

Lesson 27

Kriya yoga is a rite, a ceremony, a method, a sadhana. It is an ancient, scientific and time-tested means to harmonize naturally occurring energies within the human framework so that they resonate with the more subtle underlying energies. It is a method of refining one's physical, psychic and mental forces so that individual awareness can penetrate the depths of one's nature. It systematically 'sharpens the point' of individual being.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Naturopathy

Naturopathy is a system of medicine which aims at restoring health and eliminating disease

by building up the vitality of the body. Few of us have the experience of good health; we assume that because we are not actually ill, then we are healthy. But there is a vast spectrum of states between health and disease; not just black and white, but a thousand shades of grey.

Good health is a state of physical and mental well-being, where a person experiences buoyant spirits, abundant energy and the complete absence of body pain. All organs and body systems work efficiently, cell metabolism is normal and all the vital processes of the body are being properly maintained. In addition, there are good reserves available to enable the body to suffer stress and privation for a considerable time without breakdown. The level of vitality is high and potential for work excellent.

Disease, on the other hand, is a morbid process where the cell metabolism of one or more organs has deviated from the normal path. This derangement of metabolism is commonly caused by:

1. Dietary imbalance and deficiency
2. Poor living habits, such as shallow breathing, lack of exercise, rushed meals, negative thinking
3. Stress due to nervous tension, sudden environmental changes, occupational pressures.

In naturopathic theory, all disease first appears at the cell level of the body. Typical stages of a disease process are:

1. Mineral and vitamin concentrations fall
2. Enzyme action slows; vital enzymes cease to function
3. Metabolism slows and alters
4. Metabolic wastes build up
5. The cell membrane degenerates
6. Inflammation and pain are produced as warnings

7. Bacteria manifest and multiply, feeding off the waste

8. Toxins produced by the bacteria cause further cellular injury

9. Cell membranes disintegrate, the action of the organs is seriously impaired and their integrity is threatened

10. Degeneration of the organ sets in.

The results of this disease process will show up in several ways. There will certainly be a drop in the efficiency of the organ. Everything it normally produces, essential to the well-being of the body (hormones, special nutrients, blood cells, etc.) will be produced in much smaller quantities. At this stage a person would notice a lowering of energy and loss of the feeling of well-being. As wastes and toxins build up, pain, fever and inflammation will occur. Fever and inflammation are in themselves quite useful devices. Fever raises body temperature, enabling wastes and toxins to be burned up, at the same time encouraging elimination by sweating. Some bacteria can live only in temperatures close to that of the normal body, and so the fever may effectively kill many kinds. Inflammation dilates blood vessels in the organ, giving increased blood supply of nutrients and rebuilding materials and allowing more efficient removal of toxins. At the same time, the blood immunity mechanism is activated and white blood cells are able to easily move in and reach the bacteria. By now the person would be well aware of a disease process, as there may even be severe reactions such as vomiting, diarrhoea and bleeding, all of which are extreme reactions to a situation rapidly going out of control. At this point the disease process becomes acute and if major bleeding occurs unchecked, the whole vital process may cease. Vomiting and diarrhoea are not in themselves any great cause for alarm, as they are natural rejection processes and if they are allowed to continue, will do much to clear out the problem.

The question of cure is rather like having a growing pile of rubbish, infested with flies which are producing additional disease agents. There are three major alternatives:

1. Kill the flies using chemical sprays and leave the rubbish pile to grow in volume and toxicity.
2. Remove the rubbish by a thorough cleaning but leave the actual source of rubbish production.
3. Go to the root cause of the problem and determine why the rubbish is being produced. The cause is seldom difficult to spot. The most commonly occurring problems are disorders in water balance and mineral supply.

The use of antibiotics and inflammation suppressing drugs will solve the problem of bacterial infestation and pain with inflammation, thus alleviating many symptoms, but is obviously no real cure.

A cleansing process, such as a fast, will eliminate the waste accumulation if the body still has reserves of vital energy to draw on, but may or may not supply the deficient items. If the body is seriously depleted of energy, a fast may actually accelerate the disease process.

Strangely enough, even though the cause of the disease process may be found fairly easily, the cure may take some time. For what a naturopath really seeks to do is not merely to diagnose a cause, but to correct mistakes in living. Quite often, it is a combination of poor diet, poor living habits and stress which is causing the problem, and to correct these is often no easy matter, human nature being what it is. What is needed is a system of therapy which can supply energies of highly specific types to a devitalized system. The specific energies supplied, of course, will depend on the person and the problem. The following methods are commonly used, although there are many peripheral ones which are sometimes astonishingly quick in their action.

Diet

Signs of vitamin and mineral deficiency are noted. These are given in tablet form, in natural preparations which the body can absorb easily without strain. Foods containing these missing factors are suggested to be included in the diet. Often an essential item is missing - a common one is unsaturated fatty

acids. Often the diet is very high in acid forming foods (meat, dairy products, eggs, fish, grains) and low in alkaline forming foods (fresh raw fruit and vegetables) causing excessive waste build-up in the tissues. Even though adequate cell function can be restored by altering the diet, wastes must be cleared and organs (and often the whole body) revitalized. Often foods are not of sufficient energy content to do this and herbal remedies then find their usage.

Herbs

There is a wide range of herbs available (apart from the well known culinary varieties) which have a highly successful usage in naturopathic practice. Each, because of its specific quality, can supply vital energy in a highly concentrated form to specific organs, so enabling them to regain their normal functions in a far shorter time than would be possible from dietary therapy alone. Little is known of how herbs work. On analysis, they are found to have high concentrations of vitamins and minerals, each herb having of course a different combination of active substances. In addition, highly complex organic molecules of unknown action are consistently found. They undoubtedly contribute to the action of the herb, perhaps in a major fashion. Except for a few notable exceptions, such as foxglove or digitalis, the medicinal usage of herbs has been largely uninvestigated. This is a great pity, for their usefulness has been well established for centuries.

Fasting

This is a very powerful cleansing technique but should be used with care. A fast can extend anywhere from one day to about six weeks. The most powerful, but also the most difficult, is the water fast. Next in strength is the juice fast and then the so-called, mono-diet. Fasting relies on the body having sufficient vitality to initiate its own cleansing process once the digestive load is removed, for digestion is a process which requires considerable energy. The larger or more indigestible the meal, the more energy is required by the intestines to secrete digestive enzymes and to absorb and transport the digested food through the intestinal wall. The intestines, in common with all mucus membranes, can be used as an eliminative organ as well as an assimilative

one. That is, it can also secrete waste products of metabolism in the reverse direction, out of the bloodstream through the wall and into the intestinal tube. This will only occur when the digestive load is small or nil, so different types of fasts have different effects on the body.

