

PART III: ESSENTIAL PRACTICE

CHAPTER 12

A GOOD WAY OF EXPERIENCING THE BEAUTY OF KRIYA YOGA

In the second part of my book I have tried to give the reader the opportunity to familiarize with various procedures of *Kriya Yoga*. I have tried to describe in detail different techniques, perhaps too many techniques.

Probably the reader has made some experiments with different procedures and has noticed that some of them are more effective than others. Surely with few techniques the whole spiritual path of *Kriya Yoga* can be mastered.

Now, if I had the intention of teaching *Kriya* to a beginner, which techniques would I choose to teach? My desire is obviously to see good and solid results.

I would like that a person, through the practice of *Kriya* will be born to the *spiritual life*.

What does it mean to undertake the path of the Spirit? In addition to study, work, creating a family, rest, enjoy the beauty of nature, and experience the wonder of creation, in addition to thinking with their own head creating a philosophical view on the meaning of life, there is something that goes beyond all this: in other words that goes beyond emotional and mental life. I mean discovering a perfect, inexplicable joy that goes beyond everything and explodes peacefully in your life, often awe-inspiring.

Those who are born to mental life only, cannot understand what the birth to the spiritual life is. This birth rarely happens and when it happens it doesn't consist in the decision to live in a different way, adopting certain rituals and professing a certain faith. The spiritual life doesn't start through a mental effort. A human being must first have a contact with the joy that is in the center of her/his heart.

Now, what is necessary to teach in order that a person may have a contact with that joy? I have a clear answer in my mind: to teach *Pranayama*, the art of working with the breath.

LESSON I: Technique of Kriya Pranayama as explained by Sri Mukherjee

LESSON II: Introduction of THREE procedures to be practiced before *Kriya Pranayama* plus a further procedure that can be practiced any time during one's daily routine

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PREP. 3: Nadi Sodhana with focus on Muladhara + Tadan Kriya

TECHNIQUE 4: Guiding Kundalini

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LESSON IV: Introduction of Thokar. This lesson contains Routine 2.1 and 2.2 The goal of reaching the breathless state becomes at hand especially if you add the practice of Japa.

LESSON V: Three routines (A, B and C) that prepare a person to face in the correct way the great technique of *Tummo*. This technique completes the process of freeing the spine from any internal obstacle.



LESSON I: Technique of Kriya Pranayama as explained by Sri Mukherjee

Preliminary remark

The technique of *Kriya Pranayama* is practiced to enter *Sushumna*. In order to enter it, you need to make the breath extremely subtle. Actually, you can enter *Sushumna* only by behaving with extreme delicacy. This happens when, during *Kriya Pranayama*, your inner gaze and all your attention are fixed in the central point of the spiritual eye between your eyebrows and not in any other place! This point is *Kutastha*. Therefore, put

your whole attention there. Be mindful of avoiding any strain on the eyes. Everything should stay natural.

Many try to raise the energy in *Sushumna* with force, in a coarse way. In this situation, *Kundalini* does not move upwards but is dispersed and burned in the body; this may create diseases because initially the *Nadis* are partially blocked. Your *Kriya Pranayama* will produce only stress. Many endeavor to produce the sound in the throat since the beginning and create a strong visualization of the energy that comes up and down: this is not correct. Therefore, I repeat, we must start in an extremely simple way and proceed without expecting striking results. But then, at a certain point, something profound and meaningful will happen. As for *Kechari Mudra*, the *baby Kechari* is enough for now – *baby Kechari* is to hold the tip of the tongue up, touching the soft part of the palate.

Main instruction

By keeping both the shoulders in a natural position, by expanding the chest a little bit, by bringing the back in a straight position, by lowering gently the chin, by mentally gazing between the two eyebrows, the position becomes steady effortlessly. Do not cross the eyes, simply set yourself in the point between the eyebrows as if this were a cave where you take shelter.

Have a deep, natural breath. ¹ Chant mentally *Om* six times in *Kutastha* during inhalation and six times during exhalation.

Unlike other forms of *Kriya*, during this initial part you don't put *Om* in the physical seat of each *Chakra*. Rather you don't feel the body at all. Your breath doesn't require effort – therefore you don't make any sound in the throat. Perhaps this will seem to you not a correct way of practicing *Kriya*, but please practice this way, this is what Lahiri Mahasaya and Swami Pranabananda Giri instructed.

If your breath is very short, accept this situation without trying, with uneasiness, to lengthen your breath. A longer breath will appear spontaneously in time. What matters is to stay focused at *Kutastha* with the mental chant of *Om*. So, while you are inhaling or exhaling you "knock" at the door of *Kutastha* by chanting 6 + 6 *Oms*.

The recommended number of breaths is 108 and therefore (if you don't fall

¹ In this situation "deep breath" means: "Deep as much as you can easily mentally chant six + six *Oms*."

asleep, if are not disturbed by external events) at the end you shall have mentally chanted the syllable *Om* 12x108=1296 times.

Knocking with *Om* at *Kutastha* will give you the power to mentally touch the central point of each *Chakra* – this event happens spontaneously, so don't try to anticipate it through complicated visualizations. This event happens because the the sixth *Chakra Ajna* governs everything: it gives you an alignment with all the *Chakras*.

When, while inhaling and exhaling, you mentally chant *Om* the prescribed number or times in the central point of *Kutastha* and this subtle action happens also in each *Chakra*, automatically – even if you are not aware of this fact.

There is only a sphere of Light in *Kutastha* and all happens there. You, your body, your spine, everything is there. By going ahead, the exercise becomes more and more pleasant.

In time [if it doesn't happen today, it will happen tomorrow: it needs to have patience and to encourage the right attitude] you will feel that the spine exists, that it is possible to perceive it in all its length. There is nothing in particular you do. Don't try to obtain this by moving your awareness down in the body. Everything happens automatically.

Meanwhile you notice that the breath is slower and also the mental chant of the various *Oms* is more calm and pleasant. At a certain point you will feel that the six *Chakras* exist. What will appear through internal vision is not necessarily the traditional form of the spinal column with the six *Chakras*. The *Chakras* can be perceived in many different ways.

At a certain point you will realize that the mental chants of *Oms* in *Kutastha* are happening in the center of each *Chakra* too. But remember that your attention is always at the central point of the spiritual eye. If your focus is diverted from *Kutastha*, all the magic of this process is lost.

At a certain moment you will notice that the breath is accompanied by a delicate sound in the throat. It is the sound of the friction of the air in the throat. In this way the breath becomes slow and subtle. In time the sound of the exhalation reminds the sound produced by a small flute through which a small amount of air passes. Now don't worry how this sound should be.

