

PART II: LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA TECHNIQUES

Disclaimer

The techniques outlined here are intended for study purposes only, with the goal of comparing them to the work of other researchers. I am looking forward to intelligent feedback from this sharing. We are open to receiving comments, criticisms, corrections, and additions. Before you ask the strangest and most improbable questions, read this book in its entirety to gain a complete understanding of the subject. As you continue reading, you will find that many questions have been answered.

I would like to emphasize that this book is not a *Kriya Yoga* manual! It is not possible to learn *Kriya Yoga* techniques by reading a book. Learning delicate techniques like *Maha Mudra*, *Kriya Pranayama*, *Thokar*, and *Yoni Mudra* is a difficult task that requires an expert who controls their execution. The effect of intensive practice on a particular individual cannot be predicted because each person is different.

The author is not liable for any negative results, especially if one decides to practice the techniques without the supervision of an expert. If you plan to continue this practice, make sure you have a strong sense of sacredness and acknowledge the value it can bring to your life. While it is up to each person to control their destiny, it is highly recommended to seek expert advice or guidance.

N.B. Communicating any physical problems, such as hypertension, lung problems, and signs of hyperventilation, is necessary when you visit an expert. If you have specific physical conditions, an expert can suggest a mild version of *Kriya Pranayama* and *Mudra*. In case it is necessary, he could suggest practicing them only mentally. ¹

¹ Since I started my website in 2006, I have continued to expand my book and provide a new edition every year. My recommendation is to visit www.kriyayogainfo.net at least once yearly.

CHAPTER 6

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – PART 1

This chapter provides a description of the Kriya Pranayama technique taught by Lahiri Mahasaya. The end of this chapter includes some simple auxiliary techniques that can be of assistance to those who are having difficulty with this basic technique. Kriya practices taught by other schools are not mentioned in this article. From chapter 14 on, they will be dealt with.

INTRODUCTION

The explanation of *Kriya Yoga* techniques by Lahiri Mahasaya can be found in chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9 of this book.

LOCATION OF THE CHAKRAS

The spine contains subtle astral organs known as *Chakras*. They are ideal steps on a mystical ladder that leads the consciousness of the individual to encounter the highest ecstatic experience. Visualizing a *Chakra* with petals, *Yantra*, and *Bija Mantra* in its center, and all the things you'll find in *Hatha Yoga* classic books, isn't important. Perceiving its approximate location is crucial. The location will become more perceptible with *Kriya Yoga* practice.

When mental silence, body relaxation and intense spiritual aspiration are in place, *Kriya Pranayama* will take the inner path, so to speak. The Spiritual Reality will become concrete without the need for mind visualizations or whims. Realizing the reality of the *Chakras* will allow you to listen to their vibrations and perceive specific tones of light emanating from their locations. When the breath becomes extremely subtle, the practice of *Kechari Mudra* will help facilitate this experience.

Each *Chakra* has two aspects, one internal and one external. A *Chakra's* inner aspect is a vibration of light that attracts awareness upwards towards the Spirit. The external aspect of a *Chakra* concerns the physical body: it is a diffused light that awakens and supports the physical body. As you ascend the spine during *Kriya Pranayama*, it's typical to perceive the *Chakras* as small lights that illuminate the hollow tube of the spinal column. As you descend, the *Chakras* are understood to function as energy-distributing organs in the body: rays of light emanate from the seat of each *Chakra* and rejuvenate the part of the body in front of it.

The first *Chakra*, ***Muladhara***, is situated at the bottom of the spine, just below the *Sacrum*. In the sacral area, ***Svadhithana***, the second *Chakra*, lies halfway between *Muladhara* and the third *Chakra*. The third *Chakra*, ***Manipura***, is located in the lumbar region of the spine at the level of the navel. ***Anahata***, or the *Heart Chakra*, is the fourth *Chakra* found in the dorsal region. To identify it, you should move the shoulder blades together and focus on the tense muscles between them. ***Vishuddha***, the fifth *Chakra*, can be found at the point where the neck joins the shoulders. To identify it, swing the head sideways, hold the torso firmly, and concentrate on the point where a particular grinding sound is heard. The sixth *Chakra* is referred to as ***Ajna***.

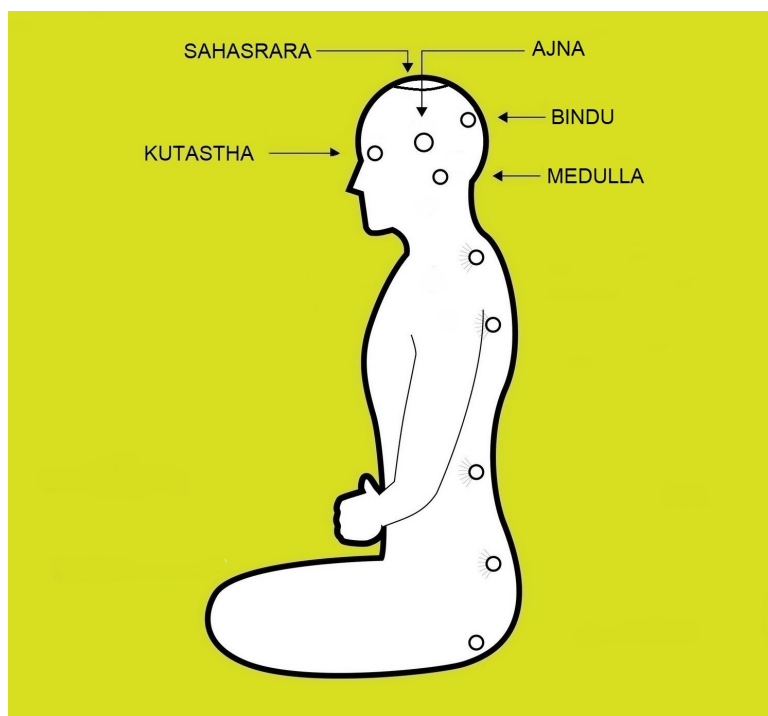


Fig.1 Location of the Chakras

The ***Medulla*** and ***Kutastha*** point between the eyebrows are closely connected to ***Ajna*** and, from a spiritual point of view, cannot be viewed as separate entities. From a practical point of view, the ***Medulla*** is the most important center. Finding stability in concentration on it can lead to finding oneself in front of one's *inner Guru*. We will come back to this concept at a later time.

When it comes to ***Kutastha***, there are those who want exact instructions on how the 'spiritual eye' should look. It would be wise not to take what you read in literature too seriously. There are descriptions that are presented as

universal facts, but in reality, they are the personal ideas of some writer. It is not a good idea to focus on an image found in a book and try to make it appear between the eyebrows. It's better to be content with catching a glimpse of light and fully immersing yourself in it.

The *Medulla* is located at the top of the spine. Lift your chin and contract the neck muscles at the base of the occipital bone, focus on the small cavity under that bone: the *Medulla* is located directly in front of this cavity.

To locate *Ajna*, the **Simple Form of Kechari Mudra** (also known as *Baby Kechari*) is used.

This form of *Kechari Mudra* involves constantly maintaining contact between the tip of the tongue and the soft palate. To ensure proper functioning, it's important to point the tip of the tongue towards the pituitary gland (**hypophysis**) that's located in the center of the brain.

The size of this endocrine gland resembles that of a pea. The hypothalamus floor is where it protrudes. Let's clarify how *baby Kechari* can be of great help in locating the *hypophysis*.

According to the explanation, the pituitary gland is stimulated due to the energy flowing through the tip of the tongue. In reality, this action is credited with improving the perception of light at the point between the eyebrows (*Kutastha*).

Let's clarify that the *hypophysis* should not be confused with the **pineal** gland. The latter has the appearance of a small pine cone. This shape is a popular icon for many spiritual organizations. It is located behind the pituitary gland, at the back of the third ventricle of the brain. Prolonged concentration on the *pineal* gland is explained to lead to complete experience of the white spiritual light throughout the head and body. The state achieved is the final step to perfect meditation, as it signifies the loss of consciousness in the state of *Samadhi*.

Bindu can be found at the top of the nape, near the area where the hair creates a vortex-like pattern. This is the *shikha* point where Hindus keep a tuft of hair after tonsure. *Bindu* is not viewed as a *Chakra* on its own. It is a significant spiritual center due to its role as a gateway that leads awareness to the *Sahasrara*, the seventh *Chakra* situated at the top of the head.

POSITION SUITABLE FOR MEDITATION

We sit facing the East. According to *patanjali*, the position of the *Yogi* (*Asana*) must be stable and comfortable.

Half-lotus: The majority of *kriyabans* feel comfortable with sitting in this

position, which has been utilized for meditation since the dawn of time because it provides a comfortable sitting position that is incredibly simple to achieve. The secret to keeping your spine straight is to sit on the edge of a thick pillow while raising your buttocks slightly. Sitting cross-legged while your knees are on the floor is something you can do. Raise your left leg and bring it towards your body until the sole of your left leg is properly aligned with the inside of your right thigh. Pull the heel of the left foot upward towards the groin as far as it will go. The right leg is positioned at the knee and the right foot is ideally positioned over the left leg, calf, or both. As much as possible, the right knee is brought down towards the ground. In order to prolong the position, reverse your legs when they get tired. As evidenced in the well-known photo of Lahiri Mahasaya, the hands are interlocked. This produces a well-balanced flow of energies from the right hand to the left and vice versa. If there are health problems or specific physical conditions, it may be advantageous to practice half lotus on a chair, provided that it is large and without armrests. By doing this, one leg can be lowered at a time and the knee joint can get some rest!

Siddhasana: This pose, known as 'perfect pose', is considered to be of moderate difficulty. The left foot's sole is put against the right thigh and the heel is put against the perineum. The right heel lies against the pubic bone. By combining this position of the legs with *Kechari Mudra*, the pranic circuit is closed and *Kriya Pranayama* becomes easy and profitable. It is clarified that this position aids in becoming acquainted with *Prana's* movements.

Padmasana: This pose known as the 'Lotus position' is a challenging one. It is often not possible to maintain it beyond a few minutes. The right foot is positioned on the left thigh and the left foot is positioned on the right thigh, with the toes facing upwards. The explanation is that this position, when combined with *Kechari* and *Shambhavi Mudras*, establishes an energetic state in the body that is suitable for observing the inner light that arises from every *Chakra*. When achieving deep *Pratyahara*, the torso can bend or fall, but the lotus position assists in keeping it upright and preventing it from bending or falling.

Sitting in *Padmasana* can be difficult for a beginner because the knees and ankles are in intense pain. Personally, I would not recommend anyone to undertake this challenging position. After practicing *Padmasana* for years, some yogis have had to have cartilage removed from their knees.

KRIYA PRANAYAMA

An introduction to the fundamental technique of Kriya Pranayama

The aim of this technique is to eliminate the reliance on the breathing phenomenon that binds the soul to the body. Let's calmly clarify how this unfolds.

Breath is the **instrument** that **Kriya Pranayama** utilizes. *Kriya Pranayama* sessions are divided into two parts.

[a] The **first part** is based on taking long and deep breaths, which create an audible sound in the throat. In three stages, this section will be described, with the breath being constantly controlled, but in different ways.

[b] The breath in the **second part** is uncontrolled and almost absent. *Paravastha* is the name given to this final stage of *Kriya Yoga*. To get ready for part b), it's important to constantly focus on the sensations caused by the breath in the spinal column. If you stop counting the long breaths and allow it to move up and down in a subtle way, you are entering the second part.

Kriya Pranayama is **designed** to give you the opportunity to experience the state of *Paravastha*. During this state, there is no mind or thought. During it, **the spiritual dimension is contacted**. We have transcended our identities as I or Ego and become pure Awareness, beyond time and space. It's important to remember that this is the sole purpose of *Kriya Pranayama*. Quoting other ways of summarizing the essence of *Kriya Pranayama* is neither necessary nor appropriate.

Note

It's apparent that *Kriya Pranayama* is a technique that requires great care. The process of learning takes several months and requires the use of good will, sensitivity, and intuition. I believe that a mastery of this procedure can be achieved by practicing its initial three phases of learning, patiently addressing the technical details one at a time, and working on it daily. The final fourth phase of experiencing *Kriya Pranayama* is not a method of practice, but rather a state of grace that arises when the body and mind are open to it.

While attempting to master the first phase of learning *Kriya Yoga*, it is possible to explore and use other *Kriya* procedures that are described in chapter 7. *Kechari Mudra* is the most significant fact that must be achieved. The value of this *Mudra* is undeniable as it enables perfect *Kriya Pranayama* and greatly relaxes the mind's functions.

THE INITIAL PHASE OF LEARNING

Avoid practicing on a full stomach. Allow an hour to pass following breakfast and two to three hours following lunch or dinner. Sit in the meditation position. Position yourself so that you are facing east. From this point forward, it is possible to use the previously described method of sitting on the edge of a thick cushion with your buttocks slightly raised. To maintain a slight tension in the neck and nape muscles, the chin should be pulled slightly inside.

Your fingers are interlinked. The mouth and eyes are closed. The *Kutastha*, the spot between the eyebrows, is where attention is focused. After closing your eyes, you find yourself in front of a dark screen. This is the *Chidakasha*'s internal space where both gross and subtle conscious activities take place. Focusing on *Kutastha* does not involve thinking about a dot located at the center of *Chidakasha*. We require a different approach that involves expanding our awareness of this space and attempting to perceive its edges accurately, up and down, to the right and left. This action should be practiced and familiarized during the practice of all *Kriya* techniques, from the first to the last! Practice *baby Kechari* by turning your tongue back as much as possible and dilating your throat, or assume the position of the real *Kechari* when you are able to.

Deeply inhale through your nose, making a hissing sound in your lower throat. ² To ensure the correct sound, aim to raise the friction of the air passing through the throat. To preserve this subtle hiss, make sure to make a slight effort to exhale air through your nasal pharynx. *Ujjayi* is the name given to this way of breathing. It's explained that this sound isn't caused by vocal cords, but rather by the movement of breath.

By using this breathing technique, you can feel a cool current rising through your spine on inhalation and a warm thread of energy flowing down your spine on exhalation. It's a fact that the breath that enters and leaves the body has the sensations of coolness and warmth embedded in it. This fact is a useful tool for progressing from simply imagining the spinal canal to actually perceiving it.

² To me, this sound resembles that of a loudspeaker that is transmitting amplified background noise – a quiet schhhh... /ʃ/. When exhaling, it becomes a thin hiss. It is explained that the perfection of the sound can be achieved by practicing *Kechari Mudra*. The sound of inhaling will be quite thin, while the sound of exhaling will be similar to that of a flute, *Sheee Sheee*. The presence of this sound indicates that the *Pranayama* has been executed properly.

Achieve a slow and deep breathing pattern without straining. In a completely quiet environment, someone next to you can hear a faint sound in your breathing, but not if they are sitting at a certain distance. It is important to breathe primarily from the abdomen. This means that during inhalation, the upper chest remains motionless or almost motionless, the shoulders do not rise, while the abdomen expands.

As you exhale, the abdomen retracts. During the final phase of the exhalation, the navel is clearly moving towards the spine. Refinement of this experience will result in a sensation of joy when you become more aware of the inward movement of the navel and the action of the diaphragm.

Inhale and exhale deeply, until your breath becomes naturally longer after a few breaths. The observation has been made that the exhalation lasts a little longer than the inhalation. A *Kriya* breath (inhalation + exhalation) should last for about 30 seconds, but you can start with 12 seconds and gradually increase its duration without any hurry.³

Two brief breath pauses are present in *Kriya Pranayama*, one between inhalation and exhalation and one between exhalation and inhalation. They are typically 1-2 seconds long. They are unforced and spontaneous. These pauses will help you appreciate their value because you will feel a sense of tranquility during them. If the air stops moving, the mind also stops operating. Use a *Mala* (beads of a rosary) or the knuckles of the fingers to count how many breaths you take. To get started, practice 12 *Kriya* breaths. As you progress, you will increase by 12 each time, resulting in the practice of 24, 36, 48...breaths, with a maximum of 144 breaths.

This practice leads to the energy in the breath withdrawing into *Sushumna*, and the breath flowing in a stream like a silk thread. For a few weeks, focus solely on what we have explained.

By using a moderate amount of will power, you can control the flow of energy in your spine and remain relaxed at all times. The breath will become more refined and tranquil. Don't be hasty to add the next instruction to your practice. Experience complete peace for a few months by perfecting what has been explained up until this point.

³ According to the reference literature, a perfect *Kriya Pranayama* requires 80 breaths in an hour, with an average of 45 seconds per breath. A beginner is far from reaching such a rhythm. Instead, it is better for him to forget about this information completely, relax, and enjoy his *Pranayama* as it spontaneously happens.

