

## Lesson 26

The human mind is no more than a centre of consciousness. The more centred or one-pointed it becomes, the more powerful, blissful and harmonized it becomes. The greater the one-pointedness, the greater the wisdom and knowledge. On the yogic path, the mind has to become like a bindu - infinitesimally concentrated yet with unlimited potential. Kriya yoga brings about this concentration of mind naturally, without force or excessive effort. The secret lies in the simultaneous harmonization of the physical, psychic and mental energies of the human framework. This process automatically concentrates the mind to a perfect bindu. It is then that things start to happen that are beyond the normal comprehension of man. The blind begin to see for the first time. Kriya yoga converges all the energies, gross and subtle, into a point (bindu) in the middle of the mandala of one's being. This is the gateway to meditation and shoonya.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



## Sahasrara

The picture we have given of the sahasrara is an attempt to express the inexpressible. It is *shoonya* - the void; perhaps it should be called *shoonya-shoonya* - the voidless void, the void of totality. It is Brahman. It is everything and nothing. Everything we say about it must be wrong, as we would be immediately limiting and categorizing it. Even if we say that it is infinite, we are wrong. It transcends all concepts, yet it is the source of all concepts. It is the merging of consciousness and prana. The sahasrara is the culmination of yoga. In fact, it is yoga itself. . . the perfect merging.

The literal meaning of the word *sahasrara* is 'one thousand'. For this reason, it is said to be a lotus with one thousand petals. However, the word sahasrara, while literally meaning one thousand, implies that its magnitude and significance is vast. In fact, unlimited. Therefore, sahasrara should more aptly be described as a lotus with an infinite number of petals.

It is both formless (*nirakara*) and with form (*akara*), yet it is also beyond and therefore untouched by form (*nirvikara*). It transcends logic, for logic compares one thing with another. The sahasrara is the totality, so what is there to compare it with?

It is the supreme experience, but even this statement is misleading. Experience implies an individual, separated from the experience, who is experiencing the experience. The sahasrara is beyond experience. It implies that the experience, the experienced and the experience!" are one and the same. The seer, seeing and seen are merged as a unified whole. Even this is a misconception, for they have always been merged. In this situation, who is there to experience? These are only words, but words intended to indicate that sahasrara is beyond all definition . . . beyond description. The picture that we have given is a humble attempt to depict that which cannot be depicted.

Mount Kailash is a famous mountain in the Himalayas. It is said to be the abode of Shiva

and Shakti, who live in eternal nuptial bliss. Symbolically, the mountain represents sahasrara, where consciousness and prana (Shiva and Shakti) are unified. Every mystical and religious system throughout the world has its own unique way of symbolizing sahasrara. Experience of sahasrara is called by different names: Buddhists call it nirvana; Hindus call it kaivalya, turiya, nirvikalpa samadhi and so forth; Sufis call it baqua; Christians call it heaven; Kabbalists call it Ain Soph. It is possible to list hundreds of names, all meaning the same thing - sahasrara.

Sahasrara is not a chakra as is often thought. Chakras are within the realms of the psyche. Consciousness manifests at different levels according to the chakra that is predominantly functioning. Sahasrara acts through nothing, and yet again, it acts through everything. It is beyond the beyond (*paratparam*), and yet it is right here. Sahasrara is the culmination of the progressive ascension through the different chakras. It is the crown of expanded awareness.

Many ancient people worshipped the seven (then known) planets. These represent the six principal chakras and sahasrara. The planets were regarded as living in the sun, for the sun is analogous to white light, which contains the essence of all other colours; it is also the source of the other planets. This symbolizes that the power of the chakras does not reside in the chakras themselves, but in sahasrara. The chakras themselves are only switches. All the potential lies in the sahasrara.

If you want more descriptions of sahasrara, we suggest that you read any of the thousands of mystical and religious scriptures. But do not become attached to intellectual analysis. It will lead you nowhere, except into a bog of misconceptions. It is far better to practise yoga, or any other spiritual system, and raise your own level of awareness.

## Kriya Yoga (Part 2)

In this second part we will discuss the vitally important topic of awareness. This is the essence of kriya yoga as well as other meditational techniques. The ability to witness all events, whether internal or external with an attitude of detachment is the means to concentration of the mind. Generally, the mind is constantly flooded with a stream of both outside stimuli and inner chattering. There is a continuous 'noise' in the mind. The mind screen, the field of perception, is overwhelmed by this never-ending turmoil, which acts as a veil to deeper exploration of one's inner being. In meditational practices and in everyday life, it is necessary to reduce this chatter. One of the most powerful methods is to adopt the attitude of the witness of all events.

It is emotional association with both inner and outer events that acts as fuel for this mental chatter, it is emotional attachment that supercharges one's thoughts and reactions to thoughts. Acting as a witness cuts the emotional ties, which stops the inner noise and makes the mind peaceful. Under this condition *shanti* (peace) and *dharana* (concentration) can arise in the mind.

### **Concentration and awareness - a definition**

Concentration means to focus one's attention on one point or object to the exclusion of all other things and thoughts. Generally, concentration is associated with suppression of extraneous thoughts.

Awareness is widely used in two different senses:

1. Awareness as a practice of witnessing.
2. Awareness as a spontaneous state of meditation; a state of perfect inner silence combined with heightened wakefulness.

In this text, and in the context of kriya yoga, the meaning of the word awareness will be as in the first definition. That is, awareness will mean the process of witnessing one's acts and thoughts. It means the process of dissociating

oneself from the workings of the mind. The mind is allowed to do its own thing, to carry on its normal functioning without suppression, yet you cease to identify with it. This is awareness and can be applied in one's daily duties as well as in kriya yoga and other meditational techniques.

Unawareness means identification with objects, ideas, etc. This is called thought, when the awareness is ensnared and trapped by the objects of perception, whether inner or outer. This entanglement can be severed so that objects and ideas are separated from one's self-identification. That is, one remains a witness to all mental perceptions and physical actions. This is called awareness.

Awareness, according to our definition, also implies that no forceful attempt is made to concentrate the mind by suppressing thoughts. This is particularly important in kriya yoga<sup>1</sup>.

### **The computer mind**

The mind is a machine. It is programmed with countless thoughts; it is full of thoughts of the past and plans for the future. It is plagued and tormented by worries, fears, jealousies, etc. It continually broods over 'whether that man likes me or dislikes me', 'have I made a good impression', 'did I make a fool of myself', 'I was very clever today' and so forth. The mind may remember a pleasant holiday, or angrily remember an argument, etc. There is no end to these mental fluctuations. They can never be stopped or suppressed directly, for they will merely bubble up again with increased intensity. Identification with the mind processes can never lead to mental peace, bliss or self-knowledge.

Then what should one do to find peace in life? The most direct method is by developing awareness. You must try to witness all thoughts and actions as something outside your being. This is the means to break the spell - the hypnotic effect of the continuous stream of

thoughts. Instead of being lost in one's thoughts and actions, one should try to become a witness of them.

In India, the automatic functions of the mind are called karma. It refers to the mental impressions that make up one's personality.

These mental impressions oppose or reinforce, believe or disbelieve an endless flow of concepts in the mind. It is these mental impressions which make one feel inferior or superior, good or bad and so forth. These impressions arise in the mind and cause corresponding external action. If one identifies with them, it is easy to get lost on the path of life. Karma is in the mind: it indicates entanglement and attachment with external phenomena and the subconscious data of the mind. To become free from the bondage of karma one must become a witness.

