

PART IV: TEACHINGS OF OTHER KRIYA TRADITIONS

CHAPTER 14

KRIYA YOGA AS TAUGHT BY SWAMI HARIHARANANDA

Upon starting to practice Swami Hariharananda's fascinating teachings, I realized that this Master would never give me the complete instruction on his specific Kriya Yoga form. In time, I was able to receive this instruction from other individuals who had studied under him. I intend to share these teachings with those who are unable to learn them elsewhere.

In the second section of the book, I discussed the essence of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya Yoga*, but now I will describe the teachings of *Swami Hariharananda*. I have been following this path for a considerable amount of time, and I have had wonderful experiences. I finally committed myself to practicing *Kriya Yoga* by Lahiri Mahasaya for the reasons I explain in the last part of this chapter. But I still maintain the essence of what *Swami Hariharananda* transmitted to me.

After meeting him, I was confident that he was teaching the *Original Kriya* of Lahiri Mahasaya, which had been slightly modified by P.Y., the founder of the organization I had been following for many years – indeed, this is what was promoted. Nothing could be further from the truth: this *Swami* taught a form of *Kriya Yoga* that was greatly influenced by various teachings he received from other sources. There is little left of the *original First Kriya* of Lahiri Mahasaya here. In fact, there is no procedure for obtaining *Kechari Mudra*. From this *First Kriya* onward, almost nothing remains of Lahiri Mahasaya's teachings.

However, one indisputable fact remains: these teachings are precious. They greatly enrich the practice of *Kriya* and brings every seeker very close to the direct experience of the spiritual dimension of existence.

Note

Various *Kriya* schools were created after *Swami Hariharananda's* passing to disseminate his teachings. There are slight differences in their definition of the teachings. Some schools refer to what I call *Third Kriya* as *Third* and

Fourth Kriya, while others refer to what I call *Fourth Kriya* as *Fifth* and *Sixth Kriya*.

When approaching these practices, it's important to keep in mind one basic concept:

The technique of *Kriya Pranayama* guides the practitioner to perceive the Divine in the *pituitary* gland and the *Fontanel*.¹ When one focuses solely on these points, they feel a certain amount of pressure. Each breath increases and facilitates contact with the Divine. It is important to focus all attention on natural breathing and realize that it is nothing but the Divine itself. Meditation is reduced to a process that constantly focuses on the breath. Meditation is aimed at transforming human consciousness into Divine Consciousness.

FIRST KRIYA

The daily repetition of this practice teaches a *kriyaban* to become familiar with the reality of *Omkar*. It has the ability to recognize the three major aspects of the Divine within each *Chakra*: internal sound, spiritual light, and movement sensation.

The *Bows* and *Maha Mudra* are highly valued. The *Kechari Mudra* suggested here is a simple one: the tongue is turned inward. Patiently, it touches the soft palate and slowly makes its way towards the uvula, staying in contact with it.

In *Kriya Pranayama*, the movement of *Prana* always oscillates from *Muladhara* to *Sahasrara*, not from *Muladhara* to *Medulla*, as taught by Lahiri Mahasaya. By adding the procedure “*Kriya Meditation*” to this technique, contact with the *Omkar* dimension is easily achieved.

The initiation

At *Swami Hariharananda's* school, it was customary for the person administering the initiation to make an effort to assist the initiate in recognizing the physical vibrations emanating from the Divine. The person was invited to assume the position predicted in the “*Bows*” technique to accomplish this important fact and imprint it in their memory. In the next paragraph, the reader can read the explanation, which is also enhanced with a drawing.

After assuming this position, with the head on the floor, the teacher placed his hands on the nape of the person's neck and requested that they feel a

¹ Instead of mentioning the *Sahasrara Chakra* in this chapter, I use *Fontanel*, an expression that *Swami Hariharananda* had consistently employed.

vibrational sensation, describing that the vibration will become noticeable and amplified while practicing *Kriya Yoga* for the entire duration.

The individual was then requested to sit with their head above their right knee and their face facing the opposite leg. After occupying this position, the person who was giving the initiation employed words of explanation and their hands to summon the vibration of the Divine that came from above and infused their head and body.

The action proceeded with the head in the opposite position. It is clear that during all these operations, the person breathed freely. However, when executing this technique during personal routine, it is recommended to hold the breath if possible. Following the completion of these actions, the person was blessed and could return to their position among the audience. Another person was initiated.

The bows

In this technique and the following ones, the tongue is in the position we have previously discussed and which we refer to as '*baby Kechari Mudra*.'

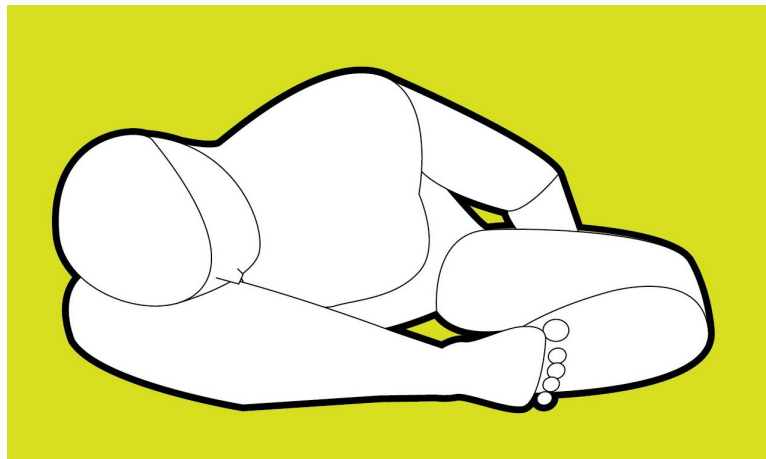


Fig.15 A bow. First position

[Sitting on heels is also OK!]

Lie down on the ground in a half lotus position or on your heels. Exhale. Focus on the *pituitary* gland located at the center of the head. By taking a deep breath (not too long), visualize the breath rising from *Muladhara* up the spine and reaching the *pituitary* gland. Hold your breath. Bend forward above your waist and, if possible, touch the floor with your head. The head is placed between the knees. The hands can be used as naturally as possible to comfortably reach this position.

Move your head to the right, placing your right ear closer to your knee. Your face is facing your left knee to detect pressure on the right side of your head. Hold this position for a moment while holding your breath.

Repeat the exercise with the other side of the body, exchanging perceptions. The head approaches the left knee, while the face turns towards the right knee, causing pressure on the left side of the head. Keep this position for a few seconds while keeping your breath held. Move the head to the center until the forehead touches the ground. Pressure can be sensed on the forehead. Then rise with your back straight and make a deep exhalation, guiding the energy down from the pituitary gland to the *Muladhara*.

Imagine the breath coming from the physical seat of *Swadhisthana* up the spine and reaching the *pituitary* gland by inhaling deeply. Perform the same steps again as you did when starting from *Muladhara*. Finally, with a deep exhalation, lead your energy from the pituitary gland to *Swadhisthana*. Repeat the procedure for *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Vishuddha*, and *Medulla*. In this way, you will practice six bows.

When you bow your body to the right, your left nostril will open. A bow to the left causes your right nostril to open. Forward bowing and keeping your forehead close to the floor will result in an equal exchange of air in your nostrils.

The lunar channel of *Ida* is on the left and the solar channel of *Pingala* is on the right. Both of these channels are stuck to the *Sushumna* channel and are blocking its entry.

The procedure described results in the separation of the two lateral channels and the opening of a passage between them. The opening of the passage marks the start of meditation practice. The perception of *Omkar*'s reality becomes tangible through this procedure.

Note

The act of holding your breath is a powerful way to stimulate *Kundalini*. If you're not ready to sustain the strength generated by this procedure, if you feel overwhelmed after meditation, or if you're feeling too agitated, don't hold your breath.

Maha Mudra

Bring your left leg under your body so that your left heel is near your perineum. Place your right knee against your body to make your thigh as close to your chest as possible. The interlocked fingers are placed just below the knee, which helps to apply pressure to your internal organs. Take 5 to 6 deep breaths while applying moderate pressure to the knee.

Take a deep breath and hold it, stretch your right leg, bend forward, breathe normally, and massage the right leg from the foot to the thigh and buttock. Use the right hand to grasp the toes of the right foot and the left hand to grasp the inside of the right foot (the arch of the foot). The face is facing to the left.

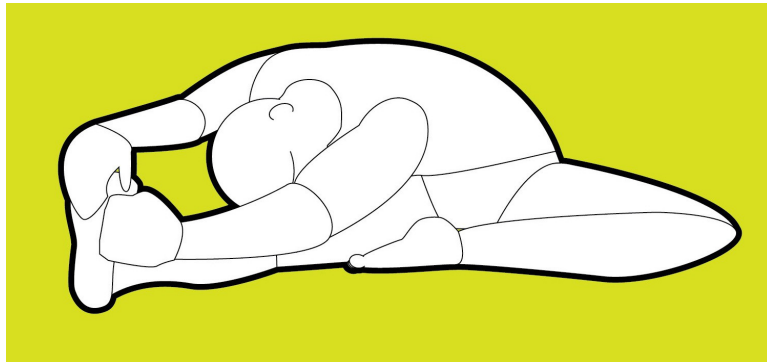


Fig.16 Here the face is turned to the left

Feel an internal pressure on the right side of the head. This contrasts with the feeling of open space on the left side of the brain. At the area between your eyebrows, mentally chant *Om* six times. Then inhale and hold, sit again on your left foot with the right knee bent and drawn towards the chest, then exhale in a normal breath.

Practice the entire procedure by exchanging perceptions, positions of the legs, and use of hands. I don't repeat everything – do not forget to chant *Om* six times at the point between your eyebrows. Now, bring both knees towards your body. Straighten both legs, bend forward, breathe normally, and rub both legs from feet to thighs and hips. Then grab both feet: the right hand for the toes of the right foot, and the left hand for the toes of the left foot.

Breathe normally, flex the feet 4 or 5 times, then relax them with the head down as close to the knees as possible. Feel pressure on the forehead of the head. Space is felt in the occipital region. Chant *Om* six times in the area between your eyebrows. Then inhale and hold, sit up straight, massage the

toes, then bring the bent legs back to the chest and exhale. The exercise is repeated three times.

Kriya Pranayama

There is a particular way of practicing *Kriya Pranayama* that this school teaches. Actually, it includes traditional *Pranayama* practice, which is coupled with a particular practice called *Kriya Meditation*, which is truly sweet and provides profound spiritual experiences. This second practice involves a subtle and brief breath. Its purpose is to gain a profound experience of the *Omkar* reality.

[I] Basic Kriya Pranayama

This *Pranayama* is similar to the classic one explained by Lahiri Mahasaya, but it has one difference that we will explain shortly.

Move the tip of the tongue towards the *pituitary* gland in the central area of the head. Start with *Ujjayi Pranayama*. By slightly lowering and pulling back the chin, the glottis and throat are partially closed, creating resistance to the breath passage. In this way, the head, body, and neck are in a straight line.

Inhale through the nose slowly, producing a long, deep breath with force. Inhale and exhale in the same way for the same length. The point of drawing in or pushing out the breath is not the nose, but the throat. The resistance against the breath reduces the speed of this, and a hissing sound is produced. This sound is automatic and will be audible. It will last throughout the process of inhalation and exhalation.

While doing this breath, move the attention up and down within the spine. When the breath enters, the practitioner moves the attention from the base of the spine up to the *Fontanel*. Similarly, by exhaling, the practitioner moves their attention from the *Fontanel* to the base of the spine. Reaching the *Fontanel* and not limiting oneself to reaching the *Medulla Oblongata* is a great innovation introduced by the school of *Swami Hariharananda*. This school explains that to reach the *Fontanel*, it is appropriate to keep the eyebrows raised (horizontal wrinkles form on the forehead).

Then there is another difference in relation to *Lahiri's*. It is taught to start the practice by inhaling along the back of the spine and exhaling through the frontal part of the spine. This teaching is abandoned when the *Prana* is sensed within the spine. It is explained that 12 or 24 breaths are sufficient for practicing.

The main characteristic of this *Kriya Pranayama* is the ability to perceive the *Omkar* reality within the head. According to this teaching, the practice of *Pranayama* is considered wrong if the practitioner does not obtain the perception of the internal sound of *Om* after an appropriate number of breaths – obviously, without the need to close the ears.

The entire practice of *Kriya* is a progressive process of tuning into the *Omkar* reality. The *Omkar* perception needs to traverse all the different phases of *Kriya*, just like a string on which pearls are strung. The *Omkar* reality must be perceived not only in the aspect of internal sound and spiritual light, but also as a sensation of oscillation, movement, or internal pressure. Keeping this teaching in mind is a fantastic way to deepen the practice. When time is available, it is recommended to dedicate oneself to the following practice.

[III] Kriya Meditation Technique

Assume the position of the tongue that we previously described. Keep a part of your consciousness always fixed in the *Fontanel*. With the eyes closed, inhale, intensifying the concentration in the *Fontanel*. Then exhale and descend to the *Medulla*. Hold the breath for a few seconds (2-3), then inhale again to raise the consciousness again to the *Fontanel*. The breath pattern could be 5 seconds of exhalation, 2-3 seconds of holding, and 5 seconds of inhalation.

Here in the *Fontanel*, you can take a short pause. Then exhale going down to the fifth *Chakra*, hold for a few seconds, then inhale from the fifth *Chakra* to the *Fontanel*. The times are the same as we indicated before.

Now exhale to the fourth *Chakra*, then inhale to the *Fontanel*, and so on. If you keep going in this direction, you will eventually reach the *Muladhara*. Hold your breath for a few seconds. Then inhale and go to the *Fontanel*. The times remain the same, regardless of the *Chakra* you have reached.

Exhale from the *Fontanel* to the second *Chakra*. Pause. Inhale back to the *Fontanel*. Then exhale down to the third *Chakra*, hold for a few seconds, then inhale from the third *Chakra* to the *Fontanel*, and so on until you exhale from the *Fontanel* to the *Medulla*. This is one cycle.

During these breathing movements, there is no need to produce a sound in the throat as in the *Pranayama* explained before. Gradually increase the number of cycles by paying attention to a specific detail.

When you pause, lingering on a *Chakra* or on the *Fontanel*, wait for the natural perception of the stimulus to allow you to breathe before starting a new breathing act, whether it is an inhalation or an exhalation. This small detail is crucial for entering the realm of the Spirit by immersing yourself in the perception of the *Omkar* vibration.

The end of the practice is very beautiful. As you reach the final climb from *Medulla* to *Fontanel*, breathe in deeply through the *Fontanel* and don't descend; exhale slowly, enter into a deep meditative state without focusing on anything particular. The name of this state is *Paravastha*.

Subtle manifestations of light, sound and vibration

After a period of practice of *Kriya Pranayama* and *Kriya Meditation*, one perceives the movements of *Prana* within the spine.

At the start, there may be a sense of heaviness or rigidity at the location of the *Chakras*. Then the practitioner perceives *Prana* as a magnetic force of attraction, as if the area were pressed or crushed due to the energetic attraction. It is possible to perceive the vibrations of each *Chakra*. Feeling these sensations occurs initially in the *Kutastha* or *Medulla*, then in the fourth *Chakra*. The sensation of sound and inner light can also be experienced.

Jyoti Mudra

This procedure has a distinct structure from that of Lahiri Mahasaya. Close your ears with your thumbs while lightly pressing the corners of your eyes with your index fingers. Concentrate in *Kutastha*. Let some of your attention be directed towards the *Muladhara*. Then, ideally, raise the energy of this *Chakra* by inhaling to the point between the eyebrows. Hold your breath for as long as it is easy for you (about 10-15 seconds) while trying to perceive the particular light of the *Muladhara* in *Kutastha*.

Exhale and ideally move again the energy of the *Muladhara Chakra* to its original location. Part of the attention now shifts to the second *Chakra*. Execute the same action as you did with the *Muladhara Chakra*. Thanks to a short exhalation, the energy of this *Chakra* ideally returns to its place.

The same is repeated for *Chakras* 3, 4, 5, and *Medulla*. Always try to perceive the light at the point between the eyebrows. Be aware that you are offering each center to the light of the spiritual eye. At the end of the procedure, place the palms of your hands on your eyelids and remain there

for 2-3 minutes to see the light. When the light disappears, lower your hands.

Paravastha

Paravastha is the state that comes after a good practice of *Kriya*. Stay in meditation for extended periods, hearing the divine sound, experiencing a vibration sensation, and savoring the divine light.

Feel the center of your concentration slowly rising from *Kutastha* to *Fontanel* and above *Fontanel* beyond the body. Stay thoughtless by perceiving this inner sky that begins at the top of your head.

Open your eyes when you've reached the end of your meditation routine. Gaze at what is in front of you but do not focus on anything in particular. See without seeing. Keep 99% of your attention focused on the *Fontanel*. After a while, you will become aware of a thin line of soft white light, like a mist, around all objects. Gradually, the Light will expand. Avoid any thoughts. Maintain a steady gaze. After 5 minutes, close your eyes and remain like that for a while before standing up.

Additional information

Some disciples were advised by *Swami Hariharananda* to perform a specific procedure at least every week, in addition to the techniques just illustrated. The ultimate goal of this exercise is to become aware of 1728 breaths in one day. Using a 108-bead *Mala*, it is possible to count the breaths. In the course of a day, 16 *Malas* are finished, which totals $108 \times 16 = 1728$.

The various breaths are observed using increasingly subtle and short breaths until they almost disappear. The *pituitary gland* in the center of the head is where consciousness is always, so it doesn't rise to the *Fontanel*. Let's explain the process of observing different breaths.

Observe how a natural inhalation arises and, with a part of your consciousness, visualize that it arises from the first *Chakra* and rises gently towards the *pituitary*. This is followed by an exhalation that seems to descend and return to the first *Chakra*. Observe the process of the next breath ascending from the second *Chakra* to the *pituitary* and then returning, with the exhalation, to the second *Chakra*.

Observe this for each *Chakra*, including the *Medulla*. During this process of observing the breath, most of the awareness has not moved from the *pituitary*. Now continue this process in reverse. Observe how the breath rises from the *Medulla* to the *pituitary* and then returns to the *Medulla*.

Then observe how a similar event involves the fifth *Chakra*, then the fourth, and so on until it returns to the first.

The twelve subtle and short breaths that you have observed constitute a cycle, and this takes a minute or so. Practice various cycles, immersing yourself more and more in the *Omkar* dimension.

SECOND KRIYA

The first thing you should do when practicing the *Second Kriya* is to start with the *Bends*, then *Maha Mudra*, and finally *Kriya Pranayama*. Then begin the *Second Kriya* by practicing the formal part, which is immediately followed by the informal part. Then you can immediately move on to the practice of *Jyoti Mudra* in a more intense form than that described in the *First Kriya*, and finally conclude your routine with *Paravastha*.

[I] Second Kriya formal part

Hold your hands with your fingers interlaced on your abdominal area. The inhalation and exhalation process is divided into 6 + 6 parts. Starting from the position with your chin resting on your chest, inhale while simultaneously raising your chin slowly as if to accompany and push the energy upwards.

Kriya Pranayama requires breathing that is both strong and prolonged, but this technique demands a more subtle breathing pattern to evenly distribute *Prana* throughout the spine.

The syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra* (*Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*) are mentally placed in the seat of each *Chakra*, taking a short pause in each center. During the first "sip" of the inhalation, the concentration is on the *Muladhara*, where the syllable *Om* is ideally placed. During the second 'sip', the focus is on the second *Chakra*, where the syllable 'Na' is ideally placed. *Mo* is in the third, *Bha* in the fourth, *Ga* in the fifth, and *Ba* is placed in the *Medulla*. Now the inhalation is complete and the chin is horizontal.

By using this breathing technique, pressure is created in each *Chakra* that is effective but not too strong. In order to achieve the best results, it's best to imagine that the breath/*mantra* is like a scalpel that slightly penetrates each *Chakra*.

Now hold the breath. Do your best to practice *Kechari Mudra*. Move the head forward towards the throat cavity. The divine light flows down from above into the occipital region of the brain, and an internal pressure is felt in the front part of the heart *Chakra*.

The head returns to its original position and then bends slightly towards the left shoulder without turning the face. The previous experience occurs again: divine light flows from above through the right part of the head, and an internal pressure is felt in the left part of the heart *Chakra*.

The head resumes its normal position and immediately bends back. The same experience of Divine Light occurs descending through the front of the head, and a certain internal pressure is felt in the back part of the heart *Chakra*.

The head returns to its normal position and slightly tilts towards the right shoulder. The experience of the Divine Light occurs through the left part of the head, and a certain internal pressure is felt in the right part of the heart *Chakra*. The head regains its normal position. During these movements, while holding the breath, there is no need for any *mantra*.

