you exhale the two flows diverge from the eyebrow centre and move outwards through the nose.

Be completely aware of this flow of breath which is naturally in the nostrils as it then diverges. Feel it.

Simultaneously be aware of smell, all smells. At this stage of kriya yoga practice your senses, including the sense of smell, should be very sensitive.



3. *Method for beginners:* most people will find that both methods 1 and 2 are too difficult. In this case a blanket should be folded a number of times and placed under the buttocks (see figure 4). This will apply a firm pressure in the region of mooladhara chakra.

Choose any of the above methods according to the flexibility of your legs and preference. The important thing is that the mooladhara chakra trigger point is pressed by either the floor or the top of the blanket.

Technique

Sit in bhadrasana.

Ensure that the buttocks are firmly in contact with the floor (or the top of the folded blanket). Hold the back and head erect.

Relax the arms.

Open the eyes.

Do nasikagra drishti¹.

Be aware of the natural flow of breath through the nostrils.

You must imagine that the flow of breath in each nostril meets at the eyebrow centre; that is, the flow of breath follows a conical or V-shaped pathway.

As you inhale the flow of breath in the two nostrils merge with each other at eyebrow centre.

The aim is to try to smell the astral body; it has a subtle fragrance that some describe as being similar to the pervading aroma of sandalwood. Continue to be aware of both the flow of breath and the sense of smell. If your eyes become tired then relax them for a minute or so before again doing nasikagra drishti. Continue the practice until you feel bliss. Do not become lost in the practice, since there is much more of the journey ahead; this bliss is merely a pleasant distraction. When you feel some bliss then proceed directly to the next kriya.

Breathing

Breathing should be slow and deep.

Awareness

You should be aware of both the breathing process and smell.

Duration

There is no fixed duration for this practice. It should be done until you experience a feeling of bliss, but don't wait expectantly for 12 hours. You must use your discretion. A reasonable practice duration is from 5 to 10 minutes.

Sequence

Manduki mudra should be done immediately after maha bheda mudra³ and before tadan kriya.

Position of eyes

The eyes should be focussed on the tip of the nose. If this is done correctly then the end of your nose will appear like a lingam. Fix your attention on this nose lingam.

Remember also that the eyes should be neither wide open nor completely closed. They must be half open, which is the same as saying that they should be half closed.

Light

This kriya cannot be practised in darkness; it has to be practised in mild light, so that one can see the end of the nose. All the kriyas after manduki mudra can be done either in darkness or in mild light, depending on your preference.

Mooladhara chakra and smell

There is a definite relationship between the sense of smell and the mooladhara chakra. This is clearly stated in various yogic scriptures and one can also experience it for oneself. During the previous 7 kriyas mooladhara chakra has been gradually stimulated. This heightens one's sense of smell. One becomes aware of very subtle smells.

KRIYA 9: TADAN KRIYA (BEATING THE KUNDALINI)

The word *tadan* means 'beating' and *kriya* means 'technique'. Therefore, a direct translation is 'the beating technique'. A more descriptive name is 'beating the kundalini'.

This is a very simple yet powerful kriya. It brings almost instant bliss, but it must be practised in the correct sequence of kriya yoga.

This is the last of the kriyas that are intended to induce pratyahara (sense withdrawal); the next group of kriyas are intended to induce dharana (mental one-pointedness).

Scriptural references

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* describes tadan kriya but under the name of *maha vedha* as follows: "Just as a beautiful woman is useless without a man, so also are maha bandha and maha mudra fruitless without maha vedha (tadan kriya).

The sadhaka should sit in the maha bandha pose (padmasana) and do pooraka (inhalation) with a concentrated mind. The breath should be retained inside while doing jalandhara bandha. Placing both palms on the ground on each side of the body, the sadhaka should slowly raise himself off the ground. The buttocks should be gently beaten on the ground. By this practice, prana will enter the sushumna. The ida, pingala and sushumna become united; this leads to freedom. The body becomes like a corpse. At this stage inhalation should be recontinued. This practice bestows many siddhis (psychic powers), prevents old age, removes wrinkles and prevents white hair. It is a practice that is highly respected by the sages." (v. 3:25-29)

This is a reasonable description of tadan kriya, except that it is called by a different name and the technique used in kriya yoga does not utilize jalandhara bandha. The details given are still insufficient for a person to practise by himself.