A water fast, in which large quantities of pure water alone are drunk, imposes almost no assimilative load on digestion and in addition provides a useful flushing medium. A juice fast is quite different in action. As well as supplying a liquid volume for flushing, the juice replenishes exhausted cell vitamin and mineral supplies, while the sugar supplies some useful energy. The organic acids such as citric and malic acid yield the valuable bicarbonation after metabolism, which neutralizes acid wastes and replenishes the cell buffer systems. Many more pints of juice can be taken per day in this manner than for the equivalent amount of solid foods.

A more gentle system of fasting is the monodiet in which only one form of food is taken. In this category come the milk diet, the grape cure and the brown rice diet of macrobiotic fame. In fact any one food can be taken, fruits being generally the most useful. This type of fast has the advantage that it does not interfere greatly with the daily routine, beyond the fact that large amounts of food are usually taken, sometimes about ten pounds of grapes per day. Food of this type, by virtue of its simplicity, imposes a much lower digestive load on the intestines, at the same time still supplying basic nutrients to the system.

In all fasts, elimination through the intestines must be helped by regular enemas, since the bulk may not be enough for normal bowel action. The best enemas are catnip or raspberry leaf herbal teas; slippery elm tea is also good. Soap and water should never be given. It works well enough, but its action on the delicate bowel membrane is excessively irritating. If possible a daily enema of four pints of water should be taken slowly and held for twenty minutes. This allows for maximum cleansing of the whole large intestine. In fact you will be utterly astonished at the result of this descaling process.

Spinal manipulation and massage

To be strictly correct, these belong to the closely associated fields of osteopathy and

chiropractic. They are commonly used as an adjunct in naturopathic practices. In theory, a basic requirement for the proper function of any organ is that it receives its normal nerve supply from the central nervous system. If the nerve supply is blocked at any point, such as by pinching due to misaligned spinal vertebrae, then the organ to which this nerve force was directed suffers abnormal function and as a result may move into a diseased state. In such a case, it is commonly found:

1. The muscles surrounding the misaligned spinal bones have gone into spasm to immobilize the area and prevent further injury.
2. Crystallization has built up as a further precaution and as a result of stress to the tissue.
3. The body has accommodated to the pain and the lack of mobility, and quite often the patient is unaware of any problem at all.
4. The organ thus out of balance is involved in considerable malfunctioning at the metabolic level, and so dietary and herbal therapies are frequently required also.

Homeopathy

Frequently, for deep-seated conditions and for mental states, the naturopath will employ some homeopathic remedies. This is quite an old form of medicine based on a very little investigated property of matter: the properties it possesses when diluted down to infinitesimal concentrations under special conditions. Orthodox chemistry and medicine would state that there is nothing in the solution except water, yet this water has astonishing properties.

Summary

Naturopathy in effect is a system of therapies, all based on the one aim to revitalize the body by whatever means the patient will try. For the philosophy has it that in building health and vitality, disease will take care of itself.

Kriya Yoga: Practice

KRIYA 4: PAWAN SANCHALANA (ROTATION OF BREATH CONSCIOUSNESS)

The Sanskrit word *pawan* means 'breath'; *sanchalana* means 'rotation' or 'conduction'. Therefore, this kriya can be called 'the rotation (or conduction) of breath consciousness'. It comes immediately after nada sanchalana¹.

Sitting position

Traditionally one should sit in either padmasana or siddhasana (siddha yoni asana for females). These postures keep the back straight yet relaxed for long periods.

If you cannot sit comfortably in any of these above asanas, then sit in any comfortable position. Be sure to keep your spine erect throughout the practice.

Hands can be placed on your lap or on your knees, as you wish. If you wish you can do jnana, chin or chinmaya mudra³.

Psychic passage awareness and mental repetition

As in kriya number 3 you will be required to rotate your awareness through the arohan and awarehan psychic pathways. You should mentally repeat the name of each chakra and kshetram in turn as your awareness passes through them. The process is as follows:

When your awareness reaches mooladhara you should mentally repeat three times: 'mooladhara ... mooladhara ... mooladhara'. Then mentally say the word 'arohan', immediately before ascending the arohan psychic passage.

Ascend the arohan passage as you breathe in. Feel each kshetram in turn and mentally repeat their names once: 'swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna'.

Then when your awareness reaches bindu you should mentally repeat three times: 'bindu ... bindu ... bindu'.

Say the word 'awarehan' once immediately before descending the awarehan passage.

Descend the awarehan as you exhale. Feel each chakra in turn and mentally repeat their names once: 'ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana'.

Then the process is repeated with mental repetition of the word mooladhara three times.

Subsidiary practices

To do pawan sanchalana you should be familiar with the following basic techniques:

1. Ujjayi pranayama⁴
2. Unmani mudra¹
3. Khechari mudra⁴

Ujjayi and unmani mudra are an integral part of nada sanchalana, so you should be able to do them. Khechari mudra is introduced here into the kriya yoga practices for the first time. It is very simple and will be an integral technique in many of the forthcoming kriyas.

Technique

After completing nada sanchalana (kriya number 3) you should immediately begin to practise pawan sanchalana. Do not change your sitting position.

Hold your spine straight.

Open the eyes.

Fold your tongue into khechari mudra; practise khechari throughout the entire practice, though you can release the tongue lock for a short duration if you feel discomfort.

Exhale deeply.

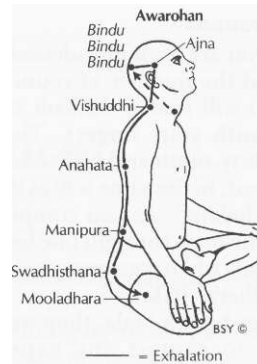
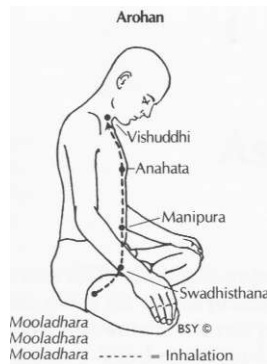
Bend your head forwards but without any tension.

Direct your awareness to the area of mooladhara chakra.

The first round starts here.

Mentally repeat: 'mooladhara ... mooladhara ... mooladhara'.

If you wish you can slightly contract the mooladhara chakra area with each mental pronunciation.



Say arohan' once mentally.

Begin your ascent up the frontal arohan passage as you breathe in with ujjayi.

As you ascend be aware of each kshetram in turn and say its name once mentally.

There should be a continuous flow of awareness from one kshetram to the next.

As your awareness moves from vishuddhi to bindu your head should slowly rise.

At bindu your head should lean slightly backwards.

Your inhalation should end when your awareness reaches bindu.

Mentally repeat: 'bindu ... bindu ... bindu'; 3 times only with complete awareness of the area of bindu.

Then mentally say 'awarohan' once and begin to descend through the spinal awarohan psychic passage.

The descent of awareness should be synchronized with exhalation in ujjayi.

Be aware of each chakra in turn and mentally repeat its name once.

As your awareness descends from bindu to mooladhara you should practise unmani mudra.

On reaching mooladhara, the eyes should be nearly or completely closed.