Yet strange to say, there is a strong tendency to hold on to thoughts, especially pleasant thoughts, as one would hold on to the top of a multi-storey building. People are frightened to release their attachment to thoughts and

concepts in case they find meaninglessness in life. Yet just the opposite is true. The more one ceases to be attached to thoughts and ideas, the more happiness and meaning one will find.

### **Awareness in everyday life**

Try to develop more awareness in day to day life. Do not stop everyday activities. You should

work, for concentration should be maintained in a tempestuous mind. If you do not work, then you will merely start to brood about your problems, become negative and lethargic. Do your work and duties but also try to be aware. Be watchful, observant of every thought, emotion and action. Let thoughts and emotions arise without judgement and with detachment. If you start to judge or condemn, then you will reinforce the thought patterns of the mind. Do not suppress; be detached. Allow all the emotional impulses, memories, etc., to bubble up from the subconscious. Do not fight them: just allow them to arise without reaction.

Your plan for daily living should be as follows to act and think, but not to be bound by actions and thoughts. Be detached. Be a witness. This will bring peace into your life and will also help you to make your mind more receptive to kriya yoga practice. Detachment

is an important attribute that you should slowly awaken, as it will increase your ability to maintain awareness in daily life.

To awaken awareness you should also try to practise some of the other forms of yoga, such as karma yoga, bhakti yoga and jnana yoga. At first when you try to be aware you will find great difficulty. You have been conditioned to be lost in the thought processes; as such you will easily and quickly sink into the oblivion of unawareness. Then you will awake again from the haze of thoughts and realize that you lapsed into a state of unconsciousness. Do not waver or become frustrated, for time and practice are necessary.

### **Awareness in kriya yoga**

In meditative practices one can adopt two methods: awareness or concentration. Concentration is widely recommended in traditional texts. However, it is impossible for most people in this busy world, because of turbulent inner disturbances. Serious and forceful attempts to concentrate the mind can cause more harm than good; it can create mental tension, headaches and frustration. If you try to fight the mind you will only lose the battle.

Before concentration of the mind can be achieved, one must first of all exhaust gross inner disturbances, subconscious desires, fears, etc. This is achieved through the practice of awareness. The mind is progressively cleaned and calmed.

Concentration and awareness are both a means to meditation. Awareness, however, is a much smoother, more feasible method for most people. Only those who already have a calm harmonious mind should consider adopting direct concentration as the means to meditation. Awareness is the method of kriya yoga. It unlocks the power of the mind by entering through the back door. It is for this reason that kriya yoga, though being an ancient system, is ideally suited to modern man.

In kriya yoga, you should be aware of the mechanics of the practice: breathing, mantra, body movement, whatever. Be careful not to become seduced by the inner thoughts or by external events. Let perceptions arise in the mind, be aware of them, but also be aware of the practice. Do not try to concentrate; only be a witness of the mind, outside events and the practice in hand. This will allow mental

dross to arise from the subconscious and be removed as a source of disturbance. This process has to occur before concentration can arise. Do not suppress even if your mind is jumping around like a wild monkey. Only be aware and carry on with your practice. Eventually the mind will settle and become peaceful.

The aim of kriya yoga is to induce a state of thoughtlessness, but this state cannot arise by suppression of thoughts. Suppression of thoughts is like pressing down a high spot in an air bed - it merely rises elsewhere.

The thoughtless state of mind allows direct perception. Thoughts act as a veil that prevents exploration of one's being, in the same way that a dirty, dusty window prevents one seeing the bright sun outside. The thoughtless state of mind is like a perfectly clean window, and this state of mind will arise naturally through the practice of kriya yoga.

But do not try to induce thoughtlessness as an aim in kriya yoga, for this in itself will create more thoughts. Merely do your practice, watch the thoughts as they arise. Simply be an observer, without like or dislike but maintain your awareness of the practice.

#### **Suppression of minor thoughts**

At a certain stage in your kriya yoga practice you may find that your mind becomes very calm, and only a few minor thoughts arise. At this point there is justification for suppression. This situation may arise after a few months of regular practice, or it may occur during a particularly auspicious practice session. You should definitely not suppress emotionally charged thoughts, but minor ones can be 'squashed'. It is like an elephant and an ant. If an elephant annoys you and disturbs your peace, tact must be used. You have to watch carefully and use cunning to get rid of the elephant. If an ant annoys you, on the other hand, then it can be quickly picked up and removed. It is the same with major and minor thoughts. You must use your discretion here in deciding which thoughts are minor in nature.

#### **Wakefulness and sleepiness**

One of the biggest problems in kriya yoga practice is sleepiness. There is a tendency in human nature to easily sink into the state of slumber, especially if there is some mental relaxation, such as will arise during kriya yoga

practice. Many people want this drowsiness, for it is pleasant and allows one to forget the problems of daily life. But you should try to understand that the state of meditation, attained through relaxed wakefulness, is far more pleasant. Furthermore, relaxed wakefulness leads to self-knowledge and bliss, whereas sleep, even ten years of continuous sleep, will never result in self-knowledge. Therefore, the serious practitioner should make all efforts to remain wide awake throughout the practice, no matter how tempted he is to gently slip into a state of sleep and pleasant dreams. It is far better to do kriya yoga with a wandering mind than a sleeping mind, for at least the problems of the mind can be removed if there is wakefulness.

In kriya yoga, you should try to remove the tamasic state by taking a cold bath, doing some asanas and surya namaskara beforehand, and making a resolve that you will not sleep. The rajasic state is absolutely necessary; it is the state where the mind is emptied of thoughts and progressively harmonized; you must try to be aware of the process. This awareness will eventually lead to the sattvic state and meditation.

#### **Pleasant and unpleasant experiences**

Be prepared to notice vast ups and downs in your emotions; sometimes you may feel jubilant, other times depressed. This will occur in your daily life and is a necessary process in the purging of mental problems. Kriya yoga will induce it. Try not to wobble, just flow with these moods, accept them and be aware. Only if the emotions are excessively explosive and negative (because of deep-rooted problems) should you reduce or even stop your kriya practices for some time. If necessary consult an experienced teacher and guide.

This purging process is the first stage to self-knowledge. If you do not pass through these experiences, often nasty and unpleasant, then it is impossible to explore the deeper realms of your mind. But the process should be reasonably slow otherwise you may experience overwhelming upsets and emotional storms. The accumulated mental neuroses have to be slowly exhausted from the mind over a period of time. This is why we have preceded kriya yoga by a lengthy description of other forms of yoga, and urged you to practise every

day This preparation is absolutely necessary. If your health deteriorates, then you can either for it gently removes gross problems from the mind. Kriya yoga is rather strong medicine; if it is done by someone with excessive problems, then it can induce very unpleasant disturbances in one's life. Therefore, we urge people who have not done at least two years of other yoga practices, not to start kriya yoga at this stage. First of all prepare yourself by regular practice of other, gentler forms of yoga.