By exhaling, awareness is guided through the *Chakras* towards the *Muladhara*. Slowly lowering the chin to the chest, awareness descends along the spinal column. The exhalation is split into six parts as well. The syllable *Te* (usually the final "e" is lengthened: *Teee*) is placed in the *Medulla*. *Va* in the fifth *Chakra*, and so on... *Su... De... Va*, until *Ya* (lengthened: *Yaaa*) is mentally chanted in the *Muladhara*.

The total time taken for a breath depends on the individual. It usually lasts about 45 seconds, but from a certain point onward, the speed of each repetition will decrease. The breath is "sucked in" and appears to be dissolving. From that point onward, there is only a hint of head movement.

You have probably read somewhere that in deep *Pranayama*, the energy passes through the *Chakras* like the thread of a necklace passes through pearls. It may also happen that the thread of energy wraps around each pearl.

The descent path in this instance is like a helix that encircles and creates pressure around every *Chakra*. As one continues with this practice, they notice that a state of tranquility is spread throughout the entire spine. The *Om* sound comes out spontaneously and draws the mind's attention.

Initially, the sound seems like that of mad bees, but eventually it becomes a melody reminiscent of a flute, a harp, a gong, or thunder. When the

sound reaches its maximum subtlety, the practitioner is overcome by an inexpressible bliss.

[III] Second Kriya informal part

Let your breath flow freely. Repeat the syllable associated with each *Chakra* mentally several times. For that reason in the *Muladhara*, repeat *Om, Om Om, Om Om...* many times, at least 36 times. Do not count with the *Mala* – remain still. The speed with which you chant the syllables is approximately two per second. Think of this *Chakra* as a horizontal disc with a diameter of approximately three centimeters. Observe the syllables moving counterclockwise within the *Chakra* near the circumference.

Then concentrate on the second *Chakra*, where you do exactly the same action, using the second syllable of the *mantra*, which is *Na, Na, Na, Na, Na...* approximately 36 times. Then you will concentrate on the third *Chakra*, repeating *Mo, Mo, Mo, Mo, Mo...* approximately 36 times. Then you will concentrate on the fourth *Chakra*, repeating *Bha, Bha, Bha, Bha, Bha...* Then, you will focus on the fifth *Chakra* (*Ga, Ga, Ga, Ga, Ga...*), then in the *Medulla* (*Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba, Ba...*).

Now practice the head movements that we explained before but in a slower way. The head bends forward towards the throat cavity. The divine Light descends from the region above the head (seat of Eternal Tranquility) into the occipital region of the brain. Internal pressure can be felt on the frontal part of the *heart Chakra*.

After feeling this for 10-20 seconds, return to the normal position of your head and bend it slightly towards your left shoulder. The previous experience occurs again: divine light flows from above through the right part of the head, and an internal pressure is felt in the left part of the *heart Chakra*.

Once you feel this for 10-20 seconds, return to the normal position of your head. Now the head bends back: the same experience of the Divine Light occurs by descending through the front part of the head and some inner pressure is felt in the back part of the *heart Chakra*. Remain in this position for about 10-20 seconds, then return to your original position.

Move the head towards the right shoulder. The experience of the Divine Light occurs through the left part of the head, and some inner pressure is felt in the right part of the *heart Chakra*. To complete the circle, the head returns to its usual position. You have felt the Divine Light and blessings in each of the four parts of the brain, and a pressure around the *heart Chakra*.

Now concentrate on the *Medulla* and repeat *Te Te Te Te Te Te...* The state of absorption is really strong. Then you will move on to concentrate on the fifth *Chakra* using *Va, Va, Va...* then the fourth... third... second... *Muladhara*. You have completed the first circle: the time required is approximately 4-6 minutes. Perform 3-4 repetitions and then go into a meditative state.

Effects

As you move from one *Chakra* to the next, you will start noticing the change in the light vibration in the region between the eyebrows. In the future, you will experience a distinct sound coming from each center. By remaining absorbed in listening to the astral sounds, one can create inner bliss while putting aside the ego consciousness, at least temporarily. This is when the reality of *Omkar* becomes apparent.

After many repetitions of this procedure, the upper part of the brain will remain ideal in space, separated from the physical body. According to *Swami Hariharananda*, this procedure is meant to separate the upper and lower parts of the head.

He compared the head to a coconut and said that this procedure opens the coconut by hitting it from all four sides. Obviously, a lot of effort is required to achieve this result. One has to really “invite” the divine energy to descend into each part of the head and make an effort to feel the pressure on the heart *Chakra* as well.

Throughout the day, attempt to remain in this state as much as possible. When you can retreat for a short meditation, tune into the Sound, the Light, the formless power of the Divine that revolves within the skull.

Here, we included an optional practice taught for several years by Swami Hariharananda, which he later chose to remove

USE OF THE SANSKRIT ALPHABET TO COMPLETE THE SECOND KRIYA

Swami Hariharananda made the choice to impart a common *Tantric Yoga* technique to enhance his *Second Kriya* practice prior to *Jyoti Mudra*. *Nyasa*, also called placing or touching, is a *Tantric* ritual that involves touching specific points on the body.

Different *mantras* are placed on different parts of the body. The belief is that this ritual enhances the divine state of the individual's body. At some point later, he

changed his mind and never taught it again, at least in Europe. In my view, it is intriguing to describe this procedure.

In each Chakra

By visualizing the petals of each *Chakra*, you can mentally chant the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. There is no breath control.

It begins with HANG KSHANG in *Ajna Chakra*: HANG in the left brain and KSHANG in the right. Then mentally chant the 16 vowels in the cervical *Chakra* (ANG AANG ING IING UNG UUNG RING RRING LRING LLRING ENG AING ONG OUNG AUNG AH) – chant each letter only once and this also applies to the following *Chakras*. During this practice, imagine each *Chakra* as a vertical disc that shines divine light through its petals. View the number of petals predicted by the *Yoga* tradition and observe them in clockwise directions. Then put the first 12 consonants in the heart *Chakra* (KONG KHONG GONG GHONG WONG CHONG CHHONG JONG JHONG NEONG TONG THONG), chant the following 10 in *Manipura* (DONG DHONG NONG TONG THONG DONG DHONG NOING PONG PHONG), then the following 6 in *Swadhisthana* (BONG BHONG MONG JONG RONG LONG) and finally the last 4 in *Muladhara* (VONG SHHONG SHONG SONG). In each *Chakra*, start from the upper left, then go down to the left and go up from the right. Three rounds are recommended. Close by repeating the two syllables HANG KSHANG in *Ajna*.

In the crown of the head

The rotation of the 50 *Sanskrit* letters around the crown of the head triggers the *Omkar* sound, which is heard in the center of the brain - in the so-called '*Cave of Brahma*', where the *pituitary* and *pineal* glands are located.

We start with the vowels behind the crown, and then move on to the consonants until we come back to the starting point. Turn counterclockwise (when viewed from above) and then turn clockwise. It is recommended to do twelve sets of rotations (6 + 6). This procedure is perceived as 'providential' due to its easily experienced positive effects.

In different parts of the body

The 50 letters of the *Sanskrit* alphabet are placed in the 50 parts of the body where the human body, according to the *Tantric* tradition, can be divided. There is no breath control. Place your hand on the following body areas while mentally chanting the appropriate letter.

1 ANG Forehead 2 AANG Mouth 3 ING Left eye 4 IING Right eye 5 UNG Left ear 6 UUNG Right ear 7 RING Left nostril 8 RRING Right nostril 9 LRING Left cheek 10 LLRING Right cheek 11 ENG inner part of the mouth (here you must not touch) 12 AING Chin 13 NGO Upper lip and upper teeth 14 OUNG Lower lip and lower teeth 15 AUNG Forehead & tops of head 16 AH Full face (touch with both hands) 17 KONG Left shoulder 18 KHONG Left elbow 19 GONG Left wrist 20 GHONG Left finger knuckles 21 WONG Left finger joints

22 CHONG right shoulder 23 CHHONG Right elbow 24 JONG Right wrist 25 JHONG Right finger knuckles 26 NEONG Right finger joints 27 TONG Left thigh joint 28 THONG Left knee 29 DONG Left ankle 30 DHONG Forefoot left 31 NONG Left toes 32 TONG Right thigh joint 33 THONG Right knee 34 DONG Right ankle 35 DHONG Right forefoot 36 NOING Right toes 37 PONG Left ribs 38 PHONG Right ribs 39 BONG Back (touch up and down) 40 BHONG Lower abdomen 41 MONG Upper abdomen 42 JONG Heart center 43 RONG Left shoulder 44 LONG Back of neck 45 VONG Right shoulder 46 SHHONG From left shoulder to right hand 47 SHONG From right shoulder to left hand 48 SONG From left shoulder to right foot 49 HAM Right shoulder to left foot 50 AKSHAM Moving down the front of the body

[Now let's proceed with the classic explanation of the Second Kriya]

Jyoti Mudra Second Kriya

During this practice you contract and relax the muscles near the physical location of each *Chakra*. In the *First Kriya*, we used the same *Jyoti Mudra*: the ears are closed by the thumbs and the eyes are covered by the index fingers.

Feel the place where the *Muladhara Chakra* is located. Contract the muscles near the *Muladhara*, which is located at the back of the perineum. In order to raise the energy of this *Chakra*, inhale it all the way up to *Kutastha*. Hold the breath for as long as possible, as long as it does not cause discomfort (about 10-15 seconds) while trying to perceive the particular light of the *Muladhara* in the *Kutastha*. Relax the physical tension and exhale.

Move your awareness to the second *Chakra Swadhisthana* and tighten the muscles of the sexual area and sacrum. *Vajroli Mudra* can be utilized to contract and relax the urethral sphincter and back muscles near the sacral center, and then do the exact same thing as you did with the *Muladhara Chakra*...

Once the energy of *Swadhisthana* returns to its initial position, focus on the third *Chakra Manipura*. Contract the abdominal muscles at the level of the navel: quickly contract and relax the navel, abdominal muscles, and the lumbar area of the spine. Repeat what you did with the two previous *Chakras*...

Repeat the same pattern for the *Anahata Chakra*. Expand the chest region. Bring the shoulder blades together and focus on the spine, which lies near the heart. Sense the contraction of the muscles situated near the dorsal center. Perform the same action as you did with the three previous *Chakras*.

Focus your attention on *Vishuddha*, the fifth *Chakra*. Move the head quickly right-left (without turning the face) a couple of times, perceiving a sound in the cervical vertebrae as if something was ground. The purpose of this is to locate the cervical center.

A different method is required to locate the *Vishuddha Chakra* astrally. Inhale the energy of this *Chakra* at the point between the eyebrows without any specific movement. Now, while holding your breath, practice the following five head inclinations. Turn your head to the left (the hands follow; the pressure on your ears and eyes does not change). The right elbow should approach the right side of your chest. Turn the head to the right, and the left elbow approaches the left side of the chest. Return to the center position and bend your head forward. Bend your head back and then back in front. Return to the usual position.

Go from *Kutastha* to *Vishuddha Chakra* by exhaling. For the *Medulla*, we have the following procedure: inhale very slowly from the base of the spine. As you breathe in, contract the muscles at the bottom of your spine, then those near your sexual organ, and finally those near your navel and *Manipura Chakra*. Then contract the muscles near the dorsal center and the throat region, and finally, clench your teeth and create wrinkles on your forehead. Observe the light located in the area between your eyebrows. Feel that your sixth center is being offered to God. Release the contraction by exhaling.

For the *Sahasrara Chakra*, we have the following procedure. Inhale and contract all the centers in the same way we did for the *Medulla*. Then, with clenched teeth, push the portion of your head that is above your eyebrows (the skull) up into the high heavens and offer it to the Divine. Release the contraction by exhaling.

To finish the procedure, position your hands on your eyelids and stay there while observing a milky white Light for 2-3 minutes. When the light disappears, fold your hands and bow your forehead, and pray to the form of God of your choice. Open your eyes, but remain focused internally in the pituitary gland, and observe the divine light in all things. Enjoy the *Paravastha* as you did during the *First Kriya*.

THIRD KRIYA

In this level the concentration is mainly on the crown of the head. In chapter 12, we learned that the *Radhasoami* movement teaches that in

addition to the 6 *Chakras* in the spine, there are also as many *Chakras* in the brain. To be precise, there are six in the gray matter of the brain, as well as another six in the white matter. By rotating *Prana* in circles in the brain, it is possible to gradually reveal the location of these 12 “higher” *Chakras*.

We also said that after completing a large number of these rotations, the soul is able to penetrate the eighth “*Portal*.” It's not clear what it is, but it's located in the white part of the brain. Through this *Portal*, one can reach the final goal of meditation practices.

When you decide to practice the *Third Kriya*, always start with the *Forward bends*, then the *Maha Mudra*, and finally the *Kriya Pranayama*. You can either practice the *Second Kriya* or skip it and move straight to the practice of the *Third Kriya*. Finally, always practice *Jyoti Mudra* and *Paravastha*.

First part: special form of Pranayama

In this part, only three *Chakras* are stimulated: *Anahata*, *Vishuddha*, and *Medulla*. This *Pranayama* is practiced 12 times in the following way: during inhalation, focus only on *Anahata*, *Vishuddha*, and *Medulla*, mentally chanting the syllables *Bha*, *Ga*, and *Ba* in them. The inhalation is continuous, not fragmented. The exhalation is also continuous: during it, you concentrate on *Kutastha*, the frontal part of *Vishuddha*, and the frontal part of *Anahata*, mentally chanting the syllables *Tee*, *Va*, and *Su*.

Second part: circulation of energy within the brain

Forget about the breath. Practice *Kechari Mudra* as best you can. Bring your head forward. Sense the energy in the frontal part of your head and mentally vibrate *Bha* in that region. Without returning your head to the normal position, slowly guide your head into a bent position towards your left shoulder – as if you were trying to touch the left shoulder with your left ear. Having reached this position, feel the energy present on the left side of the brain, above the left ear, and mentally vibrate *Ga* in that place.

From this position, bend your head back and slowly direct the flow of energy towards the occipital area of the brain. When you reach this position, mentally vibrate *Ba* in that area. Then slowly guide your head into the next position, bent towards the right shoulder - as if you were trying to touch the right shoulder with your right ear. Having reached this position, feel the energy present on the right side of the brain, above the right ear, and mentally vibrate *Tee* in that place.

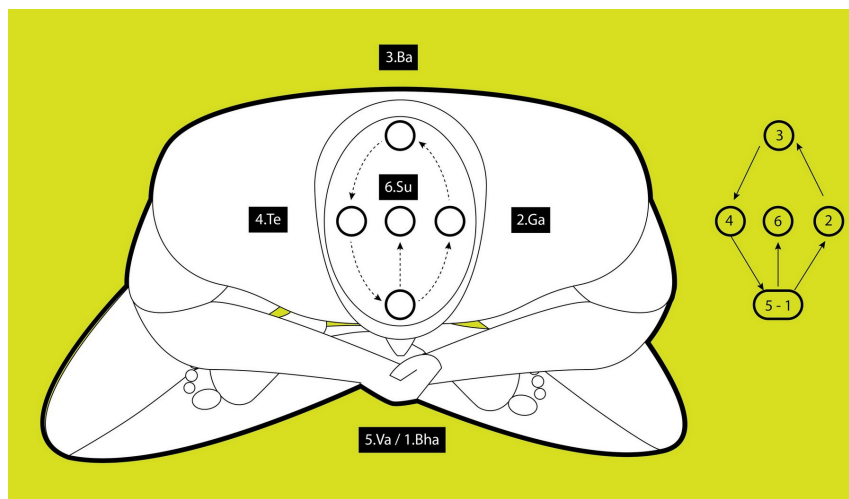


Fig.17 Circulation of calm Prana in the upper part of the brain

Slowly return to the initial position with your head bent forward. The flow of energy is directed towards the frontal region of the brain. Once you have reached this position, mentally vibrate *Va* in that area.

Slowly straighten your head to bring your chin parallel to the ground while directing your attention to the central part of the brain below the *Fontanel*. Mentally chant *Su* in that center. The first round is done. Repeat this process 12 times.

It is explained that the slow movement of energy through the brain's substance causes a *psychic pressure*. It is explained that this internal pressure, friction, favors the manifestation of the Divine Light.

Third part: circulation of energy in stillness

After completing the required number of rotations, it is not difficult to add this part where energy movement occurs in stillness.

Without moving your head, mentally repeat the syllables *Bha, Ga, Ba, Te, Ba, Su* without haste, trying to perceive the same energetic movement that was induced before by the movements of your head. The sensation is of a sphere of Light moving in a circle inside the brain, ending the circle at the point below the *Fontanel*. Try to perform at least 36 rotations.

Note

These last two practices have a very strong effect on the field of awareness. In a mercilessly clear way, you become aware of the many tricks of the ego that guide your actions. For example, the reason for

making wrong decisions appears with definitive clarity, free from veils and dissimulation.

The ego is a complex mental structure that cannot be destroyed, but can be made more transparent. There is a price to pay: inexplicable waves of fear may occur hours after the practice, and you may feel like you're not knowing who you are and where you're going. The subtle layers of the brain that you have touched are the source of this natural reaction.

These last two practices can make you less focused during the day. You feel as if you're experiencing a drug-induced state of detachment from the world. In this situation, every time you practice this technique, follow it with some repetitions of the *Second Kriya*, both the formal part (6 repetitions) and the informal part (3 repetitions).

Fourth optional part: involvement of the various Chakras

This practice is the culmination of the efforts made with the two previous techniques. The cosmic sound of *Om* is produced in a natural way by it. This is the only thing you will hear. Therefore, the mental chanting of *Bha Ga Ba Te Va Su* is not necessary. Concentrating on the *Omkar* sound is enough and you won't have to recite any *mantra*.

Focus on the center of the *Muladhara*. Inhale deeply and aim to raise the energy of *Muladhara Chakra* in the central part of the brain, under the *Fontanel*, above the *pituitary gland*. Imagine this *Chakra* as a disk that is as big as the energy circuit you created earlier.

Feel the air being drawn from your abdomen and stored in the upper portion of your lungs. Hold your breath and begin to set in motion the rotation of energy in your head, just as you learned earlier.

Energy is rotated in your head, but it also occurs around the actual location of the *Muladhara Chakra*. So two rotations of energy happen at the same time: it seems difficult but it will become natural. During this practice listen to the sound of *Omkar*.

The ideal number of rotations associated with each *Chakra* is 36, but beginners may be satisfied with a smaller number. Usually, the need to breathe disappears. Exhale immediately when you feel the need to do so and direct the *Muladhara Chakra* to its location at the base of the spine. Now inhale, lift the second *Chakra*, and repeat the procedure... Repeat the procedure for each *Chakra*, including *Medulla*.

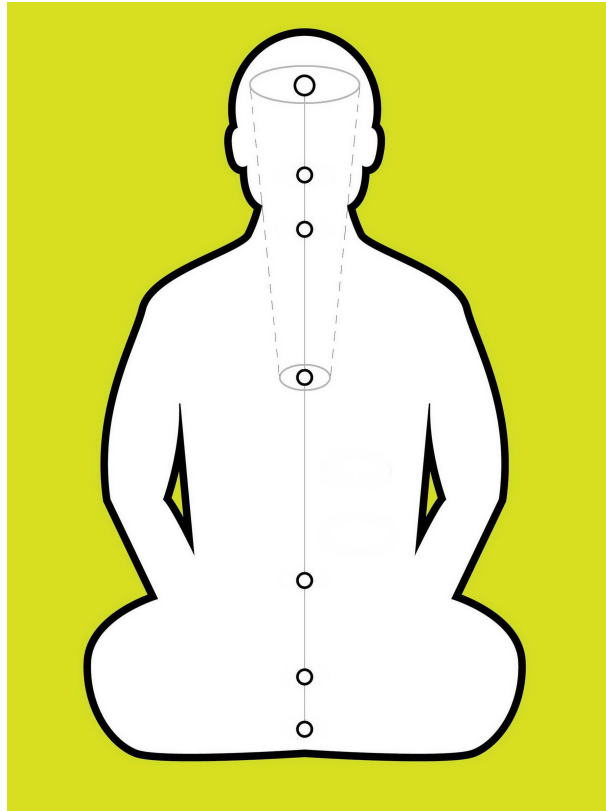


Fig.18 Here we are acting upon the heart Chakra

Repeat the process for *Medulla* and all the other *Chakras* until *Muladhara*. The practice concludes with free breathing. All the attention is focused on the *Fontanel*. Peace, inner joy, listening to the inner sounds, Divine Light... this is what you will experience. Your *Kriya* practice will transform into a romance with the reality of Beauty.