Guidelines before explaining the second stage of learning

Kriya Pranayama is used by us to enter *Sushumna* with our consciousness. To achieve this feat, we must first make our breathing extremely subtle. It is imperative to have extreme delicacy when entering *Sushumna*. This is possible if during *Kriya Pranayama*, the inner gaze remains fixed on the central point of the spiritual eye.

There are those who make an effort to forcefully and roughly attract and then raise the energy level in *Sushumna*. If this occurs, the *Kundalini* does not move upward but disperses throughout the body, which causes physical disturbances due to partially blocked nadis. The only thing that *Kriya Pranayama* causes is stress and nervousness. To reiterate, we must begin with minimal complexity and proceed without immediately expecting the promised outcomes to arrive. It is certain that a profound and meaningful event will occur once the psycho-physical system is ready.

The exercise becomes more enjoyable as we move forward. Over time [if it doesn't occur today, it will occur tomorrow – you need to be patient and cultivate the right attitude] you will experience the spine's entire length. There's nothing exceptional to do. Don't attempt to accomplish this by lowering your consciousness! Everything takes place without any intervention.

A delicate sound in your throat will accompany your breathing at a certain point. The sound is caused by the air rubbing in your throat. By doing this, your breathing becomes more subtle and slow. Don't worry about how this sound should sound at this moment.

This is precisely the “*Original Kriya*” of Lahiri Mahasaya. Your entire being is contained within a luminous sphere that is located between *Kutastha* and *Ajna* in the center of your head. What you see doesn't matter, as long as you feel at ease and absorbed in the beauty of the procedure.

How to conclude every practice

After practicing *Kriya Pranayama* (it's possible that this is just the initial phase, or it could be integrated with the second or even the third phase), it's important to try for several minutes to reach the state of consciousness that Lahiri Mahasaya has identified as *Paravastha*. When in this state, one can forget about breathing and experience a great tranquility, without any thought. It's crucial to overcome the I-conscience, the Ego identification, and recognize that one exists solely as pure awareness. Spending ten or twenty minutes in this state will give you an intimate sense of joy.

Further recommendation

I encourage you to examine the contents of Chapter 10, Part III of the book. There are different themes to examine and various illusions to dispel.

Through careful reflection, one can also comprehend truths. Of course, what has been described thus far is referred to as the initial stage of learning. Yet, there is something that should be clarified even before beginning *Kriya Pranayama*!

THE SECOND PHASE OF LEARNING

Mentally chant the *mantra Om* in each *Chakra* from the first to the sixth and from the sixth to the first while simultaneously sensing the spinal current. Consequently, *Om* will be mentally chanted 12 times per breath. It's your choice to refer to the sixth *Chakra* as either *Medulla* or *Ajna*. I remind you that *Medulla* is only an aspect of *Ajna*. Going up and down the spine, making a noise in the throat, feeling sensations of coolness and warmth, and placing *Om* in each *Chakra* is definitely a difficult task!

Lahiri Mahasaya encourages us to pursue this goal by stating that without chanting *Om* in every *Chakra*, we will experience a variety of useless thoughts that will disturb us. Without the mental chanting of *Om*, *Kriya* is described as *tamasic*, which means that there are constant distractions. Mentally chanting *Om* can make the described procedure easier. Your awareness is trained to be more disciplined, allowing it to patiently obey you as you move up and down within the spine. By adhering to this teaching, the mind will no longer be swayed in different directions and will stay on the path of the spine.

THE THIRD PHASE OF LEARNING

This lofty phase of learning is exclusively for those who have practiced the previous two phases of learning for an extended period and are highly satisfied with their progress. The practice I am describing requires starting with a minimum of 48 *Kriya* breaths. After completing these breaths, the center of awareness becomes established in the upper part of the head. To achieve this, the eyes must be in a specific position.

In his well-known portrait, Lahiri Mahasaya holds this position. The lids of the eyes are either closed or partially closed. Your eyes look up without straining, as though you are attempting to look at the ceiling while maintaining a steady head. Gradually, the slight tension that was felt is gone and the position can be held comfortably. On the forehead, a few

horizontal wrinkles appear. The *sclera* (the white of the eye) can be seen by the viewer beneath the iris because the lower eyelids are often relaxed.

Positioning the eyes in this way allows the center of awareness to settle in the crown and not lose awareness of *Kutastha* and the spinal currents. In other words, one should continue to practice everything planned in the first and second stages of learning. Energy flows from *Muladhara* into the seventh *Chakra*, but *Om* chanting only occurs in the first five *Chakras* and *Medulla*.

From time to time, you may feel like you're in a state of mind that resembles falling asleep, when suddenly regain full awareness and discover that you're absorbed in the spiritual light. It's the same feeling as when an airplane emerges from clouds into a transparent, clear sky. Practicing *Kriya Pranayama* this way is truly intoxicating.

Summary of the Kriya Pranayama technique

Here are the main points to remember:

Kriya Pranayama is started by taking a series of deep breaths, creating a sound in the throat without exerting too much effort. Almost immediately, one can perceive a sensation of coolness rising in the spine during inhalation and a sensation of warmth falling during exhalation.

Those who are skilled in recognizing these sensations can mentally recite *Om* in every *Chakra*, both while ascending and descending.

After completing the previous two phases, the attention is directed towards the top of the head. Stability is maintained in this region for all subsequent *Kriya* breaths.

After completing the prescribed number, observe how uncontrolled breathing becomes short and almost absent. One tries to maintain awareness of all *Chakras* until this awareness gives way to complete inner stillness.

EVENTS THAT CHARACTERIZE YOUR PROGRESS IN KRIYA OVER TIME

The practice of *Kriya Pranayama* gradually improves and turns into "*Uttam Pranayama*" (Excellent Pranayama). My aim is to provide a description of some events that can characterize this practice.

[1] *Breathing becomes more subtle*

To enhance the perception of the subtle spinal canal, it's important to inhale deeply and slowly. While breathing, it's beneficial to concentrate on the frontal region of the fifth *Chakra*, *Vishuddha*. Observe how this *Chakra* is

causing energy to flow through the spine. According to the explanation, this *Chakra* creates a vacuum in the throat, which induces the energy to flow inside the spine like a syringe. It can be advantageous to picture the movement of air as if it were happening through a straw.

It is worth mentioning that the current travels between the base of the spine and the *Medulla*, where the sixth *Chakra* is situated. It's not appropriate to attempt to force it to reach the point between the eyebrows. Through constant and persistent effort, the breath is transformed and internalized. The sound becomes so faint that it's almost inaudible. It seems as if the breath takes on its own life, moving without any effort on the part of the practitioner.

[2] *Concentrating on the point between the eyebrows does not cause the center of consciousness to move from the Medulla*

It's advised to close your eyes and observe any light or color at the point between your eyebrows when practicing *Kriya Pranayama*, regardless of how faint it appears. Visualization is not required; we simply need to be aware of what is happening. While paying attention to the point between the eyebrows, we can gently move the two eyebrows slightly closer to the center of the forehead.

Don't strain your eyes. It's more advantageous to allow them to naturally gravitate towards creating a vertical furrow between their eyebrows. The center of one's consciousness is always located in the upper part of the spine, at the base of the brain, which is known as the *Medulla*. This is the process by which the perception of the inner light becomes stable.

[3] *The right attitude to maintain while practicing Pranayama*

Begin each *Pranayama* session with the understanding that it's a process that progresses automatically. In order to attain the correct attitude, it is important to simply take pleasure in the sensation of the cool air rising along the spine and then the warm air descending. After some time, this method of practicing yields a powerful sense of energy.

[4] *The Inner Sound of Om is being listened to*

Practicing *Kriya Pranayama* allows for the inner sound of *Om* to be heard. The practitioner may be aware of a distant ringing that resembles a bell. The sound of "many waters" may become a part of this experience. The authentic sound of *Om* is this.

[5] *The utilization of Bandhas and Mudras*

My description of the technique of *Kriya Pranayama* has been based solely on the instructions found in the writings of Lahiri and his early disciples. I have observed that the use of *Bandhas* and *Mudras* is not mentioned. Yet,

all the classic *Hatha Yoga* books clearly state that the practice of *Pranayama* cannot be considered complete without the use of *Bandhas* and *Mudras*.

In my personal practice, I have made the decision to utilize them. Their assistance has enabled me to perceive the energy in my spine with greater intensity. I have decided to refrain from discussing them in this chapter. The fourth part of the book contains some comments on how I've used *Mula Bandha* during the breath pauses at the end of inhalation and exhalation. You will discover how I have frequently utilized an internalized form of *Aswini Mudra* while inhaling and exhaling.

THE FINAL PHASE OF KRIYA PRANAYAMA

In the end, we intend to discuss a profound experience of *Kriya Pranayama*. The final 'Fourth Phase of experiencing *Kriya Pranayama*' is precisely what we are now trying to define. The practice described in the first three phases of learning is a real gem that embodies the essence of beauty. Time passes without being noticed, and what may appear to be an exhausting task turns out to be as simple as a moment of relaxation. It is good to focus on these stages. Eventually, the experience of the fourth phase will come as well.

At a certain point, the breathing process stops and, according to various writings, the breath 'becomes like a point'. In other words, it doesn't fluctuate within the spine but remains still while the consciousness is in a blissful state. This state is a result of years of practicing *Kriya Pranayama*. Let it be clear that we are not talking about holding breath forcefully. When it occurs, a *kriyaban* doesn't need to inhale; or, if they take a short inhalation, they don't need to exhale for a very long time. Longer than science considers possible.

People who experience this state notice, amazed but without any agitation, that they are not breathing at all. They have the impression that a new energy is sustaining the body's vitality internally without the need for oxygen. When the breath is completely absent, the mind is in a state of perfect silence or as if it has dissolved.

This embodies the perfection of *Kriya Pranayama*. The mystery surrounding this event is enticing. Numerous *kriyabans* find it hard to imagine it. Even those who have been practicing for a long time with genuine dedication believe that it is impossible and that any statement about its occurrence is untrue. Nevertheless, it can be experienced.

REMEDIES FOR THOSE WHO FIND THE KRIYA PRANAYAMA TECHNIQUE DIFFICULT TO PRACTICE

Following the previous instructions may be a challenge for some individuals. There are those who believe they are not suitable for *Kriya* because their breathing tends to be short.

Lahiri Mahasaya taught that *Kriya Pranayama* has to last 45 seconds. There are many individuals who experience depression and believe that this is impossible, at least for them. Others remain calm despite this information and allow their breathing to be natural. They don't worry about the length of their breath when attempting to take a slow and deep breath. Several masters offer this advice.

The wise person realizes that their *Kriya* practice may not be perfect immediately and calms down. The relaxation and peace that *Kriya Pranayama* provides is something they enjoy. To put it briefly, this is the right mindset.

The following practice is recommended for those who struggle to perceive the *Chakras'* position

Kriya in loops

We commence with a sequence of deep breaths that consistently begin at the first *Chakra*, *Muladhara*, and progress to each of the 5 *Chakras* situated above it in their natural sequence.

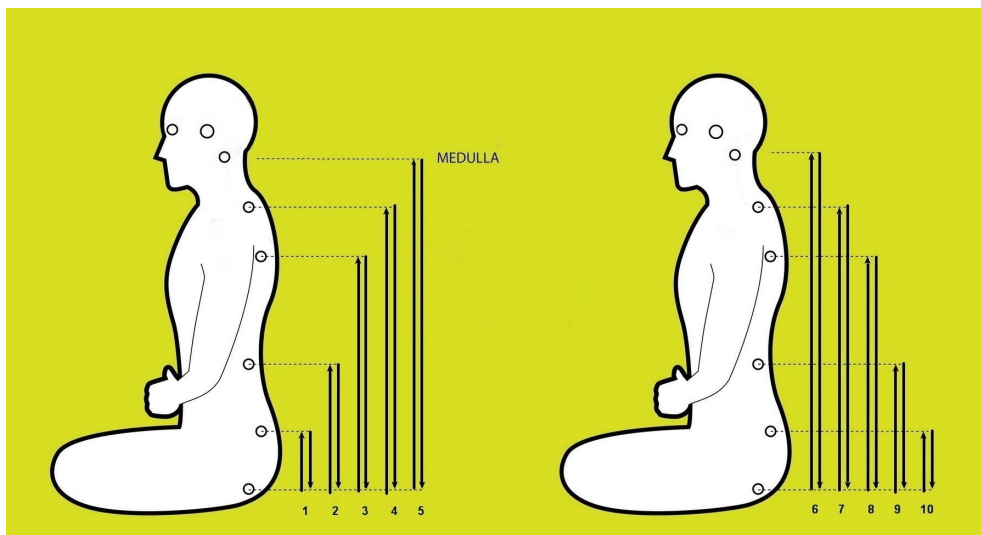


Fig. 2 Kriya in loops

Each of these breaths is an invitation for *Prana* to enter *Sushumna* and start ascending higher. We will always use natural, calm, and non-forced

breaths. Concentrate your mind in *Muladhara*.

By inhaling, raise consciousness in the second *Chakra*. After a pause, exhale and come back to *Muladhara* with awareness. Do the same thing by raising your consciousness from *Muladhara* to the third *Chakra* through an inhalation. Then after a pause, exhale and return with awareness in *Muladhara*. Repeat the same process for every *Chakra*. You will be able to arrive at *Chakras* 4, 5, *Medulla*. Now, repeat the process, reversing its order. From *Muladhara* reach *Medulla* again, then *Chakras* 5, 4, 3 and 2. In total there will be 10 breaths. This is one cycle. Perform a total of four cycles. Thus, there are a total of 40 breaths.

Trying to grasp the reality of every *Chakra*, both while in *Muladhara* and in any of the 5 *Chakras* above, is advantageous. Attempt to perceive something in each of them. It's important to attempt to feel the reality of each *Chakra*. The *Chakras* are a set of six spheres of spiritual light that are placed one above another. As you enter each of these spheres, you will feel that they transmit calmness and stillness.

A remedy is available for those who have trouble breathing through their nose

Nadi Sodhana

Let us try to clean the nostrils before starting the exercise. To do this, it's recommended to use water, inhale eucalyptus oil, and blow your nose. If one nostril is constantly blocked, it is a medical issue that requires consideration. *Pranayama* exercises should not be practiced if there is a serious cold causing obstruction. The mouth must be shut.

Concentrate on the *Muladhara Chakra*. Use your right thumb to close your right nostril and breathe deeply and slowly through your left nostril for 6-7 seconds. Imagine that the inhaled air is lifted along the left side of the spine. Hold your breath for 3-6 seconds by closing both nostrils. As you hold your breath, contract the muscles at the base of your spine. This contraction is referred to as *Mula Bandha*. Hold your left nostril closed, open your right nostril, and exhale deeply and slowly.

Inhale using your right nostril. Imagine that the energy from the inhaled air is being attracted and lifted along the right side of the spine. Hold your breath for 3-6 seconds by closing both nostrils. Throughout this hold, practice the *Mula Bandha* contraction that we previously discussed. Close the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril in a slow, even, and deep manner for 6-10 seconds. The first cycle is complete. Six cycles will suffice. There are multiple ways to open and close the nostrils using fingers. Everyone has their own preferred method. After finishing this

exercise, take a few quick breaths to ensure your blood is well-oxygenated and fully relax.

Final note

There are people who are in need of a more simplified version of *Kriya Pranayama*. I advise them to take into account what I explain in Chapter 15.

CHAPTER 7

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA – PART 2 (Completion of First Kriya)

In order to conclude the explanation of Kriya Yoga as taught by Lahiri Mahasaya, it is necessary to include the details of the techniques that are performed alongside the main technique. The refinement of Kriya's practice is achieved through them.

The practice discussed in the preceding chapter is the fundamental technique of *Kriya Yoga*. The value of it is incalculable: no other method can match its magnificence and efficiency. If you have a strong appreciation for this practice, adding more technical instructions may make you feel a bit uneasy.

Despite this, *Bandhas* and *Mudras* are included in traditional *Kriya* teachings as additional procedures. Chapter 8 is where we will discuss the three *Bandhas*. Now we will provide a detailed description of four *Mudras*: *Maha Mudra*, *Aswini Mudra*, *Yoni Mudra*, and *Kechari Mudra*.

Make sure to take your time to become familiar with them. You will find these techniques to be both enjoyable and useful.

MAHA MUDRA

Practice the following procedure by placing a carpet on the floor. Place the left leg under the body with its heel as close to the perineum as possible, then extend the right leg forward. Deeply inhale and experience the energy rising up your spine until it reaches your head.