Sitting position

To do this kriya you must sit in padmasana⁴. There is no good alternative sitting position. People who cannot sit in padmasana can sit with their legs stretched out in front of the body; this, however, is nowhere near as effective.

Hand position

Throughout the practice the hands should rest firmly on the floor on both sides of the buttocks. There are two alternatives:

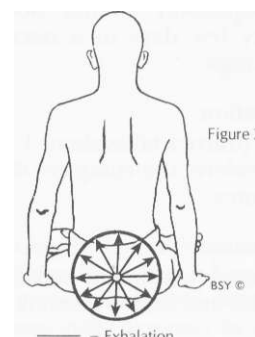
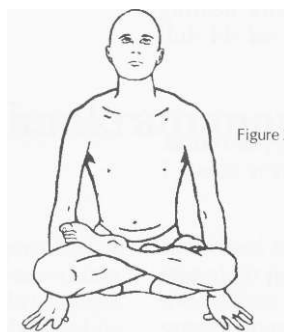
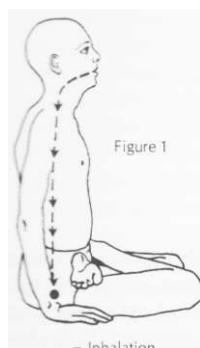
1. Palms flat on the floor, fingers pointing forwards.
 2. Fists on the floor with knuckles downwards.
- In the accompanying picture we have shown only alternative 1, but you can experiment and find the method that you like best. Both are equally good.

Technique

The practice can be arbitrarily divided into four stages:

Stage 1: starting pose

Sit in padmasana (if you cannot sit in padmasana sit with both legs stretched out in front) Place the hands on the floor besides the buttocks.



The arms should be straight, but relaxed.
Then the eyes.
Bend your head back slightly.
This is the starting position (shown in figure

Stage 2: inhalation

Practise shambhavi mudra⁵; maintain this throughout the practice.
Open your mouth slightly.
Inhale slowly and deeply through your mouth with ujjayi pranayama⁶.

Imagine that there is a tube running down the center of your body connecting the mouth to mooladhara chakra.

As you inhale, imagine that your breath is being drawn down through this inner tube.
The breath accumulates and builds up pressure at mooladhara.

This process is shown in figure 1.
At the end of inhalation proceed to stage 3.

Stage 3: beating the buttocks

Hold your- breath.
Fix awareness at the mooladhara chakra.
Practise a mild form of moola bandha; that is a slight contraction of mooladhara.
Straighten your arms and lift your buttocks and whole body off the ground (see figure 2).
Beat the buttocks on the floor.
Raise and drop the body by bending and straightening the arms.
Beginners should only beat the buttocks 3 times: this can be slowly increased up to a maximum of 11 times.
This beating should not be harsh.
Throughout, the awareness should be fixed at mooladhara.
Then proceed to stage 4.

Stage 4: diffusion

After a number of beatings sit on the floor.
Release moola bandha.
Relax the whole body.
Exhale through the nose with ujjayi pranayama.
Feel the breath and prana diffuse in all directions from mooladhara chakra (see figure 3).
This is the end of 1 round (stages 1-4).
Do 7 rounds.

Warning

Do not beat the buttocks too hard on the floor; if you do then you may injure yourself.
Do not let the coccyx bone (tailbone at the bottom of the spine) land directly on the floor.
The buttocks and the back of the folded legs should hit the floor at the same time. This will cushion and distribute the force of the fall over a wider area.