After a certain period of time, the experience of *Kundalini* rising will occur. You will receive it and overcome your resistances. You will be transported from a sweet state of calm to a truly heavenly state; you will return to your daily life with tears on your face, tears born of infinite devotion. When you can perform this procedure well, that is, when an effortless *Kumbhaka* manifests, then you will perceive the entire universe filled with resplendent Divine Light. During the day, you will be surprised by a state of mental clarity that you have never experienced before. The foundation of your consciousness will be perceived as a continuous joy that is independent of external factors.

Note

It is perfectly natural to begin this practice by gently moving your head to

aid yourself. If this helps, you can also think of six syllables of the *mantra*. This isn't mandatory, but it could be helpful for beginners. If this happens, try to gradually reach physical immobility while listening to the true *Omkar* Sound.

FOURTH KRIYA

The concept of the eighth *Chakra* located above the *Sahasrara* is introduced. As soon as this *Chakra* is perceived, the *kriyaban* is instructed on how to reach the state of perfect breathlessness. Once this state is reached, consciousness descends from the eighth *Chakra* to the *cerebellum*, lingers there, and then moves to the *pineal gland* where the *spiritual Light* has its seat.

When you decide to practice the *Fourth Kriya*, always begin with the *Bends*, then the *Maha Mudra*, and finally the *Kriya Pranayama*. You have the option to practice the *Third Kriya* briefly or skip it and proceed to the practice of the *Fourth Kriya* immediately. Finally, always practice *Jyoti Mudra* and *Paravastha*.

Preliminary practice: dissolving the breath in Brahmaloaka

The eighth *Chakra* is the gateway that allows you to get in touch with the astral body. Cleaning up what holds us to the system of reincarnation, which is our worn-out psychological patterns, is part of opening it. Spiritual compassion and self-denial are centered here. A *kriyaban* who realizes the essence of this *Chakra* develops the quality of altruism and lives in the dimension of compassion rather than judgment.

According to certain *Kriya* or *Kundalini Yoga* instructors, this *Chakra* is situated 5-6 centimeters above the *Fontanel*. Others say: 8 cm, 30 cm, and 60 cm. It's important to trust your perception.

Swing your trunk and head to the right and left while keeping the center of your attention above your head until you feel this *Chakra*. This is the correct location! Inhale and slowly raise *Prana* and awareness from *Muladhara* to the eighth *Chakra*. During this action, do not focus on any other *Chakras* in the spine. Move upwards, feeling the energy that passes through the *Fontanel* and reaches the eighth *Chakra*.

Focus on that and enjoy the balance between inhalation and exhalation. Slowly exhale, allowing the *Prana* to descend from the eighth *Chakra* to the *Muladhara*. Feel the energy flow as it descends and passes through the *Fontanel*. Repeat the procedure when you feel the need to inhale. Continue

repeating until your state of consciousness has completely changed and the breath becomes subtle and almost non-existent.

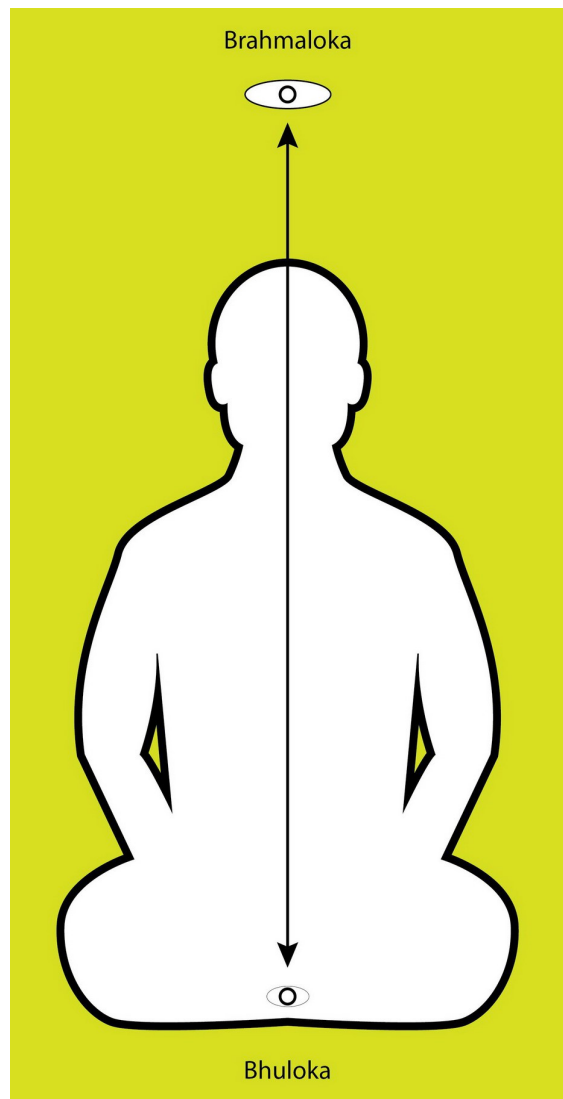


Fig.19 The breath moves between Bhuloka and Brahmaloaka and then dissolves

Now inhale gently from the *Muladhara* to the eighth *Chakra*, raising your breath and *Prana*. Exhale slowly from the eighth *Chakra* down the spine, but avoid intentionally going down to the *Muladhara*. Observe how the current related to exhalation spontaneously reaches a point in the spine. This point may not correspond to any particular *Chakra*. The starting point for the next inhalation is determined by the location of this point. Inhale from it until you reach the eighth *Chakra*.

The path's length has obviously decreased. Concentrate again on the balance between inhalation and exhalation. Exhale gently down the spine: it's likely that the current linked to exhalation will take a shorter path than

the previous one. There is a new starting point now. Inhale from this new point and move up to the eighth *Chakra*...

By repeating this procedure, you will achieve a mental and physical state where you will be breathless while concentrating completely on the eighth *Chakra*. If, after a long pause, the breath appears again, repeat the entire process from the beginning, (inhaling from the *Muladhara*). Continue in a patient and unhurried manner. The aim is to stop breathing by entering a dimension where it is no longer required.

Fourth Kriya proper: meditation on the Cerebellum

Rotate consciousness around the eighth *Chakra*. Observe a light sphere that moves around the eighth *Chakra* and then touch it at its center.

Keep repeating this perception without mentally chanting any *mantra*. Then let the sphere of light (after tracing a circle around the *Eighth Chakra*) do not enter it, but descend obliquely, crossing the *Fontanelle*. As the ray descends, raise your chin and feel that it reaches the *cerebellum*. Allow yourself to remain still for a short moment, completely immersed in the intense white and dazzling Light that emanates from there throughout the brain.

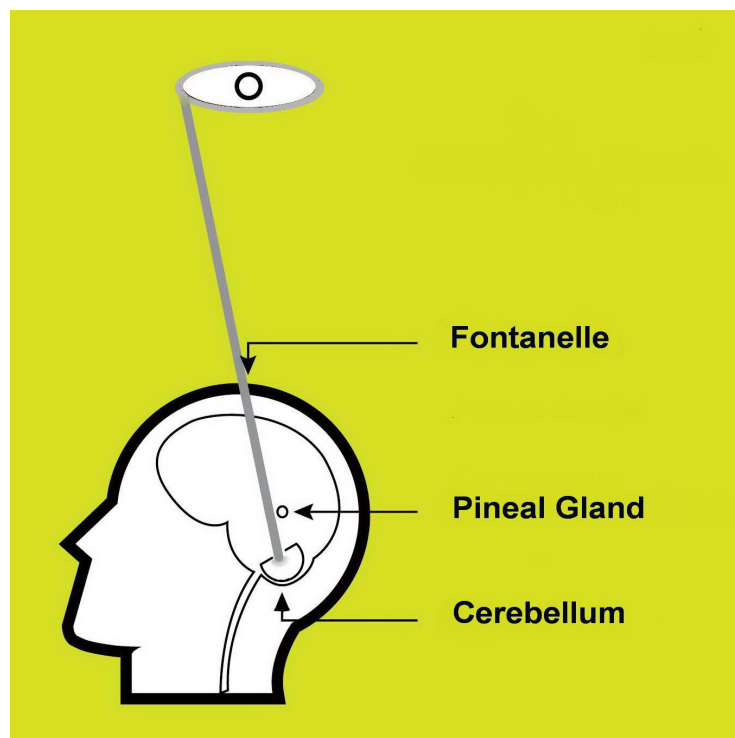


Fig.20 The Light moves from the 8th Chakra to Cerebellum

Become aware of the *cerebellum* and locate it. Lower your chin without losing sight of the Light. At a moderate speed, rotate all of your awareness

counterclockwise around the *cerebellum*. Dive deeper and deeper. Avoid going too fast or too slow. Do it repeatedly and intensely until you notice a shift in your state of consciousness and mood. Do this for a short period of time, perhaps 2-3 minutes, but not more.

After that, remain in this state for a brief moment and then open your eyes. Wait for a moment and then repeat the same procedure. Gradually, over the next few days, you can repeat the experience a few times.

Pineal Gland Meditation

Gradually raise your chin (just a few millimeters) until you feel a tenseness in the back of your neck. Condense the Light you are experiencing in your mind and direct it towards the *Pineal Gland*. Perhaps this center is the "Portal" we read about in the *Radhasoami* path, but I am not sure.

This gland is very close to the *cerebellum*, but slightly forward and above, along a line that forms an angle of 60° with the floor. The movement should be only slight, without any muscular tension. There is a kind of inner tension that guides you intuitively towards the *Pineal Gland*.

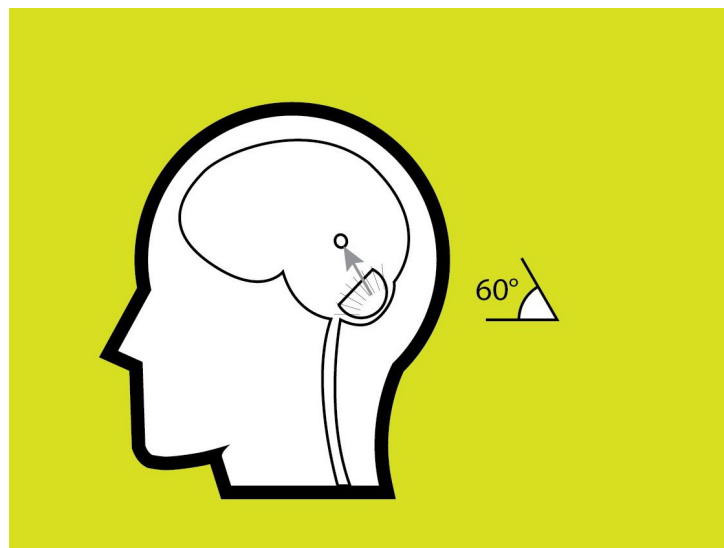


Fig.21 The Light moves from the Cerebellum to the Pineal gland

Move your awareness in a counterclockwise direction around the *Pineal Gland* at a moderate speed. A change in your state of consciousness will occur. Stay in this state for as long as your intuition advises. Keep trying this method until you are able to enter the *Pineal Gland*. This is where the union with the Divine happens. The TAT TVAM ASI state is manifested. In

this supreme state of union, one is without physical consciousness and unaware of their surroundings.

After the Omkar sound ceases to exist
the Effulgent Form appears.
Nothing exists except the Sun of the Soul.
I, Shama Churn, am that Sun. (*Lahiri Mahasaya*)²

My perspective on Swami Hariharananda's vision of Kriya

After spending time with *Swami Hariharananda* for a long time and observing how he changed his *Kriya* teachings almost every year, I came to see him as a brilliant and unwavering researcher. *Kriya* elements from various traditions, such as the *Radhasoami* movement, were collected by him and integrated into his personal practice.

A wonderful and unforgettable experience arose from my deep immersion in his teachings many years ago. One particular point in his explanation caught my attention: the sound of *Om* can be heard without closing one's ears. It is our responsibility to bring out that sound while practicing *Kriya Pranayama*. The application of this principle has brought me to a level of beauty that is beyond words. I am of the opinion that by following this advice, even a novice can easily approach the aspect of *Omkar*.

I want to devote my attention to two aspects of his *Kriya Yoga* vision: the renunciation of the practice of *Thokar* and the constant emphasis on concentration at the *Fontanel* (the seventh *Chakra*).

Regarding *Thokar*, I think that eliminating it resulted in the sacrifice of something precious. I recall a day when *Swamiji* questioned its practice, claiming that it could cause harm to the cervical vertebrae.

At his school, a teacher cautioned me that *Thokar* is unnecessary and could even be disturbing. The act of repeating a mantra in a *Chakra* is sufficient to awaken it. The prolonged holding of breath required in certain variations of *Thokar* can be very stressful. Reciting a *mantra* is a natural way to elevate consciousness. One sits silently, eyes closed, watching the darkness before oneself, and perceives the inner light. The breathing remains natural. Before departing, he reiterated that spiritual liberation cannot happen without experiencing *Omkar* personally.

² *Shama Churn* is *Lahiri Mahasaya*. This phrase is included in his diaries. *Purana Purusha*, Ashok Chatterjee's book, contains many inspirational phrases

I can calmly state that *Thokar* works excellently and doesn't cause any harm when practiced correctly, as described by Lahiri Mahasaya's *Second Kriya*.

Moving forward to the second point, it is true that in the *Kriya* of *Swami Hariharananda*, we tend to transcend the spine and *Chakras* and take shelter in the upper head region. The *Radhasoami* approach is reflected in this perspective. I am convinced that, particularly for a novice, this approach may become an escape from the fundamental human task of continuously focusing on the body in its entirety.

It is a fact that the highest part of the brain can lead to indescribable states of ecstasy. But if this experience is not supported by genuine work on all the *Chakras*, **it can become alienating**.

This is why I think that the *Sahasrara* cannot be regarded as the ultimate goal. This vision has a chance of becoming a refined illusion.

If one is obsessed with maintaining constant concentration in the *Sahasrara*, they may become filled with ego, disconnected from reality, and imprisoned in ideas that are caricatures of the real spiritual path.

In my life I have made the choice to embrace the essence of Lahiri Mahasaya's teachings and incorporate them with the most genuine core of what I received from *Swami Hariharananda*. Life has granted me the time and fortune to experience both paths.

A VERY SIMPLE FORM OF KRIYA YOGA

A method for practicing Kriya Yoga that is both easy and gentle has been given to me. The results I have achieved through practicing it have been excellent. I have full confidence that it can be beneficial for specific individuals. I am sharing this method in its entirety here.

Years ago, I heard from a *Kriya* teacher who claimed that the common way of practicing *Kriya Pranayama* was “deeply incorrect.” I got in touch with him. He was very helpful, kind, and clear in his explanations.

He informed me that the school he attended was founded by *Swami Pranabananda*, a disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya and well-known as “*The Saint with Two Bodies*.” He brought to my attention that the aim of *Kriya Pranayama* is to enter *Sushumna* with awareness. To accomplish this, extreme delicacy is first needed, followed by a very subtle breath!

The majority of *Kriya* schools instruct the use of force to raise the energy into *Sushumna* in a gross manner. From the beginning, a sound is generated in the throat and energy is seen rising and falling in the spine. This is not a good thing!

By practicing in this way, *Kundalini* does not move upwards but disperses in the body and is burned there, which creates physical disorders. These disorders are caused by the *Nadis* being partially blocked at first.

These schools are fully aware of these disorders and that is why they recommend practicing only 14 *Kriya* breaths for a few months and then gradually increasing this number. Nervous attacks are the primary disorders. This indicates that this method is not beneficial.

This school advises against teaching beginners to immediately perceive the energy that penetrates each *Chakra*, as it is a significant mistake that often prevents progress in the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*.

Instead, we should start in a very simple way and without expecting surprising results. Progressing in this manner will result in something profound and significant happening without any effort.

To correctly practice *Kriya Pranayama*, the inner gaze should stay fixed at the central point between the eyebrows (we refer to it as the spiritual eye or *Kutastha*), not anywhere else.

The practitioner shouldn't attempt to move through the *Chakras* from bottom to top during inhalation and from top to bottom during exhalation. On the contrary, the focus should be solely on *Kutastha*.

The eyes should be relaxed and everything should be natural. *Baby Kechari Mudra* is enough for beginners, as far as *Kechari Mudra* is concerned. I remember that *Baby Kechari* means keeping the tip of the tongue up and touching the soft part of the palate. This *Kriya* is easy to perform, even if it is challenging, as it requires 108 breaths to be practiced.

One may be perplexed when reading these instructions because they require one to ignore the physical location of the *Chakras*. Accepting that the task will be completed through the performance of the *Second Kriya* can help overcome this perplexity.

Ultimately, the *First Kriya* is meant only to impart a subtlety to the breath that cannot be attained in another way.

From my experience, this *Kriya* not only achieves this result but also brings about an exceptional state of Mental Silence. This involves, through practice, dispelling the persistent thoughts in the mind and maintaining a state of pure consciousness.

Technique of Kriya Pranayama as taught by this school

By keeping both shoulders in a natural position, expanding the chest a little, bringing the back into a straight position, gently lowering the chin, and mentally gazing between the two eyebrows, the position can be maintained stable without effort.

Do not cross your eyes; simply place yourself at the point between your eyebrows as if this were a quiet region where you take refuge. Relax your eyes, close them, and look internally in a relaxed manner.

Allow something to appear on its own without trying to see it. Do not try to keep *Kutastha* in mind, but try to be there, inside *Kutastha*. Make an effort to see the light of *Kutastha* solely through the mind's eye.

Deeply inhale and mentally recite the word *Om* six times in *Kutastha*. Then exhale deeply and mentally repeat the word *Om* six times in *Kutastha*. If you want to follow this school, this is the way to go. ³

³ What matters is that the breath is as deep as is needed to mentally chant with ease: 6 *Om* inhaling; another 6 *Om* exhaling.

In the spiritual eye, you place various *Oms*. The act of mentally chanting *Om* is similar to tapping. Mentally, the *mantra* is recited, attempting to perceive it at a very low volume. At least for now, breathing should be effortless with no sound produced in the throat. The minimum amount of breaths needed for *Kriya* is 108.

If your breath is very short, accept this situation without trying, with discomfort, to lengthen your breath. As time passes, a longer breath will appear spontaneously. It's important to stay centered on the *Kutastha* and mentally chant *Om* 6+6 times. Since the recommended number of breaths is 108, by the end you will have mentally chanted the syllable *Om* 12 times per 108 breaths = 1296 times in total in *Kutastha*.

It is explained that if you carry out this subtle action, it reverberates in each *Chakra* automatically, even if you are not aware of it. This fact happens spontaneously, so don't try to predict it using complicated visualizations.

Over time, you will feel that the spine exists and that it is possible to perceive it throughout its length. If it does not happen today, it will happen tomorrow. You must be patient and encourage the right attitude. There is nothing special to do. Do not try to achieve this by lowering consciousness.

Practice makes the mental chanting of the various *Om* deeper and more pleasant. After a few weeks of practice, you will notice that there is a delicate sound in your throat as you breathe. Your breathing becomes slower and more subtle.

Your entire being lies within a luminous sphere that is situated between the *Kutastha* and the center of your head. What you see is irrelevant; what matters is that you feel at ease and immersed in the beauty of the process.

As you get closer to the end of the 108 breaths, you are likely to see light in *Kutastha*. *Yoni Mudra* is going to intensify this. After completing *Yoni Mudra* and *Maha Mudra*, you will return to *Kutastha* to collect your consciousness without doing anything. This means not chanting *Om* and not paying attention to your breathing.

Let's add a "finesse" that is discovered over time. Keep your chin down and inward so that *Kutastha* and *Medulla* are at the same level. Well, you will realize that you exist in *Medulla* while only the visual force is focused in the point between the eyebrows.

Not only that, you will realize that every manifestation (not visualization), every luminous revelation of the *Chakras* occurs about four centimeters

inside the point between the eyebrows: this is the seat of *Ajna*. Maybe all this seems complicated, but with practice, it will become clearer.

Questions and answers about the Kriya Pranayama technique

I am interested in learning more about the process of knocking with Om in Kutastha. When we mentally chant Om, we don't have Kutastha in mind at that moment.

The mind is quiet, the thought process is not stressed by worry “I must have *Kutastha* in mind, otherwise my practice is wrong.” No, none of that. You are engaged in two activities: (1) breathing and (2) repeatedly placing *Om* in the center point of *Kutastha*.

That's all. Doing this for a few minutes can lead to a truly heavenly state. With patience, you will reach a divine state of contemplation. Some people speculate about the duration of each *Om*. They inquire whether there is a small pause following each *Om* and inquire about its duration in tenths of a second. I think that in this case, such people should be left free to be sage-like and build their own failures with their own strength. While *Kriya* may seem like a chemical recipe, it is actually an art form that is based on intuition, intelligence, and common sense.

Is it possible for the breaths to proceed without our control, like in the Hong So technique?