At mooladhara let your head gently bend forwards.

Open your eyes. This is the end of the first round. The process is summarized in the above pictures.

Then start the second round.

Mentally repeat: 'mooladhara ... mooladhara ... mooladhara'.

Then mentally say 'arohan' once and begin to ascend the frontal arohan passage.

Do 49 rounds.

Breathing

Ujjayi breathing throughout the practice. Hold the breath for a short time while repeating mooladhara three times. Inhale as you ascend the frontal arohan passage. Hold your breath for a short duration while repeating the word bindu three times. Exhale as you descend the spinal awarohan passage.

Mental turmoil

If your mind is disturbed, let your breathing become deeper and faster. Do not suppress the thoughts. If your mind is reasonably calm and one-pointed, let the breath be slower and more subtle, with little noise.

Energizing

This is a long practice, it is easy to become bored and sleepy. Try to feel that you are being energized with each breath. Feel the prana building up in intensity and piercing each chakra and kshetram in turn. This will help to prevent sleep.

Awareness

Maintain awareness throughout the practice. Fix your awareness on the ujjayi respiration, the piercing of the chakras and kshetrams, mental repetition and unmani mudra.

Sequence

Pawan sanchalana should be done immediately after nada sanchalana, before shabda sanchalana⁵.

Duration

You should do 49 complete rounds. This will take about 25 to 30 minutes depending on the depth and duration of breathing.

Counting of rounds

In this kriya you are strongly advised to use a mala to record the number of rounds as you do them. You will find it difficult to record mentally or with your fingers. Tie a knot between the forty-ninth and fiftieth bead after the sumeru bead, in the same way as described for nada sanchalana¹. As you complete each round rotate the mala through one bead. That is rotate the mala when your awareness returns to the mooladhara chakra.

If you do not have a mala, then we suggest that you try to contact any experienced teachers or ashram and try to purchase one. A 108 bead mala is best. Tulsi, rudraksha, sandalwood and so on can be used according to your preference.

Notes

¹ Book III, Lesson 26, Topic 3

² Book I, Lesson 7, Topic 2

³ Book I, Lesson 8, Topic 3

⁴ Book I, Lesson 6, Topic 5

⁵ Book III, Lesson 28, Topic 2

Asanas: Practice

Usually it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find a suitable place for asana practice during a busy workday. Moreover, it is not possible to continually carry a blanket around. Here we

describe *pada hastasana* and three of its variations: *pada angusthasana*, *utthita janu sirshasana* and dynamic *pada hastasana*. These asanas can be practised at any time and place without the slightest preparation. They are all forward bending asanas; in fact they can be best described as standing variations of *paschimottasana*¹. They are all ideal for loosening up the spine, removing aches and pains in the back, neck and head and for removing fatigue.

PADA HASTASANA (HAND TO FOOT OR FORWARD BENDING POSE)

Definition

The Sanskrit word *pada* means 'foot' and the word *hasta* means 'hand'. Therefore, the exact English translation is 'foot-hand pose'. It is an asana in which the hands are placed on or near the feet. The asana is also widely called 'the forward bending asana' for obvious reasons.

Technique

There are five stages.

Stage 1: starting position

Stand upright. Place the feet together. Let the arms relax and hang beside the body. Try to relax the whole body, while breathing normally. Then proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2: the forward bend

Inhale deeply.

While slowly exhaling bend the body forwards. Firstly let the head bend forwards without muscular effort.

Then let the trunk progressively bend forwards. Let the arms remain limp through the forward

bend so that they dangle vertically towards the floor.

While bending try to imagine that your body has no bones or muscles.

At the end of exhalation, your head and trunk should point towards the floor.

You should try to let your head hang as closely as possible to the knees, but without any strain. Remain immobile in this position and breathe normally a number of times.

Then proceed to stage 3.

Stage 3: accentuation of bend

Beginners will find it difficult to hold their feet with their hands or touch the knees with their head; there is insufficient spinal flexibility.

You should hold your legs as near as possible to the feet.

If you are very stiff then you can hold the back of your calves; if you are less stiff then you can hold the back of your ankles.

The palms should face forwards and be in contact with the back of the legs.

Then practise as follows:

Relax your back muscles.

Keep the legs straight.

Breathe in deeply.

Then with exhalation try to bring your forehead towards the knees.

Do not strain.

The head should be gently pulled towards the knees by slowly tensing the arm muscles.

The back and leg muscles should remain passive.

Do not worry if you cannot touch your head to your knees - this will come with regular practice as your back muscles become more supple.

Under no circumstances should you utilize excessive muscular force.

If you cannot touch your head to the knees, then merely bend forwards as far as you can comfortably.

This is the final pose of stage 3.

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Remain in this position for a minute or so, allowing the back muscles to relax and stretch. Then proceed to stage 4.

Stage 4: spinal flexion

In this stage it is best if you can hold your legs just above the ankles; if you cannot do this then you can hold your legs at a higher point. Twist your arms so that the palms face backwards while still holding your legs.

Keep your hands fixed in this position throughout. Breathe out deeply.

Then as you breathe in move your body as follows:

Raise your head and shoulders forwards and upwards as high as comfortably possible.

Simultaneously you should tense your arm muscles and try to pull your lower back downwards.

This is difficult to describe; if you try for yourself you will understand.

The lower and middle part of the back has to be pulled downwards by bending and tensing the arms; the head and shoulders have to be raised as high as possible.

This movement will apply a powerful tension and stimulation to the whole spine.

You will also feel a strong contraction of the abdominal muscles.

Hold your breath while applying this flexion in the spine.

This is the final pose for stage 4.

Then release the flexion.

Breathe out and repeat stage 3; that is, try to touch your head to your knees.

Breathe deeply and slowly for a short duration. Then repeat stage 4.

Stages 3 and 4 can be done one after the other for as long as you have available time.

Stage 5: return to the starting position

When you have done stage 3 and 4 a number of times release the hands from the legs.

Let them dangle as though without muscles and bones.

As you breathe in, slowly raise the body to the erect position.

This is 1 complete round of pada hastasana.

If you have time do another round.

Breathing

Breathe through the nose throughout the practice. Normal breathing in the starting

pose. Breathe out as you lean forwards. Breathe normally at the end of the forward bend (that is, at the end of stage 2). After deep inhalation, exhale as you draw your head towards the knees (stage 3). Breathe slowly and deeply while holding the head against or near the knees (stage 3). Breathe in as you raise your head and shoulders and tense the lower and middle spine (stage 4). Hold your breath while holding this flexion. Breathe out as you again try to touch the head to the knees (stage 3). Breathe in as you raise the body to the starting position. Coordinate breathing with physical movement throughout the practice. This will bring more benefits and will also make the asana easier to do.