During actual kriya yoga practice, or during dreams, you may also confront fearsome aspects of the mind. You may see frightening monsters, giant spiders and so many other things. There is almost no limit to the types of apparitions that can erupt from the mind. These are the expressions of the hidden negative aspects of the subconscious mind. Problems that were previously unknown will erupt into conscious perception. This too is a necessary part of the cleaning process of the mind. But you should proceed slowly with your practices; if the confrontation with these gruesome mental explosions is too intense, then you should reduce or stop your practice for some time.

As these subconscious forces arise you should not resist them. Always remember that there is an end to these disturbing influences of the mind. "Therefore, try to continue your practices; don't give up. Let them come and be aware. Let them bubble up without suppression. This is important.

Remember: the more you experience and exhaust these negative aspects of the mind the better, for the mind will become progressively calmer and harmonious. Your life will become more harmonious. Also your yoga practices, whether kriya yoga or otherwise, will become more and more effective. In fact, your whole life will transform itself into a state of meditation.

### **Physical side-effects**

The eruption of subconscious forces, the purging process of the mind, may bring health changes. These health changes may be either negative or positive. Again this is a necessary process, since the knots of neurosis are being rooted out in the deeper levels of the subconscious mind. This will automatically induce changes on a physical level. If your health improves, then there is no cause for complaint.

accept and flow with the situation or seek guidance. Many people who practise kriya yoga in the ashram become physically weak, or have diarrhoea. In the ashram we know it to be part of the mental cleaning process and expect it to happen to some people. We can therefore explain to the people concerned that there is no real cause for alarm. However, when you practise by yourself, you must decide whether to accept changes of health, or to take steps to bring improvement.

Whether your health improves or deteriorates, it is really a move to greater and deeper overall harmony. Health upsets are a temporary phenomena and as you harmonize the mind you will become stronger and any physical ailments will gradually reduce. These ups and downs in health point in a positive direction. If, however, the downs are too drastic, then you should stop your practices. Certainly you should not practise during illness.

### **Increase in desire**

Kriya yoga practice may induce strong, overwhelming desires for many things, such as sweets, rich food, etc. This increase in desire means that previously unexpressed and possibly suppressed desires are manifesting. Let them arise; express them externally if need be, if possible without hurting others. Try to be aware. This process is also part of the cleansing of the mind.

### **Lack of time**

If your social commitments do not allow you enough time to practise every day, then do not start to practise kriya yoga. You should only undertake to do kriya yoga sadhana if you can assign sufficient time to practise every morning. At first only half an hour will be necessary, but as you increase the number of kriyas you will be required to practise for a longer period. The full program of kriyas can take about two and a half hours to complete. If you practise about half of them, then about an hour and three quarters to two hours will be needed. So time is necessary. If you only have ten minutes or half an hour to spare every morning, then we suggest that you do not begin kriya yoga at this stage; rather make plans to practise it in the future. This is important. Kriya yoga is a means to self-

knowledge; it is not a plaything to be done lightly. It should be treated with respect. If you practise for three hours one day, then miss for five days, then again do one hour's practice, you will gain little benefit, and because you gain no benefit you will probably lose respect for the practice. Yet if you practise regularly for a reasonable duration, then you will find wonderful changes in your life.

### **Other paths of yoga**

Try to practise other types of yoga such as bhakti<sup>2</sup>, karma<sup>3</sup> and jnana yoga<sup>4</sup>, as this will help you to gain the most out of kriya yoga practices. These forms of yoga can be integrated into your daily life, and as such need no structured program.

### **Drop all concepts**

To gain the most benefits from the practice of kriya yoga it is essential to try to drop all concepts, ideas and beliefs. This actually applies to all yoga practices, for all conditioning dulls clarity and perception. All attachment to traditions, to other people's ideas, have to be dropped. These act as a mighty barrier, like a thick brick wall, between conscious perception of the subtler aspects of your being.

Let us take an analogy. Compare the mind to a pot of water. The water is murky and dirty with small particles. These particles represent all the concepts and conditioned reflexes that you have picked up during life. There are so many particles that it is impossible to see through the water. The water acts as a screen to your vision. The average mind is in the same state; it is so full of preconceptions and ideas that it lacks lucidity. Instead of being a perfect reflector of experience, it veils experience. One sees a shadow of experience instead of the experience itself. If the water is continually stirred, then the water always remains murky; the particles do not settle and prevent the water assuming its natural transparent state. It is the same with the average mind: it is continually being filled with new concepts and theories. The mind is kept in a state of agitation. If the concepts were dropped then the mind would become as clear as a crystal. In this state, one's perception could illuminate the deeper realms of one's being.

It is not easy to drop all concepts; it takes time, just as murky water requires time for the

dirty particles to gravitate to the bottom. But we suggest that you at least consider the possibility of trying to drop all concepts based on second hand experience. Regular practice of yoga, and especially kriya yoga, will help you to do this. The process will be hastened. But at least make a conscious effort.

Ramana Maharshi was asked many times what one must do to know truth. His reply was emphatic: "Forget every concept that you have." Intellectual suppositions and fantasies merely fill the mind with dust. Throw them out, or at least do not take them seriously. Intellectual knowledge has its place in the scheme of life, but do not be bound by it. It is certainly based upon imagination and delusion. Every sincere seeker of wisdom must endeavour to free his mind from all attachment to intellectual opinions.

It was with good reason that Tilopa, the great yogi, told his disciple Naropa: "Look into the mirror of the mind." There is significance in his words, and by a mirror he did not mean a dirty or cracked mirror; he meant a mirror that was a perfect reflector of reality. Your mind must be slowly polished so that all concepts and conditioning are wiped away.

We assume that you are a sincere seeker of wisdom. If you were not, then you would not have started to practise kriya yoga. Therefore, we suggest that you make a resolve to detach yourself from all intellectual speculations. Use the intellect but do not be bound by it. In this way you will allow the kriya practices to manifest their fullest potential.

### **Aspiration and patience**

A person can never raise his level of wisdom without aspiration. Every yogi, sage, seer, saint had this overwhelming need and aspiration to know. Only when there is this strong need to transcend normally accepted limitation, can one begin to tread the path to wisdom. This aspiration is also necessary in kriya yoga practice. Without it, you will give up after a few weeks and become distracted by other things. There must be aspiration, for this is the driving force that will make you continue to practise kriya yoga through thick and thin. It is aspiration that will give you the strength to face the dross that will initially emerge from your mind. If you have this mighty aspiration, then we urge you to start kriya yoga.



### **The culmination of kriya yoga**

Kriya yoga is in itself a means. It is designed to illuminate and flood the understanding of the practitioner so that you remove all misconceptions, clean the mind and re-identify yourself with the deeper nature. This re-identification can only come through overwhelming personal experience. This is sometimes called *anugraha* (grace). It can arise through kriya yoga. Once one has confronted one's *swabhava* (real nature) then kriya yoga has served its purpose. One will henceforth fix one's mind automatically on Shiva consciousness. One will spontaneously identify oneself with one's real nature, through bad and good circumstances of life. One's whole life becomes full with this re-identification. One's life becomes a source and generator of bliss and wisdom. Kriya yoga is a step on this path.