If everything goes as expected, if you still maintain calmness, your breath

crosses the *Chakras* from the first to the sixth and from the sixth to the first and in each *Chakra* the syllable *Om* is vibrated. This is a delicious situation. Usually this happens toward the end of the 108 breaths. All your being is settled in a bright sphere located between *Kutastha* and the center of your head. What you see doesn't matter, what matters is that you are perfectly comfortable, absorbed in the beauty of the procedure. While you are approaching the end of the 108 *Kriya* breaths, you might have the experience of the light in *Kutastha*. This will be intensified by *Yoni Mudra*. After *Yoni Mudra* and *Maha Mudra* you will sit again placing yourself in *Kutastha* without doing nothing. In other words without chanting *Om*, and without paying attention to the breath.

Important remark!

I have just written that " ... it will seem that the breath " crosses " the *Chakras* from the first to the sixth and from the sixth to the first. " Well, the opposite could happen: the breath apparently comes down within the spine during the inhalation. (and this would be very natural to happen) and apparently comes up during exhalation.

For the moment we do not try to explain this: we simply let things happen: we do not force anything.

Questions and answers

Some *kriyabans* find it difficult to learn how to practice this form of *Kriya Pranayama* because they do not accept the fact that this method is completely different from what they had been practiced before. For example they feel it strange that in the instruction there is no mention of the spinal path. There are many unexpected questions.

Are the breaths uncontrolled like in the Hong So technique?

During the *Hong So* technique we observe the spontaneous process of breathing without paying attention to whether the inhalations and exhalations are long or short.

By going ahead with this technique the breathing must be natural but we must pay attention so that it is gradually prolonged. How can the "*Hong So* breathing" sustain the procedure of *Kriya Yoga* that gradually leads to a slowing down of upward and downward movement of the current along the spine?

In Lahiri Mahasaya's teaching (and we are trying to abide by that tradition) it is stated that in the long run you become able to practice a very sublime form of Pranayama: inhalation and exhalation prolonged up to 22 + 22 seconds.

In other words: in Sri M.'s *Kriya Pranayama* we utilize a NATURAL breath. But this breathing must be slow so that you can chant *Om* mentally six times during inhalation and six times during exhalation. We must have a breath that can support this mental action. Our breath must go ahead effortlessly but must exist! If we would practice like in the *Hong So* technique, it will be impossible to have it. The breath must be natural but we must care that it gradually lengthens.

If you have a very short breath and therefore you are not able to mentally pronounce that many *Oms*, chant the *Oms* more quickly. Your breathing will be prolonged after a small number of repetitions.

I would like to know little more about the process of "knocking" with *Om* in *Kutastha*. If we mentally chant *Om*, then at that time we are not having *Kutastha* in mind.

The point is not: "having *Kutastha in mind*" but being there, inside *Kutastha*. The mind is still, the process of thought is not stressed with the idea "I must have *Kutastha* in mind otherwise my practice is wrong" No. Nothing of that. You are occupied with two activities, [1] breathing and [2] putting *Om* repeatedly in the central point of *Kutastha*. That's all. If you do this for some minutes, you enter a paradise. With patience you achieve your divine state of contemplation.

Some persons speculate about the duration of each *Om*, if after each *Om* there is a short pause. They want to know how many micro seconds it lasts... They are free to sophisticate and come to their failure. *Kriya* sometimes might seem a chemical receipt but its nature is that of an art based upon intuition, intelligence, commonsense.

What is the best routine?

108 *Kriya* breaths [Time required: from 40 to 50 minutes] After that, practice *Yoni Mudra* (only once in 24 hours), 3 *Maha Mudra* and then remain calm, focused on *Kutastha*. In this final part you simply enjoy the peace and the bliss originating from the practice of *Kriya*.

Sri Mukherjee explains clearly that even a beginner can start right away doing the full 108 repetitions. There is no lower number to begin with, there is no recommended progression. Of course if one is ill, he does not practice at all. And if one, due to circumstances beyond their control, can practice only an inferior number, well, this may happen but it should not become the rule. About other numbers found in the letters written by Lahiri to his disciples, we must understand that those letters represent very personal instructions. Here we are considering a general counsel given to serious kriyabans in a good condition of health.

As for *Maha Mudra* there is a variation recommended by Sri Mukherjee for those who find *Maha Mudra* too difficult. "Lie down on the back. Inhale. Raise the legs maintaining the pelvis on the floor. Join the hands under the knees. Keep your equilibrium on the inferior bones of the pelvis and keep the forehead near the knees. Exhale. Return to the initial position."

Alternative practice to conclude your practice of Kriya Pranayama.

When the breath is internalized inside *Sushumna*, keep attention at *Kutastha*. With natural breathing pull one inhalation into *Sushumna* with only one mental chant of *Om* and exhale with another *Om*. Practices like this until you forget yourself and reach the stage of *Samadhi*.

In the correspondence of Lahiri with his disciples, Medulla is often quoted. Has Medulla a role?

What I now describe is a "subtlety" that is discovered in time.

Practice as I describe: keep the chin some millimeters down and inside in a way that *Kutastha* and *Medulla* are at the same level. It is not difficult to realize that the center of your awareness is in the *Medulla* while the faculty of visualization is located in the point between the eyebrows. Now you will discover that every manifestation (not visualization), every luminous revelation of the *Chakras* happens about four centimeters inward from the point between the eyebrows: the seat of *Ajna*. What I say seems perhaps complicated to you but, believe me, while you are practicing, breath after breath everything becomes clearer.

How can I know when comes the right moment to produce the sounds in the throat?

It is typical of *Kriya schools* to teach you how to produce strong sounds in the throat since the beginning of the practice. They explain that strong sounds in the beginning are ok because they produce cold and warm sensations in the spine. Sri Mukherjee explains that these sensation happen but they are produced by the *Ida* and *Pingala* currents. These currents have

nothing to do with being in *Sushumna*. If you, since the starting of your *Pranayama*, insist too much upon them, you may cause some problems and lose the magic of the procedure.

Let that throat sounds come later. They will be more enjoyable, will "mesmerize" your concentration and help the procedure. The sounds appear spontaneously when the breath is sufficiently long. Only meditation born intuition can help you to understand when it is good you try to increase the force of your breath and produce the sounds.

Why Sri Mukherjee has written: "After entering Sushumna you have to use force on Pranayama."

This is a hint to the *Second Kriya* stage. It may happen that before ending 108 *Kriyas* breaths you are in *Sushumna*. It might happen that at a certain moment you will feel that the veil of darkness fades away and you witness the brilliance of the Divine Light in the center of which lies the entry point of *Sushumna*. In that wonderful situation you might perceived the color of each *Chakra*.

This is the realm of *Second Kriya* that we will examine later. In this situation it is not necessary to abide by the injunction "Don't overstep the prescribed number: 108." In this case you can go ahead until you enter an ecstatic state and are lost there. Lahiri Mahasaya has said that in this state there is no other instruction to be practiced.