Awareness

Be aware of:

1. relaxation of the back muscles
2. breathing
3. physical movement

Mistakes to avoid

- *Bending the legs:* The legs should remain straight throughout the entire practice. It is easy to touch the head to the knees if the legs are bent; even a person with the stiffest back can do it. But one will gain little benefit, for the back and leg muscles will remain as stiff as ever even if you practise for ten years. So keep your legs straight even though it may be difficult.
- *Tensing the back and leg muscles:* The back and leg muscles should remain passive throughout the practice (except in stage 4). Often people tense their back and leg muscles in an effort to increase the forward bend. This is defeating the object, for this muscular effort makes the back stiffer and reduces the amount that the body can bend forwards. Let the muscles relax; they will slowly elongate and become more flexible.
- *Jerking:* Every movement should be done slowly and smoothly without sudden jerks.

Precautions

Do not bend your spine more than its present flexibility will allow. Know and accept your limitations and do not exceed them. Slowly your spinal muscles will become more and more supple with constant practice; also your muscles will elongate slightly.

Limitations

People who suffer from the following ailments should not do pada hastasana:

- slipped disc
- heart problems
- high blood pressure
- abdominal hernia
- severe sciatica

Duration and time of practice

Pada hastasana can be done for as long as you wish. A good duration is three to five minutes. Practise any time, whenever you have the time to spare, but do not practise after meals.

Benefits

Pada hastasana gives basically the same benefits as paschimottanasana¹. It massages and tones up the digestive organs, helping to improve digestion and eliminate ailments such as constipation.

back, neck and headache. These are generally caused by chronic stress and worry, muscular tension, displacement of vertebrae and compression of associated nerves and most commonly by a bad sitting position for extended periods of time. Pada hastasana helps to eliminate these causes and prevents pain in the spine and head. It is a particularly useful asana to do during work when these aches and pains easily arise.

Pada hastasana is very beneficial for relocating minor displacements of the spinal vertebrae and for releasing nerves that are pinched by slightly displaced vertebrae (as in sciatica). Simultaneously, pada hastasana strengthens the spinal muscles, this often being the cause of slipped disc. Therefore, this is a useful asana for preventing sciatica and slipped disc and also treating mild cases after they have occurred. However, one should seek guidance before attempting to treat either of these two ailments; otherwise you may do more harm than good.

Pada hastasana can be described as a semi-inverted asana. The upper part of the body is turned upside down for most of the practice, proving blood flow to the brain and improving its efficiency. Inversion of the body also improves the blood supply to the pituitary and thyroid glands. Most inverted asanas require time, preparation and a quiet place.

Pada hastasana can be practised at any time to give most of the benefits of traditional inverted asanas (though at a lesser level)². Often during a busy work day, the blood supply to the brain can become a little sluggish. Pada hastasana helps to stimulate this blood circulation; this brings many benefits. The following are a few:

- removes fatigue and brings vitality
- improves concentration
- improves metabolic process of the body (by acting on the thyroid and pituitary)
- helps to decongest the nose

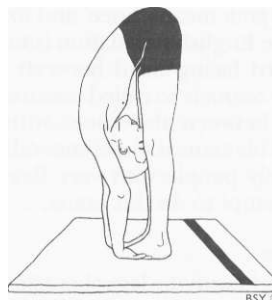
To gain these benefits, repeat stages 2 and 4 one after the other for a few minutes. This will allow sufficient time for the extra blood to flow to the head.

Pada hastasana brings many other benefits. It stretches the leg muscles, tones up the sexual organs and glands and so forth.

Variations

As with the spread symptom of most of the living hasana. The following are three.

PADA ANGUSHTHASANA (TIPTOE POSE)



The Sanskrit word *angushtha* means, both 'thumb' and 'big toe'; *pada* means 'foot'. Therefore, this asana can also be called 'the thumb to big toe pose'.

It can only be done by people with reasonably flexible spinal muscles. It is done in exactly the same way as pada hastasana. The only difference is the position of the hands.

- Those people who can easily touch their toes but who cannot place their palms flat on the floor should hold their big toes with the thumb, index and middle fingers.
- Those who can place their palms flat on the ground should place their hands under the

front of the feet, palms facing upwards. This is shown in the above figure. The fingers point towards the heels.

This is one method. An alternative method is to wrap the hands around the side of the feet so that the fingers point towards each other.

To do pada angusthasana you should do stages 1, 2 and 3 of pada hastasana, omitting stage 4. The benefits are basically the same as pada hastasana though the flexion of the back is greater.

UTTHITAJANU SIRSHASANA (UPWARD FACING HEAD BETWEEN KNEES POSE)



The Sanskrit word *utthita* means 'raised' or 'upwards'; *janu* means 'knee' and *sirsha* means 'head'. The English translation is rather long: 'the upward facing head between the knees pose'. The asana is so called because the head is placed between the knees with the face upwards. This asana is sometimes called 'utthan asana'. Only people with very flexible backs should attempt to do this asana.

Technique

Stand upright with the legs about 25 cms apart. Let the arms hang limply beside the body. Do stage 2 as described for pada hastasana. Bend the legs at the knees.

While exhaling wrap the arms horizontally around the back of the knees, elbows pointing outwards.

Relax the body.

Breathe normally for a short period.

Then exhale deeply.

Try to place the fingers on the back of the neck.

Try to slowly straighten the legs without letting the fingers slip from the back of the neck.

Do not strain; apply a little force to straighten the legs, but not too much.

The action of straightening the legs will apply a strong leverage on the spine and a firm compression of the abdomen.

The final pose is shown.

The legs should be as straight as is comfortably possible.

The face should look backwards and upwards.

Breathe deeply and slowly.

Hold the final pose for a minute or so.

Then bend the legs and relax.

Return to the final pose by again straightening the legs.

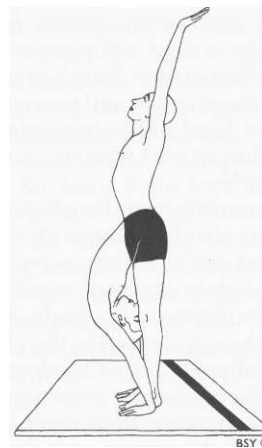
Stay in the final pose for a comfortable duration, breathing deeply.

Release the final pose.

Then either repeat the final pose or return to the starting position as described in stage 5 of pada hastasana.

All other details are as described for pada hastasana. The benefits are the same though more intense.

DYNAMIC PADA HASTASANA (DYNAMIC FORWARD BENDING POSE)



This is the easiest form of pada hastasana. It can be done by anyone except those listed under the heading 'Limitations' given for pada hastasana. It is very useful for removing excess weight, limbering up the body and for maintaining general good health. It is a good substitute for surya namaskara³.

Technique

Stand erect with the feet together and legs straight.

Raise the arms above the head, leaning backwards slightly.

Breathe out and bend forwards.

try to touch your hands to the floor.

If this is impossible then touch the tips of your fingers on the floor.

If this is impossible then bend forwards as much as possible reaching towards the ground.

Keep the legs straight throughout.

Breathe in and raise the body to the starting pose.