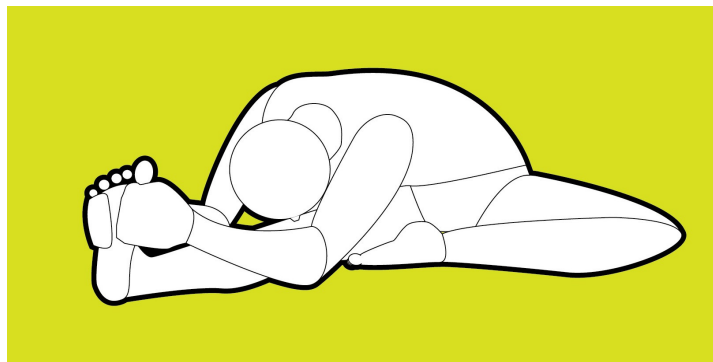


Fig.3 Maha Mudra

Hold your breath, lean forward (very relaxed) and use both hands to gently pull your right toes back a bit. When fully extended, the chin naturally rests against the chest. Continue to hold your breath and mentally repeat 'Om' at the spot between your eyebrows 6 times. While you do this, contract the anal and abdominal muscles and slightly draw the abdominal muscles inward to bring the navel toward the center of the lumbar region.

Keep holding your breath, return to your starting position. Exhale in a calm manner and sense a flow of calming energy through your spine to your *Muladhara Chakra*. Perform the same procedure with the roles of the legs reversed and then repeat it with both legs extended. This is a *Maha Mudra*. It takes about 60-80 seconds. It is necessary to repeat the *Maha Mudra* three times.

A variation of Maha Mudra.

When stretching forward, it's possible to relax your breath and repeat the *Mantra Om* 12 times, but not in *Kutastha*, but rather in *Muladhara Chakra*.

Note 1

Success in this *Mudra* must be easy and there should be no harm! Initially, it's not possible for many *kriyabans* to maintain a straight leg without risking hurting their back or knee. To avoid this, you can permit the extended leg to be slightly bent at the knee to ensure a comfortable position! In due course, you will be able to follow the instructions without any issues.

Note 2

It is recommended by the most severe *Kriya* schools to perform one *Maha Mudra* for every twelve *Kriya Pranayamas*. The minimum number is three. (To be clear, if you practice 60 *Kriya Pranayama*, you have to do *Maha Mudra* five times, while if you practice 12 or 24, you need to practice three.) Unfortunately, having heard various *kriyabans*, I can say that it's a miracle to come across one that carries out the three repetitions expected. There are individuals who deceive themselves into thinking that they are practicing *Kriya* correctly, but they have never practiced a single *Maha Mudra*. It is evident that depriving oneself of it and living a sedentary life causes the spine to become less elastic. As time goes on, conditions get worse and it's almost impossible to maintain the correct meditation posture for more than a few minutes, which is why *Maha Mudra* is such a crucial part of a *kriyaban's* practice.

Effects

While bending forward, one can become aware of both ends of the *Sushumna* and feel an energetic current moving up the spine. As time goes by, it becomes possible to see the entire *Sushumna* as a channel of radiant energy. Using this technique alone, we have accounts of *yogis* who have had fantastic experiences. According to what they are saying, there has been a significant increase in the perception of *Sushumna*. There are *kriyabans* who have set aside all the other *Kriyas* and are practicing only 144 *Maha Mudras* a day, divided into two sessions. Their opinion is that *Maha Mudra* is the most beneficial technique in all of *Kriya Yoga*.

Details of little importance

It has come to my attention that some schools are insistent on irrelevant details. For instance, they instruct the practice of bringing closer to the body the knee of the leg being stretched to ensure that the upper leg is as close to the chest as possible. The hands, which have their fingers intertwined, are wrapped around the knee and apply pressure to it. Before the third movement, both knees are brought closer to the body. It is said that this can help to keep the back straight and allow the inner sound of the *Anahata Chakra* to be audible. This seems improbable to me, but I refrain from commenting.

THE OPTIONAL USE OF ASWINI MUDRA IN KRIYA PRANAYAMA

Aswini Mudra involves the pulsating contraction of the muscles at the bottom of the spine, especially the anal sphincter, at a regularity of roughly two contractions per second. This *Mudra*, which is a potent energetic practice, activates and mobilizes stagnant energy in the first *Chakra* (*Muladhara*), encouraging it to rise up the spine. You can use this *Mudra* continuously as you inhale and exhale during *Kriya Pranayama*. After becoming familiar with this practice, one will come to understand that its effects can be truly overwhelming.

NAVI KRIYA

Many people find this technique to be tedious and skip it because they don't see the benefits. In fact, practicing it is not strictly necessary when starting *Kriya Pranayama*. It will become increasingly important to keep the breath subtle before dealing with the *Higher Kriyas*.

Description of the technique

Don't pay attention to your breath; let it be natural. Bring your chin down into the hollow of your throat. Repeat the *Mantra 'Om'* 100 times either verbally or mentally in the navel region. Then rise the chin as high as possible, *Om* is chanted about 25 times, with attention focused on the third *Chakra Manipura*. This is one *Navi Kriya*. Perform a total of four *Navi Kriyas*.

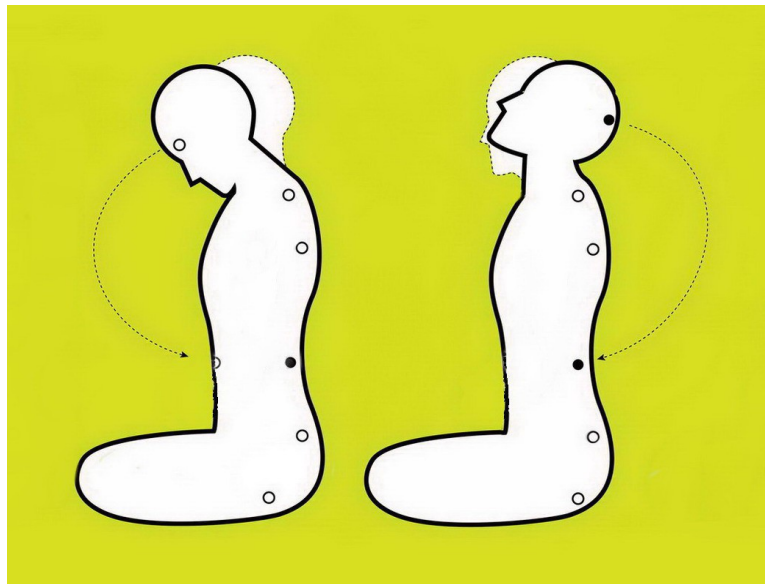


Fig.4 Navi Kriya

If you'd like, the hands can be involved in this exercise. In the first part, the thumbs gently press the navel during each *Om* chant by interlocking the fingers with palms down and the tips of the thumbs touching. When the chin is raised, the fingers intertwine behind the back and the palms are facing upwards. For each *Om*, the thumbs apply light pressure to the lumbar vertebrae.

Variant of Navi Kriya

To make this variation, chant the *mantra Om* alternately between the point between the eyebrows and the navel. Mentally chant *Om* in *Kutastha* when you experience a spontaneous inhalation. Mentally chant *Om* in the navel when a spontaneous exhalation occurs. Repetition of this will result in a strong sense of calm and the tendency for your breath to disappear. After chanting *Om* for around 100 times, raise your chin. Chant *Om* mentally while alternately chanting in *Bindu* and in *Manipura*. After chanting *Om*

about 25 times, return to the normal position of the chin. This signifies that you have executed this version of *Navi Kriya* once. Finding time to practice the entire procedure four times is difficult because this practice is slower than the previous one. Two repetitions are sufficient due to this reason.

YONI MUDRA

The perfect time to practice this technique is in the deep stillness of the night, when silence is all around and one is totally and perfectly relaxed. The quality of sleep following *Yoni Mudra* is improved. Awareness can attain the so-called state of "Super-consciousness" by passing through the layers of the subconscious.

Inhale deeply using a *Kriya* breath, guide the energy into the central part of your head and close your ears with your thumbs. The index fingers should be used to close the eyelids, the middle fingers should be used to close the nostrils, and the ring and little fingers should be used to close the lips. Pointing outward, the elbows are parallel to the ground. Make sure they don't become too exhausted; offer them support if needed.

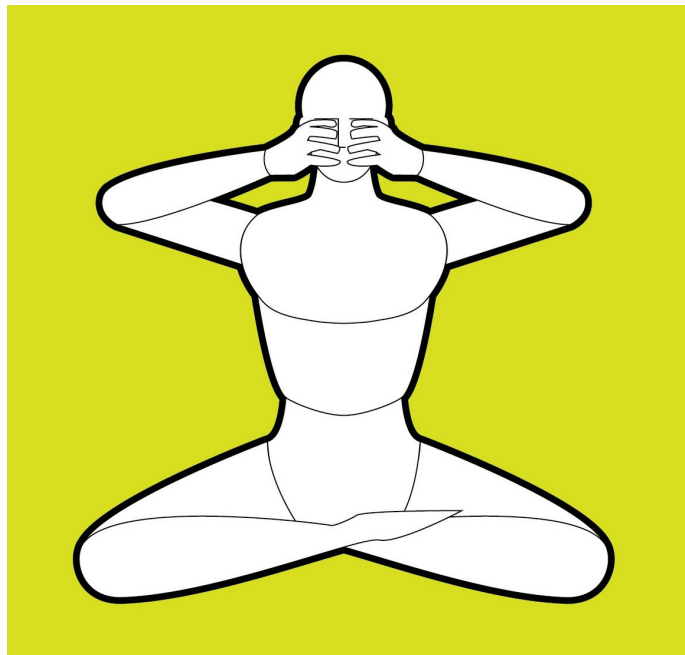


Fig.5 Yoni Mudra

Hold your breath and mentally repeat '*Om*' several times while looking at the point between your eyebrows. Try to hold your breath for as long as it feels comfortable. The index fingers shouldn't press on the eyes while observing the light, as this would be harmful and useless! Pull the lids

downwards with your index fingers and then press onto the top of the cheekbones at the corners of the eyes. When you feel the urge to breathe, exhale and bring awareness down your spine. *Yoni Mudra* is usually done once. After performing *Yoni Mudra*, try to remain focused at the center of your eyebrows for as long as possible, in order to experience the light of *Kutastha*.

[In the previous chapter, during the description of the initial stage of *Kriya Pranayama*, we talked about the significance of maximizing awareness of the inner space of *Chidakasha* and trying to perceive its edges well. I urge you to read those lines again as they are of utmost significance right now.]

At certain important schools, it is advised to increase the number of *Om* repetitions by one a day, up to a maximum of 200, while holding your breath during *Yoni Mudra*. It is recommended not to force. Now, is there any way to achieve these results without using force? It is clear to us that meeting this request is a difficult task. From my perspective, it is only after dealing with the *Thokar* procedure that this undertaking can be seriously considered.

For those who are interested in starting this journey, I have a simple remedy that can alleviate the discomfort of a long *Kumbhaka*. Following a quick inhale, firmly shut all the head openings except for the nostrils. Release a small amount of air, then immediately close the nostrils. Relax the chest muscles as if you are starting a new inhalation: this will give you the sensation that your breath is calmer in the area from the throat to the point between the eyebrows. This situation allows for the repetition of *Om* and focus on the point between the eyebrows to continue for extended periods of time.

A GUIDE TO THE FINAL PART OF THE ROUTINE

As stated in Chapter 6, the *Kriya Pranayama* technique is broken down into two parts. The initial part involves utilizing breath to stabilize and calm the mind. The second part involves calming the breath and turning the mind inward until all that remains is our consciousness, which is bliss. The name for this action is *Paravastha*.

Once we have completed the techniques of *Kriya Yoga*, we will be ready to experience the deepest meditation. There are several ways to interpret meditation, with some seeing it as being absorbed into a particular ecstatic state. Some people advocate for simply taking pleasure in the benefits of *Kriya Pranayama*.

However, there is a problem. Trying to get this state without calming down the breath can result in a simple mental distraction. Therefore, to calm the

breath, we will utilize a highly effective technique that is centered around concentrating on the *Chakras*. This practice is called *Mental Pranayama*. So let's start with it and then move on to describe the state of *Paravastha*.

MENTAL PRANAYAMA

Chakras are akin to psycho-physical knots that can be dissolved through concentration. The action gives us a sensation of vastness and freedom, like being in heaven, and we melt in pure joy. A *Kriya* routine that doesn't end in enjoying such sweetness is like a musical group that prepares all their instruments, tunes them, and then leaves everything without playing! Let's give an explanation of how to practice *this technique*.

Upon taking three deep breaths, allow your breath to flow naturally and let go of it. Move your consciousness along your spine, pausing for 10-15 seconds at each *Chakra*.

Start by focusing on the first, then move on to the second, and so on. After ascending to the *Medulla*, the descent begins with the fifth *Chakra*, followed by the fourth *Chakra*, and so on. A complete round can be finished within 2-3 minutes. Enjoy a few rounds while boosting your inner tranquility. Make an effort to perceive the sweetness coming from every *Chakra*.

Relax and take pleasure in the natural sweetness that happens without causing any strain on your *Chakras*. Keep this experience simple by not adding unnecessary details, as they may be helpful in other techniques but not in this one. To cite an example, steer clear of contracting the muscles near each *Chakra*, as well as intense visualizations and *Bija Mantras*. It's probable that the sweetness will be dispersed. Even chanting *Om* mentally in each *Chakra* might be disturbing at this moment. Stay mindful of every *Chakra* until you sense a sweetness that feels like it's melting. During the practice itself, you will learn the meaning of 'melting'.

PARAVASTHA

The *Paravastha* session in *Kriya* involves pure meditation that leads to enlightenment. *Paravastha* is a term that means "Awareness of the beyond-state of *Kriya*." Both the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and establishing *Paravastha* are vital. After performing both *Kriya Pranayama* and *Mental Pranayama*, we have reached the state that Lahiri Mahasaya referred to as **Equilibrium**. It is now possible to maintain sustained attention to awareness without relying on objects. "Self-consciousness" is what the *Paravastha* state is all about.

We no longer have to think, no longer have to realize our desires, and no longer have to grasp goals outside of ourselves. A state of pure bliss is born

from this! In this state, we reside in the "Present", where we are conscious of our "I am". To achieve it, all we need to do is to bring Consciousness behind it and above it. We no longer turn our gaze towards the mental dimension, but we turn our attention 180 degrees and focus on our own Consciousness.

Consciousness therefore observes itself. Our attention is focused on pure essence, which does not have any content. This is the real state of '*Paravastha*', a state of self-awareness consciously maintained and deepened. The feeling of being, of existing leads to a subtle bliss in one's heart. One embraces this bliss, they immerse themselves in it. It expands and expands. *Paravastha* is defined by this. By ignoring any disturbance caused by thoughts, one can continue in this manner. This power to prevent the birth of thoughts is possible if one has practiced *Kriya* well.

Devotion can be approached by those who are capable. If your heart comes to the most beautiful things that have evoked strong emotions in your life, it will bring a new level of peace and happiness that you have never experienced before. A clear realization of the true nature of this universe will be achieved for you.

FINAL REALIZATION

The *Paravastha* state's enjoyment is a major factor in the awakening of 'non-dual' wisdom. It is the manifestation of the aim of *Jnana Yoga*. This form of *Yoga* practice that we refer to here is not based on *Pranayama* exercises, but rather is derived from *Paravastha* and is maintained consciously by using one's intuition. Dealing with the *Advaita* point of view of non-duality is not very natural for those who are used to taking for granted the duality typical of classical *Yoga*, where the seeker is seen as a small individual who endeavors to approach the spiritual realization of the *Guru* and the incomprehensible perfect vastness of the Divine.

Jnana Yoga offers a different perspective. The seeker and the Divine are one, but the seeker is hypnotized to think they are a small part of the Divine, a part that is filled with ignorance and suffering. Usually, people think that *Jnana Yoga* is a kind of intellectual practice that involves only reading scriptures that propose a continuous question 'Who am I?'

True *Jnana Yoga* is the awakening of true Discernment-Wisdom that occurs by dwelling in the state of 'I am'. If you ask yourself, during *Paravastha*, 'Who am I?', you will hear a clear answer: firstly, 'I am.' I am a Consciousness that is immersed in Bliss and doesn't engage in life's experiences.