If *Kriya Pranayama* as taught by Sri Mukherjee works so well, what is the utility of *Kriya Pranayama* as described in Chapter 6 and 7?

Chapter 6 and 7 will, in time, foster the improvement of your practice. The same will happen with the so called *Higher Kriyas*.

Here ends the explanation of *Kriya Pranayama* as I have heard it from Sri Mukherjee.



LESSON II: Explanation of THREE procedures to be practiced before Kriya Pranayama plus a further procedure that can be practiced at any time during one's daily routine

PREP. 1: Forward bendings

PREP. 2: Pranayama with Japa rotating in Kutastha

PREP. 3: Nadi Sodhana with focus on Muladhara + Tadan Kriya

TECHNIQUE 4: Guiding Kundalini

Before describing four important preliminary-to-*Kriya* procedures, let me remind that one cannot start a *Kriya* routine by simply sitting in the correct position with erected spine after sitting for hours to do a mental work. It is important to practice some exercises to awaken the *Prana* in the body. At least have a brisk walking for 30 minutes.

As soon as you get up in the morning practice a bit of Japa. Then have a small breakfast and some simple activities. Having done this, if you find 40 minutes free do your routine. If you're a beginner you need only 20 minutes.

If you can't practice in the morning, try, when everyone has lunch, to find a hiding place to practice without anyone seeing you. If you can not have a lunch, practice before dinner. If before dinner it is not possible, practice late at night after taking a tea.

PREP. 1: Forward bendings (see also the related explanation in chapter 10)

Through a deep inhalation visualize the breath coming from the physical location of *Muladhara* up the spine until you complete the breath at *Ajna*. Hold your breath. Bend at the waist and touch the floor with your head. During the forward bendings you should utilize the legs and also the hands in the way which is more comfortable for you.

Move your head near the right knee – the face is turned toward the left knee so that it is possible to perceive a pressure on the right side of the head; a sensation of space is perceived inside the left side of the brain. Remain in this position for 3 to 12 seconds.

Then repeat the same exercise with the other side of your body, reversing

the perceptions. Then the head is placed in the region between the knees again, the face turned downward. A pressure is felt on the forehead. A sensation of space is perceived inside the occipital region.

Then sit up straight, inhaling deeply. Through a long exhalation let the energy go down from *Ajna Chakra* to *Muladhara*. Practice six of these forward bendings.

- The forward bendings are useful not only as a preparation to *Kriya* but also for ameliorating your standing position, correcting wrong positions. For many old persons the forward bendings can replace the *Maha Mudra*.

PREP. 2: Kriya Pranayama with Japa rotating in Kutastha

We know how important is the practice of *Japa*, especially when practiced a couple of hours before starting the *Kriya* routine. It creates a condition very favorable to an entranced contemplation of the Spiritual Reality.

If you want to practice the *Kriya Pranayama* you must know how to make your awareness stable in *Kutastha*.

Inhale as in *Kriya Pranayama*, then create a pause after inhalation. During this pause mentally chant your favored *Mantra* (the one you utilize for *Japa*.) Perceive that this *Mantra* is something that rotates in the sphere of *Kutastha*.

What does "something that rotates" mean? You have surely seen those acrobats that ride a motorbike inside a sphere made of solid steel armor. They cross the inside part of the sphere along all the directions winning the strength of gravity. Well you make pretense that your *Kutastha* is a sphere in whose internal part you make your *Mantra* rotate. (More slowly of course.) Do this until you feel a sensation of strong presence in the center between you eyebrows. A very good choice is to do 12 of these breaths while keeping the pause after inhalation for the same length of the inhalation.

PREP. 3: Nadi Sodhana with focus on Muladhara + Tadan Kriya

These two techniques have a decisive power to foster the free movement of *Prana* through *Sushumna*. A *kriyaban* will find great benefit by practicing every day these two exercises with inflexible determination.

Nadi Sodhana

Focus on the *Muladhara Chakra*. Close the right nostril and inhale through the left nostril while mentally chanting *Om* 3 times. Visualize that you are attracting the energy contained in the inhaled air and bring this energy down around your *Muladhara*. Close both nostrils and mentally chant *Om* 6 times while holding your breath. At the same time apply *Maha Bandha*. (Or *Aswini Mudra* six times.) Then exhale through the right nostril mentally chanting *Om* 6 times.

Maha Bandha means to apply the three basic *Bandhas*. The three *Bandhas* are:

Mula Bandha: contract the muscles at the base of the spine

Uddiyana Bandha: draw inside the abdominal muscles by contracting them

Jalandhara Bandha: lower the chin on the chest

Repeat the procedure inhaling through the right nostril, pause with *Bandhas* and exhale from the left nostril. These two breaths count as one unity. Practice only three unities. In the future you can increase such number. During this procedure the concentration on the *Muladhara Chakra* is the most important detail. This exercise finds its natural completion in *Tadan Kriya*.

Tadan

Inhale deeply through both nostrils feeling the breath coming down to *Muladhara*. Hold your breath and practice the three *Bandhas*. Lift your body, with the help of the hands, of few millimeters and then let the buttocks touch the seat with a mild jolt. Have three jolts – be sure that you are holding your breath during them! Then exhale, slowly and deeply, releasing the three *Bandhas*, perceiving an ecstatic feeling. This detail is very important: it is a signal that the *Prana* has entered the spine and *Kundalini* starts its travel upwards. The mental energy (not just the physical action) that you put in this exercise is a decisive factor. The action of *Tadan Kriya* is called *Maha Veda Mudra* "Mudra of the great perforation." Repeat the practice of *Tadan* two more times for a total of 9 jolts.

TECHNIQUE: Guiding Kundalini

This preparation is very important. In this procedure, the breath is utilized to guide *Kundalini* along an internal path known, in *Internal Alchemy*, as "Small Heavenly Orbit". Complete the procedure three times. However even one practice produces a fantastic result.

While *Nadi Sodhana* and *Tadan* are always practiced together, this exercise can be practiced independently. You will surely love it and will practice it, in different moments of your *Kriya* routine, every time you will feel the need to center in the internal state of calmness. When you experience the effect of this procedure you won't ask why this techniques should be practiced but why you have not practiced it before.

Note. Do not complicate this exercise, the procedure should always remain natural and likeable.

From now onwards it is fine (unless the instruction is to keep the mouth open) you keep your tongue in *baby Kechari position*. Of course practice *Kechari* proper if you are able to assume this position of the tongue.