Breathing

Inhalation and exhalation should be done with ujjayi. Inhale while drawing prana down to mooladhara (figure 1). Hold the breath while beating the buttocks (figure 2). Exhale while feeling the diffusion of prana from mooladhara (figure 3). If you wish you can breathe in and out once between each round.

Awareness

You should be aware of breath, eyebrow centre (in shambhavi mudra), physical movement and the accumulation and diffusion of prana at the mooladhara chakra.

Number of beatings

You have to hold your breath while beating the buttocks. Beginners should beat their

buttocks only 3 times. Add 1 more beating every few days to a maximum of 11 full beatings.

Duration

The practice takes about 1 minute per round. Therefore, the complete duration is about 7 minutes.

Sequence

Tadan kriya should be done after manduki mudra and before naumukhi⁷.

Notes

¹ Book I, Lesson 8, Topic 5

² Book I, Lesson 2, Topic 5

³ Book III, Lesson 30, Topic 1

⁴ Book I, Lesson 7, Topic 2

⁵ Book I, Lesson 9, Topic 5

⁶ Book I, Lesson 6, Topic 5

⁷ Book III, Lesson 32, Topic 1

Chankramanam

Chankramanam is a simple technique which is very useful for those people who are doing intense and prolonged practice of kriya yoga. It is a method of loosening up the body while maintaining one-pointedness of mind. If you experience extreme stiffness and discomfort during your practice we suggest you try it.

Definition

The Sanskrit word *chankramanam* means wandering, 'roaming about'. Within both the Sanskrit word and its English translation there is an inference of effortlessness, of roaming here and there without specific intentions and plans, and this is the essence of the practice.

In yogic terminology there are two very meaningful words: *bahir mukhi* and *antar mukhi*. *Bahir mukhi* means 'facing outwards' and it refers to the state of extroversion where one is predominantly concerned with outer activities. In a wider sense, however, it also implies absorption in one's thought processes. According to yoga, even thoughts are external to the inner being. Therefore, *bahir mukhi* refers to both the state of extroversion and introversion. This is the mundane level of awareness of day to day life.

Antar mukhi means 'facing inwards' and refers to the path that leads to higher states of consciousness. It is the sushumna path of awareness where one is poised midway between extroversion and introversion and yet beyond both. It refers to the path of transcendence. The aim of chankramanam is to tread this path.

Chankramanam is a walking sadhana (practice) without effort and without distraction by either the inner thoughts or the external environment. It can be defined as walking japa. It is intended to induce and maintain a state of *antar mukhi* while moving the body.

Tradition and usage

Chankramanam has been practised by mystics since time immemorial. Many yogis have been

renowned for roaming here and there, wherever their feet took them, like leaves blown in the breeze. Many ancient scriptures describe sages who maintained awareness only by their mantra and physical movements. They practised chankramanam all day, when they moved from place to place, when they preached and when they went from house to house to get *bhiksha* (alms). They were aware of every movement, everything that they were doing.

When Ramana Maharshi went to get *bhiksha*, he never lifted his eyes until he returned. He never looked at anyone, but maintained the vacant look of *shoonya drishti* (absorption in his own self). He never even looked at those who gave him food. His awareness was in the state of *antar mukhi*. He used to tell his disciples: "In one breath I returned, with one mind I returned and with one awareness I returned."

Very few people could understand him. It means he was practising chankramanam.

Buddhist and Christian monks practise modified forms of chankramanam as part of their sadhana. During prolonged periods of collective prayer and meditative practice, for example, a bell will sound. The whole congregation will file into a garden, courtyard or into a large hall and do chankramanam for a fixed period of time. Afterwards they will again sit down and continue their prayers or meditation. Sufis also practise forms of chankramanam.

Chankramanam has been practised throughout the world. The method is simple but difficult to perfect; the benefits are profound.

Purpose

Chankramanam has a number of purposes:

Loosens up the body. During meditative practice the body becomes very stiff and painful. Chankramanam is a method of removing this stiffness and the accompanying aches and pains.