### **Notes**

- 1 For a fuller explanation of awareness refer to:  
Book I. Lesson 1, Topic 1; Book I, Lesson 3, Topic 5
- 2 Bhakti Yoga: Part 1 - Book II, Lesson 15, Topic 2  
Part 2 - Book II, Lesson 16, Topic 1; Part 3 - Book II, Lesson 17, Topic 1; Part 4 - Book II, Lesson 18, Topic 1
- 3 Karma Yoga: Part 1 - Book I, Lesson 12, Topic 1;  
Part 2 - Book II, Lesson 13, Topic 1
- 4 Jnana Yoga: Book III, Lesson 28, Topic 1

## Kriya Yoga: Practice

### KRIYA 3: NADA SANCHALANA (ROTATION OF SOUND CONSCIOUSNESS)

The Sanskrit word *nada* means 'flow'; in the context of this practice it means 'flow of consciousness in the form of the sound Aum'. The Sanskrit word *sanchalana* means 'rotation' or 'conduction'. The English translation is therefore 'the rotation (or conduction) of sound consciousness'.

#### Rationale

This kriya is the first of a group of three kriyas - nada sanchalana, pawan sanchalana and shabda sanchalana - which follow each other in succession. They progressively induce sensitivity to the psychic pathways through the chakras. Nada sanchalana prepares one for the subsequent kriyas. It removes blockages in the flow of prana through the arohan and the awarohan. From this kriya onwards there should be a gradual increase in subtle perception and one-pointedness of mind.

#### Unmani Mudra

This kriya and the following four kriyas utilize a very simple mudra called *unmani mudra*. The word *unmani* literally means 'no mind', 'no thinking'. Therefore, unmani mudra can be called 'the attitude of thoughtlessness' or 'the attitude of meditation'.

Physically, the mudra is very easy to perform. In kriya yoga it is done as follows:  
Eyes open wide, but without strain.  
Awareness at the bindu.

As your awareness descends through the chakras - ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana to mooladhara - the eyes should slowly close.

Though the eyes remain open, your attention should be on the chakras and the descending awarohan psychic passage . . . your eyes are open, but you should be looking inside.

The eyes can be completely closed or slightly open when your awareness reaches mooladhara chakra. Choose that which you like best through experience. When you do this mudra do not try too hard; let it happen.

The practice is done more mentally than physically; that is, though the eyelids are slowly closed, the important thing is to feel the process mentally. Though the eyes are open they should not perceive anything outside. This is unmani mudra.

The state of unmani arises during meditation. Though one may be acting in the world there is a state of thoughtlessness. This is called *unmani avastha* (the state of no thought). The mind functions but without the hindrance of conflicting thoughts and analysis. One is conscious and the mind functions, but it seems to be nowhere. In this state, the eyes perceive, but one does not see. This is unmani.

The state of unmani is widely mentioned in the traditional yogic-tantric scriptures. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* states: "Without support for the mind, one should become thoughtless; then one will remain like a space which is both inside and outside ajar." (v. 4:50) This is the state of meditation - unmani.

"Whatever there is in the world, animate and inanimate, is only the scenery of the mind. When the mind achieves a state of unmani, then ignorance and duality cease." (v. 4:61) Unmani implies that state which is beyond thought - meditation. It is a state where all attachment to the world of objects is dispelled. The aim of kriya yoga is to bring about unmani. Unmani mudra is a simple technique that helps to induce the experience.

#### Psychic passage rotation

In nada sanchalana you will be required to move your awareness through the arohan and awarohan psychic passages. Arohan is the ascending frontal passage and awarohan the descending passage<sup>1</sup>.

As you rotate your awareness through these psychic pathways try to feel that each chakra and kshetram is being pierced in turn by a powerful flow of prana. If you wish you can imagine that each of the centres is like a bead and that together they form a chakra-kshetram mala. Imagine that each bead is being pierced and threaded by a sharp needle of prana. This penetration should be more of a feeling than a thought. Try not to bring in intellectual speculation.

### Mental repetition

When your awareness reaches bindu at the top of the arohan you should mentally say the word 'bindu' three times.

On reaching mooladhara at the bottom of the avarohan passage you should mentally repeat 'mooladhara' three times.

As your awareness passes through each of the other centres mentally say its name once.

### Chanting of Aum

You should chant the mantra Aum as your awareness descends through the avarohan passage. The sound must be loud and explosive as it starts from bindu. Then as your awareness moves through the chakras in the spine the sound should become a humming sound. Try to feel the sound piercing the chakras in turn. In fact, you should identify the sound with the flow of prana. The sound should end when your awareness reaches the mooladhara chakra.

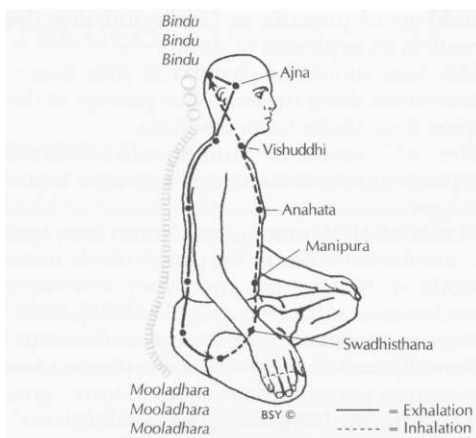
We can summarize the process as follows: bindu to ajna - explosive sound; ajna to mooladhara - a humming sound concentrated in the spine.

The sound of Aum should be loud and penetrating; in this way it has the greatest power to sensitize the chakras. However, it is not always possible to make a lot of noise, especially if it is early in the morning, as you may disturb other people living in your house. Under these circumstances you can chant Aum as a loud whisper.

### Body position

Preferably sit in padmasana or siddhasana (siddha yoni asana for women)<sup>2</sup>. These are the two sitting poses that have been taught by tradition. However, if you cannot sit in any of these asanas choose any other comfortable

sitting position such as vajrasana, ardha padmasana, etc.<sup>2</sup> You should remain in the same sitting position that you used for kriya number 2.



### Technique

After completing kriya number 2, chakra anusandhana, you should proceed directly to nada sanchalana.

Do not change your sitting position.

Open the eyes. Hold the spine upright.

Exhale deeply.

Bend your head forwards; do not press the chin against the chest or make the neck stiff.

The position of the head should be such that it is slumped forwards as though you are sleeping in a sitting position.

Fix your awareness at mooladhara chakra.

Repeat mentally: 'mooladhara - mooladhara - mooladhara' with concentration, absolute stillness of the body and while holding the breath.

Inhale up the frontal arohan passage doing ujjayi pranayama<sup>3</sup>.

As your awareness ascends through the kshetrams, mentally say their name once: 'swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi'. Try to feel that each centre is being pierced by prana as your awareness passes through it.

As your awareness moves from vishuddhi to bindu slowly raise your head.

When your awareness reaches bindu your head should be upright and facing forwards.

Hold your breath for a short time.

With awareness fixed at bindu mentally repeat: 'bindu - bindu - bindu'. Remember: there should be complete concentration, stillness of

the body and no movement of the head while repeating 'bindu'.

Then exhale with an explosive Aum sound.

You should feel as though there is a terrific build-up of pressure at bindu and that the result is an explosion of Aum .

The Aum should be chanted as your awareness passes down the avarohan passage in the spine from bindu to mooladhara.

The 'AU' sound of Aum should suddenly explode as your awareness passes from bindu to ajna.