First part: coming up of the energy

Take a deep, strong inhalation, marked by the particular sound of *Ujjayi*. [Of course when I say *Ujjayi*, the mouth is closed.] The length is about 4 seconds. Attract, through it, the energy from your body into the first *Chakra*. Feel *Kundalini* in the first *Chakra* and exhale rapidly with mouth open "huh." ² The length of the exhalation is about half second. During this exhalation *Kundalini* remains in the first *Chakra*.

Now take a deep, strong *Ujjayi* inhalation – the length is about 3-4 seconds. Feel that the energy comes upward from the first *Chakra* to the second. After feeling *Kundalini* in the second *Chakra* exhale rapidly with mouth open "huh." The length of the exhalation is about half second. During this exhalation *Kundalini* remains in the second *Chakra*.

The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the base of the spine to the third *Chakra*. [It is not necessary to perceive *Kundalini* crossing distinctly the second *Chakra*.]

The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the base of the spine to the fourth *Chakra*. [It is not necessary to perceive *Kundalini* crossing distinctly the second and the third *Chakras*.]

The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the base of the spine to the fifth *Chakra*. [It is not necessary ...]

² The sound is the same you produce with your mouth when you want to fog up a glass.

The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the base of the spine to *Ajna Chakra*. [It is not necessary ...]

Going down of the energy

Take a rapid inhalation through the nose. This is not *Ujjayi*. The length is about 1 second. Feel that *Kundalini* is present in the seventh *Chakra* – the "Thousand petal lotus." Now have a deep, strong *Ujjayi* exhalation – the length is about 4 seconds. [This exhalation happens through the nose.] Feel that the energy of *Kundalini* comes down from the seventh *Chakra* to the spiritual eye in the space between the eyebrows.

Take a rapid inhalation through the nose – as in the previous breath. The length is about 1 second. Feel that *Kundalini* is present in the seventh *Chakra*. Now with a deep *Ujjayi* exhalation (the length is about 4 seconds) feel that the *Kundalini* energy comes down from the seventh *Chakra* to the frontal part of the fifth *Chakra*: the Adam's apple.

The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the seventh *Chakra* to the frontal part of the fourth *Chakra* – the central part of the breast bone. The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the seventh *Chakra* to the frontal part of the third *Chakra* – the navel. The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the seventh *Chakra* to the frontal part of the second *Chakra*. The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the seventh *Chakra* to the base of the spine – the seat of *Muladhara*.



LESSON III: Coupling these four exercises with the practice of Kriya Pranayama as taught by Sri Mukherjee

ROUTINE R1.1

This routine starts with an excellent preparatory phase that aims at opening the spinal passage located in the *Muladhara*. When this passage is opened even only partially, the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* becomes a real delight. As for its effects, this routine has no comparison.

- Prep. 1, 2, 3
- 36 Kriya Pranayama
- Technique: "Guiding Kundalini"
- 72 Kriya Pranayama perceiving the light of the Chakras

Explanation

In this routine we break the *Kriya Pranayama* into two parts (36+72). After **Prep. 1, 2, 3** we practice **36 Kriya breaths**. Then we practice **Technique: "Guiding Kundalini."** You will be stunned how easy is to perceive the location of the *Chakras* and the breath. Therefore the following 72 *Kriya* breaths will happen in the best conditions.

This interruption is also useful to avoid the particular problem that is called "Plateau Effect."

The Plateau Effect is this: an exercise up to a certain moment seems effective, from a moment onwards seems not to work anymore. Our concentration faculties don't succeed in answering to the procedure that we are following and you can falsely think that there is no possible improvement in store for you or that we ourselves are a total failure. This effect is potentially destructive.

Now, during these 72 breaths you will have a great surprise. *Kriya Pranayama* will happen in an extraordinary way. If don't have your mind destroyed by a chaotic life, you will experience a real heaven.

You will succeed in "seeing" the *Chakras*. You will perceive that all the parts of your being are ideally focused in a region situated between *Kutastha* and *Ajna*. In this sphere you will perceive the lights [these lights

seem weak but they bring great internal realization] of the different *Chakras*. This will be a stupendous moment of the practice.

Note 1

If you find Routine R1.1 boring and unpleasant, decrease the number of breaths. For example, instead of practicing 36+72 you can practice 12+24. In the days that you feel strongly negative avoid doing violence to your being. Simply rest! Enjoy this routine at least for one month before facing the next Routine R1.2.

Note 2

The Maha Mudra does it who wants it

Many people at the beginning of their path practice the Maha Mudra very precisely, I would say obsession. Then nothing. I know these things I recommend something that is very comfortable and that puts your back in place. This is why folding is important. You do not have to move, you do not have to go and pull out a mat, do we understand each other? That's why I do not waste time talking a lot here. In this routine and also in the whole chapter 12 I put only the important, essential things.

Note 3

I refuse to practice Yoni Mudra. I've practiced it for decades and it has never given me anything. I also saw the same thing in many other people. This is why I do not want to deceive anyone. I can not say " you also do the Yoni Mudra " myself that I do not practice it and that I do not believe it. Maybe I've never practiced the real technique, maybe I've never even learned it correctly. Instead I love doing the technique: *Sushumna Pranayama* (R 2.2)


ROUTINE R1.2

During the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* you can move the attention from *Kutastha* to *Fontanelle* and to the heart *Chakra*. This is very wise: your routine will fill you with joy during all the day.

- Prep. 1, 2, 3 + Tec. Guiding Kundalini
- Kriya Pranayama in three parts moving the focus of attention.

Explanation

After having practiced the 4 techniques given in Lesson 2, divide the breaths of *Kriya Pranayama* in three parts.

[I] In the first part the concentration is on *Kutastha*. – just the way we have done up to now

[II] In the second part the concentration is on *Fontanelle*. In Chapter 6 we have explained how to do this. You need only to guide your awareness and energy at the summit of your head and remain stable there. Therefore, the chant of *Om 6+6* happens only in the *Fontanelle*. Very useful it is to also add a continuous *Aswini Mudra*.

We know that the practice of *Aswini Mudra* is insuperable in its power to make you touch with the awareness the spinal cord. Therefore, when you feel yourself ready, try to introduce a continuous *Aswini Mudra* during *Kriya Pranayama*. "Continuous" means: during the inhalation and during the exhalation. Always, continuously.

There are different definitions of *Aswini Mudra*. The standard definition is to repeatedly contract the muscles at the base of the spine (anal sphincter) with the rhythm of around two contractions a second. While learning the technique, you contract the buttock muscles, perineum or even the entire pelvic region also; with time, the contraction involves only the sphincter muscles.

This *Mudra* is a direct way of obtaining a perceptive contact with the energy at the base of the spine. This energy is pushed up within the spine. Little by little, *Aswini Mudra* will become more and more subtle – namely it will become just a mental pressure along the whole spine. You start to clearly perceive the totality of *Sushumna* like something cool and bright as a silver thread.