To attain this awareness, the only way is to dwell and merge with the sense of existence, understanding that you are just the content-less background of

Consciousness itself. In conclusion, you cannot live only by focusing on techniques, and you cannot even live on pure philosophy, convinced that no practice is necessary. To eliminate the distortion of the ego that clouds the truth of our existence as pure joy beyond time and eternity, a practical action must be taken.

To summarize, it's important to remember that the correct practice is not limited to practicing *Kriya* techniques with excellent concentration on its own but the one that involves ultimately dwelling in the state of *Paravastha* reaching the transparent peak of *Jnana Yoga*, which is like a transparent and lucid crystal that shines brightly, with the addition of spontaneous devotion that is born from the silence of one's heart.

Two examples of how to conceive your routine are presented briefly here

The most rational approach is to do Maha Mudra, K. Pranayama, Navi Kriya, Yoni Mudra at night, Mental Pranayama, and Paravastha.

Another is: K. Pranayama (only 12). Maha Mudra, Navi Kriya, completing the chosen number of K. Pranayamas, Yoni Mudra at night, Mental Pranayama, and Paravastha.

The second example is based on commencing with a short *Kriya Pranayama* session and then utilizing the techniques of *Maha Mudra* and *Navi Kriya* to prepare for a more intensive *Kriya Pranayama* session. The sweetness of *Mental Pranayama* and *Paravastha* is what completes this method of practice.

KECHARI MUDRA

The ancient *yogis* understood the value of linking the tip of the tongue to the seat of calm *Prana* in the brain. The uvula is rarely touched by the tongue and it's rare for the tongue to enter the nasal pharynx. It is explained that this prevents people from connecting with the significant energy resource that exists in the *Sahasrara* region.

The experience of *Kriya Pranayama* with *Kechari Mudra* is an enchanting one, and it is one of the greatest moments in one's life as a *kriyaban*. Generally, a novice holds their tongue in the '*baby Kechari*' position. This means that the tip of the tongue touches the palate at the point where it goes from hard to soft.

The mind can be quieted by this simple fact. The term *Kechari Mudra* entails inserting the tongue into the nasal pharynx cavity. It is recommended that the tongue be in this position when practicing *Kriya Pranayama*. Not everyone has the ability to practice this way. Let's explain the method (*Talabya Kriya*) used to obtain *Kechari Mudra*.

- ***Talabya Kriya***

The tongue is in a relaxed state, and the tip is touching the inner side of the upper arch of teeth. Press your tongue's entire body against your upper palate starting from this position to create a suction effect.

DON'T TURN YOUR TONGUE BACK!



Fig.6 Key part of Talabya Kriya

Once you have achieved the sucker effect, lower your lower jaw by opening your mouth and feel the stretch of the *frenulum* clearly. The *frenulum* is the tissue that connects the tongue and the mouth's base. The act of stretching can cause some discomfort. Expel your tongue with a snap and then release it from your mouth to point towards your chin. In the beginning, do not exceed 10 repetitions a day in order to avoid straining too much or causing a wound to the *frenulum*. In just a few days, you can achieve 50 repetitions in roughly two minutes.

Regrettably, some individuals are unsuccessful in understanding how to make the tongue stick to the palate like a sucker before opening the mouth and stretching the frenulum. They may still be unable to do it correctly, even if it's shown to them in person.

The key to success is to try it when you're alone and relaxed. Many individuals practice *Talabya Kriya* incorrectly by instinctively turning their tongue back. Their problem is the tendency to concentrate too much on where to place the tip of the tongue. To achieve a suction effect, the tip of the tongue must be relaxed while the entire body of the tongue is utilized.

Note

The *Talabya Kriya* technique can be made even more effective by massaging both the tongue and frenulum with your fingers. Lahiri Mahasaya was firmly against cutting the frenulum for quicker and simpler results. Other suggestions for stretching the frenulum can be found in *Hatha Yoga* texts. A commonly used method involves wrapping a piece of cloth around the tongue and using your hands, gently pulling the cloth both horizontally and upwards towards the tip of the nose. To ensure success, it's important to relax and repeat this procedure multiple times. In my view, these techniques are not very useful and are not even remotely comparable to the effectiveness of *Talabya Kriya*.

I hope everyone understands that *Talabya Kriya* and *Kechari Mudra* are two completely distinct practices! During the initial part of *Talabya Kriya*, you can observe concave parts on both sides of the frenulum by opening your mouth in front of a mirror. If you practice *Kechari Mudra* perfectly, you will find yourself in a completely different situation. Namely, the uvula moves forward but only the root of the tongue is noticeable because the tip of the tongue is hidden behind the uvula!

Practicing *Talabya Kriya*, apart from achieving *Kechari Mudra*, also has a noticeable relaxing effect on the process of thinking. *Talabya Kriya* should not be viewed as a straightforward exercise for stretching (lengthening) the frenulum of the tongue. When our tongue is stuck to the palate the energetic fracture between our body and the static *Prana* reservoir located in the upper head is temporarily healed.

You can easily enter a meditative state because of this fact. *Talabya Kriya* is known for its calming effect on the thought-forming process. It's hard to explain why acting on the frenulum can reduce the tendency to form useless thoughts.

It's a fact that anyone can see this effect. *Talabya Kriya* is a physical action that requires no concentration, which is odd to say. A distinct sensitivity in the *Medulla* region can be developed by applying pressure to the tongue against the upper palate and maintaining the suction effect on the palate. The tongue extension detail is also significant. The tongue, when fully extended, pulls in certain cranial bones and aids in the decompression of the entire area.

● ***What happens when you practice Talabya Kriya for a few months?***

It is appropriate to assess how close we are to *Kechari Mudra* after practicing *Talabya Kriya* daily for several months.

By pushing the base of the tongue inwards with two fingers, we can check if the tip of the tongue can touch the uvula. If the tip of your tongue is contacting your uvula, try to push the base of your tongue inward for some time every day. When the time comes, the tip of your tongue will be capable of going beyond the uvula. In time, it will be possible for you to touch the *pharynx* located behind the uvula. At some point, the tip of the tongue will extend into the nasal *pharynx* for a short distance. It's likely that removing the fingers that were pressing on the base of the tongue will cause it to slide out immediately. After a few more days of exercise, the tongue will remain in that position as if it had been "trapped". This moment is crucial. The tongue can't slide out because the soft palate (from where the uvula hangs) acts as an elastic band.



Fig.7 Kechari Mudra. The tip of the tongue enters the nasal-pharynx

The practice becomes easier and more comfortable if you practice at least 6-12 *Kriya Pranayama* with your tongue in this position every day. Of course, there are drawbacks like increased salivation that occasionally necessitate swallowing. This method of practice allows some individuals to attain the *Kechari* position without the use of their fingers. The tongue tip has the ability to enter the nasopharyngeal cavity without any assistance. Inhaling and exhaling through the nose will always be possible in this cavity.

According to some stories, the tongue should be able to extend even higher than the nasal pharynx. According to anatomical atlases, the tongue is

unable to move further once it has filled the nasal pharynx. The statement in these stories should be interpreted as a suggestion of what a typical person deceives themselves into believing is taking place. It's possible to have a strong attraction towards the point between the eyebrows by extending the tongue to its maximum limit. The sensation of reaching a higher position with the tip of the tongue originates from this.

While practicing *Kechari Mudra* during *Kriya Pranayama*, the exhalation has a subtle sound that resembles that of a small flute. It is symbolically known as the '*flute of Krishna*'. This Sound is generated in the nasal pharynx's upper part. After a prolonged period of practice, it is no longer possible to distinguish the difference between the sound of inhalation and that of exhalation. The sound Lahiri Mahasaya described is like blowing air through a keyhole. He stated that it is capable of eliminating any external factors that cause distraction, including thoughts. He explains that it's like a razor that removes everything that's connected to the mind. The *shee shee* sound can be easily intensified to bring about the awakening of *Kundalini*. In any case, always allow this sound to completely engulf your mind.

Is Kechari Mudra essential for the practice of Higher Kriyas?

According to *Kriya* reference literature, reaching the perfect form of *Kechari Mudra* ((and therefore not limit oneself to the simple form described in chapter 6) is essential for being initiation into the *Higher Kriyas*. It's not uncommon for a *Kriya* teacher to ask for the *Kechari* to be performed in person by inviting them to open their mouths and verifying that the tongue is inserted into the nasal cavity. While a perfect *Kechari Mudra*'s effect is significant, I am of the opinion that it is important, but not essential. It is false to believe that one can't attain the state of *Eternal Tranquility* until one is established in the perfect *Kechari Mudra*, which I have heard many times.

It's hard to believe that *Kechari*'s achievement can create a distinct divide among people. Those in lower classes won't be able to access the *Higher Kriyas* because they won't be capable of obtaining something physical based on their constitution instead of their efforts. They will never be able to accelerate their spiritual path because nature has not provided them with a longer frenulum or a nasal pharynx that is more accessible at the tip of their tongue! I find this idea to be absurd!

I am convinced that the simple form of *Kechari Mudra* can suffice for those who are unable to achieve the perfect form.

Anyone who has the ability to practice the perfect *Kechari Mudra* is encouraged to use it throughout their *Kriya* routine.

Kechari caused me to experience dizziness that lasted for a few weeks. Eventually, I learned to manage this mental fog. Those who are able to reach this position of the tongue should be cautious during the first three weeks as they may experience a feeling of dizziness that causes their mental faculties to seem dull. It's advisable to be aware of this and consider avoiding driving or working if there's a significant amount of risk involved.

I recall my initial encounter with Kechari Mudra, especially the instances when I held this position for a many hours

When I reached stability in this Mudra, I noticed some of its effects. At times, this technique permits the tip of the tongue to touch the area where the nasal passage meets the nasal pharynx. In *Kriya* literature, the soft tissue in the nose that contains the nasal holes is referred to as the "*uvula above the uvula.*"

The tip of the tongue is able to comfortably touch this small area. During the execution of the *Kriya* routine, it is possible for breathing to become almost still. Without looking at anything particular, the gaze suddenly stays fixed on the infinite. The mind is calm and free from unnecessary thoughts. The state of consciousness is marked by silence and transparency, with the mind stopping talking.

The mind functions more rationally and gets the benefits of rest; every thought becomes more concrete and precise. During the day's activities, it is possible to use intuition to handle any practical difficulties that may come up in life. The inner order's perfect transparency makes it possible to solve problems.

Modesty is always admired, but once it's experienced, there's a great euphoria (like discovering Aladdin's magical lamp). The ideal of perfection in *Kriya Pranayama* is represented by a practice with *Kechari Mudra*.

The days when I spent hours with the tongue in *Kechari Mudra* are especially memorable to me. I would occasionally take a walk. When I stopped and talked to someone, I was so happy that I couldn't hold back tears of joy.

Suddenly, joy burst out of my chest and reached my eyes. I concentrated on the distant mountains and attempted to direct my emotions in a manner that would transform my paralyzing joy into an aesthetic rapture. This was used by me to conceal my joy. To the person in front of me, I would emphasize the beauty of the scenery.

Comparing the new condition in which I spent those days to what I believed to be the life of mystics, I became aware of the difficulty of living, of carrying out daily and worldly duties without feeling paralyzed by an

ever-present feeling of intoxication! When I realized the benefits of practicing *Kechari Mudra* and felt that its beauty overflowed and saturated my life, I think I was born to the *original Kriya*.

... it's hard to stay mad, when there's so much beauty in the world. Sometimes I feel like I'm seeing it all at once, and it's too much, my heart fills up like a balloon that's about to burst... And then I remember to relax, and stop trying to hold on to it, and then it flows through me like rain and I can't feel anything but gratitude for every single moment of my stupid little life. (From the movie *American Beauty*; 1999)

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR IMPLEMENTING THE HIGHER KRIYAS PRACTICE?

“By limiting one's practice to the techniques of the *First Kriya*, one can attain final realization on the spiritual path.” This is the statement made by Lahiri Mahasaya! It's also true that Lahiri Mahasaya affirmed that the practice of *Thokar* could provide significant assistance. He appreciated that some of his students were practicing this technique with great intensity. As time went by and his experience increased, he came to the realization that there are other methods that can aid in achieving perfection in the practice of *Kriya*. I am primarily talking about *Tribhangamurari Thokar's* practice.

To gain a better understanding of the situation, let's look at a commonly acknowledged fact in *Kriya* literature. *Kriya Yoga* is viewed as a spiritual path in four stages.

To begin with, let's define the concept of internal knots. Perhaps the reader has already encountered Lahiri Mahasaya's quote: “Every religious path consists of four stages characterized by the untying of four internal knots (*Granti*): tongue, navel, heart, and *Muladhara*.” *Kriya's* entire process is often hindered by these knots. Our miseries are caused by their nourishment of superficial emotions and thoughts.

The **TONGUE KNOT** (*Jihvah – or Jihva – Granthi*). It is a physiological reality that our tongue normally does not come into contact with the uvula or enter the nasal pharynx. Due to this reason, we are unable to access the energy reserve located in the *Sahasrara* region.

This knot is untied using *Kechari Mudra*. The most extraordinary event is when *Pranayama* is practiced with *Kechari*, and the exhaled breath produces a beautiful sound similar to that of a flute. The power it possesses to cleanse the mind is comparable to a “razor that cuts everything that has

to do with the mind.”

Kechari Mudra has the ability to bring about subtle changes in our psycho-physical system. Calming the unwanted and useless thoughts that the mind keeps producing can be achieved.

When we engage in *Kechari Mudra*, we sense the significance of the moments spent with the tongue in that position. As the mind loses its dictatorial role, there are moments of incredible calm and mental silence that pervade the being.

The person may not understand what is happening to them, at least not immediately; they may feel like a convalescent just recovering from a state in which their mind was blocked. Initially, the *kriyaban* may feel dazed and disoriented, but eventually they realize the unreplaceable value of *Kechari Mudra* and comprehend the enormous energy waste that the tongue knot causes in life.

Kechari Mudra is the best way to receive the maximum benefits from our *Kriya* practice. Our psycho-physical system will undergo many subtle changes, the most significant of which is the quieting of all unwanted and useless thoughts.

After attaining *Kechari Mudra*, we address the **NAVEL KNOT** (*Nabhi Granthi*). The trauma of cutting the umbilical cord is behind this knot, which symbolizes the loss of the state of tranquility that we were immersed in before birth. Its essence is the rift that is created within the person.

Joy and tranquility are manifestations of the spiritual side of a person, which reside in the higher *Chakras* and the head, while the material side is located in the lower *Chakras*. There is a significant amount of misery caused by this rift: there is no lasting happiness without repositioning the original unity, at least partially. The location of this knot is the point where the *Prana* and *Apana* currents come together and activate the balancing *Samana* current. To find the path to the heart, it is necessary to unite these currents, which means awakening the *Samana* current.

The activation of the *Samana* current is an extraordinary event because it infuses our consciousness with the state of *Equilibrium*, creating that indefinable condition that some *Kriya* teachers refer to as the “state of *Kriya* absorption”. A beginner cannot comprehend the depth of practice that results from this. For this reason, *Samana* is defined as an “arrow” that, starting from the center of the body’s “bow”, can eventually reach its “target”, *Kutastha*, and reveal the spiritual light.

This knot can be untied by mastering the *Navi Kriya* technique. Understanding what happens when *Navi Kriya* acts requires referring to the

Dantian center. *Taoist Internal Alchemy* introduced this center as a tangible reality and not just a theoretical hypothesis. Crossing the navel knot entails consciously reaching the *Dantian* center. It is explained that living in this area means being born into spiritual life. The *Dantian* is a place where sexual, love, and spiritual energies are combined. It contains our unique vibration, the “note”, which embodies our will to live in the physical body. *Kriya Yoga* books simply state that “the process of *Samadhi* begins at the navel center.”

What is the consequence of not being taught Navi Kriya?

Other facts could compensate for its absence. For example we know that during the exhalation phase of *Pranayama*, the abdomen is drawn in at the end of the exhalation and there is a clear perception of the navel moving towards the spine. If we practice *Pranayama* a significant number of times, we can replace *Navi Kriya* by being aware of this movement.

Let's consider the **HEART KNOT** (*Hridaya Granthi*, also known as *Vishnu Granthi*). Lord *Vishnu* oversees preservation. Preservation of ancient knowledge, traditions, and institutions is evoked by this knot. Compassion arises when there is a strong desire to assist those who are in need. All this is very beautiful, but we must also understand that by removing this knot, we free ourselves from illusory bonds that are deeply rooted in our genetic code.

It is the cause of the superficial emotions that nourish the world of thoughts and suffocate the realm of deep emotions. The fundamental factor behind the human tendency to be influenced by others, to believe what is proclaimed as true by the splendor of organizations and churches.