During the *Hong So* technique, we observe the spontaneous process of breathing without caring whether it is long or short. In fact, during the *Hong So* technique, our breathing lasts only a couple of seconds, and going forward, the breath tends to disappear. Now, how could *Hong So* breathing technique support the procedure of *Kriya Yoga*? *Kriya* practice gradually leads to a lengthening of the breath.

In the teachings of Lahiri Mahasaya, it is stated that in the long run one becomes capable of practicing a very advanced form of *Pranayama*: the inhalation and exhalation are extended up to 22 + 22 seconds.

In other words, in this *Kriya Pranayama*, we use a natural breath. But this breath must be slow so that we can mentally chant *Om* six times while inhaling and six times while exhaling. This mental action requires our breathing to be able to support it. Breathing should be effortless, but it must exist!

It's crucial to have a NATURAL breath, but we also need to collaborate to gradually lengthen it. If you have a very short breath and therefore are not able to mentally pronounce all these *Oms*, then chant them more quickly. Your breath will become longer after a certain number of breaths. To conclude, the *Hong So* technique bears no relation to the *Kriya Pranayama* technique.

What is the best routine?

108 *Kriya* breaths are required. [40 to 50 minutes] After that, you practice the *Yoni Mudra* once in 24 hours, 3 *Maha Mudras*, and then remain calm and concentrated on *Kutastha*.

Even beginners are advised to begin immediately with 108 repetitions as explained. There is no lower number to start with, and there is no recommended progression.

Of course, if one is ill, they do not practice at all. And if circumstances beyond one's control prevent one from practicing a larger number, well, this may happen, but it should not become the norm.

It is important to understand that the other numbers found in Lahiri's letters to his disciples are very personal instructions. Here we are considering a general advice given to serious *kriyabans* who are in good health. *Yoni Mudra* and *Maha Mudra* are two of Lahiri Mahasaya's most well-known techniques.

As for *Maha Mudra*, there is a variation recommended for those who find *Maha Mudra* too difficult – Lie on your back. Inhale. Raise your legs while keeping your pelvis on the floor. Put your hands under your knees. Maintain your balance on the lower pelvic bones and keep your forehead close to your knees. Exhale. Return to the initial position.

An alternative practice exists for concluding the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*. When the breath is internalized in *Sushumna*, keep your attention on *Kutastha*. With a natural breath, inhale into *Sushumna* with a single mental chant of *Om*, and exhale with another *Om*. Practice this way until you forget yourself and reach the stage of *Samadhi*.

How can I know when it is the right time to produce throat sounds?

It is typical of *Kriya* schools to teach you how to produce strong sounds in the throat from the very beginning of the practice. Their explanation is that loud sounds at the start are beneficial because they create cool and warm

sensations in the spine. *Ida* and *Pingala* create these sensations. Being in *Sushumna* does not have anything to do with these currents.

If you insist too much on these sounds from the very beginning of *Pranayama*, you may cause problems and lose the magic of the practice. Allow the throat sounds to occur at a later time. They will be more enjoyable, will capture your concentration, and will help with the procedure. Their appearance will be spontaneous once the breath is long enough.

Only the intuition that comes from meditation can help you understand when it is good for you to try to increase the strength of your breath and therefore produce sounds.

SOME NOTES ON THE HIGHER KRIYAS

This school claims that the *Kriya* path has 4 levels. The *Second Kriya* is a consequence of the profound practice of the *First Kriya*. This school asserts that as a novice, you cannot immediately perceive the majesty of *Kriya Pranayama*. But don't believe that there are secrets that are intentionally kept hidden from you.

To gain access to the *Second Kriya*, it is necessary to have a solid practice of the *First Kriya*. To achieve this, it is necessary to practice 108 breaths of *Kriya Pranayama* twice a day. For those who cannot complete it twice, they should at least dedicate themselves to one complete session each day. By following the instructions received with sincere intention, you will be guided safely towards discovering the deeper aspects of this technique.

It is crucial to comprehend what actually takes place during *Kriya Pranayama*. The breath should be natural, but with continuous awareness, it becomes more subtle until it's almost nonexistent.

While practicing, the inner eye is directed to the Spiritual Eye (the point between the eyebrows), and the breath is observed, which gradually transforms into pure, almost imperceptible *Prana*. In a nutshell, the *First Kriya* commences with regular breathing and, by awareness, transforms it into a flow of subtle energy. The aim is to bring the breath to a point where it almost disappears, thereby freeing up space for vital energy.

Second Kriya

The *Second Kriya*, also known as *Kathor Pranayama*, is an even more superior version of *Kriya Pranayama*. The *Second Kriya* requires one to work with the life force through extremely subtle breathing.

The power of mental concentration is applied to this subtle breath, with the objective of piercing each *Chakra*. This method is ideal for fully appreciating the majesty of this practice.

To start, we draw *Prana* into the *Sushumna* channel and push it towards the first *Chakra* (*Muladhara*). Then, with a concentrated mind and the power of visualization, we guide the energy from the first *Chakra* to the second *Chakra*, from the second *Chakra* to the third *Chakra*, and so on, ascending along the spinal column, reaching the *Medulla*.

Prana, possessing energy, breaks through energetic knots and flows through each *Chakra*. Upon arriving at the *Medulla*, one feels the presence of *Prana*. The action is repeated a second time within the *Medulla*. Then the same steps are carried out in the subsequent *Chakras*, gradually moving downward until reaching the *Muladhara*, where the process is repeated once more.

You can either ignore your breathing or use it as you wish. For the latter choice, I will include a personal note at the conclusion of this chapter.

The duration of a complete cycle of ascent and descent can be a matter of a minute or so. In the beginning, it's common for it to take longer. But after a few months, a complete cycle will last for a minute. At the outset, the practice is based on 10 rounds, which are increased by 10 every 10 days, resulting in a maximum of 200 rounds.

The most challenging part is in the area between *Muladhara* and *Manipura*, where the mind is the most agitated. In order for the *Prana* to pass through, it needs to be applied with more mental strength. After passing through the third *Chakra* (*Manipura*), the mind begins to quiet down. The sixth *Chakra* is responsible for the spontaneous rise of the *Prana* and mind at that point.

In the calm state, the *Chakras'* manifestations start appearing in the area between *Kutastha* and the center of the head. Observing this light, one moves forward with the descent and then starts again.

A Note on Thokar

Lahiri Mahasaya taught a technique known as *Thokar*, which utilizes physical movements to assist energy in moving from the lower *Chakras* to the heart. The school we are currently discussing teaches that such movements are unnecessary. The energetic knots, in fact, are intertwined *nadis*, and they are dissolved through the power of mental concentration and the subtle action of the *Second Kriya*. The process transforms the breath into an arrow of light that pierces the center of the *Chakras*, making *Thokar* unnecessary.

You are free to experiment: you can try *Thokar* and observe what happens. You have the option to carry on with the *Second Kriya* and observe if it works. If possible, go back to *Thokar* and find out if it finally reveals the power that Lahiri Mahasaya promised: unlocking the door of *Sushumna*.

How the Tattwas are perceived

While traversing the deepest channel of the *Sushumna*, you have the option to meditate on each *Chakra* for increasing periods of time, from 5 to 30 minutes. By doing this, one is able to connect with the subtle energies of the *Chakras*, known as *Tattwas*. The five essential elements are known as *Tattwas*: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Ether. Each *Tattwa* represents a specific aspect of divinity and confers a specific power or blessing upon the practitioner.

The impact of the Second Kriya

The ripe fruit of the *Second Kriya* is this: the mind enters a state of perfect concentration, completely natural. The downward-pulling force vanishes, and the *Prana* gathers at the point between the eyebrows. By practicing consistently, the breath moves from *Chakra* to *Chakra*, eventually reaching the sixth. The door to *Kutastha* is opened at this moment. If this occurs, you are prepared to gain access to the *Third Kriya*.

Third Kriya

While the *First* and *Second Kriya* are practiced below *Kutastha*, the *Third Kriya* is practiced in *Kutastha*. Above *Manipura*, the mind becomes attracted to a mesmerizing light perceived in *Kutastha*. The eyes and mind become fixed on *Kutastha* with hypnotic attraction. At this moment, one has only one work to do: “knocking” on the door of *Kutastha*. The *Third*

Kriya involves a deep concentration in *Kutastha* and an intense *Japa* of *Om*.

After completing 200 times of the *Second Kriya Pranayama*, place 432 *Oms* in *Kutastha* (or at the point in the central part of the head). Place these *Oms* in that center “during one single breath.” Instead of “place”, you can say: “Transform your being into an arrow and enter *Kutastha* 432 times during one single breath.”

Let's now question ourselves: what is meant by “during a single breath”?

Here, reflection on the concept of breath is needed, and it becomes clear that at this practice level, traditional breath understanding no longer applies. “A single breath” translates to “a single, continuous movement of *Prana*.”

A beginner's attempt at this action is clearly destined for failure. He might attempt using minuscule doses of inhalation for *Kutastha* and mentally uttering 432 *Om*'s as naturally as feasible. If he has put in the effort to refine his breath until it becomes pure *Prana*, then he doesn't need any tricks and knows how to push the *Prana* into *Kutastha* with the effort of continuous attention. This endeavor must persist until whatever I am now elucidating comes to fruition.

With the mind and inner vision firmly fixed in *Kutastha*, a tunnel appears at the right moment. A sustained effort is continuously exerted here.

The entrance to this tunnel is deep black and is surrounded by divine light, which is guarded by two types of power. The first veil blocks the ability to see the divine Light. The second veil is a deflecting force that makes the mind slip out of the entrance of the tunnel.

When the mind and inner vision are fixed in the center of this Light, the tunnel is entered. As the entrance expands, the inner world will become ten thousand times more brilliant.

In the center of *Kutastha*, a roundness called *Chittakash* appears. Everything is reflected in this area, making it clear like a mirror. The subtle life force (*Prana*) can be used very intensely to decrease the veil and see this area clearly.

A reflection can be seen in the form of an egg, which is black and surrounded by a brilliant light. It also has the appearance of an eye. When you are immersed in this vision, you continue with the perception described in the *Fourth Kriya*.

Fourth Kriya

This practice is known as the *Kriya of the West*. In the previous *Kriyas*, the observer is in the *Medulla*, while the center of attention is in the *Kutastha*. In this *Fourth Kriya*, the position is reversed. The observer is in the *Kutastha* and the center of attention is at the back of the head. For this reason, it is said that while the previous *Kriyas* are *Kriyas of the East*, this last one is a *Kriya of the West*. This marks the start of the *Fourth Kriya*. In this *Kriya*, you are beyond the *Chakras* and beyond the mind. There is no need to work on *Prana*.

Practical instruction

Observe an equilateral triangle enclosed in a circle and meditate on it while entering the *Kutastha*. Repeat 432 *Om*, but forget the *Chakras* in the spine. In this triangle, at its center point, you will find a star called "*Sri Bindu*."

There are also three stars at the corners of the triangle. You will have to pierce the three stars and then focus on the ***Mula Chakra***. *Mula* means "Root". In my opinion, it could be the center referred to as *Bindu* that was introduced in chapter 6.

Piercing the *Mula Chakra* will allow you to cross the borderline between life and death, leading to the manifestation of divine intoxication. Immerse yourself in the lake of *Bindu*. The "moment of moments" of life will occur where all veils will be destroyed, resulting in the cessation of all perceptions. You won't be affected by the pain of death or any relationship with the world.

It should be noted that this *Kriya* can be performed without being aware of the triangle and all the described details. Refining awareness and being aware of awareness are enough, in fact.

By being aware of awareness, awareness refines and becomes eternal and absolute awareness. In the *Fourth Kriya*, the practitioner immerses themselves in the pure perception of the divine *Sound* and *Light*. The state of *Eternal Tranquility* can be achieved through this practice.

The supreme knowledge will be acquired through this profound meditation. At this moment, you will forget your identity and experience total bliss. At this level, mind and intellect are lost and the individual soul immerses itself in the universal Soul.

FINAL NOTE REGARDING THE SECOND KRIYA

These are the explanations I got from this school. Impressive is how the four levels are both simple and powerful.

I am of the opinion that the *First Kriya* of this school is the most effective preparation for *Kriya Pranayama*.

The mind is completely silenced by continuing to place the *Om mantra* in *Kutastha*. A long and well-established practice of the *First Kriya* allows one to move on to the next step and thus finally enter the spine with consciousness.

I do not believe that concentrating only on *Kutastha* and repeating *Om* in it – as explained – creates an automatic stimulation in each *Chakra*. No! My belief is that this practice is only meant to break the connection with the mind.

The *Second Kriya* was only described vaguely by the teacher I spoke with. He told me that understanding how to practice this second step would spontaneously occur. According to him, this intuitive understanding was a result of intense practice of the *Kriya Pranayama* technique for months and months.

What I am describing now is not the *Second Kriya* that he shared in precise words, but what I deduced from the general information he gave me. I have had more explicit discussions with other researchers. The reader is free to choose whether to pay attention to what I describe below or ignore it.

Practical Instructions

Based on my experience, focusing solely on this form of *Second Kriya*, restricting myself to purely mental work, was found to be too demanding, thus extremely tiring. I opted to utilize my breath in a very specific manner.

Until the *Second Kriya*'s cycle number hits 40 or 50, I pause at each *Chakra* for a moment to experience a gentle breath, which includes a single inhalation and exhalation. After doing this in the various *Chakras* on the ascent and then repeating the same process on the descent, the elapsed time is about one minute. The time the teacher specified is this.

When this number is surpassed, I adjust my approach. I breathe in short parts, as described in *Swami Hariharananda's Second Kriya* (the part he refers to as *Formal Part*). I don't pause in the head with the movements that this master prescribes, but everything else is practically the same. With

this method, 200 cycles can be achieved.

Following the gradual mastery of this technique, one no longer requires focusing on the spine and settles into the region governed by brain centers.

It is up to the practitioner to decide whether to use only the *Third* and *Fourth Kriya* from this point on or maintain a moderate practice of the *Second Kriya*.

CHAPTER 16

HOW I CONCEIVED MY KRIYA ROUTINE

For the past three years, I have put in a lot of effort to complete this chapter. I am sharing the particulars of my current routine

Through trial and error, this routine was developed over the past five years and has been crucial in understanding what it takes to truly experience the breathless state. The routine I followed when I was 33, which had initially given me a breathless state, wasn't working now, 40 years later.

The loss of that gift was caused by the long periods I spent applying various incremental routines combined with the experience of various new techniques.

The practice of *Japa* is the prerequisite for each session. As before, I whisper the *mantra* at least 108 times. It is depicted moving both horizontally and vertically within *Kutastha's* space.

The routine I describe below begins by focusing on refining the breath and increasing awareness of the *Chakras*. Afterward, I proceed to refine the practice of my *Kriya Pranayama* practice by using *Shibendu Lahiri's* instruction. I dedicate myself finally to recreating the state of breathlessness with the aid of new procedures.

At the end of the description of the main routine, I include a few pages dedicated to alternative practices I occasionally use, which I collectively call "Experiments".

The objective of these sessions is to examine how a routine can be conceived using only one technique in a different way. Exploration of every aspect of that technique is the secret, and it's essential to repeat it for as long as circumstances permit.

My day ends naturally with *Yoni Mudra*, which I practice before bed to promote inner silence and prepare for sleep.

ROUTINE

PREPARATION

I practice *Japa* every morning, as I previously mentioned.

I get started on the routine by using the *Bends* that I learned from *Swami Hariharananda's* school (refer to chapter 14). I follow up with my own interpretation of *Maha Mudra*. I take a deep breath, take the *Ardha Matsyendrasana* position, and hold my breath. I come back to my normal position and exhale. I repeat this pose while twisting my spine in the opposite direction. I make sure to repeat these two movements at the least three times.

Now, I will outline the four procedures that I've selected for my practice. Lastly, I'll include some thoughts on the best way to utilize them.

[I] KRIYA IN LOOPS

This procedure has already been introduced in Chapter 6. Here, it is refined and intimate, but it also demands a lot of attention.

We begin by focusing on the *Muladhara*. It is possible to picture something in it circling its circumference in a counterclockwise direction. From now on, I will consistently use the same visualization in every center that I will concentrate on.

With a mild and gentle inhalation, I guide my awareness to the second *Chakra*. At this location, inspiration is concluded. I await the stimulus to exhale, and in the meantime the rotation of the energy continues. When the urge to breathe arises, I return my focus to *Muladhara* by exhaling softly. There's always a sense of counter-clockwise rotation accompanying me. Here I wait for the impulse to breathe in.

When inhalation occurs, I begin a similar process moving my consciousness from *Muladhara* to the third *Chakra*. Here too, the rotation of energy moves to the third *Chakra*. When I complete my inhalation, I wait for the stimulus to exhale, and meanwhile, the rotation of energy continues. The stimulus arises to exhale and I guide my awareness back to *Muladhara*.

For each of the *Chakras*, I repeat this process. Afterward, I will move to

Chakras 4, 5, and the *Medulla*. To sum up, five subtle breaths are utilized to infuse these *Chakras* with awareness and, in a certain sense, link them to the *Muladhara*.

There are no particular effects associated with this first cycle. The clarity of these effects becomes apparent after practicing more cycles as detailed below

During these additional cycles, the breath becomes more subtle and reaches and pervades the *Chakras*. The effectiveness of consciously creating a counterclockwise rotation in each *Chakra* will become apparent.

These additional cycles are a deeply spiritual experience. The breath becomes shorter and evanescent, with the potential to disappear and become a mental substance. I also experience light in various *Chakras*.

[III] KRIYA PRANAYAMA

Shibendu Lahiri asserted that during *Kriya Pranayama* exhalation, the breath was not perceived to be flowing through the nostrils but rather was dissolving within the body. He thought that this was one of the mysterious facts about *Kriya* that was incomprehensible to him using pure logic.

What I'm going to disclose is my distinctive approach to this specific type of exhaling.

During each exhalation, I attempt to exert a specific mental “pressure” onto each *Chakra* for approximately one to two seconds. Applying this action at the location of each *Chakra* is not an arduous task. I believe that every *kriyaban* has the capacity to execute this task as soon as they rely on their instincts and intuition.

Once that is completed, it becomes impossible to distinguish whether there is a short pause in each *Chakra* or a very quick exhale. You experience an intensified consciousness and energy that activates the particular *Chakra*. When this action is applied to each *Chakra* up to the *Muladhara*, the exhalation can be prolonged to the point of giving the impression of a never-ending event.

Then comes an inhalation that appears to travel deeper into the *Sushumna* channel. At the conclusion of the inhalation, there is a specific action that looks like “swallowing the breath.” We then proceed to stimulate every *Chakra*, starting with the *Medulla* and coming down.

As the practice progresses, I can achieve a breathing pattern that is truly *internalized*.

[III] MINIMIZING THE LENGTH OF EACH BREATH

The goal of this procedure is to achieve the state of “*calm breath*.” Passive practice is not appropriate for it. Careful attention and constant awareness are necessary.

Practical explanation

I inhale deeply from *Muladhara* to *Kutastha*, ignore the existence of other *Chakras* completely. I breathe out while keeping track of breathing, millimeter by millimeter. But I avoid going all the way to *Muladhara*!

I observe the spontaneous exhalation current reaching a specific point in the spine. The precise location of this point is irrelevant. I record it because it becomes the new starting point.

I inhale from this point to *Kutastha*, and follow the energy's upward motion on the new path, which will definitely be shorter.

Then I exhale and observe that the current travels a shorter path than before. A new starting point has been established!

I perform this entire task repeatedly, noticing that the breath becomes increasingly shallow. Thus, a moment occurs where it seems as if there is no breath left, while all the energy is gathered in the space between *Kutastha* and *Ajna*.

[IV] CONSCIOUSNESS SHIFTING BETWEEN AJNA AND THE HEART CHAKRA

Inhaling deeply, I bring awareness to *Ajna* in the center of your head. Then, I let a calm exhalation carry awareness from the *Ajna Chakra* to the heart *Chakra*.

I concentrate on the heart *Chakra* and feel the energy that is present there. I become aware of the state of “balance” between inhalation and exhalation. This means relaxing and trying to remain without feeling the need to breathe for a few seconds. I allow the process of natural inhalation to begin. I observe the subtle movement of the breath, starting from the heart *Chakra* and rising towards *Ajna*. Once it arrives at *Ajna*, I am confident there is no sudden automatic exhalation, as this would happen physiologically. I then observe a pause in which I concentrate on the state of “balance” between inhalation and exhalation until I perceive a clear stimulus to exhale.

Then the exhalation happens. I pay attention to every tiny part of this exhalation as it descends and returns to the heart *Chakra*. Here, once again,

I become aware of the state of “balance” between inhalation and exhalation. I remain in this state without breathing for a few seconds and wait for the stimulus to inhale. After that, the same process is repeated, with the observation of a calm inhalation rising and arriving in *Ajna*. The whole process is repeated until the breath appears to have vanished.