The exercise is very gratifying. You will perceive a white light, diffused, in the upper part of your head. A beautiful sensation of fresh air that comes up crossing each *Chakras* will make you feel filled with energy. A sweet warm that goes down permeating every zone of the body from top to bottom will infuse a great feeling of comfort. The practice seems to have a life of its own.

Sometimes you will have the impression you are crossing a mental state, that is similar to falling asleep and suddenly returning to full awareness, realizing that you are basking in the spiritual light. It's like a plane emerging from clouds into a clear transparent sky.

[III] During the last 36 *Kriya* breaths, the *Oms* (6+6) are mentally chanted in the *Anahata Chakra*. That's all. Forget the *Aswini Mudra* or make it so subtle that it cannot disturb. The routine ends with the awareness become stable in the heart *Chakra*.

Note

Many persons write me thanking for the previous two routines. They say that the results is extraordinary. Let me emphasize the secret of the success of these routines.

The secret lies in the utilization of strong tools during the preparatory phase. Nadi Sodhana with inverted breath, Tadan *Kriya* and Shakti Chalana ("Guiding Kundalini") are very strong tools.

Never recoil from giving the right stimulation to the *Muladhara Chakra* when you want to experience a complete form of *Pranayama*!

In other *Kriya* schools, we see an excessive prudence in teaching effective tools that point at awakening the *Muladhara Chakra*. All the other *Chakras* are seriously taken into account.

I believe that there are no serious reasons to cultivate such fear. Let us avoid thinking that *Muladhara* and *Kundalini* can be a source of troubles!! *Kundalini* is the vital energy present in the body. It is true that when it enters *Sushumna* it has an overwhelming effect that recalls the image of a snake that hisses and spits when disturbed, but there is no reason to fear the *Kundalini* energy that is the very essence of the spiritual experiences.

A very good strategy is to complete the stimulus on the *Muladhara Chakra* by guiding the awakened *Kundalini* energy up and down along the spine. Remember also that this possibility is always achieved after having created a condition of energetic balance between *Ida* and *Pingala*. Focusing on this task will help a *kriyaban* to familiarize with a peaceful dimension that can even appear as austere, while in reality is made of true Beauty.



LESSON IV: Introduction of Thokar

ROUTINE R 2.1

- Prep. 1, 2, 3
- Kriya Pranayama (24)
- Second Kriya (24)
- % Kriya Pranayama (24)
- Technique: "Guiding Kundalini"

Explanation

Prep. 1, 2, 3 + Kriya Pranayama (24) ...

Second Kriya

Moderately contract the muscles at the base of the spine. Inhale and at the same time lift the awareness along the spinal column. Interlaced hands are placed over the navel to create a mental pressure over the first three *Chakras*. This pressure is perfected by adding the practice of *Uddiyana Bandha*. During the inhalation, lift the chin following the inner movement of the *Prana*; mentally chant the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya.*) *Om* is chanted in the first *Chakra*, *Na* in the second, *Mo* in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth and *Ba* in *Bindu*. Hold your breath.

After the just described inhalation, while holding your breath, bend the head to the left (without turning your face to the left), guide your awareness within the right hemisphere of the head. Mentally chant *Te* in such region. Then, always holding your breath, bend your head to the right intensifying the concentration on the left part of the left hemisphere and mentally chant *Va* in that region.

Practice *Thokar* on the *heart Chakra* and reinforce this *Thokar* with *Maha Bandha*. *Thokar* means: lower the chin on the chest while focusing all your attention on the *heart Chakra*, where you mentally chant the syllable "*Su*".

Maha Bandha means: practice the three *Bandha* together. The three *Bandhas* are: *Mula Bandha*: contract the muscles at the base of the spine; *Uddiyana Bandha*: draw internally the abdominal muscles by contracting

them; *Jalandhara Bandha*: keep the chin on the chest.

Stop some seconds with your concentration on the *heart Chakra*. After perceiving an intensification of *energy* in that region, raise your chin as much as possible and perceive Light.

Now keep your chin perfectly horizontal. Start a sweet, slow, tranquil exhalation. This exhalation injects the Light in *Sushumna* through *Medulla*. Let the Light come down millimeter after millimeter towards the base of the spine. This Light "pierces" each *Chakra*. The mental chant of *Om* or of *Te, Va, Su, De, Va, Ya*, helps you to feel more clearly this "piercing" procedure. Repeat this powerful *Kriya Pranayama* 24 times.

Inhalation: *Om Na Mo Bha Ga Ba* coming up inside the *Chakras*
Holding the breath and doing Thokar: *Te, Va, Su* [*]
Exhalation: *Te, Va, Su, De, Va, Ya*, coming down inside the *Chakras*
Let us keep total immobility. No Thokar, No Mula Bandha

[*] As you see these three syllables are repeated

Kriya Pranayama again

After *Second Kriya*, if you practice again a moderate number of *Kriya* breaths, you will feel a great transformation. That *Kriya proper* will be of a higher nature.

You will remain centered in *Kutastha* and, as you move up and down the spine you will pierce each *Chakra*. I know it may seem difficult, but of course it can be done!

Technique: "Guiding Kundalini" ...



ROUTINE R2.2

[Let us move towards the breathless state]

- Prep. 1, 2, 3
- Kriya Pranayama (12)
- Second Kriya (24)
- Perfecting *Kriya Pranayama* (24)
- Technique: "Guiding Kundalini" (at least once)
- Sushumna Pranayama

Explanation

Here you make a further effort. You add *Sushumna Pranayama* to the previous techniques – this is a very subtle procedure and it is the only new procedure that we propose in Routine 2.2. All the other parts were already discussed.

Sushumna Pranayama

Sushumna Pranayama is the *Pranayama* that happens inside the *Sushumna* and therefore in the state of breathlessness. We shall reach this state by a succession of short breaths between *Muladhara* and each *Chakra*.