The 'M-M-M-M' sound should travel from ajna to mooladhara, becoming progressively more subtle so that by the time your awareness reaches mooladhara it is a slight buzzing sound. Practise unmani as your awareness descends. Mentally say the name of each centre as your awareness passes through them in turn: 'ajna, vishuddhi, anahata, manipura, swadhisthana'. When you reach mooladhara gently lean your head forwards.

Open your eyes.

This is the end of the first round.

The process is summarized picture on the previous page.

After completing the first round start the second immediately.

Repeat the word: 'mooladhara - mooladhara - mooladhara'.

Then with ujjayi pranayama start to ascend through the frontal arohan psychic passage.

Do 13 rounds.

Then proceed directly to kriya number 4<sup>4</sup>.

### Breathing

There should be a short breath retention while repeating mooladhara three times mentally. Ujjayi inhalation should be synchronized with the ascent of awareness through the arohan passage. Retain the breath for a short time while mentally repeating bindu three times. Exhale with Aum sound from bindu to mooladhara through the spinal avarohan psychic passage.

### Awareness

Try to practise the kriya in the correct manner with alertness. It is very easy to forget parts of the practice or even do the practice without attention. Let the thoughts arise, but try to maintain awareness of the practice. If you feel sleepy take a cold wash or bath.

Remember to try to remain a witness throughout the practice.

### Counting of rounds

You have to do 13 rounds. Therefore, at the end of each round you have to keep a count of the number of rounds that have been done. You should count as your awareness reaches mooladhara at the end of Aum descent in the avarohan passage. Various methods of counting can be used. Mental counting is the obvious method, but this has the drawback that it is very easy to forget. If you wish you can count on your fingers. The best method, however, is to use a mala. You should tie a knot or piece of string at the thirteenth bead past the sumeru (junction or summit) bead<sup>5</sup>. When you start the practice of nada sanchalana, hold the mala just before the first bead after the sumeru bead. Then as you complete each round, rotate the mala through one bead. When you reach the thirteenth bead you will feel the knot and know that you have completed 13 rounds. Experiment and find the method of counting that you like the best.

About 7 or 8 minutes will be required to complete 13 rounds.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> We have given full details of these two psychic passages in Book III, Lesson 25, Topic 4

<sup>2</sup> Book I, Lesson 7, Topic 2

<sup>3</sup> Book I, Lesson 6, Topic 5

<sup>4</sup> Book III, Lesson 27, Topic 2

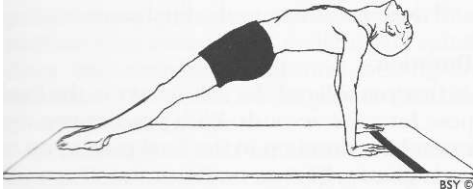
<sup>5</sup> Book II, Lesson 14, Topic 5

## Asanas: Practice

In this topic we will discuss two backward bending asanas - setu asana and chakrasana. These two asanas give similar benefits; therefore it is not necessary to do both of them. Those who are able should practise the more difficult chakrasana; those who cannot do chakrasana can practise setu asana instead.

### SETU ASANA (BRIDGE POSE)

The Sanskrit word *setu* means 'bridge'. Therefore, in English this asana can be called 'bridge pose'.



#### Technique

Sit on the floor with your legs stretched forwards. Place the palms of your hands on the floor to the side and behind the buttocks. This is the starting position,

Your arms should be straight with the fingers pointing backwards; the trunk should be inclined backwards.

Inhale deeply.

Raise your buttocks as high as is comfortable. Let your head hang backwards and downwards between the two arms.

Hold the breath.

This is the final pose.

try to place the soles of the feet fully on the ground.

Keep the legs and arms straight.

Stay in the final pose for a comfortable duration: then return to the starting position. Repeat a number of times according to available time.

#### Breathing

Inhale deeply while in the starting position. Hold the breath while raising, maintaining the final pose and lowering the body. Exhale on returning to the starting position.

#### Other details

Further details such as benefits, awareness and so forth are as given for chakrasana.

### CHAKRASANA (WHEEL POSE)

The word *chakra* has many meanings: 'wheel', 'circle', 'vortex', 'whirlpool', 'spiral' and so on. In the context of chakrasana, the best English translation is 'wheel pose'. This asana is so called because of the wheel shape taken by the body in the final pose. At first you may think that this is not a very exact description of the asana, especially if you refer to the following picture. However, there are many people with supple spines who can easily grasp their ankles

with their hands in the final position. When the asana is done in this manner, then the full circle is achieved, thus fully justifying the traditional name of the asana. However, we do not suggest that you attempt to perform the full circle unless you have a very flexible back. If you do so prematurely, you may snap a few bones and muscles and remain in a permanent backward bend.

#### Technique

Lie flat on your back.

Bend the legs and place the heels near the buttocks; the feet should be about half a metre apart.

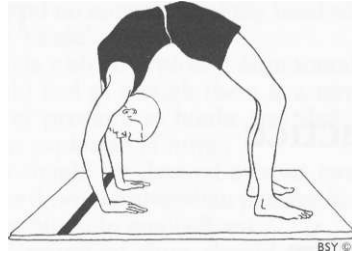
Bend the arms and place the hands on the ground

beside the back of the head; the fingers should point

towards the shoulders with the palms flat on the floor.

This is the starting position.

Relax the whole body for a few seconds in preparation for performing the final pose.



Breathe in deeply.

Then raise the head and trunk off the ground by straightening the legs and arms; the feet and hands should not be moved.

Try to arch the back as much as possible to take the final pose.

Let the head hang between the two straight arms.

The degree of bend in the back can be accentuated by bending or straightening the knees, and allowing the shoulders to move over the arms.

Do not try to bend the back more than its flexibility will allow.

This is the final pose. Breathe slowly and deeply. Stay in the final pose for as long as is comfortable.

Then slowly return to the starting position by slowly lowering the body to the ground.

The asana can be repeated once or twice if you have sufficient energy and time.

#### **Breathing**

Inhale deeply in the starting position. Hold the breath while elevating the body to the final pose. Breathe as deeply and slowly as possible in the final pose. Breathe in before lowering the body. Hold the breath while lowering the body to the starting pose.

#### **Use of mat**

We suggest that you practise chakrasana on a bare floor, for a mat or blanket can slip and cause injury.

#### **Advice for beginners**

If your back is very stiff then we strongly advise you not to attempt to perform chakrasana. Instead, you should systematically loosen up your spine over a period of time by doing other backward bending asanas such as dhanurasana<sup>1</sup>, ushtrasana<sup>2</sup> and so forth. You can also practise setu asana.

At first it is a little difficult to raise the body directly from the ground to the final pose. We therefore suggest that you adopt an intermediate stage; from the starting position raise your body so that you can bend your head backwards. Then rest the top of the head on the ground and support the weight of the body temporarily on the head. From this intermediate position, it is much easier to attain the final pose.

#### **Advice for adepts**

If you can comfortably and easily do chakrasana in the way we have described, then you can accentuate the flexion of the back in the final pose by progressively and carefully moving the hands and feet closer towards each other. Be careful not to strain.

#### **Awareness**

Direct your attention to relaxing the spine in the final pose. When you can easily perform chakrasana, then direct your attention to slow and deep breathing in the final pose.

#### **Duration**

At first you will only be able to stay in the final pose for a few seconds. With practice you can extend the duration in the final pose to up to two minutes. Be sure not to strain.