How do I employ these four techniques

Let's take a look at the two main approaches to this routine.

First method. I practice one technique at a time, with a focus on 12 cycles of *Kriya in loops*; 36 repetitions of *Kriya Pranayama*; several breaths of the technique to minimize the length of each breath until it has almost disappeared, and all the energy is in the space between *Kutastha* and *Ajna*. I conclude by achieving a state of breathlessness with the last technique.

Second method. To start, I practice the four techniques by repeating each a limited number of times. In short, four cycles of [I] followed by 12 breaths of [II], followed by 8 breaths of [III], followed by 3 cycles of [IV].

Each of the four techniques serves as an excellent preparation for the one that follows. Using the fourth technique as a first step, I can repeat the sequence in the same order, using the just mentioned numbers. Following this pattern, it's not hard to practice another final repetition.

After a total of three repetitions, I will continue to repeat technique [IV] until I reach the final breathlessness state.

Observation regarding the practice of the technique [III]

A problematic situation may arise while practicing. It has been bothering me personally for months. The problem is that this practice is so soothing that it causes drowsiness, which affects the procedure. The following method can be employed to prevent drowsiness. Each time I inhale, I mentally repeat the syllable VAAA; each time I exhale, I repeat the syllable SHEEE. By adopting this remedy, you do not lose concentration and the risk of drowsiness is overcome!

An observation about the practice of the technique [IV]

I based my definition on the instruction given by the masters to become aware of the state of “equilibrium” between inhalation and exhalation. I briefly stated that this means relaxing and trying to remain without feeling the need to breathe for a few seconds. Now I realize that this is not sufficient to clarify how to act. The truth is that the word “equilibrium” itself is a mystery. What I have to add is my own personal experience. In my opinion, it is very useful, during such moments, to try to perceive, in each of the two centers in which I find myself, a slow oscillation from left to right and from right to left.

The secret to success lies in practicing with intuition and attention, then **slowly consuming breath until it dissolves**. Having a lot of experience is necessary to determine the appropriate strategy.

To conclude: the moment in which you witness the miracle of the breath stopping, the bliss becomes more solid than ever! This is the way your *Kriya Yoga* practice concludes.

" No me pidàis que lo explique. Tengo el fuego en las manos " ⁴

(Garcia Lorca)

My worship is of a very strange kind. Holy water is not required. No special utensils are necessary. Even flowers are redundant. In this worship, all gods have disappeared, and emptiness has merged with euphoria. (Lahiri Mahasaya)

⁴ "Don't ask me to explain it to you. I have a fire in my hands."

EXPERIMENTS

After many years of practice, I've concluded that it's not appropriate to repeat the same routine every day for an indefinite amount of time. If, after several decades of practice without evident progress, this habit were to continue, that is not necessarily a sign of seriousness, but perhaps, I am sorry to say, a sign of imbecility.

A superficial and hasty approach can result from choosing this option, as it is motivated by the desire to complete the meditation routine as quickly as possible. Breaking away from this monotonous routine and dedicating to an experimentation period is something I find extremely beneficial.

In order for this experimentation to be considered serious, it must involve an uninterrupted commitment for some days. This approach will ensure that inner progress is significant and not just a distraction.

It's important to keep in mind that your daily routine doesn't have to be completely altered. In my view, *Japa* should be kept unchanged, and the advice to end each routine gently, moving towards a state where breathing has been dramatically calmed, is unquestioned.

Once you have practiced these routines for the designated time, it's important to write down some final thoughts and keep them in your journals. Returning to your usual routine can be done while observing the valuable guidance provided by your experimentation.

What's necessary is to set a clear goal and make every effort possible to achieve it. I don't intend to impose my point of view on what the best goals are and what it's worth pursuing. I'll just give a few examples to help you understand what I mean by "clear goal."

FIRST EXAMPLE: NOT VIOLENT FORM OF KRIYA

I take the practice without any expectations, as if *Kriya* could happen on its own, without my help. I do not want to think of it as "work."

The breath, the movement of energy, and the whole process must manifest spontaneously while I rest in the "cave" of *Ajna* in the center of my head. With unwavering determination, I repeat to myself: "No matter what happens, I will not do anything else. If nothing comes to pass, I will remain calm and accept this event."

All I do is observe the deep breath coming in and then going out. The breath is long, natural, and enjoyable. I allow my attention to rest on its

sound, clear and limpid. This attention – which is so easy to maintain – is not experienced as an effort. “Resting in my breath” is my only activity.

As I remain in tune with the sound of my breathing, I start to experience a comforting sensation that is connected to the simple perception of coolness entering and warmth leaving.

At that point, something happens. Without my intervention and without any pressure, I start to feel a subtle energy gathering in my body and slowly intensifying. I don't control it. I don't try to make it go up or down. I remain neutral; my sole objective is “to observe”, not “to act.”

Intentionally, I don't perceive the various *Chakras* in my spine. It is my perception that there are three distinct regions of the body associated with the three *Dantians* mentioned in the *Nei Dan* practice of Chinese *Internal Alchemy*.

I allow my body to choose when to exhale. The breath should be deep, long, and produce a beautiful sound. As I inhale, I feel energy in my spine at the level of my heart. As I exhale, I feel a vibration in the front of my body. As I move forward, I observe that my inhalation becomes more subtle, while my exhalation lengthens, keeping a clear and present sound.

During the brief moments of pause after every exhalation, a subtle bliss begins to manifest, which is difficult to describe but profoundly real. Without any effort on my part, I acknowledge that the two energetic currents outlined in *Kriya Pranayama* are occurring without fail, immersed in an increasing intensity of happiness.

The success of this practice stems from both respecting the will to do nothing and **allowing** *Kriya* to manifest in its entirety without restriction.

In fact, I must steer clear of sinking into a state of torpor that leads to sleep. It is essential to understand that “not doing” does not mean letting your breath disappear.

The key is to maintain a strong and vivid breath, without forcing it, but also without letting it go away.

The final stage of practice has begun now. As I exhale, I allow my chin to drop and my inner eye focuses on my navel. I have a feeling of strength flowing through my heart and a sweetness emerging in the navel region.

Repeating the procedure multiple times results in the appearance of the *Samana* current, which guides awareness towards the central *Sushumna* channel. I experience a sublime state by steadily persevering with this practice.

SECOND EXHAMPLE: YOUR HEART IS EXPERIENCING PRANAYAMA

Mentally repeat your favorite *mantra* as you practice *Kriya Pranayama*. Allow the session to unfold smoothly and experience a sense of euphoria that sustains your heart.

Notice how your practice becomes more subtle. The *Prayer* moves in the spine, following the rhythm of your breath. The length of your breath diminishes. During inhalation, half of the *prayer* is mentally repeated while the other half is mentally repeated during exhalation.

Your chin may begin to move slightly up and down in accordance with the *Prayer's* flow. On occasion, the chin stays lowered, the eyes are closed, and the mind disappears, as if it had gently dissolved into those moments of silence.

As a result, *Japa* has become an exceptional form of *Kriya Pranayama* that has entered the heart. Every breath is accompanied by an intense energy rising and falling through the heart *Chakra*. From the center of the heart, everything radiates, making it the focal point of the whole experience.

The devotion that develops is not what is commonly known as *Bhakti*. It is not directed towards a figure or an ideal. Instead, it is the sensation of being overwhelmed, dissolved, or annihilated by something immense. It's a joy that's hard to contain.

A mystical experience comes to mind, which Saint Teresa of Avila referred to as "infused memory." The soul is infiltrated by a divine presence and there is nothing one can do to prevent it.

A glorious delirium, a celestial folly, a state of unspeakable delights. It is an inebriation of love in which the soul doesn't know what to do, whether to speak or to keep silent, whether to cry or to laugh. The soul is conscious of a deep satisfaction. The soul feels invaded by something that has the taste of eternal life and feels as if coming into contact with an *Endless Goodness*. Hence comes the feeling that there is nothing on the earth worthy of your desire or attention. (*St. Therese*)

THIRD EXAMPLE: ENGAGE IN INTELLIGENT INNOVATION IN KRIYA PRACTICE

In this routine, we divide *Kriya Pranayama* into two parts: 24 + 48. Our first step is to perform 24 breaths of *Kriya Pranayama*. We then perform an intermediate exercise. This exercise will make it easy for you to recognize the *Chakra* locations and calm your breath. The next step is to practice 48 more *Kriya* breaths, which will take place in optimal conditions.

After completing the initial preliminary techniques, begin practicing 24 *Kriya Pranayama*.

At this point, you'll be faced with a new procedure you'll have to master. It's known as:

Guiding Kundalini

You will surely love it and you will ask why you have not practiced it before. Take an inhalation marked by the particular sound of *Ujjayi*. The length is about 4 seconds. Attract, through it, the energy from your body into the first *Chakra*. Feel *Kundalini* in the first *Chakra* and exhale rapidly with mouth open "huh." ⁵ The length of the exhalation is about half second. During this exhalation *Kundalini* remains in the first *Chakra*.

Perform the *Ujjayi* inhalation again, bringing energy to the second *Chakra* through it. After feeling *Kundalini* in the second *Chakra* exhale rapidly with mouth open "huh." The length of the exhalation is about half second. During this exhalation *Kundalini* remains in the second *Chakra*.

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

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

The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the base of the spine to the fifth *Chakra*. The procedure is repeated guiding *Kundalini* from the base of the spine to *Ajna Chakra*.

Take a rapid inhalation through the nose. Feel that *Kundalini* is present in the seventh *Chakra*. Now, practice an *Ujjayi* exhalation that lasts about 4 seconds by breathing through your nose. Feel that the energy of *Kundalini*

⁵ The sound is the same you produce with your mouth when you want to fog up a glass.

comes down from the seventh *Chakra* to the spiritual eye in the space between the eyebrows.

Take a rapid inhalation through the nose. Feel that *Kundalini* is present in the seventh *Chakra*. Now with a deep *Ujjayi* exhalation feel that the *Kundalini* energy comes down from the seventh *Chakra* to the frontal part of the fifth *Chakra*: the Adam's apple.

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

By taking this last action, the first cycle is finished. Perform a total of three cycles.

Now it's your turn to complete the last 48 breaths of *Kriya Pranayama*. There will be a great surprise waiting for you during them. *Kriya Pranayama* will be unfolded in an extraordinary manner. You will experience a feeling of living in a genuine paradise. Your entire being will be ideally concentrated in the area between *Kutastha* and *Ajna*. In this ideal space, you may even be able to perceive the lights of the different *Chakras*.

Note

This method of stopping *Kriya Pranayama*, practicing a different technique, and then resuming *Kriya Pranayama*, helps avoid a particular problem known as the “*Plateau Effect*”.

This effect is based on a psychological fact. An exercise such as *Kriya Pranayama* practiced intelligently, appears effective for a certain number of weeks, but then ceases to be effective. Our concentration faculties do not respond to the procedure we are following. This leads to the false belief that there is no possibility of future improvement and that all one's efforts will ultimately be a complete failure. Instead, you'll experience that surprise during the final 48 breaths of the practice, which destroys the false pessimistic conclusion.

FOURTH EXAMPLE: EXPLORING THE POWER OF TUMMO

We should become familiar with some terms related to the *Internal Alchemy of Ancient China and Tibet*.

Imagine the body being transparent as if it were made of crystal when meditating in the typical position. The *Dantian* measures around eight centimeters in diameter and is similar in size to a ball. In order to locate it, concentrate on the navel, reaching a distance of approximately four centimeters back and down the same distance.

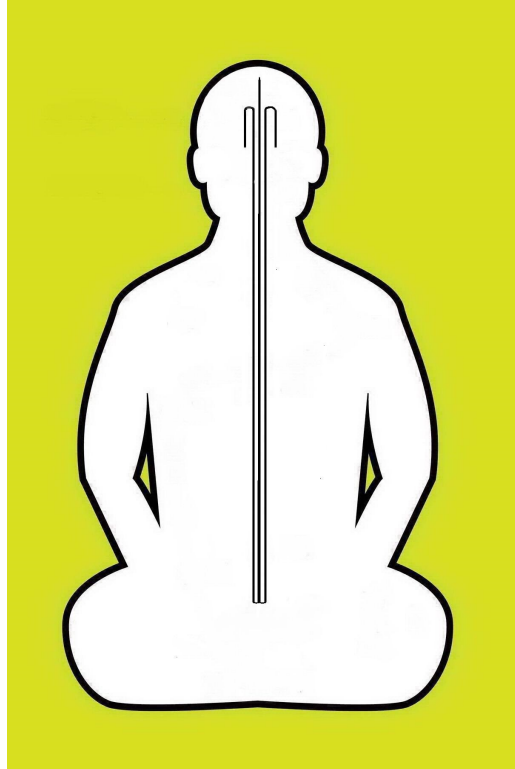


Figure 22. Nine Breaths Technique

Visualize the *Central Channel*, a tube approximately two centimeters in diameter. The *Dantian* is where it originates and ascends vertically through the body, reaching the crown of the head, and ends at the top, emitting energy that radiates into vast space. Therefore, it differs from the spinal channel, which is known as *Sushumna* in *Kriya Yoga*. It is situated in front of it and travels within the body.

Visualize two more subtle channels that start from your nostrils and descend parallel to the *Central Channel*, reaching the *Dantian* on either side of the channel. They bend towards the center, just like two umbrella handles reaching for the *Dantian*.

The nine-breaths meditation technique

This exercise resembles *Nadi Sodhana Pranayama*, but it is slightly different. Close your left nostril. Inhale through your right nostril, feeling the energy descend to the *Dantian*. Hold your breath for a short period of time, close your right nostril, and exhale through the left channel and exit through the left nostril.

While doing this, imagine that clean, fresh energy enters through your right nostril, descending along the right channel, and curves toward the center, arriving at the *Dantian* point. After a pause, as you exhale, imagine the current rising along the left channel and exiting through the left nostril .

Perform this exercise three times, then repeat the previous three steps, flipping the nostrils. It's just a matter of switching right for left and vice versa.

Finally, position your hands in your lap and visualize taking in light and energy through both nostrils. Light and energy descend as you inhale and unite with the *Dantian*. Keep your breath for a few seconds.

A new energy current is manifesting. When you exhale through the *Dantian*, a spiritual light enters the central channel of the spine and starts to rise. The exhalation is peaceful and prolonged. It's easy to feel the energy rising, particularly as it passes through the heart region. It rises to the top and exits high, spreading out into an infinite space. Repeat this last step three more times. You have practiced nine breaths in total. It's possible to repeat this practice for a more intense effect.

TUMMO TECHNIQUE

This technique is not widely known by *Yoga* practitioners. I suggest you give it a try: you'll never want to give it up!

Inhalation is divided into three distinct parts. The *Prana* that enters the body through the nostrils is attracted and directed towards the fifth *Chakra*. The time it takes is approximately two seconds.

Take a short break to perform a gentle *Mula Bandha*, and then, while inhaling, keep drawing *Prana* from the fifth *Chakra* to the fourth. Make a brief pause and increase the intensity of the *Mula Bandha*. To complete the inhalation process, draw *Prana* from the fourth *Chakra* to the *Dantian*.

Hold the breath in the dantian, intensify the *Mula Bandha*, and add *Uddiyana Bandha* and *Jalandhara Bandha*. To achieve this, you must contract the perineal muscles, draw in the abdomen with will, and lower the chin to the chest.

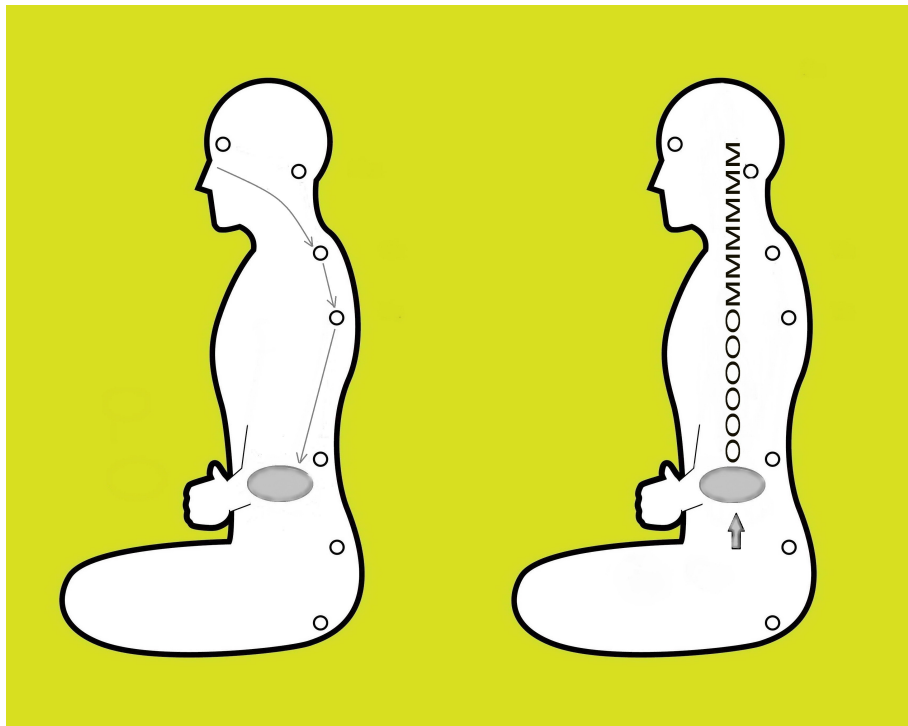


Fig. 23 Tummo technique

Then continue to hold your breath, intensifying the action of the *Bandhas*. Extend the breath hold for as long as possible by firmly contracting and compressing the diaphragm from both sides.

The temperature in the *Dantian* is rising. After holding the breath, the three *Bandhas* are broken and a prolonged exhalation happens, causing the *Prana* to enter the *Central Channel* and start to rise.

The rise of the *Prana* is accompanied by an intense and prolonged mental chanting of OOOMMM... This practice is normally repeated 12 times.

Note

The theoretical view of *Kriya* explains that the intensification of the *Samana* current in the abdominal area guides the consciousness towards the *Sushumna* channel, resulting in an ecstatic state. The *Samana* current is

originating in the *Dantian* region. *Kriya Yoga* books contain this phrase: “The navel is where *Samadhi* begins.”

In chapter 12, we mentioned that Hesychasts, with their heads bowed and their eyes directed towards the abdomen, concentrate on the navel, trying to locate the “*place of the heart*.” Here, the same action is being carried out.

Tummo is capable of producing exceptional outcomes. The impact is significant when it is repeated multiple times. The quote I shared below describes what occurs when the number of repetitions increases.

By performing **ten** breathing cycles of *Tummo*, one is able to feel the heat of the flame of a candle in the navel. With the next **ten** breathing cycles, the navel and its surrounding area will be filled with heat. The next **ten** breathing cycles cause the lower body to experience heat. Another **ten** breathing cycles move the heat upward towards the heart region. With these 40 *Tummo* breaths the knot of the heart (*Granti*) melts.

Another **ten** breaths and the flame is moved upward to the Throat *Chakra*. The next **ten** breathing cycles raise the flame towards the *Ajna Chakra*. The last **ten** breathing cycles lead it to the seventh *Chakra*.

40 + 30 breaths is a great result. From now on there is no more practice using the breath. The *Paravastha* state (the real *Paravastha*) totally absorbs the awareness of the person who has reached this elevated state of consciousness. It is explained that this is the way to untie the knot of *Rudra Granti* (or *Shiva Granti*) found in the *Ajna Chakra*.

It is wise to begin your routine with the nine-breath technique and then devote yourself solely to the practice of *Tummo*. In my opinion, an incremental routine is the perfect formula, as it ensures a pleasant rhythm and doesn't require excessive effort. It's crucial to stop as soon as the procedure becomes irritating.

As you continue with the gradual process, you will observe an increase in energy in the fourth *Chakra*, then in the head.

This is a good result, but it's necessary to conclude the meditation session by taking a few simple breaths, calming the breath, and then focusing on the sensations felt in the heart and *Kutastha*.

VASE-SHAPED BREATHING

Before closing the information on the practice of *Tummo*, I would like to add information on a technique useful for those who struggle to perceive the sensation of heat during *Tummo* practice. The following practice is primarily based on visualization. You have the option to experience it and then stop once you've achieved the desired outcomes.

Rest your hands on your lower abdomen. Inhale and allow your lower abdomen to expand into your hands. Imagine your abdomen and torso as a vessel, and the inhaled air as cool, clear water pouring into the vessel. Feel the inhalation filling the lower part of the vessel first, and then continue to fill it up to the rim or your collarbones. Apply this visualization to every inhalation.

Then exhale. Allow your abdomen to relax, but not completely: maintain the slightly rounded, vase-like shape of your lower abdomen. The aim is to produce physical heat.