According to Lahiri Mahasaya, untying this knot allows access to the inner temple.

Spiritual reality cannot be communicated with unless our internal strength is strong: the calm and state of grace that had been created through much effort is instantly destroyed by the heart beating wildly as soon as some spiritual experience approaches.

The *Thokar* procedure is used in the *Kriya* tradition to dissolve this knot. At the end of chapter 8, I will explain the practical importance of *Thokar* in preventing the disasters wrought in our lives by sudden frenetic and violent emotions. By conquering them, or rather, by overcoming them, we can attain a state of imperturbable peace.

If life conditions allow, it would be a good idea to start practicing *Thokar*, which is also known as *Second Kriya*. Using a specific pressure or blow to the *Anahata Chakra* causes the heart knot to be struck. By repeatedly using

the *Thokar* procedure, it is possible to pierce this knot.

By untying this knot, a *kriyaban* becomes one with the element of air (the fourth of the five *Tattwas*), which is located in the fourth *Chakra*. The *Tattwas* consist of five elements, which include earth, water, fire, air, and ether (space). As explained, everything in the universe is comprised of a blend of these five forms of energy. For a *kriyaban*, the theory of *Tattwas* is not idle speculation. We view them as a precise succession of states of consciousness, whose intimate essence we encounter during our final journey toward Absolute Consciousness.

By attuning to the Air *Tattwa*, you can enter a sublime state where your awareness of Divine Sound and Light is greatly intensified. The cardiac plexus controls breathing and makes it possible to attain a breathless state.

Finally, we come to the **MULADHARA KNOT** (*Brahma Granthi*). Energy must pass through the powerful obstruction at the base of the spine to reach the realm of the Spirit. To release it, it means achieving a perfect state of balance, the cessation of all tension between opposites, which is the state Lahiri Mahasaya called *Tranquility*. Only when this happens is it possible to enter the Spirit realm freely through the spinal gateway.

This is the most significant obstacle to spiritual pursuit. It hinders *Kundalini*'s ability to move freely within the spine. Meditation is not effective without untying this knot. The world of names and forms causes disorientation and hinders the mind from focusing on a specific point. The mind gets stuck due to ambitions and desires.

Untying this knot will shatter the screen of illusion and allow *Kundalini* to rise with all its power and reach *Kutastha*. Time-bound awareness dissolves – the yogi establishes himself in the supreme *Atman*, whose seat is in the *Sahasrara Chakra*. Total liberation is accomplished.

It can be said that this knot is also found in *Kutastha*, since the opening of the spine's door is also present there. The so-called “spiritual eye” is actually the vision of the spine's cross-section.

A strong resistance exists to maintaining the vision of the spiritual eye. The *Avarana* and *Vikshepa* currents are referred to in some texts as forces that distract and deceive our concentration. If we can overcome them, we will perceive the spiritual eye, enter it with our consciousness, and our awareness will reach perfect emancipation.

What's the proper way to untie this knot? Holding the breath in *Maha Mudra* and *Yoni Mudra* is the simplest and most direct method. It is of great value to gradually increase the number of repetitions of *Om* by one per day, with a maximum of 200, during *Yoni Mudra*. One *Maha Mudra* is

recommended for every 12 *Pranayamas*. The *First Kriya's* teachings are sufficient to achieve all of this.

Regarding the *Higher Kriyas*, we know that through the *Second* and *Third Kriyas*, the heart space has been illuminated. Now is the time to achieve a similar experience in the seat of each *Chakra*.

To achieve this, *Hatha Yoga* teaches the use of the *Bija Mantras*.⁴ The different colors of the *Tattwas* are perceived using a different teaching in the *Fourth Kriya*. Experiencing the *Tattwa* of Air is such a profound state that many people stay ensnared to it for the rest of their lives. In the *Fourth Kriya*, introduced in Chapter 8, one achieves a complete experience of the five *Tattwas*. It has been explained that after twelve *Pranayamas* of the *Fourth Kriya*, the screen of illusion is broken and awareness is able to enter *Sushumna* and travel towards *Kutastha*.

Mastering the breathlessness plays an important role in achieving the proper effect. Legends state that this *Kriya* was confined to a small group of disciples due to this reason. It is my belief that Lahiri met this requirement by creating the *Fifth Kriya*. When a *kriyaban* decides to carry out this procedure, they encounter numerous splendid experiences and the final internal barriers are eliminated one by one. The final result occurs after years of hard work.

Conclusion

In practice, the *Higher Kriyas* are concerned with untying two knots: that of the heart and that of *Muladhara*. The practice of the *Higher Kriyas* is performed only when the breath has become subtle and calm through *Kriya Pranayama*, and obviously, when there is sufficient time for such practice. In fact, these practices are usually carried out towards the end of life, when the person is retired and the children are grown and independent.

⁴ A *Bija Mantra* is a "seed sound" that, when chanted verbally or mentally, manifests its potential. The first element is **Earth**, which represents a solid foundation for every beginning; its *Bija Mantra* is "LAM". The second element is **Water**, which is the sphere of the unconscious, emotions, and intuition. Its *Bija Mantra* is "VAM." The third element is **Fire**, which governs the realm of passion, creativity, and enthusiasm. Its *Bija Mantra* is "RAM." The fourth element is **Air**, which influences emotional stability and creative imagination. Its *Bija Mantra* is "YAM". The last element is **Ether**, which controls change and growth; its *Bija Mantra* is "HAM".

CHAPTER 8

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA (Higher Kriyas as explained by Major schools)

My focus is on the descriptions of Higher Kriyas that enable those who follow the Kriya path to overcome even the most stubborn internal obstacles. The techniques outlined involve practicing Kumbhaka, which is holding the breath.

The *Higher Kriyas* come in many different forms, but we will be focusing on the tradition that was passed down by *Panchanan Bhattacharya*, who was directly taught by Lahiri Mahasaya. There are two categories of *Kriyas*: the initial group (which we will cover in this chapter) demands the ability to hold one's breath for an extended period of time. This skill is always developed with great caution and in a gradual manner.

The remaining group will be discussed in the forthcoming chapter, which necessitates attaining the state of 'calm breath' state before practicing. The state of '*calm breath*' is achieved by the *kriyaban* by attaining a long, but extremely subtle, almost non-existent breath while practicing *Pranayama*. The throat is no longer making any sound. Putting into words the state of 'calm breath' is a difficult task. It is only those who have experienced it in their own practice that can understand it.

The techniques that are covered in this chapter include the technique of *Thokar*, the *Advanced Thokar*, and *Pratichakra Omkar Kriya*. *Thokar* is given the name *Second Kriya*, while *Advanced Thokar* is given the name *Third Kriya*, and finally *Pratichakra Omkar Kriya* is given the name *Fourth Kriya*. These are the names commonly utilized by schools connected to *Panchanan Bhattacharya*.

AN INTRODUCTION TO BANDHAS

In the *Second Kriya (Thokar)*, we use three *Bandhas*: *Mula Bandha*, *Uddiyana Bandha*, and *Jalandhara Bandha*.

They can be defined as energetic “locks” that act as valves to direct and contain the flow of *Prana* within the body. Their function is to prevent energy from dispersing and direct it towards the spinal column and *Chakras*. The three *Bandhas* must be integrated in *Thokar* practice to ensure breathwork's full effectiveness.

In Chapter 6, we talked about *Mula Bandha* while describing *Nadi Sodhana Pranayama*. The contraction of the perineum (the area between the anus and the genitals) is what we're discussing. *Mula Bandha*, known as the 'root lock,' is a yoga practice characterized by conscious mental and physical pressure at the base of the spine. It is believed to be an essential tool for converting sexual energy into spiritual power and channeling it towards elevating consciousness.

This method is not the same as *Aswini Mudra*, which entails simple rhythmic contractions of the anal sphincter. *Mula Bandha's* action is more refined: it creates an upward closing sensation, as if the pelvic floor is being raised internally. A slight upward movement of the pubic area, which involves the pelvic diaphragm, can increase the effect.

The flow of the vital current *Apana*, which usually moves downward, is reversed on an energetic level by *Mula Bandha*. Conscious contraction is used to guide *Apana* upward until it reaches *Prana* in the navel region. The stimulation of energy flow along the central *Sushumna* channel is achieved by this union, which leads to the overcoming of the energetic duality associated with the lateral *Ida* and *Pingala* channels.

To perform *Jalandhara Bandha*, one must bend their chin toward their chest while maintaining a gentle contraction in the neck and throat area. By using this technique, the flow of subtle energy can be directed towards the heart *Chakra*.

Lifting the abdomen upward after a deep exhalation is how *Uddiyana Bandha* is done. After inhalation, it can also be utilized, and this is precisely what we will do during the *Thokar* practice we will be discussing. To do this technique, simply pull the navel region as tightly as possible. Increase the perception of energy in the *Manipura Chakra* by maintaining a gentle abdominal contraction. The other two *Bandhas* will accompany *Uddiyana Bandha*.

SECOND KRIYA: THOKAR

Once a *kriyaban* is well-versed in the principal technique of *Kriya Yoga*, which is *Pranayama*, he can complete the exercise of *Kriya Yoga* by adding the *Thokar* procedure to his routine.

In anticipation of our explanation, we can say that the *kriyaban* uses a 'jerk' to direct his inner strength towards the *Chakra* of the heart. *Thokar's* distinctive feature is this technical detail. The mind experiences emptiness and encounters a state of perfect calm.

Practical instruction

This procedure entails using the *Vasudeva Mantra* 'Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya' which has 12 syllables.⁵ This *mantra* is used to deeply touch each *Chakra*.

Bring your chin down slightly. Moderately tighten the muscles at the bottom of your spine. To create mental pressure on the first three *Chakras*, the hands have intertwined fingers placed above the navel. By adding *Uddiyana Bandha*, this pressure is refined. Breathe in and slowly lift your chin as you follow the inner movement of *Prana*. Mentally recite the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*. *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 *Medulla*. When you finish inhaling, hold your breath, lower your head forward, and touch your chest with your chin.

Move your head to the left and turn your face to the left while lifting your chin until it's over your left shoulder and parallel to the ground. Then rotate your head to the right, in counterclockwise direction. Mentally intone *Te* in the heart *Chakra* when the head is facing forward centered between the shoulders and the chin is raised pushing the head backward as much as possible. Continue rotating the head counterclockwise until the right ear reaches the right shoulder, avoiding turning the face to the right.

Continue to rotate until the chin is back in the center and touching the chest. Don't stop, just keep rotating by moving your head to the left, turning your face to the left, and raising your chin until it's above your left shoulder. At this moment, tense up the cervical muscles and chant *Va* in the heart *Chakra*.

Continue the rotation to the right. Attained the center point between your shoulders, bend forward, bring your chin down to your chest with a sharp movement, and mentally chant *Su* in your heart *Chakra*. For a mental count of six, hold your breath in this position.

In order to fully reap the benefits of this pause, it's crucial to practice the three *Bandhas* (*Mula*, *Uddiyana*, and *Jalandhara*) with a strong focus. The ancient texts of *Hatha Yoga* state that *Pranayama* is useless without the three *Bandhas*. Well, these *Bandhas* can be experienced at this precise moment. The feeling of increased energy in the heart region is a decisive factor.

⁵ I received it with the first "v" changed to "b": 'Om Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya'. I have become accustomed to writing it in this form in my descriptions.

Then, keeping your chin down, breathe out quietly. Mentally chant **De** in *Manipura*, **Va** in *Swadhisthana*, and **Ya** in *Muladhara*.

The duration of the exhalation should exceed the duration of the inhalation. This moment is very important. If you concentrate on the energy that radiates from the heart throughout the body, you will be mesmerized by the power that this procedure can create. Repeat the *Thokar* process for a minimum of 12 repetitions.

THIRD KRIYA: ADVANCED FORM OF THOKAR

Our next *Kriya* is an enormous acceleration of the *Second Kriya* that unties the heart knot with greater force. The *Kumbhaka* for this *Kriya* must be longer than the one planned in the *Second Kriya*. The instruction is to repeat the blow on the heart, which we've previously described, numerous times, while maintaining a flawless *Kumbhaka*. It is explained that the door of *Sushumna* is opened by means of this form of *Thokar*. Upon experiencing experiences of happiness, pain, peace, etc., the material and psychic bondage will be cut away.

Practical instruction

Once you have chanted **Su** in the heart, hold your breath, shift your head and face to the left by raising your chin over your left shoulder, and mentally chant **Te** in the heart *Chakra*. Continue rotating the head in the same counterclockwise direction. When the head is centered between the shoulders, chant **Va** in the heart *Chakra*. Afterward, tilt the head forward, bring the chin to the chest chanting **Su** in the heart *Chakra*. Hold your breath and keep repeating these movements as long as you can. Upon completion of your effort, exhale quietly. Chant **De** in *Manipura*, **Va** in *Swadhisthana*, and **Ya** in *Muladhara* mentally.

But now let's take into account what Lahiri Mahasaya instructed: increase the number of repetitions by one every day until you reach 200 repetitions of the movement, always holding your breath! It is essential to avoid feeling uncomfortable! Practice of this procedure with an enhanced number of repetitions of *Thokar* is limited to once daily.

Let us reflect on the difficulty of enhancing the repetitions of head movements while still maintaining a perfect Kumbhaka

Let's inquire: is it feasible to comfortably accomplish 200 rotations without disrupting the state of *Kumbhaka*? Despite reducing our movements to the essentials, fulfilling this request seems to be a daunting task. After 20-30

repetitions, it becomes common for *kriyabans* to become stuck and pant to regain breath. Would it be acceptable to move your head in an extremely fast way? This wouldn't be a good idea.

Think about a possible explanation for what happens to those who claim to have accomplished that goal. When someone approaches the limit of their ability to hold their breath, a small, almost imperceptible, sigh of air may be released when the chin is lowered towards the chest. Perhaps a very small, almost imperceptible amount of air enters when the chin is raised.

Please take note that I wrote 'almost imperceptible'! It is evident that a person does not perform any particular act of inhaling or exhaling. The *kriyaban* is unaware of this fact, and the phenomenon occurs spontaneously and unconsciously. This *kriyaban* can be convinced that he is maintaining perfect apnea.

I am of the opinion that this is the way to achieve the goal of 200 rotations. Is it within the realm of possibility that practicing this way, which we perceive as imperfect, will eventually occur in better conditions? In fact, let's reflect on how these repetitive movements of *Thokar* can act on the nerve ganglia of the heart region and influence the central cardio-respiratory system.

Are these conditions capable of enabling you to achieve the goal of perfect 200 hundred repetitions? I cannot answer. But I cannot think that the experience of 200 rotations occurs in a state of unspeakable suffering. I must believe that it occurs in a state of consciousness characterized by an increased sense of freedom from physical laws. I stress that my writing is solely based on my personal viewpoint.

FOURTH KRIYA: PRATICHAKRA OMKAR KRIYA

The heart center is where the *Prana* becomes stable during the *Second* and *Third levels* of *Kriya*. The *Fourth Kriya* can be employed to achieve a consistently stable state of *Prana* throughout *Sushumna*, specifically in each *Chakra*. The *Muladhara Granti* gets pierced through the practice of the *Fourth Kriya*.

There are numerous variations of this technique. They all share the same characteristic: through a deep inhalation, the energy of every *Chakra* is raised and held in *Kutastha* for as long as possible without any discomfort. Learning to hold your breath longer and longer is typically accomplished by gradually increasing the time you hold it.

In *Kutastha*, the six *Chakras* are viewed as a set of six moons. It is stated that one must be capable of maintaining *Prana* in *Kutastha*. If the *Prana*

starts descending slowly below the throat, it must be lifted up into *Kutastha* again. By repeating 12 cycles of the entire procedure with excellent mind stability, you can go beyond the realms of stability previously achieved. This method will lead to the dissolution of the 'shell' created by our lack of awareness of our divine nature.

Practical instruction

Concentrate on the *Muladhara Chakra*. Tense the muscles that are in close proximity to its physical location. By taking a deep breath, imagine the *Muladhara Chakra* rising up to the point between your eyebrows, where you will perceive it as a full moon. Don't touch the other *Chakras*. During this action, they do not exist.

Hold your breath and pay attention to the inner space between your eyebrows. The *Kechari Mudra* will make this task easy. ⁶ There is a particular color experience that happens between the eyebrows. Chant the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Na Mo Bha Ga Ba Te Va Su De Va Ya*) three times while holding your breath. Carefully place its syllables into the center of *Kutastha*.