If you have sufficient time you can perform chakrasana two or three times. But do not attempt it if you feel even slightly tired.

#### **Sequence**

Chakrasana is an excellent counterpose for all forward bending asanas. It is particularly useful as a counterpose to asanas such as halasana and sarvangasana which apply a tight forward lock on the neck. Chakrasana stretches the neck in the opposite direction and quickly releases tension. If possible, try to do a forward bending asana after chakrasana.

#### **Limitations**

Chakrasana should not be practised by people who suffer from high blood pressure, heart problems, stomach ulcers, dilated eye pupils or hernia, or by anyone who has weak arms. Also, it should not be attempted by anyone who has recently undergone any abdominal operation or who has fractured any bones. Pregnant women should not do it.

### **Benefits**

In a way chakrasana is an inverted form of dhanurasana (the bow pose). As such the benefits are very similar; therefore, to save repetition we suggest that you refer to the benefits given for dhanurasana<sup>1</sup>.

There are, however, notable differences in the physical influence of the asanas. In the final pose of dhanurasana the whole weight of the body is supported on the belly.

This firmly and deeply massages the internal organs. Chakrasana also massages the abdominal organs but by stretching the outer muscles: deep breathing in the final pose, accentuates this process.

Chakrasana, unlike dhanurasana, is also an inverted asana. Therefore, a minute or so in the final pose will flush the brain with a freshly oxygenated supply of blood. This will help to improve the efficiency of the brain cells and in turn, the overall health of the entire body. Chakrasana gives an accentuated stretch to all the nerves of the back, including the sympathetic and parasympathetic nerves. The profound backward bend realigns any spinal discs and vertebrae that may be slightly displaced. This action is even greater than that given by dhanurasana.

In summary we can say that chakrasana is an excellent asana that can help to bring about optimum health of the body if it is done regularly. We suggest that you try to master it.

### **Notes**

1 Book II. Lesson 15, Topic 4

2 Book I. Lesson 6, Topic 3

3 Book I. Lesson 4, Topic 2

## Topic 1

# Meditation: Antar Mouna (Stage 1)

When the mind is silent and peaceful it becomes very powerful. It becomes the receptor of bliss and wisdom, a perfect instrument. Life becomes a spontaneous flow and expression of joy. All this arises naturally when the mind is in a state of inner silence. However, this inner silence can never arise when there is a continual stream of disturbing thoughts and turbulent emotions. All the inner noise of thoughts and emotions has to be removed before one can experience the soundless sound of inner silence. The practice we will now introduce and describe further in the next four lessons - *antar mouna* - is designed specifically to eradicate mental noise and induce calmness in the mind<sup>1</sup>.

### Definition

The word *antar* means 'inner' and *mouna* means 'silence'. Therefore, the exact translation of *antar mouna* is 'inner silence'. *Antar mouna* is a meditative technique that leads to inner tranquillity and silence.

### Utility

*Antar mouna* is a basic practice of yoga. It is a fundamental part of Buddhist practice, though it is known by a different name (*vipassana*) and is used in a slightly modified form. Some of the principles of *antar mouna* are also widely used in modern psychiatry. It is one of the most direct methods of tackling the problems of the mind. This is the reason why it is so widely utilized in both religious, mystical and psychiatric systems.

The by-product of modern life is overwhelming mental tension that almost grinds man into the ground to the point of despair. If these mental tensions are released, even slightly, then life begins to show new promise and new meaning begins to awaken. One method, a very direct method, of releasing these oppressive mental tensions is *antar mouna*.

Everyone has mental suppressions. Since a young age we have habitually suppressed nasty thoughts and desires and tried to forget bad experiences. But suppression does not solve the problem, for the thoughts merely stay submerged in the subconscious realms of the mind in seed form. Even if we are not conscious of them, these suppressed thoughts act furtively from the subconscious to bring pain, unhappiness and frustration in life. To find happiness, real happiness, these mental impressions (*samskaras*) have to be rooted out. A direct method is *antar mouna*.

*Antar mouna* is very systematic. Firstly, it increases one's resistance to external disturbances. Then it allows subconscious thoughts and pent-up emotions to slowly bubble up to conscious perception. One directly confronts the contents of the subconscious mind: long forgotten memories, fears, hatreds and so forth. Thoughts and feelings that have been hidden for years come to the surface and are exhausted. Gradually the mind is harmonized over a period of time. The mind becomes progressively tranquil and one-pointed.

Eventually a stage is reached where thoughts and emotions from the subconscious tend to be almost insignificant. These are merely the remnants, the most overpowering thoughts and emotions having previously been exhausted. These minor thoughts cause little harm and are more a nuisance than anything else. At this stage the thought processes of the mind can be suppressed to induce a state of thoughtlessness. This can eventually lead to the state of meditation and perception of one's being. This perception, more than anything else in life, will transform one's understanding of existence and one's place in the universe.

*Antar mouna* is to be utilized by those people who have disturbances in the mind. It will gradually harmonize the mind so that it eventually attains a state of thoughtlessness and meditation.



## Pratyahara

The Sanskrit word pratyahara is made up of two root words: *prati* and *ahara*. These root words have the following meanings: *prati* - 'opposite', 'in opposition to'; *ahara* - 'to fetch', 'bring back', also 'to take food'. Therefore, the literal meaning of *pratyahara* is 'to oppose the bringing back' or 'to oppose the taking of food'. In yoga, the word has a specific meaning in conjunction with sense perception. It means that sense perception is opposed. We are continuously receiving impressions and data from the external world through the medium of the senses: eyes, ears, etc. These impressions are the food of the mind. They keep the mind in a continual state of agitation and extroversion. Pratyahara implies that this bringing back of sense data is opposed. The taking of 'food' for the senses is prevented. Pratyahara means that inner perception is cut off, disconnected from the senses. This is usually called sense withdrawal'.

In most of our waking life, perception is directed towards the outside world via the senses. By inducing pratyahara and preventing external perception, our perception remains inside the mind. This allows perception of the different layers of the mind. This cutting off of external perception is the purpose of the first stage of antar mouna.

It is worthwhile pointing out that we perceive the subconscious layers of the mind during dreams. This is similar to the state to be attained in stage 2 of antar mouna. However, there is one big difference: in dreams and sleep, the level of awareness is slight or nil; in antar mouna and other meditative practices the aim is to maintain a high level of awareness. This is the difference. Actually dreams are themselves the means for releasing tensions from the mind. They act as the safety valve for the mind. Without dreaming, the average person would explode with the pressure of mental tensions. However, this process of confronting mental tension is heightened when there is awareness. Dreams generally lack awareness. Therefore, antar mouna, especially stage 2, is essentially a process of 'conscious dreaming'. This leads to a speeded-up process of removing tensions from the mind.

Pratyahara does not only mean cutting off external sense perception; in fact, this is only the first stage. Pratyahara in the real sense of

the word means the state where one's perception is completely cut off from the thought processes. So, perfected pratyahara implies that both external sense perception and the thought processes are transcended. When this state is achieved then dharana (concentration) will arise and eventually the state of dhyana (meditation).

The entire process of antar mouna is concerned with inducing pratyahara as a means to meditation. Without pratyahara, meditation is impossible, and pratyahara itself is not easy. This is why so few people actually experience the higher state of meditation, but if one approaches one's mind systematically, then meditation will arise. If the approach is incorrect then meditation is unlikely to occur even if you practise twenty-four hours a day for twenty years. Antar mouna is one such systematic method.