In order to generate it, take a deep breath and feel the air descend into the Left and Right channels, filling them. When both channels are full, swallow a little saliva, contract your diaphragm, and firmly press the energy onto your dantian. Simultaneously, practice *Mula Bandha*, raising the energy in your *Dantian*. Hold your breath and visualize a candle flame in the center of your vase. Take a deep breath and hold it for as long as possible, as if you were struggling to hold air in a vase. A sensation of warmth will be felt in the central channel. The central channel is filled with air. The air in the right and left channels is dissolved and emptied.

When you can no longer hold your breath, let it go freely. Visualize the air rising freely through the central channel while exhaling, like gas rising through an unobstructed tube. This is a cycle. Perform several repetitions.

A feeling of warmth and bliss increases. The heat inside is intense, but it doesn't dissipate. Concentrate with a deep awareness on the visualized flame. There is now only the blissful awareness of the flame in you. Once everything becomes clear to you, you can quit this practice and simply practice *Tummo*.

FIFTH EXAMPLE: EXPLORING THE POWER OF THOKAR TRIBHANGAMURARI

I practice *Thokar Tribhangamurari* by whispering each syllable softly. Chapter 9 explains my choice, and I repeat this technique 18 times.

When I have described the *Tribhangamurari Thokar* technique I have highlighted the significance of practicing it with free and uncontrolled breathing. Now I describe a way to practice *Thokar Tribhangamurari* during the pause between inhalation and exhalation of my *Kriya Pranayama*. Some yogis use this method, and I believe it is legitimate.

I inhale accompanying the current moving through the spine by lifting my chin. At this moment, I stop breathing and I mentally descend down the *Tribhangamurari* three-curve path. I perform the typical movements of *Thokar Tribhangamurari*, placing the five mental taps.

The last movement, which is the blow on *Muladhara*, is pleasant because the energy is enhanced in this *Chakra*. I take a moment to feel the sensation of energy. To enhance this experience, I practice the *Mula Bandha* and hold it lightly during the exhalation that follows. Now is the time when the *Kriya Pranayama* exhalation begins, producing a distinctive sound of 'eeeeee'. When I exhale, there is a powerful sensation of energy that descends and becomes clearly perceptible in the area of the heart and third Chakra. The current that rises from the *Muladhara* matches this current.

I have a tendency to feel ecstatic while practicing. I am intoxicated with joy.

CHAPTER 17

THE KRIYA OF THE CELLS

In this chapter, I go deeper into what I discussed in the previous one about my practice of Jnana Yoga. I describe how I carried out this practice almost unconsciously, using what I call 'Kriya of the Cells'.

I start by recalling what I wrote about my initial experience of the breathless state in chapter 3. At the conclusion of that chapter, I attempted to ponder the profound significance of what I had experienced. To begin with, I realized how vital it was for me to experience the value of *Japa*.

In simple terms, I came to the realization that the Divine could only enter my life if I was able to calm my mind. There was no other alternative. Total calm was the only way for my consciousness to pass through all the layers that protect the ego, including thoughts, emotions, and sensations, until it reached the cells of the body.

A deeper understanding was that the experience of the breathless state had a connection to the dimension where *The Mother* had operated throughout her life.

Breathlessness meant perceiving that each cell of the body was supported by internal energy. I felt this vaguely at the time and certainly did not comprehend its full implications. I was only able to feel an inexhaustible love for *The Mother*, and that was sufficient for me. After that, I lost my way with other research on the *original Kriya*.

Now here I want to resume the discussion and share a particular experience that I had after those years, which I called '*Kriya of the Cells*'.

It all began when I met a *Kriya* school that taught how to raise the energy at the base of the spine during inhalation, then direct it to the peak of the head and allow it to slowly descend into the entire body during an exhalation that took twice as long as the inhalation.

In that school, it was necessary to constantly concentrate on the sound of breathing and perceiving the energy rising in the spinal canal during inhalation and descending not only into the spine but also into the entire body during exhalation.

My immediate understanding was that once the expected number of breaths was finished, it was appropriate to mentally carry forward the same intention that had been intensely present during *Pranayama*.

Of course, it was a matter of letting go of the valuable aid provided by breathing and letting it go. However, I had a desire to implement this plan.

For several months, I was involved in that experience, and it repeated itself in the following years, particularly during the summer months. In my introspection, I came up with some important reflections that I share after the experience is described.

I must mention that the study of *Taoist Internal Alchemy* also encouraged me to try the *Kriya of the cells*.⁶ In this discipline, we speak of the practice of the *Microcosmic Orbit*, where sexual energy is transformed, with the help of breathing, into pure love, and this in turn leads to spiritual realization.

A spontaneous phenomenon of energetic circulation takes place in the body once this practice is mastered. The *Macrocosmic Orbit* is the name given to this circulation and it represents the final objective of *Internal Alchemy*. It is described as a substantial infusion of energy that reaches the body and all its cells through a golden liquid.

Now I repeat that when I dedicate myself to this practice, the sensation is that of perceiving fresh air on the body. I guarantee that there is no air coming out of your nose. It's not just a state of well-being, but it's also like being in a state of crystalline immobility, feeling a sense of unlimited security.

During this process, one experiences a different energy than the one one perceives during classical *Kriya Pranayama*. It doesn't flow from one place to another. It is *static* energy.

In order to approach this experience, I prefer to meditate outdoors with my eyes open and with a strong determination to become one with all the elements of the landscape in front of me.

Strangely, I cannot explain why I do not find the practice of *Kechari Mudra* to be of any use. It's possible that this practice tends to isolate me from the environment, despite my desire to be a part of it. Strangely though, *Kechari Mudra*, which was so precious during the usual practice of *Kriya* that I described in the previous chapter, is not useful for me here.

⁶ I have given a brief description of this mystical path in the chapter 12

I will be describing my experience by distinguishing two moments in it.

[I] The descent into the cells of the body occurs through a long and deep breath

To accomplish this practice, one must whisper a *mantra* for at least 20 minutes to calm the mind. Once this is finished, the practice commences with a simple *Ujjayi Pranayama*, ignoring the existence of various *Chakras* and paying close attention to the sound of the breath.

During inhalation, the abdomen swells and the navel moves towards the spine when you exhale. The abdominal region experiences an increase in energy as a result of this.

The goal of each exhalation is to discover (or open) an inner path that reaches the cells of the body. The purpose of each exhalation is to infuse the divine into the body.

The cells are under a lot of mental pressure. The tiniest particles of vitality in the air should not come out of the nose, but should be directed towards the body - as if countless hypodermic needles were injecting energy and light into the cells. It's a natural occurrence for this exhalation to be long, as long as possible.

It's beautiful to imagine that the subtle sound of exhalation can act as a *mantra*. *Sri Aurobindo* mentioned the power of the *Bija mantra*, the 'sacred sound of the *Rishi*,' and stated that it's 'the cry that breaks the hardest rock.'

...the treasure of heaven
hidden in the secret cave
like the baby of the bird,
inside the infinite rock
(*Rig-Veda*, I.130.3)

A special brightness of joy radiates from this form of breathing! You have the impression that energy can be directed to any part of your body. The second phase begins after 24 breaths done in this way, and it's not easy to describe.

[II] The breath becomes increasingly subtle

The aim of the second phase is to practice different subtle breaths, attempting to make the effort purely mental. You move up the spinal column and down through the front of the body, feeling a sense of bliss.

When inhaling, you feel the energy reaching the top of your head. As you exhale, the energy is released into the various frontal parts of your body, which you can visualize gradually reaching.

By moving the energy in this way, up the spine and down the body, the bliss becomes stronger and stronger. It takes over and makes breathing unnecessary.

Continue this procedure, making it more subtle and gentle, until you reach complete immobility: everything stops! It will be possible to sustain the life of cells without the need for oxygen. Everything occurs in perfect stillness.

Avoid repeatedly asking yourself whether you are in a state of breathlessness or whether your breath is still present. It's important to comprehend that "*thought*" and "*breathless state*" cannot coexist, meaning they cannot occur simultaneously.

It is crucial to give up all thoughts and avoid disturbing the state of great absorption we are in. A beautiful spiritual experience that could arise during our practice could be blocked or prevented by thoughts.

I carry in my heart the magic of *The Mother's* words when she described the value of descending into the body through various layers of consciousness, until reaching the *Consciousness of the Cells*. This yearning was present in her during her last years on earth. The words she used to describe it have a powerful impact on me.

When I end this practice and realize it's time to return to regular life, I feel completely relaxed. It's a struggle to get up from your meditation mat or seat. However, normal life must resume and continue.

What I can recall about this Kriya form

The simple act of bringing awareness to the exhalation phase of *Pranayama* by visualizing the breath descending to every cell of the body has unexpected outcomes.

I noticed that the days following my practice, even when I couldn't go outside because the weather had deteriorated, I had the mental state of a clear Spring day.

The beauty of life, like precious wine from a full cup, seemed to overflow from every atom and fill my heart. I felt like for years I had hoped in vain that the Divine would become a part of my life, but never saw any results... and suddenly, I discovered that the Divine had always been present.

Heaven's fire is lit in the breast of the earth
and the undying suns here burn.
(*Sri Aurobindo, "A God's labor"*)

The feeling of beauty and fulfillment was overwhelming, as if an impressionist painter had finally transformed his visionary conception into reality, conveying the impression that the inert substance of the matter he depicted was a mixture of multi-colored light particles, like countless suns radiating in brilliant transparency.

It seemed that this process was capable of destroying every mental prison I had created by myself. The problems that had arisen in my mind, particularly those related to complicated and contradictory plans for the future, became an illusion from which I emerged definitively. Life, which until then had been full of hardships, now seemed to be moving peacefully towards the future, where I perceived no insurmountable obstacles.

Kriya was practiced in this way multiple times, and each time, after a few days of practice, I noticed a strange effect that I didn't expect.

In reality, I experienced the sensation of being without skin. I'll clarify. Imagine an anthill that has been disturbed: countless ants are moving chaotically. The entire environment in which I lived seemed to be more agitated and sometimes even aggressive.

Occasionally, after a prolonged absence, some friends came to visit me to discuss various issues that they have not been able to resolve. The topics we discussed prompted me to make significant modifications to my attitude.

I found myself having trouble facing what appeared to be difficult challenges that I had skillfully avoided until that point. Due to this, I had to abandon my calm state and put my rational abilities to the test. I put in a lot of work to take into account the challenging issues that those individuals brought to my attention.

I was taken aback by a peculiar phenomenon. I had the impression that I was able to perceive, not only through my consciousness but also through my body, what was happening in the consciousness of these friends.

I want to make it clear that I am not talking about telepathic perceptions. I am referring to experiencing a state of mind that I believed was not mine, that had no justification, that was totally unrelated to me.

At this point, I began to think that my *Kriya* practice might have had an effect on those people, and that is why they came to me with so many issues! How did this happen and what significance could it hold?

It appeared unlikely to me, almost like a daydream. I couldn't determine if my impression was deceiving or if it was a true fact. Is it possible for me to believe that my spiritual practices had an impact on the reality around me, leading to things happening that would have not happened or in a different way?

I had never considered this as a possibility before, but now rationally believe it to be impossible. The thought I was having resembled a figment of my imagination.

It is widely known that the mind excels at clutching at straws, but since these events have occurred repeatedly, I couldn't ignore this phenomenon. I am cognizant of the fact that my writing provokes the most daring *New Age* manias. My determination to be completely sincere led me to describe this particular experience.

Fascinating hypothesis

After some time had passed, I started to ponder the following hypothesis. It's possible that all authentic spiritual paths have a step of 'ascent' and a step of 'descent'? The 'ascent' phase is commonly understood as the 'mystical path'.

The 'descent' phase, on the other hand, occurs when a mystic feels in their heart the suffering and problems of other people and agrees to do something to try to solve them. In the lives of mystics, this last phase is rarely seen as a necessary effect to complete their spiritual path.

I am committed to taking this 'descent' phase seriously, so I have a complete separation from a common trend that represents the opposite of what I am trying to describe. I'm talking about individuals who claim to love all of humanity as their "greatest Self". They claim that they frequently send positive vibes or good intentions to humanity...

Certainly, I am not bothered by this abundance of silly words. I acknowledge that these words and statements are just words, uttered within a banal emotional state of mind that lacks any real meaning.

It's not simple to accept the concept that one person's spiritual awakening has an impact on those around them. What are the effects of the spiritual efforts of an individual on those who are in some way connected to him?

I didn't think this fact was completely impossible. I began to contemplate the possibility that pursuing spiritual understanding could necessitate acting in ways that are beyond reason's grasp.

When studying the biographies of mystics, we encounter examples of how they accepted to take on the burden of other people's suffering, in order to dissolve it.

It brings back memories of *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina's* experience of dying multiple times while being a metaphysical connection to some wounded soldiers who were dying on the battlefield far from home.

Lahiri Mahasaya was also affected. Let us think of that famous episode when he felt like he was drowning in the bodies of people who had suffered a shipwreck in a distant sea.

He didn't ask and didn't make an effort to attract this experience to himself. He fully accepted it, and we can hypothesize about the supreme comfort he brought to those unfortunate persons. It is possible to share the pain of others in your body with the aim of diminishing and eradicating it.

Now, Lahiri Mahasaya and other saints are mirrors for us who practice *Kriya Yoga*. It's possible that what happened to the mystics could happen to us someday.

Surely, we are not close to the transcendent state of consciousness of Lahiri Mahasaya. Although we may not have the same spiritual realization, devotion, or surrender to the Divine as the saints, we can slowly direct our hearts towards this new dimension of the spiritual path.

Our spiritual journey will fall apart if we constantly and inexorably exclude ourselves from the pain of others. I genuinely believe this.

What we can do then is to try to perfect our *Kriya Pranayama* without any limits. Practicing *Pranayama* with a breath that reaches every cell of our body can bring us closer to the most fascinating dimension of the spiritual realm: that of the Divine that is present in both matter and the consciousness of all human beings.

My belief is that the cells in our body act as portals to this dimension. What will happen when this reality becomes a reality in our lives, not just as a theoretical concept, but as a practical experience that we can physically feel? Lahiri Mahasaya asserted that the entire universe is contained within the body, and the final Self is the entire universe. It is my belief that it is time to begin comprehending and accepting the implications of this statement!

The Alternative

Sri Aurobindo wrote:

Seeking heaven's rest or the spirit's wordless peace,
Or in bodies motionless like statues, fixed
In tranced cessations of their sleepless thought
Sat sleeping souls, and this too was a dream.

(*Sri Aurobindo, Savitri; Book X - Canto IV*)

What does the expression “... and this too was a dream” imply? It is not possible to lead this life with a mind always focused on enjoying spiritual pleasures or refined emotions, with a heart that is fictitiously open to universal love, but is actually hard and resistant like a stone.

Our achievements may not be viewed as a state of enlightenment, but rather as a chronic state of drowsiness in this situation. Those who aspire to live in a heavenly dimension without any disturbance want to live in an illusion. It may be a golden illusion, but it is still an *illusion*.

Sharing part of the suffering of others may be a difficult experience in the last phase of our spiritual path, as per a universal law. The temporary loss of our spiritual realization may be a result of this event. The only way to conquer this challenging test is through true surrender to the divine.

Encouragement

There is a statement attributed to the mythical *Babaji* (who in turn quoted the *Bhagavad Gita*): “Even a small practice of this inner religious rite will save you from great fears and colossal sufferings.”

In my view, the contact with the *Collective Unconscious* swamps leads to significant fears and colossal sufferings. The perfection of *Pranayama* with the energy that flows into the cells of the body will surely alleviate any potential suffering we may face.

Is it possible for us to overcome the various layers of darkness that are present within us and in the minds of our brothers? The alternative is to wait until life exerts a strong downward force on us, resulting in us having to accept some physical suffering that requires us to pay attention to our bodies.

I believe that focusing intensely on the cells of our body is something that complements and enhances the work of *Pranayama*.

I find it inappropriate for some people who consider themselves spiritual to consider their bodies as unimportant. These individuals are likely to forget the world and get lost in their dreams. What is the explanation for their negative moods and depression? Sometimes they experience the darkest despair.

St. John of the Cross referred to this state as the “*Dark Night of the Soul.*” He stated that these souls feel as if God has abruptly left them; they even doubt the worthiness of their spiritual journey.

Although their consciousness is completely turned towards the Divine, they continue to believe that they are sinners, without any possibility of salvation. The absence of light and hope for a long time, even if they feel the desire to express their faith externally, leads them to doubt the existence of God. As a result, they feel impure and lost forever.

It's true, but not as common, that there have been souls who remembered the world and had no other purpose than to alleviate the pain of their fellow human beings, however, they had knowledge of the “*Dark Night of the Soul.*”

It is my belief that learning to guide awareness in the cells of one's body without giving up can mitigate or resolve these sufferings. My belief is that our body is the best means of protecting ourselves from any kind of pain.

When it seems impossible to reconnect with that profound inspiration that once guided us towards the spiritual path, when innocence appears to be lost and we witness an enormous dark wall that blocks every small step towards total consecration to the divine, that is the moment to descend, using the method that is most comfortable for us, towards the cells of the body to encounter that dimension known to very few, which *Mother* evoked when speaking of “abysses of truth and oceans of smiles that lie behind the august peaks of truth.”

By perfecting our *Pranayama*, we will approach an experience of incredible beauty: the divine immanence in matter. I believe that *Sri Aurobindo* was referring specifically to this possibility when he wrote:

Now the wasteland, now the silence;
A blank dark wall, and behind it heaven.
(*Sri Aurobindo, from: "Journey's End"*)

Final note: the concept of the Collective Unconscious

The *Collective Unconscious* represents a part of our unconscious that is common to all of humanity. Jung ⁷ introduced a terminology that allows us to explore an aspect of the mystical path that would otherwise be completely foreign, not only to our capacity for expression, but also to understand. Jung discovered that our human psyche consists of multiple layers, one of which is shared with humanity and is known as the *Collective Unconscious*.

Freud saw the Unconscious as a storehouse of repressed contents that we cannot recall to consciousness due to an almost automatic act of will. Jung discovered a deeper level: the *Collective Unconscious*, which connects all human beings through a deeper layer of their psyche.

The influence that the *Collective Unconscious* has on our lives is, on occasion, vital! When we feel helpless when confronting difficult problems, the deepest layer of our unconscious mind is present and enables us to connect with the entirety of human experience, a massive repository of objective wisdom that contains all possible solutions. This can save us!

An innumerable number of '*Significant Coincidences*' is a typical outcome of contacting the *Collective Unconscious*. We cannot even imagine how many ways they happen.

To give a simple explanation of what it is, let's compare it to causality – which acts in the direction of the progression of time and connects two phenomena that occur in the same space at different times – the existence of a principle is hypothesized (a-causal) which connects two phenomena that occur at the same time but in different spaces.

It's important to emphasize that they have a meaning, a sense that connects them and triggers a strong emotional response in the observer. If two events happen simultaneously but in different spaces, it is obvious that causality (the first causing the second or vice versa) is not possible.

There would be nothing strange about these events in and of themselves,

⁷ In my view, Jung's discoveries are valuable for comprehending the mystical path - perhaps more than any other concept formulated during the 20th century. Even though he was cautious in his statements, the scientific community didn't forgive him for dealing with matters that weren't considered part of psychiatry – alchemy, which seemed an absurdity, the world of myths, which were considered a meaningless imagination, and above all, the great value he placed on the religious dimension which he considered something universal, fundamentally healthy, and not, as others would have preferred, a pathology. The enthusiasm for his writings persists today, particularly among those who deal with spiritual or esoteric subjects.

except one fact: the observer regards their occurrence as a significant coincidence, a near-miracle, something the universe wants to communicate to him. The observer is deeply touched by what is perceived as the mysterious side of life.

It's like the world is speaking to you when this happens. If it happens and you notice it, you must not lose your common sense and begin to believe that you are endowed with extraordinary powers. It is not about telepathy or clairvoyance... it is something much deeper. Your eyes are being opened to the wonders and subtle laws of this universe.

CHAPTER 18

DISCUSSIONS WITH STUDENTS OF P.Y.'s CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

The main topics I will address in this chapter will be the ones I talked about with devotees who adhere strictly to Master P.Y.'s teachings.

This chapter is intended for those who are committed to moving forward on the *Kriya* path by utilizing only the techniques that can be obtained from organizations that disseminate P.Y.'s teachings.

These devotees do not think it's necessary to mix P.Y.'s techniques with other procedures, except for the *Kechari Mudra* teaching mentioned in P.Y.'s writings, which he certainly practiced.⁸ They view themselves as his followers and assume that adopting other teachings is equivalent to not demonstrating trust in his teaching.

During my pursuit of P.Y.'s teachings, our meditation counselor explained that disloyalty to the *Guru* and his organization was the ultimate evil. The term 'disloyalty' was used by her even when referring to reading what people who had left the main organization wrote about *Kriya Yoga*.