Exhaling slowly is a good way to lower this *Chakra* from the point between the eyebrows to its true seat in the spine. Perform a similar action for *Chakras* 2, 3, 4, 5, and *Medulla* as well. Make sure to contract the muscles of the spine located near the seat of the *Chakra* when you lift it into *Kutastha*.

To complete the cycle, attract *Medulla* again in *Kutastha* and place it back in its position. Perform the same action for *Chakras* 5, 4, 2, 1, as well. Be mindful of a particular experience of light in *Kutastha* at all times. The key to breaking *Muladhara's* knot is to experience the different *Chakra* in this way. The *Fourth Kriya* practice is finished when the procedure described is repeated 12 times.

The *Kriya* tradition involves the *Chakras* being connected to the five *Tattwas*, which include earth, water, fire, air, and ether. ⁷ Offering every

⁶ "Ke-chari is a term that means 'the state of those who fly in the sky, in the ether'. The area between the tip of the tongue and the intersection of the eyebrows creates a specific spot that is perceived as a 'void', even though it's not actually a physical void. Immersing yourself in this space makes it easier for a *kriyaban* to perceive the rhythm of each *Chakra*.

⁷ It is explained that everything that exists in the universe is composed of the combination of these five forms of energy. The theory of *Tattwas* is not a matter of idle speculation for a *kriyaban*. The concept is that they are a concrete series of states of consciousness that the devotee can experience during their journey towards the dimension of Spirit.

Tattwa individually to the light of the spiritual eye, gathering it, and intensifying it in the region between the eyebrows is the most effective way to dissolve the final shell of illusion. This is the enigma surrounding the breaking of the *Muladhara* knot. When this happens, *Kundalini* moves and rises up.

Let us deal with the delicate subject of increasing the repetitions of the *Vasudeva Mantra* in the center of *Kutastha* for every *Chakra*. Gradually, one should achieve thirty-six repetitions for each *Chakra* while holding one's breath. This is what the tradition says. We are in an identical scenario to the one we came across with the *Third Kriya*. Chanting this *Mantra* 36 times slowly and holding our breath at that moment makes this achievement practically impossible, making it a real torture. I abide by and record what tradition has handed down to us.

Nonetheless, I hold the belief that the concept of '*perfect breath holding*' should be replaced with the concept of '*calm breath*', which is a breath that is very subtle and practically non-existent. Trying to achieve an unnatural condition would be an absurd idea to strain and hurt our bodies. To avoid feeling inferior, I suggest increasing a few numbers and being satisfied with them. My belief is that it's best to emphasize the intensity of concentration and the joy and well-being derived from the exercise.

After accomplishing the necessary number of cycles of the *Fourth Kriya* technique, the practitioner should remain silent in a contemplative manner. The mind must gradually separate itself from all the different thoughts by deeply immersing itself in the vastness of stillness and perfect balance. There are no other *Sadhanas*.

Conclusion

As previously stated, there are essentially two methods for teaching the *Higher Kriyas*. The first method was described in this chapter. You are now contemplating what to do with these directions. I think that you would like to experiment with these techniques and decide which ones will be included in your final routine. It's common for individuals to keep practicing the *Second Kriya*. I hope you find the time to learn and practice enthusiastically, and also to understand the second way in which the *Higher Kriyas* were taught. Despite being challenging, this experience will be unparalleled. We will discuss this in the next chapter.

How I acquired the information shared in the present chapter

I was aware before this book was published that the original *Second Kriya* was composed of the *Thokar* technique and that the same procedure repeated multiple

times was known as *Third Kriya*. I received a detailed description of the *Thokar*'s movements from two friends who wrote to me from the USA. It was given to them by an Indian master who had lived in the United States for a long time before passing away. The teacher was initiated by *Sri Dubey*, who relied on *Panchanan Bhattacharya*'s teachings.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MOST CRUCIAL TECHNIQUE OF THE THREE MENTIONED IN THIS CHAPTER – THOKAR (SECOND KRIYA)

In his diaries Lahiri Mahasaya wrote:

The breath is normally oriented externally. If, through the practice of *Pranayama*, it is internally oriented, then it is possible, through the technique of *Thokar*, to open the door to the inner temple. With a strong action on the *Anahata Chakra* the door opens. Deep absorption occurs and this state becomes stable for a prolonged period.

By reflecting on these teachings, we comprehend why *Thokar* is regarded as the ultimate perfection of *Kriya Pranayama*. It is a practice that every kriyaban is required to take up sooner or later.

This recommendation is made for this reason, and there are no particular risks involved: the majority of people are generally able to sustain the required breath holding.

I would like to focus now on a very important effect this practice can have on the concrete lives of those on a spiritual path: the control of superficial and potentially destructive emotions.

Controlling emotions does not imply repressing or eliminating them, but rather growing them and keeping them under the direction of wisdom and discernment.

The issue with superficial emotions

Let's consider a common fact. Fears, insecurities, and pessimism are often the source of our superficial emotions. Being able to contain them and proceed with balance, even when faced with painful conflicts, is fundamental. The practice of *Thokar* has a significant impact on our ability to prevent impulsive emotions from causing us to make irreparable decisions.

In Eastern texts, I searched for profound reflections on the topic of emotions, but often found only theoretical classifications: 'positive'

emotions (affection, happiness, contentment) versus 'negative' emotions (envy, aggression, delusion). Beyond these distinctions, there's another important point: superficial and uncontrolled emotions can wreak havoc on our lives.

It is common for us to experience sudden emotional outbursts, such as violent, frenetic, or almost hysterical ones, that quickly disappear. In those moments, we experience a modified yet highly convincing reality that urges us to act quickly, as if we were in a feverish state that is fueled by a visceral and deceptive pleasure.

It is almost impossible to listen to common sense when passion is inflaming the entire being. It's like a summer hailstorm: first it forms and gathers in the air, then it suddenly falls and causes damage. It's possible for the process that leads to fateful decisions to develop slowly in our imagination.

In our daydreams, the idea of giving up something valuable but challenging can become an alluring vision of the future. What was once thought of as cowardice can now be perceived as a luminous liberation. It's similar to a sky that's gloomy but suddenly clears and changes to a brilliant blue. This luminosity can be deceiving.

What happens after making impulsive decisions

If we act based on seductive but immature emotions, we could be setting ourselves up for disaster. Making a wrong decision, stubbornly, can result in a life of regret. At times, it appears that someone is stubbornly “defending their right to pain and suffering”, as Mother, the person closest to Sri Aurobindo, put it.

An uncontrollable urge can lead someone to abandon a course of study, a career they had dreamed of for years, or to break up deep relationships with a partner, friends, or family. In those moments, advice isn't significant: the words of the most sincere friends are rejected.

Feeling criticized or misunderstood can often cause the break-up of important bonds. A genuine observation can be turned into an unbearable offense because of pride. Criticism, even when constructive, is perceived as an act of cruelty. The more penetrated it is, the more it causes pain, as if one were swallowing a hard, sharp stone.

A *kriyaban* may think they are following the voice of their heart, but in reality, they are driven by frustrations and internal wounds. Their ability to reject any argument and act self-destructively is surprising to those around them.

A feeling of heaviness may arise after days or months. However, the mind constructs a subtle deception: the belief that one could not have acted

differently. Even when it is possible to find one's way back, pride can prevent one from doing so. While the destructive action is enjoyed with uninterrupted pleasure surrounded by flashes of blue, pride prevails.

Deep within the heart, there is a pain that persists and part of one's spiritual aspirations are entangled in the past, which one lacks the courage to sincerely revisit.

The role played by Thokar (Second Kriya)

The most effective way to address this destructive mechanism is through an intense and sincere practice of *Thokar* (*Second Kriya*).⁸ With consistent and disciplined practice, this technique can gradually change how we react.

To truly understand Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya* is to recognize how the practice of *Thokar* can have an impact on our daily lives and our relationship with those closest to us.

It is not just an advanced exercise for perfecting *Kriya Pranayama*, but also a tool for inner growth: a means of bringing balance, clarity, and responsibility to our choices.

⁸ Intensive means doing more than 48 repetitions of *Thokar* for a period of time. Another way, of immense value, is to complete the incremental routine of *Thokar Tribhangamurari* that we will describe in chapter 9.

CHAPTER 9

LAHIRI MAHASAYA'S KRIYA YOGA

(Second part of the Higher Kriyas as taught by Satya Charan Lahiri)

I am focusing on the description of other Higher Kriyas that can be practiced while in a 'calm breath' state. There is no attempt to hold back the breath or make it longer.

These techniques were taught at the school of *Satya Charan Lahiri*, who got them from his father *Tincouri Lahiri*, the son of Lahiri Mahasaya. [Master *Ashoke Kumar Chatterjee* kept this lineage alive.]

In this school, the three techniques I am going to describe are called *Second*, *Third* and *Fourth Kriya* however, to avoid confusion with the techniques described in the previous chapter I will use brackets for these names and call them either *Fifth*, *Sixth* and *Seventh Kriya* as they were called by *Panchanan Bhattacharya*. There are good reasons why I think that the ideal practice of the *higher Kriyas* should start with the eighth chapter and then proceed with the techniques explained here.

Let's get started with the *Fifth Kriya* that will be given in three steps: *Amantrak*, *Samantrak*, and *Thokar*. The *Anahata Chakra* is directly affected by the *Thokar* described in the previous chapter, but this new *Thokar* (which is also referred to as *Thokar Tribhangamurari*) affects in a special way the *Muladhara Chakra*. It is clarified that when this *Chakra* is struck, the *Kundalini* energy will move to the heart *Chakra*. Thus the *Thokar Tribhangamurari* concludes the action of the *Thokar* that was explained in the eighth chapter. The main feature of these procedures is that they are performed in the state of '*calm breath*', which is the result of a long practice of *Kriya Pranayama*.

The *Tribhangamurari* form, which is *Sri Krishna's* symbol, is the starting point for the introduction of these *higher Kriyas*. *Tribhanga* is a body position used in traditional Indian art and dance. Standing, the body bends in a particular direction for the knees, another direction for the hips, and then a different direction for the shoulders and neck. *Krishna* playing his flute is commonly depicted with one of his lower legs crossing over the other.

The drawing below is a copy of Lahiri's diary, depicting the spine as it appeared to him in *Kutastha*.

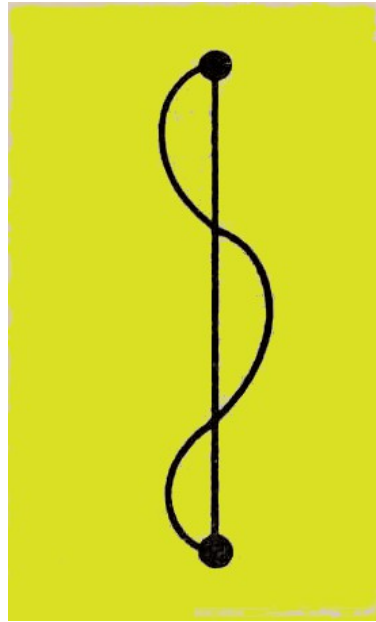


Fig. 8

In order to perceive this form, we'll begin by engraving it in our body by moving our awareness along a prescribed path, and then by accompanying it with the *Vasudeva Mantra*. Ultimately, this perception will be strengthened through the use of specific head movements. We will experience a significant transformation by repeating these procedures many times. By ascending from *Muladhara* to the head and then descending via the three-curve path, twelve spiritual centers will be deeply stimulated.

According to some, the *Tribhangamurari* movement is perceived spontaneously when *Kriya Pranayama* is practiced for a large number of times. I think instead that it is perceived after many attempts to guide one's awareness along a very precisely prescribed path. It's difficult to articulate what happens when we perceive such movement because there are no words to describe a reality that is beyond our imagination. The *Tribhangamurari* movement indeed seems to belong to another world.

The three procedures, *Amantrak*, *Samantrak*, and *Thokar*, should not be practiced at the same time. Start with mastering the perception of *Amantrak* and then, without delay, master the following ones. If you choose to skip these steps and proceed straight away with the *Thokar*, you may get a very poor result that will disappoint you.

FIFTH KRIYA: TRIBHANGAMURARI MACRO MOVEMENT

[This technique is referred to as *Second Kriya* by the school of *Satya Charan Lahiri*]

First stage of practice: Amantrak

Let your breath go, don't think about it, forget about it completely. The tongue can be in *Kechari Mudra* or in *baby Kechari*. Slowly raise your awareness along the spinal canal, from *Muladhara* to *Bindu*. The *Bindu* point is located at the back of the head a little below the *Sahasrara Chakra*, where the hairline forms a vortex.

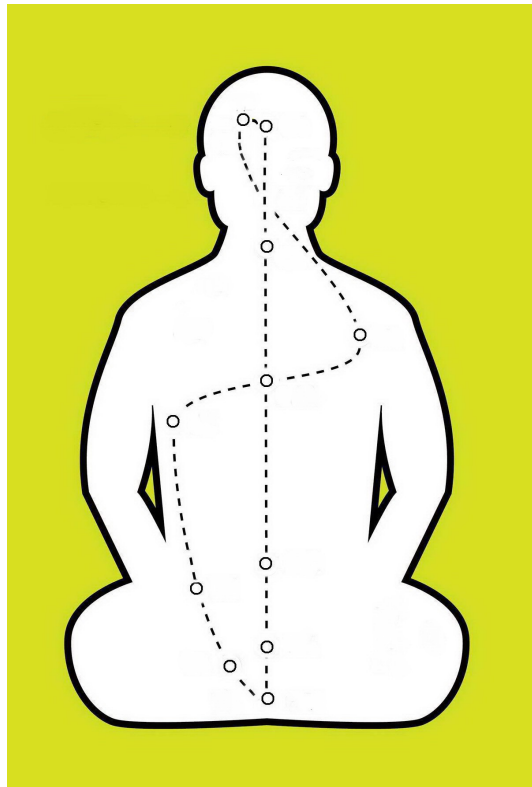


Fig.9 Tribhangamurari path as seen from the back

Then, *Prana* and awareness move at a slow pace along the *Tribhangamurari* path. This path originates from *Bindu*, ascends slightly towards the **left** part of the brain, and then descends towards the **right** part of the body. When it reaches a specific point in the back that is approximately 5-6 centimeters above the height of the right nipple, it turns and moves to the **left**, crossing the heart node. Once it reaches a point in the back that falls 5-6 centimeters below the height of the left nipple, it

changes its direction again and points towards *Muladhara*. The procedure, which involves going up and down, takes approximately a minute.

In this procedure, the breath is completely forgotten. You are free to experiment with an almost undetectable way of breathing as long as it is useful. Later try to perceive the *Tribhangamurari* movement mentally, forgetting the breath that will be free and very calm. This technique is known as '*Amantrak*', which means 'without the use of a *mantra*'. It was conveyed to us that *Amantrak*'s entire journey takes approximately one minute. If someone completes a lap in a shorter time, such as 40 seconds, they should not think that the practice is incorrect.

We want to emphasize now the most essential element of this practice. The core of it is the continuous increase in mental pressure throughout the entire circuit. Think about the physical motion of squeezing a tube of toothpaste that's nearly empty with a pencil to get rid of any remaining toothpaste. This image gives you a clear idea of how much mental pressure you need to apply during this process. With great concentration and will, you can increase the flow of energy along the *Tribhangamurari* path without limits.

The routine suggests repeating this technique 25 times daily for two weeks. Repeat it 50 times daily for another two weeks; then, 75 times daily for another two weeks, and so on until you reach 200 times per day for two weeks. The *Samantrak* instruction should only be practiced at this point.

Second stage of practice: Samantrak

The practice of *Samantrak* involves the use of a *mantra*. In this procedure, the breath is completely forgotten as well. This is the official way to teach, but you are free to experiment with an very subtle breath as long as it does not pressure you to move too quickly. The syllables *Om*, *Na*, *Mo*, *Bha*, and *Ga* are vibrated respectively in the first five chakras, with *Ba* being vibrated in *Bindu*. *Tee* (which has *eee...* prolonged) is pronounced in the upper center, situated on the left side of the brain. The syllables *Va*, *Su*, *De*, and *Va* are placed in four new centers outside the spine; *Yaaa* is vibrated in *Muladhara*.

These five new centers are actually five 'vortexes' in the main flow of the current, therefore they don't represent a new set of *Chakras*. Vibration of each syllable acts as a mental *Thokar*, or like a tap that happens in stillness. By performing the technique slowly, there is ample time for this stimulation to be very effective. The *Samantrak* route also takes around one minute. In any case, 40/45 seconds is an excellent time. The purpose of this procedure is to replicate what we did in *Amantrak* but to reinforce the

mental pressure on the entire path by mentally vibrating the 12 syllables of the *Mantra*.