This is 1 round.

In the starting position, try to bend your back backwards but without strain.

Do as many rounds as you can without fatigue.

Up to 20 is a reasonable number.

Notes

1 Book II. Lesson 13, Topic 2

2 Book II. Lesson 22, Topic 3

3 Book I. Lesson 5, Topic 2

Topic 1

Pranayama: Bhastrika Pranayama

So far in this book we have described four types of pranayama techniques. These are as follows:

1. Samaveta¹
2. Ujjayi²
3. Bhramari³
4. Nadi shodhana⁴

All of these techniques have distinctive characteristics and benefits. Perfection of bhramari alone or nadi shodhana alone can lead to meditation. Nothing else is required.

There are a few more basic and traditional types of pranayama techniques. One of them, bhastrika, will be discussed here. This practice is also very distinctive and can give many benefits on all levels, whether physical, pranic or mental.

Definition

The Sanskrit word *bhastrika* means 'bellows'. Thus the practice can be called 'the bellows pranayama'. This practice is so called because air is drawn forcefully and quickly in and out of the lungs like the bellows of a village blacksmith. The blacksmith increases the flow of air into a fire in order to produce more heat for his work. Bhastrika pranayama can be said to do the same thing: it increases the flow of air into the body, which produces inner heat, both gross and subtle. The inner fire of the mind-body is stoked. This heat burns up impurities, whether physical impurities such as toxins, pranic blockages, or mental neuroses. The Sanskrit word *tapas* means 'to burn one's impurities'. Bhastrika pranayama is one method, a very direct method of self-purification through *tapas*.

Scriptural references

Bhastrika is an important practice of pranayama. It is therefore widely mentioned in various scriptures. However, some of these descriptions are very vague. For example in the *Gherand Samhita* it says: "Draw air in and

out of your nostrils over and over again like blacksmith's bellows." (v. 5:74)

"Inhale deeply twenty times. Do kumbhaka (retain breath). Then exhale in the way already explained. Wise men practise bhastrika three times every day and never suffer from any disease. They grow healthier day by day." (v. 5:75, 76) This explanation is not given so much for specific instruction but for remembrance. The actual details were intended to be given by a guru.

In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* there are a few verses which describe the practice. These are as follows: "Place both feet on the thighs and sit comfortably in padmasana. This is the destroyer of all impurities. Lock the pose and keep the neck and abdomen in one straight line. Keeping the mouth closed, exhale through the two nostrils. The exhalation should be such that it makes a sound from the heart to the forehead. Then quickly inhale and fill the lungs.

"Again exhale and inhale. Do this over and over again like the blacksmith's bellows. Air should be moved in and out of the body until you feel tired. Then inhale through the right nostril so that the abdomen expands (like a balloon). Close the nostrils with the fingers and retain the breath. Then after retention, exhale through the left nostril.

"This practice removes disease caused by kapha, pitta and vata (gross and subtle elements in the body). It increases the digestive fire. The flow of prana is revitalized. The practice helps to awaken the kundalini by destroying blockages, including the brahma, vishnu and rudra granthis⁵. You are especially recommended to practise bhastrika pranayama." (v. 2:59-67)

Although this is a much fuller explanation, a person would still find it difficult to practise correctly using only reference to this text. Incidentally, the method described is slightly different from the method that we will shortly

describe. This is not surprising for bhastrika has many minor variations. Even today many ashrams and schools teach slightly different variations of bhastrika. Each has its place in the sphere of yoga. The method that we teach is one that we have thoroughly tested.

Body position

Sit in any comfortable asana. Any of the traditional asanas, such as padmasana, siddhasana, etc. are best. Your spine should be held upright throughout the practice⁶.

Control of breath through the nostrils

During the practice, the breath flow has to be directed firstly through the left nostril, then through the right nostril and then through both nostrils together. The method of control is to use nasagra mudra.

The right hand is normally used, but if you wish you can use your left hand. The second and third fingers should rest firmly on the forehead. The little finger is not utilized. The flow of breath through each nostril is controlled by the thumb and ring finger. If you use your right hand, then flow of breath through the left nostril is induced by pressing the thumb against the right nostril. Conversely, breath flow through the right nostril is induced by pressing the ring finger against the left nostril wall. If you use your left hand for control then the same will apply, but with the roles of thumb and ring finger reversed.

Technique

Sit in a comfortable pose.
Hold the head and back straight.
Close the eyes. Relax the whole body.

Stage 1: left nostril respiration

Raise your right hand in front of your face and do nasagra mudra.
The other hand should rest in your lap or on your knee.

Close the right nostril with the thumb.
Breathe forcefully and quickly through the left nostril 10 times.

The pumping action should be done by the expansion and contraction of the abdomen; try not to use your chest.

Forceful exhalation is induced by firmly and quickly contracting the abdominal muscles. Forceful inhalation is induced by fully expand-

ing the abdominal muscles.

The whole process of breathing should be rapid and rhythmical.

You should do it sufficiently fast so that you hear a snuffing sound in the nose as you breathe in and out.

Then, after completing 10 rapid respirations, breathe in deeply through the left nostril; keep the right nostril closed.

Fill the lungs as much as possible by expanding both the chest and the abdomen.

Hold your breath. Close both nostrils.

Press your chin against the chest. Contract the throat so that it is locked; this is the same as jalandhara bandha, but without the arm lock⁷.

Also contract the perineum, the area of the mooladhara chakra, as in moola bandha⁸.

Hold the breath for as long as you can.

Do not strain.

Mentally count the duration of breath retention.

Then raise your head.

Release the pressure of the ring finger.

Breathe out slowly through the left nostril.

Then begin stage 2.

Stage 2: right nostril respiration

Close your left nostril.

Open the right nostril.

Breathe in and out deeply and rapidly through the right nostril 10 times.

Remember: the abdominal expansion and contraction should act as the bellows that induce air into the lungs and then push it out again.

Then inhale slowly and deeply through the right nostril.

Hold your breath. Close both nostrils.

Press your chin against the chest.

Contract the throat to form jalandhara bandha.

Contract the area of mooladhara chakra.

Mentally count the duration of breath retention.

Raise your head.

Release the blockage of the right nostril and breathe out slowly through the right nostril.

Proceed to stage 3.

Stage 3: respiration through both nostrils

Open both nostrils.

Breathe in and out deeply and rapidly 10 times through both nostrils together.

Then inhale deeply and slowly through both

nostrils.

Close both nostrils with the thumb and ring finger.

Hold your breath.

Press your chin against the chest.

Contract both throat and mooladhara chakra areas.

Mentally count the duration of breath retention.

After a comfortable length of time raise your head.

Release the pressure on both nostrils.

Breathe out slowly through both nostrils.

This is the end of stage 3 and also the end of 1 complete round.

One round is stage 1 + stage 2 + stage 3.

Start another round.

Breathing

The mouth should be closed throughout the practice; only breathe through the nose. The following is a brief summary of the breathing sequence for one complete round.