After my book was published online, I had an intense email exchange with various P.Y. seekers. After making it clear that they did not approve of my decision to describe so explicitly the techniques of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya Yoga*, they inquired about my ability to assert that P.Y. had simplified or modified certain technical details of *Kriya Yoga*. This chapter contains the answer to their question.

I met some of them. I came to the realization that their concern was to find out if there was anything crucial in *Kriya Yoga* that was not mentioned in the correspondence course, if there was a technique that they were unaware of, but that P.Y. only shared with certain disciples.

Those *kriyabans* were highly committed, sincere, and highly motivated. There was never any nonsense that came from their mouths. On the contrary, I listened to them very carefully when, not for pure and simple demonstration, they had the ability to quote certain sentences from P.Y.'s

⁸ These techniques are slightly different from those taught by *Lahiri Mahasaya*. I don't give a detailed description here, but I can freely comment on them based on my personal experience – for what it's worth. It is my assumption that the reader has knowledge of them.

writings by heart. They had read and reread those texts multiple times, in an effort to decipher their profound meaning.

Their extraordinary dedication to the regular practice of *Kriya*, twice a day left me positively impressed. At times, they express dissatisfaction with their practice due to its lack of depth, but they have never neglected it.

It became evident that their pursuit of the *Kriya* path was not motivated by esoteric curiosity or the need to find an alternative treatment for anxiety, depression, not for developing the potentials of the mind, but for one reason only: to walk the Spiritual Path so beautifully portrayed in P.Y.'s autobiography.

It was evident to me that they approached *Kriya Yoga* with an attitude of genuine devotion or aspiration towards Spiritual Reality.

I haven't encountered any practitioners who follow the belief that a person's evolution progresses by one year for every *Kriya* breath.

They did not deal with this "spiritual mathematics." Some proceeded in one way, some in another. They proceeded with a strong motivation that came from their hearts, not abstract mental reasoning, and even less from *New Age* fantasies.

We discussed a variety of topics. As time went on, many things began to become clear. I am trying to express my thoughts here after organizing them.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE PERSONALITY OF P.Y.

These researchers gave me the chance to share my idea about Master P.Y. with them. But let me introduce an important concept. In recent years, I have come to understand that the spiritual dimension cannot be reached through our human reasoning, which is guided by the study of sacred scriptures and religious texts. Spiritual reality is achieved by experiencing the ecstatic state through meditation or rare events.

Before talking about a person like P.Y., I think it is useless to report what I learned about any indications regarding P.Y.'s previous lives or possible future ideas of his possible reincarnations.

I don't care about the various revelations he made in this regard because they only serve to encourage fruitless mental activity.

I do not give thought to whether he was a perfect *Avatar* or a human with the common limitations of humans. With my friends, I only shared a general idea of his personality.

We are familiar with what is described in his Autobiography. In practice, there are three aspects of P.Y. that are worth discussing. The first aspect was what characterized his childhood and youth in India. The second was that of the yogi lecturer who spread his teachings in the United States until his return to India. And finally, the third aspect was that of the great Master who spent his last years in the United States after the death of his Master, Sri Yukteswar.

We had a general idea of **the first aspect**. His spiritual aspirations led him to the feet of many saints, both before and after meeting with his *Guru*. We also discovered his curiosity about esotericism and his various experiences with the possibilities of the human mind, even with regard to the possibility of contacting disembodied souls.

We knew how P.Y. completely renounced these last experiences. Nevertheless, every experience he had in his spiritual quest became the foundation of what he later taught in the United States through conferences, books, and correspondence-based material.

Regrettably, his Autobiography lacks details on his encounter with the *Radhasoami* movement and the huge impact it had on him. I will discuss this fact shortly.

The second aspect of P.Y., as revealed by those who knew him personally or by researchers who carefully examined the accounts of what transpired during his lectures. It is the story of a *yogi* who introduced Westerners to the principles of ancient *Vedic* philosophy and *Hinduism*, which were integrated with *Christianity*.

We learned with amazement, combined with some perplexity, that he sometimes appeared in public accompanied by characters who had made a favorable impression on him and who displayed their seemingly miraculous powers.

In his numerous lectures, he demonstrated his mastery of the mind's control over the body and addressed every aspect of using willpower in everyday life, including health and work...

Throughout this period of intense activity, he worked to publish teaching materials that were mostly spiritual, but were presented as a science, using language fitting for the present age.

We learned about **the third aspect** of P.Y. through the stories told by his main disciples. This pertains to the period when he gradually distanced himself from the general public. He spent his day meditating and dictating

his interpretations of significant spiritual texts, such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Gospels*, and *Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat*.

In these years, he was the *Guru* who carried out a divine mission as a universal Master without a strong commitment to any particular religious faith. We were most impressed by the fact that he spent several hours conversing with the Divine, who appeared to him as the *Divine Mother*.

This aspect was the most precious and dearest to each and every one of us. We expressed our deep appreciation to this Master for providing us with his wonderful Autobiography and Correspondence Lessons.

His writings had given a decisive direction to our existence. Perhaps we could have found the spiritual path without this book, but how long would we have had to struggle to learn from various sources the most diverse methods of meditation before discovering anything that resembles the fantastic *Kriya Yoga* that he had so enthusiastically told us about!

I was aware of the changes in my life after reading and rereading this book and practicing its teachings for many years. Each of the friends who regularly practiced his teachings could express the same opinion. Our sharing led to our agreement on this.

AN ESSENTIAL FACT THAT IS WORTH KNOWING AND ACCEPTING

A few decades ago, I had to deal with a difficult situation. A group of friends went to a couple of P.Y. *Ashrams* in India and conversed with monks who resided in this organization. Some of them provided me with perturbing information.

They stated that the *Higher Kriyas* practiced in these places are not the same as the techniques we practice based on the correspondence course! I found all of this to be very unlikely.

I am confident in what a friend told me. He had requested an Indian monk disciple of P.Y. to review his *Kriya* in a formal manner. He mentioned that the monk was taken aback by the fact that the request included a review of the *Higher Kriyas*. This was something that happened rarely.

During my friend's explanation of how he practiced the *Second Kriya*, the monk seemed to lack understanding of the procedure my friend was referring to. There was an immediate sense of embarrassment. The monk regained his composure and presented a general explanation on the energy flow in the spine and meditation in general.

The next day, the monk wanted to talk to my friend again. He expressed his apologies for displaying obvious perplexity when listening to my friend. He mentioned a fact that was very specific: the organization was

completely shocked when P.Y. left his body. There were still numerous decisions that needed to be made. The correspondence course was still in progress. Some parts of it may need to be reconsidered in the future.

The monk suggested that he had received something that was slightly different from what my friend had received. However, he concluded that people who sincerely feel they are disciples of P.Y. should always abide by the instructions received from his organization. The spiritual path will move towards dissolution if one does not have sincere trust in their *Guru*.

He urged my friend to faithfully adhere to P.Y.'s teachings and put into practice what is written in the correspondence course.

Of course, the monk couldn't say anything else. From my perspective, individuals who had been initiated into a *Higher Kriya* in the pure tradition of Lahiri Mahasaya lived in that *Ashram*. They didn't restrict themselves to studying only the lessons of the correspondence course.

It's possible that the monk had received the original *Second Kriya* and had never studied the one taught in the correspondence course.

It's crucial to share a piece of information with the reader that answers the question that some ask: "Is it true that P.Y. altered *Kriya*'s techniques"?

The answer is that P.Y. brought to the West the essential core of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya* and **added to it** the teachings of the *Radhasoami* path that I spoke about in chapter 12. The reason his organization teaches *Hong So, Om*, and a very particular form of *Second Kriya* is due to this reason.

The *Radhasoami* teaching was introduced to P.Y. by Sri Charu Chandra Basu, who was the brother of his brother-in-law Sri Satish Chandra Basu and had a home very close to his own. Charu Baba shared with him the main aspect of the meditation techniques used in the *Radhasoami* movement.

It is also known that his teacher, *Sri Yuktswar*, was initiated into the *Radhasoami* religious movement. The **Sant Mat** path's meditation practice of **Surat Shabd Yoga** (*Meditation of Inner Light and Sound*) was introduced to Master P.Y.. It is believed that this event took place sometime between 1900 and 1910.

The young P.Y. devoted himself with absolute fervor to that discipline and within a short time, he was absorbed in the experience of listening in ecstasy to the *Divine Sound* and perceiving the *Divine Light*, and was overwhelmed by it.

Because the spiritual life of the young P.Y. was deeply rooted in the altar of his heart, that *Light* remained unchanged throughout his life and the depth

of that experience always remained in his awareness in both the easy and difficult situations of his existence.

It is true that P.Y. has been a follower of Lahiri Mahasaya's teachings since he was a child. He made a commitment to practice the initial phases of *Kriya Yoga* that he had received from his father. He always thought that the experience of *Sound* and *Light* was an essential part of *Kriya Yoga*, so it wasn't just a preparatory activity.

P.Y. had such a passion for this practice that it appears in certain writings published in the United States that he considered it to be the primary aspect of his teaching. This was a very concrete fact, and those friends with whom I spoke about it accepted my conclusions without reservation.

DISCUSSING TECHNIQUES FROM RADHASOAMI

I'll attempt to summarize what we talked about with these friends briefly, beginning with the three techniques from *Radhasoami*.

Hong So Technique

With these researchers, I attempted to discuss whether P.Y.'s introduction of mantra *Hong So* instead of traditional *So Ham* was a mistake – to be precise, *Sa* is inhaled while *Ham* is exhaled. This is also included in the ancient *Yoga* texts. It is recommended that you listen to the breath sound and recognize that it is precisely *Sa Ham*. It has been observed that when the breath settles down, this sound is heard in the *Kutastha* and eventually transforms into the sound of *Om*.

It's evident that we couldn't find an answer to this question. Instead, we talked about the fact that after the *Kriya* proper (and possibly after *Jyoti Mudra*), it is possible to practice this technique on the spine.

You can visualize your breath rising and falling in the spine with *Hoooong* and *Soooo*. The breath is not under control - it is free. When the breath is so short that the procedure seems to disappear and become nothing, you can try to feel this short breath as if it were happening in each *Chakra*.

If you practice in this way, a 'virtuous circle' between inner calmness and reduced oxygen needs begins. This results in a remarkable outcome, even for those who believe they are just inexperienced beginners. Flying inside the spinal tunnel will lead you into a state of heavenly tranquility. In time, you will realize the truth echoing in the words of a great disciple of P.Y.: "*I have learned to live by inner joy.*" (J.J. Lynn)

Om Meditation Technique

Despite some people's skepticism, the *Om* meditation technique is effective. If you practice it as instructed, you will succeed: in the recommended position, with elbow rest, closing your ears as directed, with no wicks to close your ears, and mentally chanting *Om, Om, Om...* maintain a complete commitment to internal listening for as long as possible, without ever being discouraged.

Often your hands go numb and you can't feel them anymore. That's the moment to proceed undaunted. Usually, you don't recognize the precise moment you start hearing the internal sounds.

You realize that you've been listening to them for some time and can't explain how you didn't notice it.

I believe that the reason for this is that the internal sounds do not appear when the mind continues to work with thought, but only when it is completely empty, even if it is empty of the consciousness of the ego, or even of the fact of performing a certain *Yoga* technique.

When you reach total emptiness, it may seem like you have entered a state that resembles sleep, but the repetition of the *mantra* has resulted in a change, then you are surprised by the inner sounds and gradually become aware of them.

Great inner experiences are produced by this practice. Dedicating sufficient time to this technique is a must. I am of the opinion that there is no need to follow any other procedure after the *Om* technique.

Considerations on the Second Kriya of P.Y.

Our conversations frequently focused on the *Second Kriya* of P.Y.. It's simple to explain this. For many *kriyabans*, a moment of crisis occurred with their organization when their request to obtain a seminar on the *Higher Kriyas* was refused in an incomprehensible and anachronistic manner.

The meetings organized to review basic teachings (*Hong So, Om* technique, and *Kriya proper*) were always a source of inspiration. The disappointment stemmed from the lack of a similar opportunity in the *Higher Kriyas* field.⁹

⁹ I know that recently a couple of organizations that spread P.Y.'s teachings have shown that behaving in this way is not good, and therefore they regularly hold live classes on *higher Kriyas*.

The fact that this technique is not the same as the *Second Kriya* as handed down by tradition has caused confusion among some students.

I have come across individuals who have abandoned the practice of this technique without fully investigating its potential. The introduction of an intermediary technique by their *Guru* between the *First* and the *authentic Second Kriya* led to a serious conflict. Perhaps they came to talk to me because of this. It's possible that they hoped I could clarify a certain discomfort they had.

It was explained that the true *Second Kriya* is the *Third Kriya* of P.Y., while the *Second Kriya* of P.Y. is a meditation technique that is not based on any form of *Pranayama*, but on focusing on the *Chakras*, try to pinpoint their physical and astral locations.

This technique is a step forward from the *Om* meditation technique. It is possible to hear the internal sounds and sense the spiritual light that emanates from each *Chakra*. In my opinion, there is no doubt that P.Y. learned it from the *Radhasoami* tradition.

It's possible for a practitioner to have difficulty seeing either the astral sounds of the *Chakras* or the colors of each of them on the *Kutastha* screen for a long time. One must prepare to do very hard work before obtaining tangible results. I've never encountered a *kriyaban* who has told me that he practices this technique regularly over the years.

Let's endeavor to comprehend the magnificence of P.Y.'s *Second Kriya*. This technique has a profound effect on you, even if it doesn't produce immediate effects. I am of the opinion that mastering *Kriya Pranayama* and facing P.Y.'s *Second Kriya* and tackling it seriously proves to be a project of tremendous value.

What does taking it seriously mean? It's about practicing it correctly and avoiding a common mistake. The fundamental problem with this technique is that many do not understand that it does not consist of meditating on the *Chakras*.

The *Radhasoami* movement disapproves of doing this. The technique consists of simply feeling the position of each *Chakra* internally. Once the position is recognized, one moves on to the next *Chakra* and so on.

In my opinion, if you devote 15 to 30 minutes to this technique, it will lead to a profound inner transformation. By moving the center of concentration from *Chakra* to *Chakra*, one gains the ability to move through the spinal tunnel. The experience will allow one to travel along the entire spine. The

practice of *Kriya Pranayama* will be continuously refined through this method.

As *Kriya Pranayama* improves, you will feel like you are flying through different regions of the inner sky. The sound of *Om* can be heard without closing one's ears during *Kriya Pranayama*. In each *Chakra*, the *Om* vibration will have a slightly different tone.

The *Second Kriya* of P.Y. is the deepest procedure to be practiced in the last part of life after such an exceptionally enriching experience of *Kriya Pranayama*.

When you fully dedicate yourself to this practice, you will experience a level of devotion that will surprise you.

THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS ON THE TECHNIQUES TAUGHT BY LAHIRI MAHASAYA

Our discussion should now focus on the techniques that are at the heart of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya Yoga*.

Some reflections on P.Y.'s First Kriya

It's advisable to start the meditation routine with *Maha Mudra* followed by *Kriya proper*. From my experience, it is advised to practice the *Hong So* and *Om* techniques after practicing *Kriya proper*. The researchers I spoke to were quite aware of this fact, despite it contradicting the advice given by the organization.

I found that *Kriya Pranayama* is effective, regardless of whether you practice it with your mouth open, half-closed, or closed. In order to begin the practice, one can open the mouth for a certain number of breaths and then close it for an equal or greater number of breaths.

It seems that P.Y. had a very clear idea that a *kriyaban* should not continue breathing through their mouth forever but should progress towards *Kechari Mudra*.¹⁰

As for *Kechari Mudra*, I know that some *kriyabans* had achieved it.¹¹

¹⁰ This belief is based on my practical experience. When I tried to increase the number of *Kriya Pranayamas* while keeping my mouth open, after 60 repetitions of *Kriya Pranayama*, I developed such nervousness that I could not sit anymore. I had to keep practicing standing. I comprehended at that moment that this practice couldn't continue in this manner.

¹¹ P.Y. in his writings and talks has given the definition of *Kechari Mudra* without providing any practical exercises to achieve this *Mudra*. I know that in the new edition of the correspondence lessons there is much more on how to practice

By practicing with the mouth closed and the tongue in *Kechari Mudra* (even *baby Kechari*), the sound is bound to become clean and beautiful, like that of a flute. The sound of a flute is felt after prolonged practice when the spine is clean, like an empty tube.

Kriya proper has two variants, one taught in 1930 and later modified by P.Y., which is now widely used. In AOY, there is a description of *Kriya* that matches the first version perfectly: 'The *Kriya Yogi* mentally moves his vital energy up and down, around the six spinal centers'. This sentence does not match the currently given procedure.

To conclude the discussion on *Kriya Pranayama*, there is no question that P.Y.'s instruction on this procedure is highly valid, even though it's natural to continuously perfect it.

I am pondering why this Master didn't come up with a set of lessons to be studied at a certain time after the initiation to complete the explanation of the *First Kriya*.

To enhance the practice of this vital technique, many details are required. I have no doubt that he had a thorough understanding of these details and consistently applied them. In my estimation, he had a plan to give these details, but he was unable to do so due to lack of time. The inclusion of an important piece of information in the new edition of the lessons made me extremely happy. Mentally chanting *Om* on each *Chakra* along the spine during *Kriya* practice is suggested as an optional practice.

Some reflections on P.Y.'s Third Kriya

I shared a really fascinating fact with my friends. The practice of P.Y.'s *Third Kriya* could be beneficial for *kriyabans* if they precede it with an incremental routine without head movements. Only later should they face the complete technique by practicing a second incremental routine of it.¹²

These researchers had no knowledge of the concept of incremental routine. I explained to them its importance in relation to any *Kriya Yoga* technique.

To practice the *Third Kriya*, you must learn how to experience a long and deep breath that passes through *Chakra* after *Chakra*, hence the reason for this advice.

Kechari Mudra.

¹² To clarify the concept of incremental routine, see chapter 13 in the third part of the book.

From my perspective, it's beneficial to concentrate solely on the fact that one's consciousness learns to move along the spinal tunnel when dealing with this technique.

The ability that is achieved after months or years of *Kriya proper* is good to use in guiding awareness in the first *Chakra*, then in the second *Chakra*, and so on... *Chakra* after *Chakra*, up to *Kutastha*, and then backwards to *Muladhara*.

In order to achieve this, you must be in complete immobility while mentally repeating the 12 syllables of the typical *mantra* of the *higher Kriyas* of Lahiri Mahasaya. The breath is calm, very subtle, and almost imperceptible. If the breath seems too calm, almost imperceptible, this is not an indication of incorrect practice but of correct practice.

In my experience, it is very helpful to gradually increase the number of repetitions. I started with 25 repetitions once a day for two weeks. For another two weeks, perform 50 repetitions per day. Then I practiced 75 repetitions per day for two weeks, then 100 repetitions per day, and so on, increasing by 25 repetitions per day until I practiced 200 repetitions per day for two weeks.

And then? After that, one is prepared for the actual *Third Kriya* procedure. To clarify, one is now prepared to benefit the most from employing the *Third Kriya* procedure as described in the lessons.

At this moment, you have the opportunity to initiate incremental practice using the proper *Third Kriya* technique, by applying precisely the same amount of repetitions and following the same sequence.

Gentle head movements are essential to avoid stressing the cervical vertebrae. The power that this plane can unleash is beyond words. If one doesn't have the courage to go beyond the 12 prescribed repetitions of *Third Kriya*, they won't be able to appreciate the power contained in this technique!

It's a good idea to increase the number of repetitions, without fear. As you practice subtle *Pranayama* after each session, you will observe the spontaneous movement of the spine's energy.

These friends believed that once the *Third Kriya* was mastered, the *Fourth Kriya* would manifest itself with all its power, so I didn't discuss it with them. Although I am familiar with the teachings of the correspondence course, it is still not clear to me what was, according to P.Y., the best action to take or the attitude to cultivate after having completed the daily practice of these procedures.

REFLECTIONS ON A VERY DIFFICULT CHOICE

As I look back on my journey, I feel the urge to share some reflections.

In the course of my life, I have come across genuine and devoted individuals who are deeply inspired by P.Y.'s teachings. These encounters have caused me to honestly question the choices I have made in my life, especially my gradual approach towards the teachings of Lahiri Mahasaya.

There was no immediate transition, nor was it void of internal conflict. At first, I endeavored to deepen the teachings I received from the Correspondence Lessons of the organization founded by P.Y. Over time, I started to perceive some of these teachings as an unnecessary overlay covering the luminous simplicity at the core of the practice. Despite being profound, certain concepts no longer matched my internal search.