So remember the order carefully: firstly pratyahara, then dharana and then dhyana. If you follow the stages of antar mouna in the correct sequence and perfect each stage, then you will automatically tread the right path.

## The six stages

Antar mouna consists of six separate stages. These are briefly as follows:

### Stage 1: awareness of sense perceptions

In this stage, one becomes aware of external events. One intentionally directs perception to the outer world. Generally the eyes are closed so that sense impressions will be received mainly through the ears in the form of sound. One can also be aware of the senses of touch and smell. The purpose of this stage is to reduce the influence of outside impressions on one's perception. It is a case of 'familiarity breeding contempt'. Intentional perception of the outside world leads automatically to disinterest. The mind ceases to be interested or disturbed by external sounds, etc. This leads automatically to stage 2.

Stage 1 induces the first part of pratyahara; that is disassociation of the senses from the outside world.

### Stage 2: awareness of spontaneous thought process

In this stage one becomes aware of the spontaneous samskaras exploding from the

subconscious realms of the mind. This is the stage where the grosser neuroses, phobias and tensions of the mind are released. You will relive many past experiences and experience the eruption of suppressed desires. There should be absolutely no suppression.

This stage should be practised until the mind becomes reasonably calm and trouble free. Then one should proceed to stage 3.

### **Stage 3: conscious creation of thoughts**

In this stage one has to create a thought or visualize a scene at will. After dwelling on the thought for some time it is consciously rejected as an object of perception. Then another thought is posed and again rejected after some time. This is repeated with numerous thoughts of any theme. This is a further process of purging the mind of negative data. These created thoughts stir up associated feelings and ideas that are eventually exhausted. For example, if you create the thought: "I wish I could kill Mr. X," and dwell on this thought then many strong emotions and associated thoughts are drawn up from the subconscious realms of the mind. Many suppressed thoughts and feelings can be exhausted in this manner.

After a few weeks or months of practice one should proceed to stage 4.

### **Stage 4: awareness and disposal of spontaneous thoughts**

In this stage one again becomes aware of the spontaneous eruption of thoughts, as in stage 2. However, one should choose prominent thoughts that arise and reflect on them for a short time. Then they should be exhausted at will. Again one should be aware of the spontaneous thought process and again choose a prominent thought. If one has already practised the previous stages 1-3 to a reasonable degree of perfection then the thoughts that arise in this stage will tend to be more subtle. They may even be precognitive or telepathic thoughts. However, these thoughts, no matter how subtle, are still a source of agitation in the mind. Therefore, they too must be exhausted. After some weeks or months one should leave stage 4 and proceed to stage 5.

### **Stage 5: thoughtlessness**

At this stage the mind should be reasonably calm and peaceful. Thoughts will still arise, but

they will not be very strong or cause any great emotional upheaval. At this stage, it is therefore justified to suppress all thoughts completely. This should lead to a state of thoughtlessness. Perfection of this stage implies the attainment of pratyahara. This is the gateway to dharana.

At this stage one should adopt a psychic symbol as a focal point for concentration. Without this symbol one will become lost in the bottomless psychic realms of one's being, and will not reach the destination . . . dhyana.

### **Sequence**

Each stage is a preparation for the following stage. Therefore, it is important to spend some weeks and months perfecting each stage before proceeding to the next. Premature attempts to practise the later stages 3, 4 and 5 without mastering the earlier stages will tend to be a waste of time.

### **Duration**

As a rough guide we suggest that you spend at least one month practising each stage, preferably more. Over the next few lessons we will progressively introduce and describe each stage of antar mouna in turn<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, follow the instructions carefully and spend an adequate amount of time on each stage, developing it fully before proceeding to the next stage. One month, however, is the minimum time. If possible, try to spend more time doing each stage, especially stages 2, 3 and 4.

### **Place and time of practice**

Antar mouna, especially the earlier stages, can be practised at any time and any place. It can be practised while walking, sitting, eating, dreaming or in any activity. It can be practised under all conditions - at home, in the office, in a car, among friends - anywhere and everywhere. The practice should not interfere with your work, but if you have a rest or a spare moment try to practise stage 1 or 2. That is, if you are surrounded by noises, try to dissociate yourself from the cause and source. Try to cut yourself off from external stimuli. This is a good method of calming the mind even in the midst of intense noise and the most unpleasant surroundings. Also, if your mind is besieged and disturbed by guilt, worry, fears, etc., try to practise stage 2. That is, let all thoughts bubble

to the surface without suppression. Accept the thoughts and let them evaporate like a cloud. This too will help to reduce the tension level in the mind in day to day life.

If you want to do antar mouna as part of your daily practice program, we suggest that you either practise late at night just before sleep, or early in the morning after waking up. At night, the mind is most likely to be disturbed by the affairs of the day. Possibly the thoughts are so strong that you cannot sleep. Antar mouna should be practised in order to remove these anxieties and calm the restless mind. After some time you will get a good night's sleep.

In the early morning, thoughts are likely to be much less compelling, the grosser thoughts having been partially expressed and diminished through dreams. The thoughts that arise in the mind are likely to be more subtle. Therefore, this is the best time to exhaust deeper thoughts in the subconscious realms of the mind. Negative thoughts of this type are likely to have a profound influence on one's being; removal of them will bring about vast positive changes in one's life.

Noises and other disturbances are likely to be least early in the morning and late at night; therefore it is much easier to ignore sense impressions. Stage 1 of antar mouna is much easier and one can start the serious business of cleaning out the mind in the way described in stage 2<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Body position**

Antar mouna can be practised in any position. However, we recommend that you sit in any of the traditional meditative asanas, such as padmasana, siddhasana, siddha yoni asana, sukhasana, vajrasana, etc.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Awareness**

The essence of antar mouna is awareness. In all stages you must try to adopt the attitude of *sakshi bhava* (witnessing). You must try to be the seer, not the thinker. This doesn't mean that you should be absent-minded. On the contrary you should be intensely alert to all occurrences within the mind. But you should try not to become involved with any experiences, whether external sense impressions or inner, bubbling thoughts. Remain a detached observer. Only in this manner can the suppressed

thoughts arise from the subconscious mind without impediment and be exhausted.

### **ANTAR MOUNA - STAGE 1 AWARENESS OF SENSE PERCEPTION**

This is the preliminary stage of antar mouna in which you have to become aware of sensations and experiences in the external world. Most of our sense perceptions come through the eyes. However, in antar mouna the eyes are closed, so that the perceptions which arise during the practice will be sounds, smells, etc. The most compelling of these sense perceptions will be sound. Therefore, stage 1 is primarily concerned with perceiving external sounds.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of antar mouna stage 1 is to eventually induce a state of introversion in preparation for stage 2. Most people have been conditioned since birth to remain extroverted; there is almost an addiction to outside stimuli. Until one becomes introverted it is impossible to start exhausting negative subconscious data from the mind.