Stage 1: rapid respiration through the left nostril. Deep inhalation through the left nostril. Retention. Exhalation through the left nostril.

Stage 2: same as stage 1 but through the right nostril.

Stage 3: same as stage 1 and 2 but through both nostrils.

Correct method of rapid respiration

It is widely believed that most of the breathing process is induced by expansion and contraction of the chest. This is totally wrong, or rather it is if one breathes correctly. Most of the air is induced into the lungs because of expansion and contraction of the abdomen. Some air is drawn into the lungs because of chest expansion, but not as much as by abdominal induction.

In bhastrika pranayama, one should breathe in and out rapidly using only the abdomen. The movement of the chest should be minimized. There will be some movement of the chest, of course, but it should be passive. The respiration should be performed by conscious and accentuated movement of the abdomen. Some will find this difficult, for the abdominal muscles will have become lazy through lack of use. But with practice you will find it easier and easier as you regain the normal muscular control of the abdomen during breathing. This

practice is especially recommended for those people who don't breathe correctly.

Rest between rounds

Bhastrika is a dynamic practice and requires a large expenditure of physical energy. This will apply more to beginners, who lack control over their abdominal muscles. You should not exhaust yourself. If you wish you can take a short rest between each full round. That is, you can breathe in and out slowly a few times with complete relaxation before continuing the next round.

With practice you will find that you do not require much energy to rapidly expand and contract the abdomen. It will almost move spontaneously without effort. In this case you can dispense with these periods of rest.

Awareness

Maintain awareness of the breathing process, physical movements and mental counting.

Sequence and time of practice

The best time to practise bhastrika pranayama is after asana practice and immediately before starting meditative techniques. Bhastrika has a wonderful effect on the mind. It induces an intense but relaxed state of wakefulness. This is a good foundation for meditational practice.

Bhastrika should not be done with a full stomach. Therefore, the best time is early in the morning before breakfast. The *Gherand Samhita* suggests that it should be practised three times every day. This is perfectly acceptable if you are on a restricted diet. This does not apply to the average person living in society.

Blockage of the nose

It is impossible to practise bhastrika if the nose is blocked. The best way to overcome this problem is to do jala neti either immediately before practising bhastrika or before your asana program⁹.

Number of deep respirations

In the practice we have suggested that you breathe rapidly 10 times. This is the number that you should do if you have just begun bhastrika. As your abdominal muscles become stronger with regular practice then you can increase the number of rapid respirations.

Increase by 5 respirations every week. Some people do 200 rapid and deep respirations and more, but you should only practise a suitable number within your capacity. A reasonable number is 50 respirations after a few months practice.

Duration of retention

When you first start bhastrika, only hold your breath for a short period, say five to ten seconds. With practice you can increase the duration until you can hold your breath for a minute or more. However, don't strain. You should mentally count the duration of retention.

Number of rounds

1 round = stage 1 + stage 2 + stage 3.

Beginners will find it difficult to do more than 3 complete rounds, without feeling tired. Do not exhaust yourself. Practise a comfortable number of rounds, no more. With regular practice you can increase the number of rounds.

Some practitioners practise bhastrika pranayama continuously for hours and hours. This charges the whole system and is a very good sadhana. However, this amount of vigorous practice should only be done when the body is in perfect health, in suitable surroundings and with a strictly regulated diet. We do not advise the reader to undertake such practice, without seeking expert guidance. If you eat the wrong food and practise too many rounds of bhastrika, then you will become ill.

We suggest that you do not practise more than 10 complete rounds without guidance.

This does not sound very much, but actually it will take about 40 to 50 minutes to complete this number of rounds. This is more than one can fit into a busy day.

Precautions

The practice should be stopped immediately if you feel:

- fainting
- excessive perspiration
- excessive shaking of the body
- vomiting

The practice requires forceful and rapid respiration. This does not mean that one should use extreme force. There is no need to bite the teeth or contort the face. The respira-

tions should be done rhythmically and with control. In fact they should be done with an attitude of relaxation.

Limitations

Bhastrika should not be practised by people who suffer from:

- high blood pressure
- any heart ailments
- hernia
- vertigo

Bhastrika is ideal for purifying the blood and removing a bad complexion. However, this purification should be slow. If you do too much bhastrika then all the impurities in the blood will be ejected from the body in a mighty torrent. This may result in massive boils or other skin eruptions in the initial stages of practice. We suggest that you proceed steadily but surely. Let the impurities be removed slowly. In this manner you are less likely to get painful boils or skin eruptions.

Benefits

Bhastrika pranayama brings a wide range of benefits that span the whole spectrum of the human being. The following is a brief summary of the main benefits.

Opens up the air cells of the lungs: Most people do not breathe properly - the breathing tends to be shallow. The lungs are not fully utilized and exercised and the small air cells (alveoli) in the bottom of the lungs tend to stay permanently closed. Mucus builds up and acts as the fertile soil for the growth of germs and disease. Also, when the air cells remain permanently closed the blood is not fully oxygenated. Those parts of the lungs that are open allow oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange, while the closed or blocked parts don't. This results in 'mismatching', a condition where one part of the lungs gives more transfer than other parts. The overall effect is decreased oxygen content in the blood. That is, instead of an ideal 100% oxygenation there is only say 70%. This results in decreased oxygenation of the body tissues and general weakness and bad health.

Bhastrika directly opens up closed air cells. Germs, mucus and possibly stagnant air are eliminated from the lungs. All the air cells are cleaned and rejuvenated from top to bottom, which leads to an increased transfer of oxygen

through the cell membranes and allows better removal of waste carbon dioxide from the body. This results in better health of the whole body and increased vitality.

Bhastrika purifies the lungs. This makes it a very useful technique for combating ailments such as asthma, tuberculosis, pleurisy and bronchitis.

Corrects bad breathing habits: We have already mentioned this factor elsewhere. Most people do not use their abdomen when they breathe. Bhastrika is a means of retraining the nerve reflexes of the body so that one uses the abdominal muscles more during normal respiration throughout the day. Deeper breathing means that the body induces abundant amounts of oxygen with minimum number of breaths. This means that the body cells obtain adequate nutrition in the form of oxygen with minimum energy expenditure. The result is better overall health¹⁰.

Speeds up the blood circulation: This allows the organs, muscles, nerves, etc. of the body to function more efficiently.

Improves digestion by giving a vigorous massage to the digestive organs. This too leads to better all round health.

Removes physical impurities by increasing the metabolic rate and increasing blood circulation. Bhastrika is therefore a first rate technique for purifying the blood, improving skin complexion and removing boils, pimples, etc.

Increases the flow of prana throughout the whole pranic body, which helps to induce good health and also to remove disease at more subtle levels. The pranic body is recharged.

Makes the mind calm and one-pointed preparing the body-mind for meditation.