Revitalizes the body. After a prolonged period of sitting, the blood circulation tends to become sluggish and the blood stagnates in various

parts of the body. Chankramanam reactivates the blood flow, helping to maintain health of the numerous organs and functions of the body such as digestion, respiration, etc.

Removes sleepiness. The increased blood supply wakes up the brain removing drowsiness.

Removes introversion. In meditative practice it is very easy to become introverted and to become lost in one's compulsive thoughts. Chankramanam helps to reduce and prevent excessive introversion without going to the other extreme of extroversion. It brings a balance between these two extremes so that one perches on the razor's edge between them.

Develops awareness of the present. Awareness of one's movements and mantra reduces the tendency to brood about the past or dream about the future.

Chankramanam is useful if you start to yawn during your daily meditative program. It helps to bring greater benefits when you again continue your practice. In fact, those sadhakas who sit in one position for hours and hours should definitely practise chankramanam in order to maintain good health.

CHANKRAMANAM

Start walking. You can either walk in a circle or to and fro according to space available.

You can walk slowly or quickly, but it should be comfortable and rhythmical.

Imagine that the body is moving by itself like a clockwork toy.

Your head should lean forwards so that you are looking in the direction of your feet.

You should look but not see; the eyelids should be lowered, not looking at anything specifically. The eyes should be vacant; if you wish you can focus on the space between the nosetip and the ground.

Start to chant a mantra. If you have your own mantra then use that; if not use Aum.

You can practise either upanshu japa (whispering japa with movement of lips) or manasik japa (mental pronunciation)¹.

Synchronize your chanting with the movement of your feet.

As you move your right foot forwards chant your mantra once.

As you move the left leg forwards again chant the mantra.

Continue in this manner with awareness of the

physical movement and the mantra. People are very rarely aware of their movements; how often have you walked to the bathroom without awareness of your movement? Be aware! Continuous awareness of your mantra with every step.

Try to imagine, to feel that you are outside watching the body moving automatically; feel that it is separate from yourself.

If you start to get lost in thoughts and forget your mantra, do not worry; but immediately bring your awareness back to the mantra and try to maintain this awareness.

Continue in this manner for as long as you have time available.

Awareness

Are you aware of what you are doing? When you are eating, are you aware of it, or is it just mechanical? Cows in the field eat and eat all day, but they do not know they are eating. There is no self-awareness. If you are eating, know that you are eating. Be aware of every morsel, the taste, the satisfaction or dissatisfaction. This awareness must be developed in everything that you do, whether cleaning the toilets, working, playing, gardening or during meditative practice. Use chankramanam as a means to help awaken this awareness.

Duration

Chankramanam can be practised for as long as you wish, but for the purposes of meditative practice and kriya yoga we suggest five to ten minutes or until stiffness is removed.

When and where

It can be done at any time and any place when you are walking. If done for loosening the body during meditative practice, then do it when you feel stiff. It is best done in a garden or open ground. If this is not convenient or if you live on the top floor of a block of flats, then practise in the open space of a room.

Integration with kriya yoga

If you are serious about your practice of kriya yoga, then we suggest that you begin to practise chankramanam at a suitable intermediate stage in your program.

Notes

¹ Book II, Lesson 14, Topic 5

Asanas: Practice

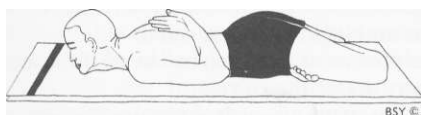
There are a number of asanas that are performed in padmasana, some of which we have already described. The following are five more main asanas belonging to this group.

1. Gupta padmasana
2. Lolasana
3. Parvatasana
4. Garbhasana
5. Kukkutasana

Needless to say, these asanas can only be practised by those people who can sit in padmasana¹.

GUPTA PADMASANA (HIDDEN LOTUS POSE)

The word **gupta** means 'hidden'. In English it is normally called 'the hidden lotus pose'. It is so called because the feet are hidden under the body in the final pose.