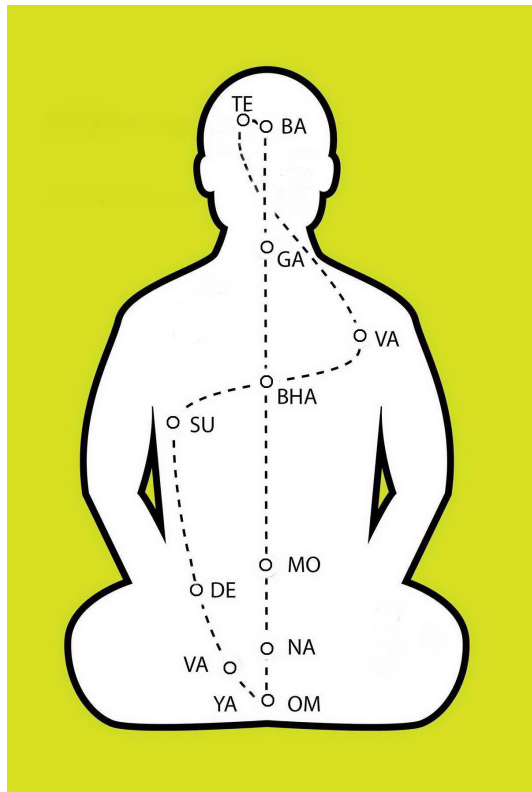


Fig.10 Tribhangamurari path, enriched with the syllables of the Mantra

The recommended daily practice repetitions for *Samantrak* practice now remain the same. Do it 25 times, once a day, for two weeks. Then 50 times, once a day, for two weeks....and so on until 200 times.

Don't be in a hurry

Amantrak and *Samantrak* make you perceive a specific sensation of movement inside your body. It's best to apply the *Thokar* procedure only when this energy flow is well imprinted in your consciousness. The *Mantra's* syllables, *Om Namoh Bhagabate Vasudevaya*, are planted in every center with great care and will affect your mood. It's like activating different lights throughout the three-curve path. It's like the sun from a clear sky is finally coming into your practice. Discovering a previously unknown state of ecstasy will allow you to fully experience the beauty of life.

Some students attempt to immediately savor the power of *Thokar Tribhangamurari* by conducting sporadic and disordered experiments with *Amantrak* and *Samantrak*, without following the said rules. What could have been experimented with *Thokar* may remain forever inaccessible to these unfortunate people.

Third stage of practice: Thokar

[Keep in mind that this *Thokar* is not the same as the one mentioned in Chapter 8]

Forget the breath. The hands with intertwined fingers are positioned on the navel area to raise the abdominal region, resulting in mental pressure on the first three *Chakras*. Place your chin on your chest and slowly guide your energy and awareness along the spinal column from *Muladhara* to *Bindu*.

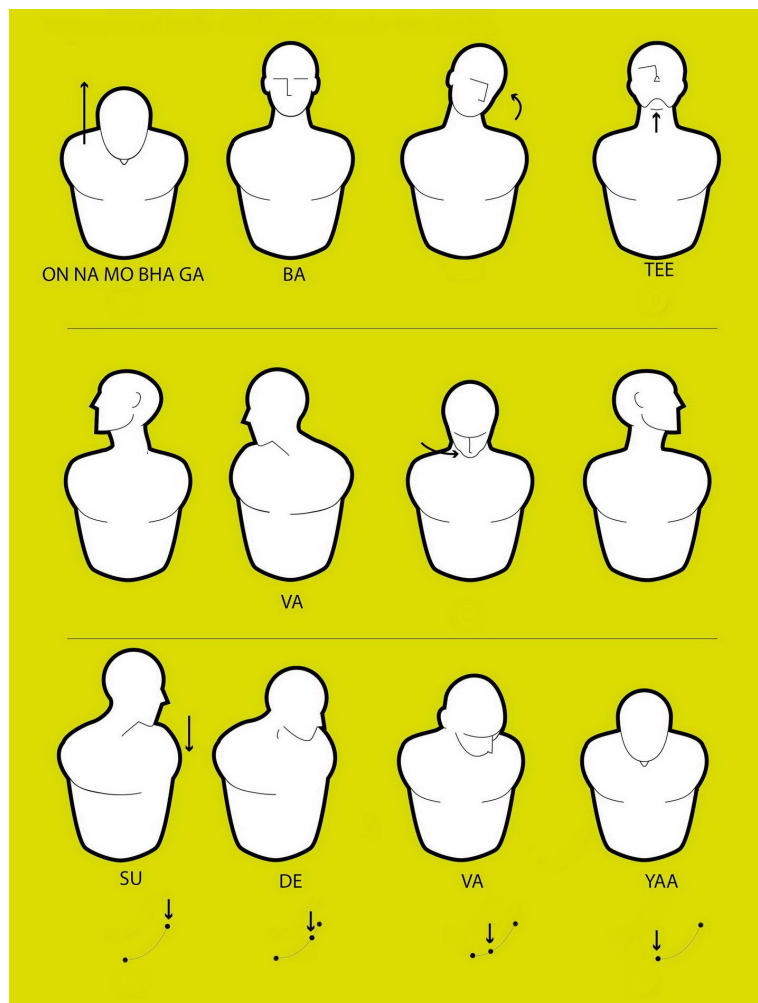


Fig.11 Thokar Tribhangamurari as seen from the front

While you "touch" every *Chakra* internally with the *Mantra* syllables, your chin slowly rises. *Om* is placed in the first *Chakra*, *Na* is placed in the second....etc When energy and awareness reach *Bindu*, the chin is parallel to the ground.

The descent of energy begins now. It is important to describe the descent with care as it is the most delicate part. The description of the correct head movements requires a minimum of patience. At first sight, they appear complex. The energy flow along the *Tribhangamurari* path is synchronized with the head's movement. The movements were created in a logical and efficient way to favor the particular sinuous flow of energy and awareness.

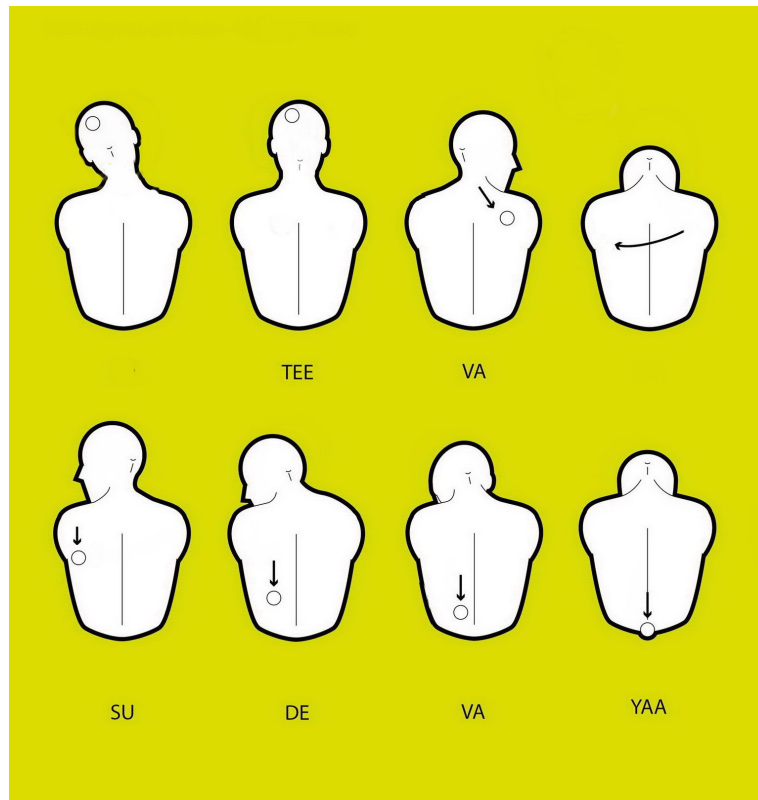


Fig.12 The same movements (only the descent) as seen from the back

Move your face to the left by a few centimeters without changing direction, then bring it back to the center by lifting your chin. During this movement the inner flow of energy moves from the *Bindu* to a higher point on the left side of the brain, as shown in the drawing. Pause and mentally pronounce the syllable *Tee* while staying in this position. Turn your face to the right with a slow movement. Only the face is moving, not the trunk. During this movement, the internal flow of energy moves from the seventh point in the brain to the point of the back on the right side.

These simple movements perfectly accompany the descent of the energy. The first of the five psycho-physical blows happens here: the chin touches the right shoulder briefly, and the sound of '*Va*' is vibrated in the eighth center. To facilitate contact with the chin, the shoulder makes a small

upward movement. In case you can't reach the right shoulder with your chin, try to get as close to it as you can. If not, rely solely on mental strength and the vibration of the syllable 'Va' to stimulate the eighth center.

Then the face slowly turns to the left, accompanying the internal flow of energy from the eighth to the ninth center, crossing the fourth *Chakra*. If possible, the chin should be placed over the left shoulder. The second strike occurs when the chin briefly touches the left shoulder and the syllable 'Su' is mentally chanted in the ninth center. A small upward movement is made by the shoulder to make contact with the chin easier.

When *De* and *Va* are placed in the tenth and eleventh center, there are two more hits that occur. In this modality, the chin slowly moves towards the center of the chest and touches the left collarbone. Two light strokes are given to the left collarbone in intermediate positions. It goes without saying that blows are given when the *Mantra's* syllables are vibrated. Finally, the center of the chest is struck while the syllable 'Ya' in *Muladhara* is vibrated. Repeat this entire procedure 36 times.

In synthesis the movements of the head with the five strokes have encouraged a further intensification of mental pressure along the entire *Tribhangamurari* circuit. Now you can relax by doing a simple *mental Pranayama* or a minimal *Samantrak* practice. Expert supervision assists in preventing problems, which include physical issues like overexertion and pain in the cervical vertebrae and neck muscles. Abrupt movements should be avoided; instead, a great mental concentration should be used. For a few weeks, it's recommended to avoid practicing this *Thokar* every day. It gets better every two or three days.

Remark

The head movements during this procedure increase the intensity of the *Tribhangamurari* flow. The issue is that many *kriyabans* concentrate solely on delivering blows and don't realize the importance of generating mental pressure along every millimeter of the path. Our first experience was a sensation of movement that rises along the spine and descends along the three-curve path. Through the *Samantrak* procedure, we improved the perception of the 12 centers. Now, we must feel that the head's movements are perfectly consistent with the internal *Tribhangamurari* movement, millimeter by millimeter.

To intensify the perception of the internal flow, we can create mental pressure along each part of it. The head's movements are designed to press down on every millimeter of the path. Slowly moving the chin should be done as if we were trying to overcome a strong resistance. Our suggestion

was similar to squeezing a nearly empty tube of toothpaste with a pencil to extract the last little bit.

Incremental routine of Thokar Tribhangamurari

As soon as possible, aim to finish the gradual incremental process of this procedure. This will mark a significant moment in your life. The doses that have been prescribed are: 36x1, 36x2, 36x3....36x35, and 36x36. It is common for a week to pass between one stage and the next! This routine is of utmost importance. The results are powerful and involve a significant inner transformation. This task requires a minimum of 8-10 months to be finished.

Amantrak and *Samantrak* had daily practice, but *Thokar Tribhangamurari* will have weekly incremental practice. The subconscious material brought to the surface by strong action on *Muladhara* and the heart *Chakra* needs considerable time to be metabolized.

The process starts with 36 rounds; a week later, you practice 36x2, then 36x3, and gradually increase until you reach 36x36 repetitions. This signifies that there are 1296 full rounds! Can you picture the strong effects of this action? 1296 implies that you begin in the morning and finish at night, repeating the same action multiple times. You will surely improve your ability to open the door of *Sushumna*! This experience has been prepared by you by practicing 36x35 and before 36x34.... etc... It should be noted that you have practiced *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* for several months!

My memories of this experience

It is important for each seeker to be able to live this experience as their intuition suggests. While practicing *Thokar Tribhangamurari*'s incremental routine, I found that when I whispered the syllables of the *mantra* from certain points onward, it became extremely effective.

It is evident that the initial phase of the incremental *Thokar Tribhangamurari* session entails holding the *Kechari Mudra* position and closing the mouth. After the initial half of the session, I attempted to cease using *Kechari* and mentally whispered all twelve syllables, guiding them towards the center positions. In each center, a sensation of warmth is created by the syllables of the *mantra*. Joy is brought about by a special power when a light touch is combined with mental intention.

The downward movement is quite remarkable, especially when utilizing the final six syllables, and particularly the final one, recited in *Muladhara*. I realized during that blissful moment that if I desire more joy, I am able to

obtain it immediately!

In my diaries, I described that experience: 'In those moments, it became natural for me to whisper the different syllables of the *Mantra*. After each syllable, there was a brief pause that was isolated and protected from any hurry. I was able to sense a sweet radiation emanating from the center I was in within an instant. This increased the experience of joy, which was limitless.' One evening, a sound of tolling bells came from a faraway village; it was like a waterfall of light! This surprise was so unexpected that my heart was bursting with joy. I opened my eyes, but didn't pay attention to anything in particular. It was a miracle of delight; the intensity of such beauty was almost impossible to bear! These words continued to repeat somewhere at the back of my mind: "Never has a human being been granted so much joy!"

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON THE TRIBHANGAMURARI MOVEMENT

The *Tribhangamurari* path as illustrated in Figure 8 is the one that was explained to a direct disciple of *Satya Charan Lahiri* in 1978/79. Years ago, I contacted this disciple after ending my relationship with *Shibendu Lahiri*, who taught me the *Tribhangamurari* path in a way that wasn't convincing to me. The person I contacted was capable of answering my questions and gave me a photocopy of the drawing created by *Satya Charan*, an elderly man with a trembling hand.

A few years passed and I received further clarification from reliable sources. *Satya Charan Lahiri* had made slight changes to this path in the years before the person I contacted received the initiation. Our objective is to make this modification clear.

When reaching the sixth point and chanting *Ba* on *Satya Charan's* path, where is the seventh point? Evidently, a little higher up on the left. This is the way I have always practiced and it is the teaching I have referenced in this chapter. The modification explained by *Satya Charan* seems to be reserved for advanced students. Upon reaching the *Bindu*, it is necessary to climb up to the seventh *Chakra*, cross the skull bone, and then climb another 12 cm. Then turn to the left and descend until you pierce the pineal gland, where the syllable '*Tee*' is uttered. All other procedures remain the same as explained in this chapter. For example, the eighth center can be found at a specific point on the back that's approximately 5-6 centimeters above the height of the right nipple...

If you use your breath to better perceive the *Tribhangamurari* path, it's important after inhaling and reaching *Bindu* chanting *Ba*, to start a slow exhalation, feeling the current that rises from that point, pierces the skull,

and rises several centimeters more. Then you can bend to your left and descend towards the pineal gland where *Tee* is chanted.

Satya Charan emphasized that the path segment that rises from the seventh *Chakra* and then descends is represented in *Lord Shiva's* iconography. By searching, the reader can see that in certain images, the Ganges river passes through *Shiva's* locks and descends towards the earth to the left of *Shiva*. According to *Satya Charan*, this is an indication of the initial stage of the *Tribhangamurari* movement. He shared this information with the people he initiated.

Descending from a high spot and penetrating the pineal gland can be a significant experience for someone, in my view.

FURTHER INFORMATION

I've been curious about the origins of *Tribhangamurari's* teachings, or rather, what tradition they came from. If we look at the typical yoga books, we won't find anything that resembles it. However, if we rely on information from people who have had contact with Lahiri Mahasaya's teachings, we only find it among a small number of teachers.

I believe that when Lahiri returned to Benares (Kashi, now Varanasi) after meeting *Babaji* and being initiated into *Kriya Yoga* by him, he had only one teaching with him: *Kriya Pranayama*. I am uncertain if this instruction was the same as the one he imparted to his initial disciples.

Being aware of the difficulties faced by individuals who live not as a hermit but as a person committed to life, he always endeavored to customize the *Kriya* procedure for his disciples. I am of the opinion that he was the one who came up with the basic method of *Maha Mudra*, along with *Navi Kriya* and perhaps even *Yoni Mudra*.

Later, having learned from his Muslim disciples the procedure they called *Dhikr* or *Zikr*, he believed it could be an important aid, and so he also integrated this technique into his teachings.

He combined it with *Pranayama*, but differentiated it by reserving this teaching for his most advanced disciples in an initiation following the first. He then called this practice *Second Kriya*. It became commonly known as *Thokar*. This technique was later perfected and became the *Third Kriya*. Lahiri's intuition and experience then led him to conceive the practice of the *Fourth Kriya*.