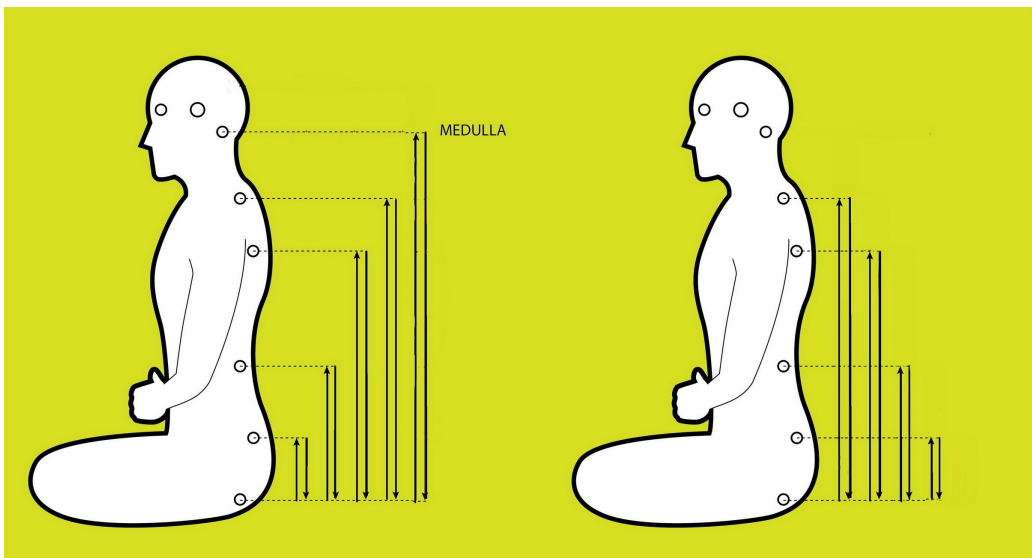


Fig.22 One cycle is made of 9 short breaths

Start with three deep breaths. Then focus the attention on the *Muladhara*. When it comes natural to inhale, inhale without forcing the breath and pause an instant in the second *Chakra*. Try to have a good perception of this *Chakra*. Exhale when it comes natural to exhale and focus again on *Muladhara*. Make a short pause. When it comes natural to inhale, inhale without forcing the breath and pause an instant in the *Third Chakra*. Try to have a good perception of this *Chakra*. Exhale when it comes natural to exhale and focus again on the *Muladhara*.

Repeat the procedure between the *Muladhara* and the fourth *Chakra*; *Muladhara* and the fifth *Chakra*; *Muladhara* and *Medulla*; *Muladhara* and fifth *Chakra*; *Muladhara* - fourth *Chakra*; *Muladhara* - third *Chakra*; *Muladhara* – Second *Chakra*.

These 9 calm breaths are one cycle. If at this point your breath has not drastically calmed down, you practice one or two cycles more.

After 4-6 cycles you will notice that the breath is almost disappeared, while the spine has become like a steel bar. I cannot guarantee that you will also succeed in listening to the internal sounds coming from the *Chakras*, but you will certainly perceive a particular internal pressure in the head which is an aspect of the *Omkar* dimension.

Once completed 4-6 cycles, if you are not in the breathless state forget the *Chakras* and make the procedure more "subtle". Feel *Muladhara* and a small piece of the spine, then *Muladhara* and another piece of the spine, then another The mechanism is the same but instead of reaching the perception of the whole spine in 5 steps you reach it in a greater number of steps.

You intuitively discover the power of conquering the spine millimeter after millimeter. What does it mean "conquering"? It means to perceive, to be intensely conscious.... It means that you do not breathe anymore and you are inside the *Sushumna*.

One day your intuition will suggest to focus on the totality of your body and perceive there a fresh energy. Go ahead until you realize that your body is sustained by internal energy. Go ahead not only feeling the *Chakras* but also the whole body. One day your breath will stop completely: it will be like a miracle.

"No me pidáis que lo explique. Tengo el fuego en las manos" ³
(*Garcia Lorca*)



³ "Don't ask me that I explain it. I have the fire in the hands

LESSON V: In this last part we explore two themes:

[1] Changing the direction of energy flow in *Kriya Pranayama*

[2] Introduction of two Tibetan techniques which will help tremendously in the practice of *Kriya*.

These routines will change your life.

ROUTINE A

- Forward bendings (variation)
- Technique of the nine breaths
- New form of Kriya Pranayama

Explanation

[1] Forward bendings (variation)

Take a deep breath. Visualize the breath entering from the nose and descend to the *Muladhara* physical location. Hold your breath. Fold at the belt. Make use of the hands to reach this position and to make it comfortable.

Move your head close to your left knee – the face is facing the right knee. Feel the stretch on the right part of the spine and a pressure on the left side of the head. Stay in this position for at least 3 seconds.

Holding your breath, repeat the same exercise by moving the head to the other side and reversing the perceptions. Then the head is placed back in the region between the knees, the face facing down.

Return to the starting position and exhale slowly feeling the energy **rising** in the spine. Practice six of these bendings.

[2] Technique of the nine breaths

In the typical position of meditation, visualize your body, as if it were made of crystal. The *Sushumna* channel is like a tube with a diameter of about two centimeters. Attention: it starts from a point that is four centimeters below the navel (this is the point which we already know and which we call *Dantian*) and reaches the top of the head.

To the left and right of the central channel, it displays two thinner channels that start from the nostrils and descend, parallel to the central channel and arrive as far as the *Dantian*. In fact, to be precise, they come down parallel the *Sushumna* and then, at the *Dantian*, curve towards the center like two umbrella handles reaching the *Dantian*. In this way they join the central channel

Description of the exercise

Close the left nostril with a right hand finger. Inhale through the right nostril, feel the energy coming down to the *Dantian*. Hold the breath for a few seconds, stop the right nostril, expel the air making it rise through the left channel and exit through the left nostril.

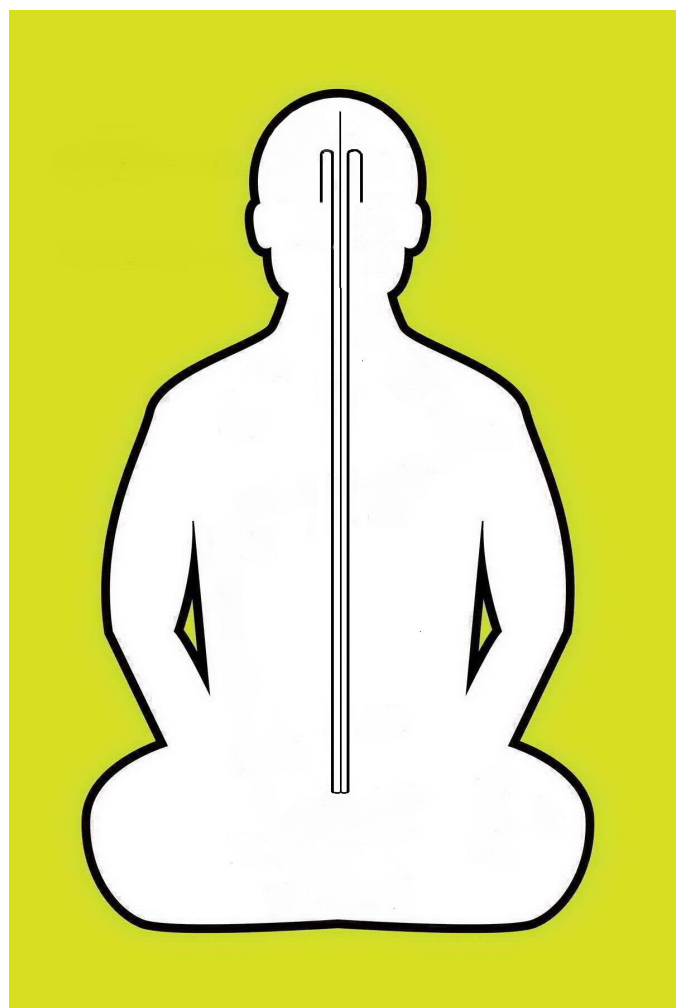


Figure 23. Nine breaths technique

Performing this operation, imagine that through the right nostril enter a clean and fresh energy that descends along the right channel and arrives, curving towards the center in the *Dantian* point. After a pause, during the

exhalation, imagine to throw out impurities through the current that rises along the left channel and exits through the left nostril.