Technique

Sit in padmasana.
Using your arms, raise the body so that it is supported on the two knees.
Then slowly lean forwards and rest the chest flat on the ground.
Place the two palms together behind the back.
Rest the chin or one cheek on the ground, whichever is most comfortable.
This is the final pose.
Close the eyes and relax the whole body.
Stay in the final pose for as long as is comfortable.

Breathing and awareness

Normal breathing in the final pose.

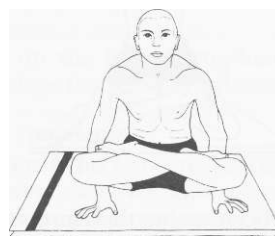
Pay attention to the breathing and relaxation of the whole body in the final pose.

Benefits

This asana further loosens up the legs, so that you will be able to sit in padmasana for longer periods of time. It helps to correct postural defects in the spine. With practice it can even be used as a relaxation asana.

LOLASANA (SWINGING POSE)

The word **lola** means 'to swing'. Therefore, this asana is called 'the swinging pose'.



Technique

Sit in padmasana. Place the palms on the floor on either side of the buttocks.
Breathe in deeply.
Raise the buttocks and legs from the ground using the support of the arms as shown in the above picture. Then swing the body backwards and forwards while balancing on both arms. Continue this swinging movement for as long as you can hold your breath. Then again lower the buttocks and legs to the ground.

Breathing and awareness

Inhale before lifting the body. Hold the breath while raising and swinging the body to and fro. Exhale on returning to the ground. Breathe normally a number of times before repeating the practice. Pay attention to physical movement and breathing.

Number of rounds

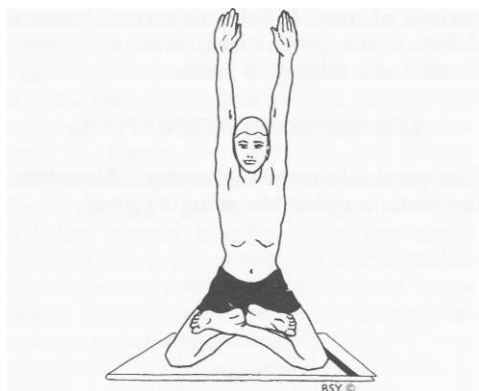
Do as many rounds as you have time available. Five rounds is a reasonable number.

Benefits

Strengthens the abdominal and arm muscles. It is an excellent preparatory practice for tadan kriya².

**PADMA PARVATASANA
(LOTUS MOUNTAIN POSE)**

The word *parvat* means 'mountain' and *padma* means lotus. Therefore, this asana is called 'the lotus mountain pose'. It is a balancing asana.

**Technique**

This is a difficult asana, therefore you can if you wish practise in front of a wall. Sit in padmasana¹.

Using the arms for support, slowly raise the buttocks off the ground so that the weight of the body is entirely on the knees.

Slowly straighten the spine and make the back and legs vertical; remember you can use the support of a wall if you want.

Fix your gaze on a point on the wall directly in front of the eyes.

Raise one arm upwards, maintaining balance with the other arm.

Then when you feel ready try to raise the other arm upwards. The final pose is shown.

If you lose balance try to fall forwards and immediately take support of the wall with the arms; if you fall backwards, quickly place the hands on the floor to reduce the impact of the fall.

Breathing and awareness

Normal breathing throughout the practice.

Fix your attention on maintaining balance and on a fixed point on the wall.

Perfection

If you can do this asana in front of a wall, then you can try it in the middle of an open space.

Benefits

Develops sense of balance and helps to reduce nervous tension.

**GARBHA PINDASANA
(FOETUS IN THE WOMB POSE)**

The word *garbha* means 'womb' and *pindasana* means foetus, so this asana is literally called 'the foetus in the womb pose'.

This asana can only be done by those people who can easily sit in padmasana and who have slim legs and arms.

**Technique**

Sit in padmasana.

Slowly slide the two arms between the calf and thigh of each leg. This insertion is easier if the arms and legs are wet or oiled.