Generally, we can say that bhastrika supercharges the entire physical-panic-mental body. One's whole being becomes very sensitive - one becomes more receptive to higher and more subtle vibrations. Such is the utility of bhastrika pranayama.

Notes

¹Book I, Lesson 2, Topic 6

²Book I, Lesson 6, Topic 5

³Book II, Lesson 17, Topic 4

⁴For details on nadi shodhana refer to Book I, Lesson 3, Topic 4.

⁵Book II, Lesson 20, Topic 2

⁶Book I, Lesson 7, Topic 2

⁷Book II, Lesson 14, Topic 3

⁸Book II, Lesson 19, Topic 4

⁹Book I, Lesson 1, Topic 2

¹⁰For more details on the process of breathing refer to Book I, Lesson 1, Topic 4.

Meditation: Antar Mouna (Stage 2)

In a distant land there once lived a landlord who had been blessed with much good fortune. He was very wealthy and possessed many lands and fine houses and servants who waited on him even waking moment. He was fond of entertaining and used to throw lavish banquets to which came people of great distinction. His wife and children were charming and beautiful and adored him. He particularly liked to take excursions in a magnificent carriage drawn by six horses, waving and smiling to the people who called out 'My lord, my lord' as he drove past. Once he generously donated funds so that a new court house building could be built in the nearby town, and when it was finished he had a large portrait of himself hung in the foyer. Everyone told him what a fine fellow he was and he secretly agreed with them.

Then one day a terrible drought came upon the land. Many people were dying of starvation but still the landlord lived in his accustomed style. Like everyone else his crops failed, but he sold some houses and property to pay the expenses. As funds became short, parties became too expensive and his friends deserted him. His brothers started court proceedings to prevent him selling more property but he hired expensive lawyers to fight them; still he refused to accept his new situation. "So long as I am lord," he told himself, "I shall live like one. Soon he had to sell his fine carriage and was reduced to driving around in a horse and cart, his once fine clothes now dirty and torn, and although people still called him 'lord' to his face they laughed at him behind his back. Eventually he had to sell all his property to pay for court costs. His wife and children became seriously ill and, because he could not buy them medicine, died. Broken with grief and unable to even buy food, the once great landlord was reduced to begging from door to door. One day he was outside the town Court House and some people were looking at a painting in the foyer. When he went up and told them that the portrait was of himself

they just laughed and called him a 'crazy old beggar'. When he still insisted, "It's me, it's me," they became very angry and drove him away. Sore and weeping he dragged himself home.

His misfortune was to go from one extreme of wealth, status and family, to another of poverty, wretchedness and loneliness. Most of us have not experienced these extremes but we still have a lot in common with him. Like many of us he was proud of his social position and vain about his clothes and appearance, he liked to be flattered and he preferred to drive in first class transport. He was also a good family man and had many friends, and gave generously to community projects. Above all else he was determined to have a good time, even when this brought suffering to his family and eventually led to his own downfall.

This man enjoyed the good life that many of us would like, but it was a shallow one. His life was completely externalized and he had no inner experience or knowledge to draw upon when fortune turned against him. Antar mouna is one way of awakening inner knowledge in the court house of our mind. It gives us a steady reference point in a fickle world, an inner understanding that makes us into a spiritual 'lord' despite the circumstances of our life, whether rich or poor.

It is impossible to meditate when the mind is overwhelmed by a continuous stream of thoughts. If strong thoughts and emotions are suppressed, then meditation will be impossible, for the suppressed thoughts will act as a veil between individual perception and the deeper layers of being. The only path to meditation is to exhaust persistent and tumultuous emotional thoughts from the mind. Most meditative practices help to do this; one of the most direct is antar mouna stage 2.

ANTAR MOUNA - STAGE 2: AWARENESS OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT PROCESS

Antar mouna stage 1 is concerned with stimuli and experiences which come from outside; antar mouna stage 2 is concerned with those experiences, thoughts, memories, visions and emotions which arise from inside the mind¹.

Purpose

The purpose of this stage is to exhaust negative thoughts, complexes, phobias, etc. from the subconscious mind. In Sanskrit these thoughts are called samskaras.

Throughout life we tend to allow good thoughts to arise to conscious perception, but try to suppress bad thoughts. If a pleasant thought arises we accept and enjoy it and perhaps even dwell on it. On the other hand, if an unpleasant, nasty thought arises we tend to quickly push it back into the subconscious layers of the mind. This is called suppression and each suppressed thought remains unexpressed and emotionally charged; it acts as a block in the mind.

In life we build up a vast accumulation of suppressed thoughts. They cause unhappiness and tension in life. They keep the mind in a continual state of disturbance. They tend to cause states of depression and dissatisfaction without any obvious reason, yet the reason is almost certainly to be found in the form of suppressed thoughts. The purpose of antar mouna stage 2 is to slowly exhaust these thoughts, to purge the mind. It is a process of mental shankhprakashalana.

The process

Antar mouna stage 2 is concerned with passive awareness of the thinking process. One should allow all thoughts to arise in the mind without suppression. Some thoughts may be disagreeable and repulsive, but don't reject them. Even if you have thoughts of murder, revenge, jealousy, hatred, etc. you should not suppress them. Allow all thoughts to bubble up without exception.

Do not make any effort to create thoughts. Let them arise naturally . . . and disappear naturally. It is not necessary to try to think, only let the thoughts arise spontaneously. Simultaneously you should try to be a witness of the thinking. You should try to remain a

disinterested spectator of everything that occurs in your mind.

You may experience periods of time where the mind seems blank, thoughts stop. It is unlikely that you are in samadhi. This period of blankness means that you have habitually fastened down the lid of the mind so tightly that thoughts cannot arise freely. That is, strong suppression prevents thoughts arising. Merely watch the mind and thoughts will soon start to arise again. Do not try to create thoughts during these periods of blankness. Only wait for the spontaneous flow of thoughts to start again.

After regular practice over a period of time you may start to see thoughts that you did not think existed in your mind. You may relive childhood memories. Thoughts will arise which you tried hard to forget. Fears may show themselves very vividly: fear of snakes, spiders, mice, fear of drowning, fear of the dark and so many other mental phobias. Whatever arises, try to remain an impassive witness.

As you begin to perceive deeper parts of the subconscious mind you may see visions - they may be beautiful or they may be grotesque and frightening. These are the more subtle forms of thoughts. Let them arise without suppression. Merely observe them without like or dislike. These visions must also be exhausted for they too are part of the veil of the subconscious mind.

Regular practice of antar mouna stage 2 will gradually purge the mind of suppressed thoughts. Eventually it can lead to a state of mental tranquillity and one-pointedness.

Preparation

You should first of all practise stage 1 for a period of time in order to become indifferent to external distractions. We suggest that you practise stage 1 for at least one month¹.

Technique

Sit in a comfortable pose.

Close your eyes. Relax your whole body.

Practise antar mouna stage 1; that is, become aware of external sounds¹.