Repeat this exercise three times, then repeat three times the previous steps by reversing the role of the nostrils. Obviously I do not repeat: just change right with left and vice versa.

Finally, place your hands on your lap, imagine breathing-in, from both nostrils, light and energy. Light and energy descend as you inhale and merge into the *Dantian*. Hold the air for a few seconds. A new energetic current manifests.

Exhale: through the *Dantian* a spiritual light enters the central channel of the spine and begins to rise. The exhalation is calm and long. You feel that the energy rises and you feel the moment when it crosses the heart area. It rises up to the head and comes out at the top, radiating in the infinite space. Repeat this last step 3 times.

Plan

We have practiced 3+3+3 breaths. After one month we shall practice 6+6+6 breaths, after another month we shall practice 9+9+9 breaths. The effect will be enormous. Be careful: you'll feel strange and could have a feeling of unease. Go ahead anyway. One day you will get only pure joy.

[3] New form of Kriya Pranayama

Read again how the 9 breath technique ends. Practice now a *Pranayama* containing the same principle. This is not the canonical Kriya Pranayama.

Inhale. It is not necessary to visualize that you are inhaling from both nostrils. Focus on the fresh air entering your lungs and comes down. Your breath is natural, not lengthened through the power of will. Enter a passive attitude, I mean the attitude of a person who wants to avoid any effort. Enjoy the sensations of fresh and warmth that are perceived inhaling and exhaling. Do not force yourself to perceive the location of the *Chakras*.

During the exhalation the air is warm and moves upwards. When this flow of energy crosses the heart area, perceive intensely this moment.

If you inhale and exhale with a half-closed mouth, the two sensations of cold and warm are perceived more intensely. Half-closed mouth means that the lips touch each other in the central part. While they are kept in this position, the air goes in and out through the lateral parts of the mouth.

Do not impose a rhythm to inhalation and exhalation. After inhalation there could be a natural pause. The exhalation should happen spontaneously and not when you induce it in order to follow certain injunction about the length of each breath.

If and only if you do this, then *Kundalini* will start to manifest; if you do not follow this instructions and impose a rhythm like in *Kriya Pranayama*, then the breathing process will be made of a series of mechanical movements, boring you.

Practice at least 36 breaths.

ROUTINE B

- Japa in the body (protection)
- Forward bendings
- Technique of the nine breaths
- Simple form of Tummo (with vase breathing)
- Variation of "Sushumna Pranayama"

Explanation

[1] Japa in the body (protection)

These three routines are very powerful. They may give problems of balancing the spiritual interest with the innumerable duties of material life.

Now, increasing the awareness of the cells of the body is a great protection. From an esoteric tradition, whose name is unknown to me, I have learned how to "apply" the vowels on the skin of the body. The essence of this teaching is that the vibration of a pure vowel sound, if repeated with immutable concentration in the body, can reach its cells. "The whole body will be activated with new life and it will be reborn": so say the mystics from whom I'm drawing inspiration. You will be surprised of how you will feel during the day!

We use the vowels in the following order: U- O - A - E - I.

Inhale guiding your consciousness in each part of the body. Start whispering the vowel U: U-U-U-U-U-U-U-U..... come up from the feet to the head, repeating this vocal a hundred times. The same process will then be repeated with the second vowel and so on. Make each vocal vibrate in your feet, calves, legs, abdomen, etc. until you will have vibrated all the vowels in your whole body. Complete the hundred repetitions of the last

vowel "I" in a low voice. The exercise ends here. There are no tortuous complications to add.

[2] Forward bendings

[Already explained]

[3] Technique of the nine breaths

[Already explained]

[4] Simple form of Tummo (with vase breathing)

After having practiced the 9 breaths technique, the breathing runs equally in both nostrils: this is the best moment to practice Vase breathing.

Place your hands over your lower belly. Inhale, allow the lower belly to expand outward into your hands. Imagine that your abdomen and your entire torso is like a "vase", visualize that the inhaled air is like fresh, clear water that you're pouring into the vase. Feel that the inhalation fills the bottom of the vase first, and then continues to fill upward to the brim of the vase: up to your collarbones. For each inhalation utilize this visualization.

Exhalation follows. Allow your abdomen to relax but not completely: maintain this slight rounded vase-like shape of the lower belly. Our intention is to generate physical heat. Let us learn how to generate it.

Inhale deeply. Feel that the air comes down entering into the Right and Left Channel, filling them up. When both channels, Right and Left, are full, swallow a little saliva, tense your diaphragm, and press firmly the energy descending down **over Dantian**. At the same time practice *Mula Bandha* and raise the lower energy **up to Dantian**. Hold your breath, visualize the flame of a candle in the center of your "Vase". Hold the breath as long as you can as if holding the air in a vase to its fullness. A sensation of heat is felt in the central channel.

All the air enters into the Central Channel and fills it. The air in the Right and Left Channel is dissolved or emptied.

When the breath can be held no longer, you should rapidly release it. When you exhale the air, you should visualize it arising through the Central Channel freely, like gas through a pipe. This is one cycle. Repeat different times. A sense of heat and bliss grows. Generate a deep but restrained inner heat. Concentrate with penetrative awareness on the visualized flame. All that exists is blissful awareness of the flame.

This way of practicing is to be patiently perfected.

[5] Variation of "Sushumna Pranayama"

Sushumna Pranayama is the *Pranayama* that happens inside the *Sushumna* and therefore in the breathless state. We shall reach this state by a succession of short breaths between *Medulla* and each *Chakra*.

Start with three deep breaths. Then focus the attention on the *Medulla*. When you feel natural to inhale, inhale guiding the energy in the fifth *Chakra*. Pause in the fifth *Chakra* until it is comfortable. Try to have a good perception of this *Chakra*. Exhale up to *Medulla* when it comes natural to exhale. Focus upon the location of *Medulla*. Make a pause there. When it comes natural to inhale, inhale guiding the energy in the fourth *Chakra*. Pause there until it is comfortable. Try to have a good perception of this *Chakra*. Exhale when it comes natural to exhale coming up into the seat of *Medulla*.