Insert the arms until you can bend them at the elbows under the calves.

Fold the arms upwards and raise the legs.

Place the hands behind or on the side of the head.

Simultaneously maintain balance of the body so that only the bottom of the spine rests on the floor; this is much easier than it looks.

This is the final pose.

Stay in the final pose for as long as you feel comfortable.

If you wish you can close the eyes.

Then lower the arms and legs.

Release the arms from the legs.

Easier method of inserting the arms

Even people with slim and flexible legs will find it difficult to insert the arms between the folded legs.

An easier method is as follows:

Sit with the legs straight in front of the body.

Fold one leg so that the foot rests on the opposite thigh.

Insert the arm on the same side of the body between the thigh and calf; at this stage it should be comparatively easy.

The elbow should be placed so that it is behind the knee of the folded leg.

Then carefully fold the other leg and adjust the foot so that it rests on the opposite thigh behind the previously folded arm; this may need a little manipulation, but it can be done with practice.

Then insert the other arm between the calf and thigh of the folded leg on the same side. From this position the asana can be done very easily.

Breathing and awareness

Breathe normally throughout the entire practice. Pay attention to attaining the final pose and maintaining balance.

Benefits

If you can do this asana you will find it very useful in calming the mind and soothing away anger and tension. It develops the sense of balance.

KUKKUTASANA (COCKEREL POSE)

The Sanskrit word *kukkuṭ* means 'cockerel'; therefore, this asana can be called 'the cockerel pose'. It is so called because it resembles a cockerel in the final pose, the two arms representing its two legs.

Scriptural references

The Gherand Samhita states: "Sit in padmasana."

Push the arms through the crevices between the thigh and calf muscles. Place the palms on the ground and raise the body off the ground like a raised platform." (v. 2:31)

Technique

Sit in padmasana.

Insert the arms between the folded legs as already described for garbhasana; if you wish, you can adopt the easier method of inserting the arms. Place the palms flat on the ground in front of the buttocks.

Push forwards and raise the body so that it is balanced on the two arms; this requires practice.

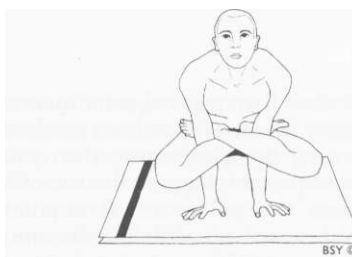
Hold the back straight.

This is the final pose.

Stay in the final pose for a comfortable time.

Then return to the ground.

Slowly release the arms from the legs.



Breathing and awareness

Normal breathing throughout the practice. Pay attention to attaining the final pose and maintaining balance.

Benefits

Loosens up the legs, strengthens the arms and develops the sense of balance.

General comments

We do not expect you to practise all these asanas every day. We have given them for reference purposes and so that you can try them when you have time and when your body is sufficiently flexible.

We have already previously described a few asanas which are also done from padmasana. They are:

1. Yoga mudra³
2. Baddha padmasana³
3. Matsyasana⁴
4. Padma mayurasana⁵

These all belong to the same group and give many benefits. Try them. But do not break any bones by prematurely forcing stiff legs into padmasana. Slowly loosen the legs by doing leg loosening exercises, such as the half butterfly etc.⁶

Notes

¹ Book I, Lesson 7, Topic 2

² Topic 3 of this lesson

³ Book II, Lesson 14, Topic 2

⁴ Book II, Lesson 20, Topic 4

⁵ Book III, Lesson 28, Topic 4

⁶ Book I, Lesson 1, Topic 3 and Book I, Lesson 6, Topic 4

Topic 1

Meditation: Antar Mouna (Stage 6)

We have described five stages of antar mouna over the last five lessons, if you have reached stage 5: inducing thoughtlessness, then you should begin to practise stage 6: the use of a psychic symbol¹. This will act as a focal point for your awareness and will induce one-pointedness of mind. Without this symbol you will not progress further in antar mouna; instead you will experience some calmness and a good sleep. You will not be able to contact deeper levels of your being.