Then after a few minutes proceed to stage 2. Switch your whole attention to the thought process of the mind; forget the outer world.

Do not choose any thoughts; let them arise spontaneously.

Let all thoughts arise freely without the slightest restriction.

Do not choose pleasant thoughts in preference to unpleasant thoughts - accept whatever comes.

Some thoughts may follow a pattern, others may arise which have no obvious relationship with the previous thoughts.

You may think about work, you may think about food, you may think about an enemy, or

You may wish you could go back to sleep.

No external stimuli is required for these thoughts; they are arising from the superficial or deeper layers of the subconscious.

Remain alert and vigilant throughout.

Be aware; merely observe the thoughts as though they are occurring outside yourself.

Continually remind yourself that these thoughts are separate from yourself.

Say to yourself periodically: "I am different from these thoughts."

Every now and again ask yourself: "Am I aware of these thoughts?"

Do not control any thought; only watch them. Allow your mind to think anything that it wishes; do not interfere.

Only be a witness; try to be a detached, uninfluenced observer of all thoughts.

Sometimes the thoughts will be pleasurable - sometimes undesirable - sometimes they flow like a mighty river . . .

Sometimes there will be suppression of thoughts . . .

Only observe.

Do not oppose any thought.

Allow all emotions such as hatred, fear, guilt and so forth to arise without resistance.

Release all these pent-up emotions.

But try to remain a witness, a seer, separate from emotions and thoughts.

Be alert and in time the suppressed parts of your personality will show themselves to you.

Combine alertness with freedom of thought.

Release all the bottled up feelings and thoughts that have caused you so much pain and suffering in the past - let them arise and evaporate.

Open up the door of your subconscious mind. Look inside and remove all the useless mental debris that is accumulated there.

Go on watching your thoughts . . .

Then after 5 minutes or so become aware of the chidakasha, the mind screen in front of

your closed eyes.

This is the screen of your mind on which it is possible to see subconscious visions.

Watch the screen very carefully.

Do not create anything or expect anything.

Only watch.

If visions arise, merely observe them as a witness.

If no visions arise do not worry . . . only continue to watch the mind screen with alertness but no expectation.

After a few minutes, continue awareness of the thought process.

Watch all the thoughts arising . . . unstimulated, from the subconscious.

After some time again return to perception of the chidakasha.

Do not be tense . . . merely watch.

Whether visions arise or not, do not worry, only watch.

Then again return to detached observation of the thought process.

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

This is antar mouna stage 2.

Awareness

We have already mentioned the importance of awareness, but because this attitude is so important we will again emphasize it. Try not to identify with thoughts . . . try to remain a witness. Try to imagine that you are watching television: the thoughts and visions are the program and you are the viewer. This attitude is essential in order to gain the fullest benefits from the practice.

In the beginning you will definitely identify with the thoughts. You will become absent-minded and entangled in them. Then a few seconds or minutes later you will realize with a sudden jolt that you were totally absorbed and caught in the net of thoughts. You will know that you lost awareness. Do not worry, for this tendency to become lost in thoughts and identify with them is part of human conditioning since birth. All you must do is to be more alert. Try to maintain the attitude of a witness . . . be aware.

Readiness for stage 3

Total exhaustion of negative thoughts and emotions is impossible. Therefore, the second stage must be left at an earlier point even

though it is not really completed. You should proceed to stage 3² when you start to become overwhelmed by psychic visions. If you do not experience visions, then proceed to stage 3 when you have spent a month or so practising stage 2.

Thought awareness twenty-four hours a day

The method that we have described can be practised as part of your daily yogic practice program. However, we suggest that you try to practise spontaneous thought awareness twenty-four hours a day. You should always try to be aware, a witness of your thoughts. Allow them to arise and then dissipate into nothing, like vapour. This prevents the build-up of emotions and also releases those tensions, gross and subtle, that you have already accumulated. If you are sincerely seeking meaning and a deeper knowledge of life, we strongly urge you to start practising thought awareness on a more permanent basis. Do not suppress thoughts, for suppression has been your method of avoiding unpleasant thoughts and experiences since birth. These mental suppressions act as a fog that dulls the mind; they act as a smoke screen preventing perception of the deeper aspects of one's being. They prevent the subtle perception that is absolutely necessary in the higher stages of yoga. Let the thoughts bubble up, empty the mind of its impurities and remove the veil that prevents intuitive knowledge.

Notes

¹ Book III, Lesson 26, Topic 5

² Book III, Lesson 28, Topic 5

Daily Practice Program

This lesson is concerned almost entirely with descriptions of yogic practices as follows:

Pawan sanchalana, the fourth practice of kriya yoga. This is quite a long practice taking about 25 minutes. The total duration of your kriya practice will now be about three quarters of an hour.

Antar mouna stage 2, which is concerned with awareness of spontaneous thoughts. Try to practise this technique throughout the whole day. It is an excellent method of cleaning out the mind.

Bhastrika pranayama is an excellent preparation for kriya yoga practice since it heightens the sensitivity of the mind and induces one-pointedness. It also charges one's whole being with prana through the nadis.

Pada liastasana can be integrated into your regular practice program and be done at almost any time during the day.

We suggest you change your program as follows.

| Practice | Minutes |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| Program 1: duration 2 hours | |
| Surya Namaskara | 8 |
| Shavasana | 3 |
| Ardha Padma Paschimottanasana | 4 |
| Bhujangasana | 4 |
| Pada Hastasana | 5 |
| Ardha Matsyendrasana | 4 |
| Sirshasana | 5 |
| Tadasana | 1 |
| Shavasana | 3 |
| Bhastrika Pranayama | 17 |
| Kriya Yoga: | |
| Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra | 10 |
| Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana | 4 |
| Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana | 7 |
| Kriya 4: Pawan Sanchalana | 25 |
| Antar Mouna - Stage 2 | 20 |
| | 120 |

Program 2: duration 1 1/2 hours

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Surya Namaskara | 5 |
| Shavasana | 3 |
| Ardha Padma Paschimottanasana | 4 |
| Bhujangasana | 3 |
| Ardha Matsyendrasana | 4 |
| Sirshasana | 3 |
| Tadasana | 1 |
| Shavasana | 2 |
| Bhastrika Pranayama | 9 |
| Kriya Yoga: | |
| Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra | 10 |
| Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana | 4 |
| Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana | 7 |
| Kriya 4: Pawan Sanchalana | 25 |
| Antar Mouna - Stage 2 | 10 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 90 |

Program 3: duration 1 hour

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Surya Namaskara | 5 |
| Shavasana | 3 |
| Ardha Padma Paschimottanasana | 4 |
| Bhujangasana | 3 |
| Ardha Matsyendrasana | 3 |
| Kriya Yoga: | |
| Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra | 10 |
| Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana | 4 |
| Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana | 7 |
| Kriya 4: Pawan Sanchalana | 25 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 64 |

In this last program we have added 4 extra minutes in order to give an integral practice program.