The practice is designed to neutralize responses to external phenomena; to become detached and unaffected by the outer world, even if only for a short period of time. This introversion is essential for meditative practice. Many people know this and they try to force themselves to be introverted. They fight their mind and force it to ignore sense impressions. This merely builds up tension and prevents meditation. Therefore, the first stage of antar mouna does not try to suppress the inclination to perceive outer sense data. In fact the method of this stage prescribes intentional awareness of the outer world. Perceive outer impressions. Let them arise. In time you will automatically become introverted. You will spontaneously lose interest in the outside world and when this happens, you are ready to begin stage 2<sup>1</sup>.

#### **The mechanics of external perception**

For the sake of explanation we can say that there are three main factors involved in external sense perception. These are:

1. The sense organ - transmitter of perception
2. The object of perception
3. Consciousness - the inner perceiver

These three factors are involved in all sense perceptions whether hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting or touching. Consider the act of hearing for example.

The sense organ that receives sound vibration is the ear. The source of a sound is an external object, perhaps a car horn. The third factor is that which perceives sound - the inner consciousness. Without this inner consciousness nothing can be perceived. Furthermore, from the point of view of consciousness, both the ear and the source of the sound are external. This also applies to smell and the nose, form and the eyes, taste and the tongue and touch and the skin. They are all external to the inner consciousness. This consciousness is the *drashta* (seer) in the innermost depths and centre of your being. When this consciousness can be separated and dissociated from the external sense organs and objects, then one can begin to explore the subconscious mind. This is the aim of stage 1.

#### Technique

Sit in a steady and comfortable pose.

Keep the spine erect, but without strain.

Close your eyes and keep them closed for the whole practice.

Say to yourself: 'Now I will start the practice of antar mouna.'

First of all be aware of your body.

Feel the sensations of touch - the pressure of your body against the ground, the sensation of the blanket wrapped around your shoulders and so forth.

Fix your whole attention on the sense of touch.

Do it intensely until you lose interest.

Then become aware of the outside environment.

Become aware of all sense experiences whether they disturb or not.

Let perception of external stimuli arise without the slightest resistance.

Do not control the mind, only be alert to the outer world.

Keep yourself receptive to everything that is taking place in the surroundings.

Do not make excessive effort for this will create mental tension; let there be choiceless awareness.

Though there are various sense impressions, sound will be the most prominent.

Be aware of outer sounds.

The sound may be a car, telephone, bell, radio, birds, people talking . . . whatever, listen carefully with detached awareness.

Listen to these sounds without judgement, thinking or analysis; only hear the sounds without concern for their cause.

If you hear a bell in an adjoining room, do not think of the bell. . . only listen to the sound.

But you should remain aware, a spectator; do not identify with any of the sounds.

Say to yourself: 'I am the seer, unaffected by these sounds'.

Always consider that the external perceptions are a relation between the objects and the senses; they don't affect you . . . the seer inside.

At first you should be aware of all sounds in the environment without choice . . . do not choose, only receive.

Continue this for a few minutes.

Then you should choose a prominent sound and fix your attention on it to the exclusion of all other sounds. Then after a short time, perhaps a minute, switch your attention to another sound of your choice.

Remain alert.

Be aware.

Do not sleep.

Be aware of different sounds in turn.

Then again be aware of all sounds that arise at the same time.

Expand your perception of the external world to the full, stretch your perception to the limits; hear even the slightest sound.

Try not to think . . . only awareness of external sense experiences.

Then become aware of your breath.

Fix your whole attention on the flow of the breath in your nostrils; cut off perception of outside sounds.

Continue breath awareness for a few minutes.

Then again direct your attention to the outside world; again become aware of external sounds.

As before, you can fix your attention on the general noise in the surroundings or choose one prominent sound.

Be alert, do not introvert and become lost in thoughts.

Listen to a ticking clock.

Listen to someone coughing.

Listen to someone speaking.

Listen to the wind.

Listen to the sound of silence.

Listen intently.

It does not matter whether you perceive many sounds or one particular sound, but listen to the outside world as though it is something strange to you.

Then after some minutes, again be aware of the breathing process.

Do not listen to outer sounds ... only perceive the flow of breath.

Fix your whole attention on the breath.

Then after some time again perceive outer sounds.

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

This is stage 1 of antar mouna.

### **Readiness for stage 2**

The aim is to reach a stage where one is completely accustomed to and detached from outside sensations, especially sounds, so that they do not influence the mind. It is possible to introvert and be unaffected even if a train passes nearby, or even if a mosquito starts buzzing around you. If you have reached this stage then you are ready to proceed to stage 2<sup>2</sup>.

### **Preparation for other meditative techniques**

.Antar mouna stage 1 is an excellent preparatory practice for other meditative methods, including kriya yoga. If you have the time, practise it before doing other meditative techniques.

### **Notes**

1 Antar mouna: Stage 2 - Book III, Lesson 27, Topic 5; Stage 3 - Book III, Lesson 28, Topic 5; Stage 4 - Book III, Lesson 29, Topic 5; Stage 5 - Book III, Lesson 30, Topic 4; Stage 6 - Book III, Lesson 31, Topic 6

2 For details on traditional meditative asanas refer to Book I, Lesson 2, Topic 5; Book I, Lesson 7, Topic 2

## Daily Practice Program

Now you should integrate kriya number 3, nada sanchalana, with the previous two kriyas from Lesson 25. The approximate time required for the three practices is about 21 minutes, which should leave spare time to practise other techniques. Carefully read our second discussion on kriya yoga and bear it in mind both during your daily program and in your day to day life.

In this lesson we have introduced antar mouna and described stage 1. If you have time try to practise it.

Practise and perfect either setu asana or chakrasana, according to your ability. If you can do chakrasana then there is no need to do setu asana; if you cannot do chakrasana, then practise setu asana as an alternative.

Practice	Minutes
<b>Program 1:</b> duration 2 hours	
Surya Namaskara	10
Shavasana	3
Ardha Padma Paschimottanasana	4
Bhujangasana	4
Ardha Matsyendrasana	4
Sarvangasana	4
Halasana	4
Chakrasana or Setu Asana	3
Sirshasana	5
Tadasana	1
Shavasana	3
Nadi Shodhana with Maha Bandha	15
Chakra Shuddhi	13
Kriya Yoga:	
Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra	10
Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana	4
Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana	7
Antar Mouna - Stage 1	20
Chidakasha Dharana	6
	120

<b>Program 2: duration 1 1/2 hours</b>	
Surya Namaskara	7
Shavasana	3
Ardha Padma Paschimottanasana	4
Ardha Matsyendrasana	4
Sarvangasana	4
Halasana	4
Chakrasana or Setu Asana	3
Sirshasana	5
Tadasana	1
Shavasana	3
Nadi Shodhana with Maha Bandha	7
Chakra Shuddhi	8
Kriya Yoga:	
Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra	10
Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana	4
Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana	7
Antar Mouna - Stage 1	15
	<hr/>
	90

<b>Program 3: duration 1 hour</b>	
Surya Namaskara	5
Shavasana	3
Ardha Padma Paschimottanasana	4
Ardha Matsyendrasana	3
Halasana	4
Chakrasana or Setu Asana	3
Sirshasana	3
Tadasana	1
Shavasana	2
Kriya Yoga:	
Kriya 1: Vipareeta Karani Mudra	10
Kriya 2: Chakra Anusandhana	4
Kriya 3: Nada Sanchalana	7
Antar Mouna - Stage 1	11
	<hr/>
	60