A full explanation of the psychic symbol and its implications is given in this lesson².

ANTAR MOUNA - STAGE 6 PSYCHIC SYMBOL AWARENESS

Many people attempt concentration prematurely. Because of this they have little or no success in their practices. First of all the mind must be harmonized to a reasonable level. Then one must induce pratyahara (sense dissociation). Both of these are induced through regular practise of antar mouna stages 1-5 over a period of time. When you have attained the thoughtless state of stage 5 then the mind has to be moulded so that it patterns itself into the form of a symbol. That is stage 6 - dharana (concentration on an inner psychic symbol).

Technique

Very little explanation is needed, only regular practise and perseverance.

Practise stage 5 to induce thoughtlessness.

Then create an inner image of your psychic symbol.

Fix all your attention on the symbol. If it fades away, bring it back. There should be constant awareness of your psychic symbol.

Try not to get side-tracked by psychic scenery; if these images are strong let them arise but while maintaining awareness of the symbol.

If the images are not overwhelming, crush them and fix all your attention on the symbol.

You should be resolute, do not develop interest in any experiences that arise ... only awareness of your psychic symbol.

Do not sleep. If you can maintain a constant stream of awareness towards the symbol, then you will glide into the state of ... dhyana.

Sleep awareness

It is possible for very advanced sadhakas to maintain a state of sleepless sleep. That is, though sleeping, they maintain complete awareness of their dreams. It is done by utilizing a psychic symbol that has become such a natural part of one's psyche that perception of it can be maintained even during sleep.

The onset of sleep is like descending into a deep well with a rope. One slips and falls into the well ... one loses awareness and becomes lost in deep sleep. The psychic symbol is a means of descending into sleep without falling into the depths of unconsciousness. If you cannot do this practice, don't worry; it is difficult to maintain awareness in the sleep state.

Antar Mouna in summary

The six stages of antar mouna are as follows:

1. Awareness of sense perceptions³
2. Awareness of spontaneous thought process⁴
3. Conscious creation of thoughts⁵
4. Awareness and disposal of spontaneous thoughts⁶
5. Thoughtlessness'
6. Psychic symbol awareness

These lead to dharana and then dhyana.

Notes

¹ Antar Mouna, stage 5 - Book III, Lesson 30, Topic 4

² Topic 1 of this lesson

³ Antar Mouna, stage 1 - Book III, Lesson 26, Topic 5

⁴ Book III, Lesson 27, Topic 5

⁵ Book III, Lesson 28, Topic 5

⁶ Book III, Lesson 29, Topic 5

Daily Practice Program

Integrate the two new kriyas - manduki mudra and tadan kriya - into your daily practice. If you are not ready to use a psychic symbol, program. Also bear in mind the suggestions then remember what we have said in the we have given in the topic entitled 'Hints for discussion for your future practice.

Kriya Yoga Practice'. If necessary practise If you have time try one or more of the chankramanam. asanas described in this lesson: lolasana, gupta If you have practised stage 5 of antar mouna padmasana, parvatasana, garbhasana and then you should start to utilize a psychic symbol kukutasana.

Practice	Minutes
Program 1: duration 2 hours	
Surya Namaskara	5
Shavasana	3
Chant Aum 3 times	1
Kriya yoga:	
Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra	10
Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana	4
Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana	7
Kriya 4: Pawan Sanchalana	25
Kriya 5: Shabda Sanchalana	30
Kriya 6: Maha Mudra	10
Kriya 7: Maha Bheda Mudra	10
Kriya 8: Manduki Mudra	5
Kriya 9: Tadan Kriya	7
Antar Mouna - Stage 6	3
	120

Program 2: Kriya practice only

Do all the kriyas one after the other; approximate duration of the program is 108 minutes, which is very auspicious.

Program 3: duration 1 hour for general health

Use the same program as given in lesson 30.