Repeat the procedure between the *Medulla* and the third *Chakra*; *Medulla* and the second *Chakra*; *Medulla* and *Muladhara*. Then *Medulla* and second *Chakra*; *Medulla* and third *Chakra*; *Medulla* and fourth *Chakra*; *Muladhara* and fifth *Chakra*. This is one cycle.

After 3-6 cycles you will notice that the breath is almost disappeared, while the spine has become like a steel bar.

One day your intuition will suggest to focus on the totality of your body and perceive there a fresh energy. While going with the cycles of breaths you will realize that your body is sustained by fresh internal energy. One day your breath will stop completely: it will be like a miracle.

ROUTINE C

- Japa in the body
- Forward bendings
- Bhastrika
- Thokar (variation with hissing sound)
- Tummo

[1] Japa in the body

[Already explained]

[2] Forward bendings

[Already explained]

[3] Bhastrika

Inhale and exhale different times with the intention of creating a "brushing" effect upon the location of heart *Chakra*. From above that location come down under it – this during inhalation. From under that location come up over it – this during exhalation.

After 12 deep breaths, inhale, hold and remain with a fixed concentration on the heart *Chakra*. Repeat the procedure.

[4] Thokar (variation with hissing sound)

What we describe now is a variation of the *Advanced form of Thokar* that we have described in *Chapter 8*. It is a variation that will make you ready for the practice of *Tummo*. You will perceive an intensification of energy in the region of the fourth *Chakra*.

Inhale sweetly; move the head to the left and guide a short exhalation in *Medulla*. Move the head to the right and guide a short exhalation in the fifth *Chakra*. Lower the chin on the chest and guide a short exhalation in the heart *Chakra*. Through these three exhalations all the air is out.

Inhale and repeat the procedure, repeat it many times.

Note

It is necessary to clarify what it means "guiding a short exhalation in the three upper *Chakras*." The secret is this: each short exhalation (1/3 of a complete exhalation) is accompanied by the hissing sound ssssss... produced blowing gently through the lips.

In this way, the exhalation can guide the energy in any part of the body you visualize. In our situation we have these three parts ssssss... ssssss... and ssssst...

Energy will be injected in *Medulla*, in the *Fifth Chakra* and in the *Fourth Chakra*. These exhalations are special: there is a ssssss... on *Medulla*, a ssssss... on the fifth *Chakra* and ssssst... on the heart *Chakra*. I write ssssst... and not ssssss... only to give the idea of a dynamism, like a short blow, when you send energy to the heart *Chakra*.

In conclusion this *Thokar* is based upon an inspiration through the nose followed by the three described movements of the head accompanied by three short exhalations through the semi closed mouth.

By going ahead in this way, you will feel more and more energy increasing in these three centers and in particular warmth or heat in the heart *Chakra*.

Repeat many times (for example ten minutes) feeling a hot sensation growing in the heart *Chakra*, you become ready for the *Tummo* technique.

[5] **Tummo**

► *Initial practice (very simple)*

Inhale through both nose and mouth in three parts. The mouth is semi closed.

First part of the inhalation: draw the *Prana* (visualize a golden light) from the ether. Visualize it enters through *Kutastha* and accumulates in the fifth *Chakra*. The length of this first part is about 3 seconds. Exhale a minimal quantity of air, rapidly with mouth open "huh." ⁴ The length of this partial exhalation is about half second. During this exhalation the *Prana* remains in the fifth *Chakra*. Practice a slight *Mula Bandha*.

Second part of the inhalation: draw the *Prana* from the fifth *Chakra* into the fourth *Chakra*. A short exhalation follows - just we have done after the first part. Increase the intensity of *Mula Bandha*.

Third part of the inhalation: draw the *Prana* from fourth *Chakra* into third *Chakra*. There is no exhalation here. Hold your breath. Bring the intensity of *Mula Bandha* to the maximum degree and add *Jalandhara Bandha*.

⁴ The sound is the same you produce with your mouth when you want to fog up a glass.

Contract your diaphragm and firmly compress the *Prana* brought down from above. The *Prana* is completely locked in, compressed both from above and below. Go ahead holding your breath. Feel warmth increasing and brimming over into the surrounding abdominal region. Focus all your concentration capability at the base of the spine.

Now start a long exhalation (either through the nose or with semi-closed mouth) feeling the *Prana* coming upwards from the inferior abdomen moving towards the center of the head or towards *fontanelle*. It moves through the frontal part of the spine, ideally through an empty tube placed in the central part of the body. During the exhalation feel the warm sensation increasing in all the spine. In time, the warm will become heat. Relax *Mula Bandha*.

This is one *Tummo* breath. Do 24 repetitions and maintain this amount of *Tummo* breaths for a couple of months. Then try to increase this number. 36 repetitions is a very good achievement.

► *Advanced practice*

By performing **ten** breathing cycles (as described), one is able to perceive the warm of the flame of a candle in the navel. With the next **ten** breathing cycles, the navel and its surrounding area are filled with heat. The subsequent **ten** breathing cycles cause the lower body to experience heat all over. Another **ten** breathing cycles move the heat it further upwards to the heart region. With these 40 *Tummo* breaths the heart knot (*Granti*) is unfastened.

Ten more breaths and the flame is moved upwards to the throat *Chakra*. The next **ten** breathing cycles raise the flame towards the *Ajna Chakra*. The last **ten** breathing cycles lead it to the crown *Chakra*.

40+30 breaths is a great achievement. The *Rudra Granti* knot (the last knot) is unfastened. There is no more practice with breath. The *Paravastha state* (the real *Paravastha*) totally absorbs the awareness of the person who has ascended to this lofty state.

GUIDE FOR THE FUTURE PRACTICE

Since many years I am reflecting upon the two parts in which *Kriya Yoga* can be divided. *Kriya* without physical movement and *Kriya* with

movement. Despite all my efforts to amalgamate them, they remain divided.

In my opinion, from now onwards, you can alternate routine B (or the simpler routine A) with routine C without trying to mix them.

Routines like routine B are the routines conceived to reach the Paravastha state only by entering the breathless state. Forget the *Thokar* and start your routine with the technique of the nine breaths. Then there is the new way of conceiving *Pranayama* as we have explained in routine B. Increase the time you devote to it and you will reach your goal.

Routines like routine C are the routines that give great space to *Thokar* and to *Tummo*. You merge with the inner light perceived in the heart *Chakra*. By simple further steps you reach a contemplation state and are reborn in the *Paravastha* state.

During the day do not forget Devotional Prayer. Chapter 13 is devoted to this. Remember what St. Theresa of Avila said: *You can do nothing without Prayer and you can do miracles with it.*