It seems to me that he was still unaware of the *Tribhangamurari* three-curve movement. In fact, he had the opportunity to experience it in *Kutastha* and drew a picture in his diary. This drawing is a representation of this movement from the front. To get an idea of how we might perceive

it, we must reverse the direction of the right and left sides in this drawing. This inversion is the precise basis of Figure 8, which is located at the beginning of this chapter.

He ideally placed this path within the human body, where the spine is the vertical line of this drawing. The three curves are shown to descend from the head's top to the left, through the torso to the right and left, culminating in the *Muladhara Chakra*.

He realized that this path could be perceived by entering a particular state called "state of calm breath." He or his disciples made the decision to gradually teach this procedure, and as a result, the preparatory techniques known as *Amantrak* and *Samantrak* came into being.

He considered it rational to apply five strong stimulants (*Thokar*) to perceive the *Tribhangamurari* movement and drew a picture of this action, which is evident in some copies of his diary. The recommended number of repetitions for every practice was also established.

A few years ago, I learned of a *Kriya yogi* who had been taught *Kriya* by P.Y.'s organization, but then left to teach *Kriya* on his own. He used to instruct on the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* by taking a long breath that rises in the spine and descends following the *Tribhangamurari* path.

Although it's possible to do this theoretically and potentially useful, I believe that *Kriya Pranayama* should only be practiced in the spine, where the *Sushumna* current is present. Perceiving the path with three curves requires the breath to calm down or disappear.

Later, a final revelation occurred. Lahiri Mahasaya discovered that the *Tribhangamurari* movement could be perceived in every *Chakra* located in the spine and in the other six centers located along the three-curve path of descent. He made a few drawings of this experience. Interpreting these drawings is not easy. This insight helped to create the technique we refer to as *Micro Tribhangamurari Movement*.

SIXTH KRIYA: TRIBHANGAMURARI MICRO MOVEMENT

[This technique is referred to as *Third Kriya* by the school of *Satya Charan Lahiri*]

The *Tribhangamurari* movement is present in small dimensions in every one of the twelve centers. We will refer to it as the *Tribhangamurari micro movement*.

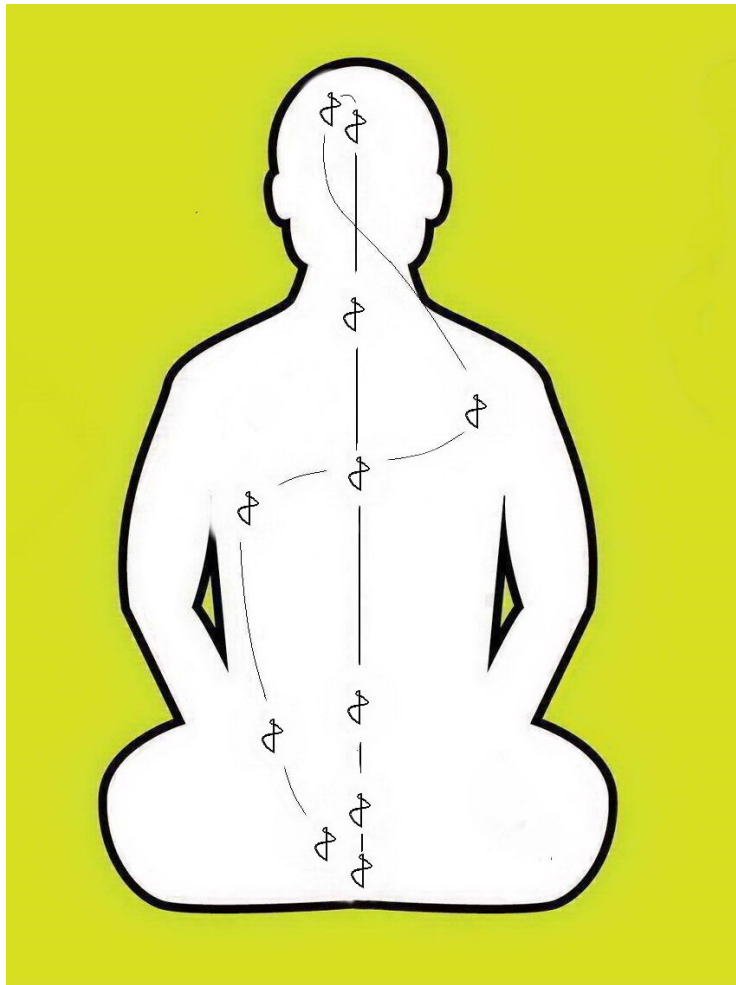


Fig.13 Tribhangamurari micro movement in each of the 12 centers

The way one perceives it is very subtle. The repetition of this work in each center up and down can result in a significant amount of time being required. It is typical for people to use this technique in their final years of life. Once finished with the work in twelve centers, the practice could be repeated in *Kutastha*, where one prepares for the *Mahasamadhi*, the final conscious exit from the body at the moment of death.

This *Kriya* is taught in two steps: *Amantrak* and *Samantrak*. The practice is known as *Muladhara Granti Ved*, which is the act of unfastening the knot of *Muladhara*. Without using rhetorical quotes, I can say that by following

this method, one can escape the constraints of time and space and attain the most elevated spiritual state.

Practical instruction: how to perceive the Micro movement

Our first step is to learn to experience this *micro movement* in small dimensions without any *Mantra*. This practice is called *Amantrak micro*.

Try this experiment: breathe deeply and lift the *Prana* from *Muladhara* to the spiritual eye between the eyebrows. Lower your chin slightly, hold your breath, and stare at the *Muladhara Chakra*. Visualize it as a disc that lies flat and has a diameter of a small coin. While exhaling slowly, attempt to draw the *Tribhangamurari micro movement* in a smaller size on that disc.

The time it takes is irrelevant - it can be short or long, it doesn't matter. Press ideally the disc with a steady but moderate amount of force, as though you were holding a pen and making a precise and clear mark. From this point forward, forget the breath.

Repeat this practice mentally in the first *Chakra*. Move forward to the second *Chakra* and carry out the same process. Continue attempting to perceive the *micro movement* in *Chakras 3, 4 and 5*, then in *Bindu*. Then in the center that is above *Bindu*, then in the four centers that are located outside the spine and finish this your first round in *Muladhara*. Increase the mental pressure on each center by completing three cycles of *Amantrak micro* daily, gradually stopping the practice of inhaling deeply to raise *Prana* and exhaling slowly while observing the *micro movement*. Don't pay attention to your breath at all. Accurately perceive the *micro movement* in a state of '*calm breath*'. Do this method for a minimum of three months before utilizing the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*.

Tribhangamurari micro movement utilizing the Mantra

Use breath and *Kechari Mudra* to lift *Prana* from the *Muladhara Chakra* and direct it into the spiritual eye. Observing from this position, visualize the *Muladhara Chakra*. You can breathe freely now. Mentally repeat the syllables '*Om-Na-Mo-Bha-Ga-Ba-Te-Va-Su-De-Va-Ya*'. Do this *Japa* without hurry. Try to see how this mental chanting of the *Mantra* creates the *micro movement Tribhangamurari* in this *Chakra* and realize how such chanting adds more pressure to it. Avoid moving the spinal column or head by remaining motionless. Here, all the power of pressure must be obtained by repeating the syllables of the *mantra*. Each syllable is like a small "pulse."

Take into account what we have explained to enhance the perception of the *Tribhangamurari macro movement*. Instead of mentally reciting the syllables, you can whisper them in a low voice. Well, this method remains valid here. Make many attempts to determine if this method can be

beneficial for you.

The duration of a *micro movement* is determined by the speed at which you repeat the *Mantra*. For a large number of people, it lasts about 10 seconds. Remember Lahiri Mahasaya's recommendation: "Don't be in a hurry!" Try to feel the difference between going slow and going fast. Your power will be immense if you move at a slow pace. Repeat the *Vasudeva Mantra* three times. After perceiving the micro movement three times, repeat the process for *Chakras* 2, 3, 4 and 5, followed by *Bindu*, then, the point above *Bindu* on the left, then the four centers outside the spine, and finally *Muladhara*. This is one 'round'.

Learn to perceive the *micro movement* well by completely ignoring the breath, just as you did when familiarizing yourself with the *micro movement* without using the *mantra*.

Performing a practice with three rounds is a great way to finish any *Kriya Yoga* routine. At the end, remain aware of the light that you will perceive in the upper part of your head. If you don't hurry, you will enter a state that can be described as 'beyond time.' After practicing this way, if you can find the time to lie down on your back (*Savasana*), you will attain a particular state of physical and mental stillness. The *Kundalini* energy could ascend to the heart *Chakra* and reveal the *Kutastha*. If you are able to schedule an incremental routine of this procedure, you can increase the number of rounds per session up to 20.

The beauty of this technique is unearthly, mysterious, and ethereal. The ruins of past illusions are transformed into spiritual realization doors. The deeper part of the *Omkar* reality is embodied in this inner movement. To perceive it implies eradicating any type of duality present in the *Chakras* and consequently, in one's awareness. The center between the eyebrows seems to merge with every *Chakra*, bringing them together into one reality. The state of absorption that is generated by having this particular perception in each *Chakra* is unmatched. A flame of love for the Divine is born. The nature and importance of this *micro movement* have only been revealed by a few *Kriya* schools. Sadly, many people are frantically searching for unattainable substitutes for it!

SPECIAL INCREMENTAL ROUTINE OF THE TRIBHANGAMURARI MICRO MOVEMENT TO BE PERFORMED IN THE LAST PART OF LIFE

When I received this instruction, I was told that this special incremental routine of the *Tribhangamurari micro movement* is a peaceful return to the origin, a preparation to 'die forever.' This signifies the eternal freedom. *Yoni Mudra*, which is done every night as a *kriyaban* aims to remove awareness from the body and prepares for sleep, which is a "little death," is

a similar action to this one. The most effective way to prepare for the conscious exit out of the body at the time of death (*Mahasamadhi*) is through this special last incremental routine.

There are many stories about possible *Kriya* ways to leave the physical shell during the *Mahasamadhi* process, but we cannot guarantee their authenticity. The typical method is *Thokar*, according to some, while others suggest procedures that take place exclusively in *Kutastha*. It is reasonable to assume that performing *Thokar*'s physical movements is not always feasible. The only possible action could be to focus your awareness on the spine or the point between the eyebrows.

Let's clarify how this final routine is accomplished

We have 36 practice sessions in this incremental routine. The new thing is that most of these sessions take more than one day. On the first day, 36 *micro movements* are perceived in each of the 12 centers. In the second session, it is necessary to perceive 36x2 *micro movements* in every center. [72 *micro movements* are experienced without interruption in the first *Chakra*, then 72 in the second *Chakra*, and so on...]

The third session is practiced after a few days, and it involves 36x3 *micro movements* in each center. Then other days pass. The 36x4 group has a practice that can last for one whole day. The next steps, which are 36x5, 36x6, 36x7, 36x8, usually require a full day and a portion of the following day. This is something that is normally not done: sleeping a full night between the two parts of what is considered a single session.

It's crucial that you recover more or less immediately after waking up in the morning of the following day. It is not permitted to go to work and it is suggested to remain quiet, preventing any opportunity for conversation. Of course, common sense must always prevail: a polite response is always a duty if someone speaks to us. It is clear that if the next sessions take several days, the last session will take approximately 12 days!

Just to be sure that everyone understands, let's try to describe what happens during the last session: one perceives 36x36 *micro movements* in each center! This means: 1296 *micro movements* in *Muladhara*, 1296 in *Swadhisthana* and so on, ending again after several days in *Muladhara* with 1296 perceptions.

It is important to note that it is not permitted to skip any stages. Don't think 'during my next summer vacation, I will easily find a dozen days to practice 36x36.' No! That is not the way it works. Perceiving the *micro movement* 36x36 times in each center requires having perceived it 36x35 times beforehand. And before this, 36x34 times, and so on

This is truly an amazing feat. There will be numerous wonderful experiences and all internal obstacles will be dissolved one by one. When the practice is finished, one comes to realize that their experience cannot be described because the bliss experienced partially erases it from memory. As old age approaches, a *kriyaban* should strive to make the most of the chance to enjoy the pleasure of completing the recommended number of repetitions, never giving in to the temptation to practice too quickly.

The significance of the micro movement and my memory of the incremental routine

In chapter 4, I pointed out how *Swami Hariharananda* had a strong preference for discussing the three qualities of the Divine. According to this teaching, the Divine can be experienced directly and authentically by recognizing at least one of its qualities, which are: internal sound (subtle sounds emitted by each *Chakra* which then merge into the cosmic sound of *Om*); perceiving internal light and feeling a particular movement sensation (such as oscillation or pressure).

I had mainly concentrated on the perception of internal sounds, very little on the second aspect of light, and even less on the sensation of movement. My spiritual journey has been successfully completed by working diligently with the incremental routine of *Tribhangamurari's* micro movement.

Let's talk about the difficulties of this demanding incremental routine and highlight its beauty. A lot of times, my practice was hindered by an uncontrollable drowsiness. Several daydream images appeared on the inner screen of awareness. The situation was not resolved by changing the position of the legs, practicing *Maha Mudra* frequently, or taking a short break. The only solution was to get used to practicing while always being half-asleep, since there was no way to prevent drowsiness (coffee, a lot of sleep...).

As I previously mentioned, I have found it advantageous to softly whisper the syllables, rather than mentally chanting them. During a late afternoon, I was seated on the beach and practicing, surrounded by people who weren't bothering me but who I could hear walking nearby. When I felt someone watching me, I would pretend to be reading a small book that I had always kept open on my knees. The feeling of bliss was overwhelming.

While it was sunset, I leaned against a rock and practiced with my eyes closed. The sky was an indestructible and infinitely transparent crystal, and the waves were always changing their colors. Hidden by the dark lenses of

my sunglasses, my eyes were dripping with tears. The only way I can express my emotions is by recalling a poem.

In the end of the film *Mahabharata*, there is an Indian chant that is based on the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*.

I know this great Spirit, which is radiant like the sun and transcends any material notion of darkness. Only those who have a knowledge of Him can go beyond the boundaries of birth and death. The only way to liberate yourself is by knowing this Great Spirit. There is no other way.

As the chant recited 'There is no other way', I realized that I would never give up on this extraordinary and wonderful state and practice.

SEVENTH KRIYA: TRIBHANGAMURARI MICRO MOVEMENT IN KUTASTHA

[This technique is referred to as *Fourth Kriya* by the school of *Satya Charan Lahiri*]

At the end of life, after completing all of the work in the 12 centers, one can only focus on *Kutastha*. The main objective of this task is to penetrate the star of *Kutastha*. There won't be a need for *Pranayama*. Mentally repeating the syllables of the *Mantra* in the space between the eyebrows is the sole method for practicing until the *Tribhangamurari* form emerges. It is obvious that this experience is not created by a visualization procedure. The experience will take place at the right time.

According to the explanation, during the final stage of life, the *kriyaban* recognizes the right moment to depart from this body, and this awareness occurs roughly six months beforehand. The *Thokar* technique is explained to involve abandoning the body. By controlling all nine doors of the body and focusing the mind and *Prana* on the heart center, the *kriyaban* will immerse himself in the sacred *Om* Sound.

Become one with *Brahma* will result in no return. There is no other destiny more important than this one. The *kriyaban's* objective is **not to return**.

With that being said, my discussion on *Kriya* techniques taught by Lahiri Mahasaya is concluded. Now I'll make an effort to explain why I chose to add two additional sections to this book. The third section of the book deals with the theme of preventing failure on the spiritual path. My goal is to uncover the reasons for individuals who complain of not experiencing positive effects from *Kriya Yoga* practice and end up leaving this path.

My opinion is that the problem lies not in the improper application of certain techniques, but rather in the unsuitable attitude of these seekers towards the practice of *Kriya Yoga*. Following that, I clarify the distinction

between a 'clean' and 'polluted' spiritual path. There is much to contemplate about this topic.

In the third section of the book, I am considering the practical utility of *Japa*. Afterwards, I demonstrate the similarities between certain mystical paths and *Kriya Yoga*, and finally, I come back to the topic of incremental routines.

The fourth part of the book is devoted to discussing two significant variants of Lahiri Mahasaya's *original Kriya*. Some extremely interesting points can be found in these variations, which could be of use to some researchers. In the remaining two chapters, I share my thoughts on how to develop a personal routine that is effective and produces clearly visible outcomes. In the last chapter, reflections on P.Y.'s teachings are the focus.