The realization of the significance of *Japa*, inner prayer, as a method for improving *Kriya Yoga* and attaining a state of profound internalization was a crucial moment. This teaching, which became pivotal to me, was not discovered in the Lessons but through my own personal research.

The book *Purana Purusha*, which is dedicated to Lahiri Mahasaya, left a deep impression on me. I came across a vision that was essential, clear, and brimming with light. I realized that the core of the spiritual path can be quite simple, and any addition to that core could be a distraction rather than a blessing.

Reflecting on the concept of *Guru* resulted in one of the most profound insights. As time went on, I came to realize that the true Master is not necessarily an external human being, but rather an inner Presence that lives in our hearts. In unforgettable words, Lahiri Mahasaya conveyed this vision:

"I am not the *Guru*, God is the true *Guru*. I am simply a mirror that reveals your potential with *Kriya*. Once you understand this, discard the mirror."

Despite being simple, this perspective can be profoundly transformative. This has compelled me to reevaluate my relationship with every spiritual figure or organization, and to increasingly prioritize direct experience and the voice of the inner Self above all else.

I am not denying my experience: the techniques I initially learned have given me moments of profound inspiration and spiritual longing. Today, I am convinced that I need to walk in a more essential and distinct manner, departing from points that no longer align with my current understanding.

I hold the belief that if *Kriya Yoga* is practiced with sincerity and consistency, it can lead to a life driven by the highest values, without the need for other ancillary disciplines or worldly goals.

What is the reason for providing additional training on how to develop skills related to material success through willpower and visualization? Even though this is a trendy idea, it is completely unnecessary.

Another reflection concerns P.Y.'s choice to establish a monastic order, with very specific rules, particularly regarding chastity. While this vision is respected and useful for many, it diverges from what Lahiri Mahasaya taught: to him, family life was a path that could be both valid and desirable for a yogi, as long as it was centered around the sincere and daily practice of *Kriya*.

It's true that for certain individuals, the monastic ideal is a direct and inspired route to the Divine. However, for others, this ideal has been difficult to sustain, occasionally leading to disillusionment or suffering.

Regardless, I must acknowledge P.Y.'s skill in creating an organization to spread the teachings of *Kriya Yoga*. These teachings have played a crucial role in shaping my path.

These teachings are dear to me, and the current version of the lessons has achieved truly astonishing levels of perfection. However, allow me to dream of how they would be even more beautiful if they could be complemented with a lesson dedicated to serious seekers, providing guidance on how to enhance the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* by incorporating *Kechari Mudra*, as taught by Lahiri Mahasaya.

I wish to reiterate an indisputable fact: my spiritual journey began with the teachings of P.Y. And for this reason, I have an unshakeable sense of gratitude for this Master.

To conclude these reflections, I want to emphasize that the spiritual path is never straight or uniform for everyone. It is up to each person to discover their own path by listening to the quiet voice that speaks within their heart. I am increasingly looking to trust that voice today.

CHAPTER 19

A CONCISE GUIDE TO THE PRACTICE OF KRIYA YOGA

What you'll find in this chapter:

1. A concise overview of the three Kriya schools outlined in the book
2. A guide on how to proceed, with specific instructions for Part One: Kriya Pranayama; Part Two: Higher Kriyas
3. Answers to questions that may come up
4. An overview of my journey, with any obstacles I overcame

A CONCISE OVERVIEW OF THE THREE KRIYA SCHOOLS OUTLINED IN THE BOOK

KRIYA PRANAYAMA AS TAUGHT BY LAHIRI MAHASAYA

In Lahiri Mahasaya's teaching, the focus is on a natural, continuous breath, with an emphasis on making it as long as possible without any discomfort.

A subtle sound in the throat arises spontaneously when the breath lengthens enough. At first, this sound might be heard even by those nearby, but over time, particularly during exhalation, it becomes more refined, reminiscent of the sound of a small flute.

Breathing is never forced. Although it's continuous, a short, spontaneous pause may occur at the end of each inhalation or exhalation, without any effort. Internalization is accompanied by pauses that are natural and should not be searched for or prolonged, but simply observed.

Duration and progression of breathing

The initial step for beginners is to practice a 15-second breath (inhalation followed by exhalation). As time progresses, the duration spontaneously increases to 20 seconds. Reaching 30 seconds is an excellent result, but it's hard to achieve the 44 seconds suggested by Lahiri Mahasaya as the ideal duration.

A gradual and natural lengthening of the breath can be observed with consistent practice. Gradually, the number of breaths is increased, traditionally 12 at a time, while always taking into account the physical capabilities of each person.

Om can help awaken awareness of the chakras

As the practitioner inhales and exhales, they mentally chant Om in each Chakra, thereby guiding awareness along the spine.

The prolonged application permits consciousness to move smoothly and continuously from one Chakra to the next, resulting in a unified and harmonious flow.

Omkar is a term that refers to Om, the primordial vibration. The Divine Reality known as Omkar is not a symbol or a concept, but rather an internal perception that occurs when the mind becomes quiet.

Kriya's effectiveness indicators

Kriya's true effectiveness can be witnessed in the practitioner's perception of a cool current rising up the spine during inhalation and a warm current descending during exhalation.

Along the spine, there is a thin thread of energy that is felt, both ascending and descending. When the breath, awareness, and inner silence are in harmony, this perception should not be forced, but rather emerge spontaneously.

The role of breath in long practices

When practicing long sequences of breaths (108, 144, 200), it is essential to avoid the practice becoming exclusively mental, which can lead to losing contact with the real breath. Despite its subtlety, a breath must always be there, and its noise should be audible even at the limit of one's ability to hear.

At the end of longer routines, the breath is almost unnoticeable. This is a demonstration of good practice, not a mistake. Emphasizing a loud sound in the throat throughout a long practice is detrimental to the quality and finesse of Kriya.

Paravastha is the state that comes after Kriya

A state may spontaneously manifest in which the breath almost disappears effortlessly after proper practice.

The state of profound tranquility and thoughtlessness that follows Pranayama is known as Paravastha that is, “the state that follows the action of Pranayama”. Paravastha is a natural consequence of properly executed Kriya, not a technique.

The factors that support Kriya Pranayama

There are certain elements that are especially helpful in deepening and stabilizing the practice:

1. Maha Mudra

Stretching the spine before Pranayama prepares the body and energy system, allowing for Prana to flow freely.

2. Look into Kutastha.

Kutastha is the focus of the gaze, but awareness lies within the Medulla Oblongata. It's beneficial to keep the chin tucked in a little bit.

Kutastha's hallmark lies in the perception of inner light. Lahiri Mahasaya repeatedly recorded his perceptions in his journals, considering them to be a true spiritual revelation. It is important not to dwell on the descriptions found in books, as they vary from author to author. Every authentic revelation is always personal and unexpected.

3. Kechari Mudra

Kechari is a term that means “moving in inner space”. To confirm the possibility of obtaining Kechari Mudra, the practitioner can gently push the base of the tongue inward with two fingers and observe if the tip of the tongue touches the uvula.

Contacting the uvula leads to a significant reduction in unwanted thoughts, which gradually lose their power.

4. Navi Kriya

The practice of Navi Kriya can take place either before or after Kriya Pranayama. To perform this, one must verbally or mentally direct Om toward the navel for several repetitions. By drawing Prana inward and promoting the union of Prana and Apana, this practice facilitates access to the dimension of Sushumna, known as the central channel in which the Divine reveals itself.

The state of Calm Breath

With consistent internalization and months of practice, the “state of calm breath” may become apparent. Kevala Kumbhaka (breathlessness) is a state that cannot be described in words, it is not an intellectual experience but a reality that can be lived directly. It is associated with a profound bliss that Lahiri Mahasaya called 'Eternal Tranquility'.

The Higher Kriyas

Practicing Kriya Pranayama in a serious manner gradually prepares the mind for the higher Kriyas. The deep knots of the heart and Muladhara can be cured using these techniques. Although these knots are able to be untied with Kriya Pranayama, they are still extremely delicate and have the potential to be dangerous. Whenever possible, it's best to approach the higher Kriyas with respect and on time.

There are two large groups for the higher Kriyas: those that require the ability to hold breath for a long time; those that imply the attainment of the state of “calm breath.”

There are strong reasons to believe that the first group was part of the teachings that Lahiri Mahasaya imparted to his disciples immediately after his initiation by Babaji, while the second emerged later. It was mostly because of the Master's direct experience and various conversations with his more advanced disciples.

The capacity for long-term Kumbhaka requires extreme caution and develops at a gradual pace. Retention may occur with either full or empty lungs; however, in Lahiri's Kriya Yoga, only full lungs are required.

Kriya Pranayama should be the first step in practicing these higher Kriyas, until the breath becomes subtle, calm, and peaceful.

A note about practicing Nadi Sodhana Pranayama

No evidence exists that Kriya teachers directly prescribed the alternate breathing of Nadi Sodhana. Despite this, experience has shown that this technique can be extremely beneficial as a support.

Traditionally, there is a short breath hold at the end of every inhalation. When performed after exhalation and with a light Mula Bandha, a pleasant shivering sensation can rise along the central channel of the spine, the Sushumna.

KRIYA YOGA IN THE WAY TAUGHT BY SWAMI HARIHARANANDA

The practice of bends and Maha Mudra

Bends and Maha Mudra are taught with great attention to detail. The teacher oversees and deepens their practice to allow the practitioner to directly experience their effects and have them “imprinted” on their memory.

Initiation

As part of the initiation process, the teacher encourages the practitioner to perform the bends technique. The internal perceptions that require attention are repeated to each individual.

The teacher puts his hands on the nape of the initiate's neck and asks them to witness the internal vibration of Omkar. The profound meaning of this vibration is explained in an introductory speech addressed to all participants, both those who are approaching this school for the first time and those returning for a refresher course.

There is a specific kind of Kechari Mudra

The introduction of Kriya Pranayama begins with an explanation of the school's understanding of Kechari Mudra.

In this context, Kechari Mudra consists of constantly keeping the tip of the tongue in contact with the soft palate, orienting the tip of the tongue toward the pituitary gland (hypophysis), positioned at the center of the brain.

According to this teaching, the pituitary gland is stimulated by the energy that flows through the tip of the tongue. Omkar's reality is made more accessible through this stimulation.

It is believed that the pituitary gland is a focal point that aids in seeing light at the point between the eyebrows (Kutastha) and ultimately aids in establishing awareness in the fontanel.

In the fontanel, it's possible to feel the Divine manifesting as internal sound, spiritual light, movement, or oscillation.

Through these perceptions, one can connect with the Divine and experience inner peace and joy.

First Kriya

Two phases are present in the experience of Kriya Pranayama.

First Phase

It is similar to the procedure taught by Lahiri Mahasaya, with one fundamental difference: the energetic current rising along the spinal column is guided towards the fontanel from the beginning of the Kriya breaths.

Second Phase

After establishing itself in the fontanel, awareness progressively descends, “touching” each Chakra below. Short, subtle breaths are used to achieve this. Each Chakra has a breath that is dedicated to it. Consciousness stay constantly focused on the Divine.

The correct practice of Pranayama requires the practitioner to recognize the internal sound of Omkar, which initially feels like the distant sound of a bell.

Technique of Second Kriya

The Second Kriya is a more in-depth version of the First Kriya and is completely different from the one taught by Lahiri Mahasaya.

Inhalation and exhalation are divided into six parts, which correspond to the six Chakras. The attention always remains on the fontanel. The breathing pattern generates a conscious pressure in each Chakra.

The head movement at the end of each inhalation enhances awareness of the fontanel.

The Second Kriya has a second phase where breathing is free, but the phenomena described above still happen. Attention deepens.

Third Kriya

The Third Kriya continues the work that was started by the previous techniques. The purpose of it is to direct Prana towards the upper part of the head, making it more likely to experience an ecstatic state.

Fourth Kriya

In the Fourth Kriya, the ecstasy state is further intensified by completely calming the breath to a breathless state and then by guiding awareness towards the cerebellum and the pineal gland.

KRIYA YOGA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE SCHOOL OF SWAMI PRANABANANDA

This school stands out due to its extreme simplicity. The initial approach is captivating and particularly suitable for beginners.

First Kriya

During a deep breath, the syllable Om is mentally placed in the Kutastha six times during inhalation and six times during exhalation.

Second Kriya

Prana is urged to enter each Chakra along the spine, ascending and descending.

The practitioner is allowed to make their own decision on how to proceed: they can either use the power of concentration or use the breath.

Third Kriya

The breath remains calm while the practitioner repeatedly attempts to penetrate Kutastha, placing the syllable Om there 432 times.

Fourth Kriya

The goal involves reaching the Mula Chakra, which can be found in the back of the brain, opposite Kutastha but slightly higher.

After examining the three main schools of Kriya Yoga, i have a suggestion to share

If the reader is uncertain about which school to trust, I suggest reading the descriptions of each school briefly, subsequently testing out the First Kriya technique presented by the school that is intuitively appealing to them. Over time, I suggest experimenting with the other two. This will enhance their understanding and practical experience on how to move forward.

I have another suggestion for you: ensure that your routine is not the same as your previous day's routine. Even when the procedures are the same, always incorporate something new. Don't be afraid to be inspired by your intuition and the desire to uncover new aspects in each practice.

A GUIDE ON HOW TO PROCEED, WITH SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON KRIYA PRANAYAMA AND ON THE HIGHER KRIYAS

Through Kriya Yoga, one can experience inner transformation while practicing the mystical technique of Kriya Pranayama and continuously refining it.

The development of Ujjayi Pranayama is what makes Kriya Pranayama unique in that it involves bringing its action to an increasingly subtle and conscious level.

Initially, breathing is thought of as the movement of air into and out of the lungs. Through practice, it is possible to visualize and feel it internally as a current rising and falling along the spine.

The process starts with long, deep breaths, which gradually become more subtle, penetrating, and refined, culminating in a spontaneous internalization of consciousness and the creation of a natural and profound mental silence.

Getting ready to experience inner silence.

Kriya Yoga involves seriously accepting the idea of embarking on an authentic inner journey that won't end in a few days but will develop over time, intertwining with day-to-day life and becoming an integral part of it.

Before starting the Kriya Pranayama procedure, it's advisable to prepare for mental silence, even if only partially.

A commitment to overcoming identification with thought and the ongoing work of the mind is what mental silence is all about. Through this method, one can become aware and recognize their true nature: pure, clear, thoughtless awareness.

Japa is the foundation for the path

Japa practice is highly recommended to start this journey.

Japa, which is also referred to as “inner prayer” or simply “prayer”, entails the continuous repetition of a mantra while counting the repetitions using a mala or on the knuckles. The duration of this practice is approximately thirty minutes.

The practice commences with an audible prayer, either said aloud or whispered. Japa tends to continue mentally and spontaneously after completing the predetermined number of repetitions, like a natural event.

The purpose of this practice is to heal the mind, not to obtain favors from the Divine. To walk the path of Kriya, it is essential to learn how to calm the mind, which is why Japa has an eminently therapeutic and calming function.

The background noise of the mind is gradually reduced by Japa, which creates silence that will be clearly visible during Kriya practice.

It is crucial to comprehend that the most significant effects of Kriya will remain blocked if mental noise is not mitigated. If inner silence is not present, there will be no effect or meaningful perception during or after the practice of Kriya.

Only when the mind is quiet can true spiritual experience arise. The essence of true spiritual experience lies in the silence, where intuition flourishes, and it is only those who can deeply listen in total silence who can access it.

When thoughts are quieted, we become naturally absorbed in the spiritual dimension of existence. Through spontaneous absorption, breathing can be slowed down and the action of Kriya can be clearly perceived.

A prolonged Japa session before Kriya can enable one to observe the breath moving along the spine without any interruption, as if it were flowing millimeter by millimeter.

It is true to say that practicing Kriya without a preliminary Japa is usually a waste of time. In the absence of inner silence, Kriya faces the danger of becoming sterile.

Kriya's delicate nature

It's essential to acknowledge that the path of Kriya is inherently challenging. It's not hard or stressful, it's just extremely subtle and delicate.

Deep, natural, and conscious breathing can lead to the gradual opening of the heart and mind to an inner reality that is often completely new and unexpected.

Incorrect practice can cause excessive stress to the body; attentive practice, however, allows Kriya to manifest in all its beauty.

The "State of Calm Breath"

The so-called "state of calm breath" is where Kriya practice achieves perfection. This state is caused by a natural suspension of the breath, and does not involve forced holding.

Once someone enters this state, the thought process stops, awareness of the internal energy that sustains the body increases, and one has the clear sensation of crossing a threshold that opens onto vastness and silence.

In this inner space, there is a natural and steady control of the mind.

The Inner Guru

Finding an external Guru is not a major issue. The inner Guru can be perceived by focusing one's awareness firmly on the center of the spiritual heart.

This guidance is unique and does not have anything to do with mental constructs or fantasies, but rather manifests as intuition and silent inner certainty.

Higher Kriyas

The difficulty of practicing the Higher Kriyas is determined by the school you choose. Swami Hariharananda's school does not pose any problems for those following it. Swami Pranabananda's school presents a significant obstacle in tackling the Second Kriya and adhering to the recommended number of repetitions. I'm talking about increasing from 10 to 200 repetitions. Naturally, this very serious commitment occurs only once in a lifetime, and from that moment on, it's no longer a commitment but pure joy that characterizes the remaining journey through the Third and Fourth Kriyas.

For those who are pursuing Lahiri's school, I propose taking small steps. The initial step is to become acquainted with the Second Kriya (Thokar) as explained in chapter eight. The second step involves becoming familiar with all the techniques contained in chapter nine. The Third Step involves completing the incremental routines for the Fifth Kriya (Tribhangamurari Macro). This action is in alignment with the demands of life when a person is busy with work. The fourth step is challenging due to its delicate nature. It involves tackling the Third and Fourth Kriyas explained in Chapter 8. These two delicate techniques have been neglected until now. The fifth step pertains to those who have retired from work and involves completing the substantial commitment needed for the Sixth Kriya (Tribhangamurari Micro) incremental routine. The final immersion into the Divine requires the final step, which is the Seventh Kriya.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY COME UP

When Thought takes over the internalization process, what do you do?

Reply. I take several deep breaths (Bhastrika Pranayama) and then proceed with calmness.

When you're feeling drowsy, what do you do?

Reply. I open my eyes, adjust myself to the perfect meditation position, and continue with my eyes open or closed.

Which effect is the first one to appear during a session?

Reply. Being aware of the spine and chakras.

What is the reason for implementing a new variation of a technique?

Reply. I made the decision to change my current routine after a clear intuition during my most recent Kriya session. This variation must undergo a tangible and excellent transformation in practice in order to be approved and become definitive.

Who gave you a correction and what changes did you make at the start?

Reply. I have not been corrected by anyone during my practice, except for one piece of advice given to me initially about the sound of my breath during Kriya Pranayama. So I made an effort to improve the sound.

What are the effects of forcing and where do you feel them?

Reply. I am compelled to leave the correct meditation position and stand up.

What are the signs that you're turning your practice into a rigid recipe?

Reply. My dissatisfaction lasts for a few days, and then I consider what to do to rectify it. At times, it took me approximately 40 days to come up with the changes I wanted to make.

What factors cause your state of tranquility to destabilize?

Reply. The state depends on the outcome of my most recent Kriya practices throughout the day. This state is destabilized by having to deal with sensitive issues that are posed to me by some people who occasionally come to visit me. Fortunately, there has been a significant decrease in this.

I have learned to be concise and direct in my explanations. I make an effort to convey through all means that the fundamental problem of every human being is their identification with the mind, or the dimension of thought. Overcoming this identification results in immediate resolution of every problem, and the need for many words is eliminated.

Tell me about a session where holding your breath felt dangerous or forced, and what change did you make.

Reply. Several times, I experienced this when trying to increase the rotations of the Thokar while holding my breath. I have firmly chosen to discontinue this practice because I had the impression that it was not leading to anything positive. It is my belief that Lahiri Mahasaya also had this intuition in the last years of his life. In actuality, he opted to eliminate this requirement while teaching Thokar to his son Tincouri.

A CONDENSED VERSION OF MY SPIRITUAL JOURNEY AND A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CHALLENGES I FACED

Keeping a journal of your practice, rereading it often, and continually updating it is, in my opinion, the best way to support effective experimentation aimed at wisely approaching the path of Kriya Yoga. This is what I have always done. I carefully chose which experiments to pursue, setting concrete and verifiable objectives. I then recorded the results of my experiences in my journals.

I am now sharing a summary of the main approaches to the Kriya routine, starting from the beginning until now.

[I] Before receiving initiation into Kriya Yoga, I utilized two traditional Pranayama practices. Nadi Sodhana became my preliminary technique and Ujjayi became my primary practice. [These techniques are described in Chapter 6.]

Routine: Some asanas / Nadi Sodhana Pranayama / Ujjayi Pranayama / Remaining calm and thoughtless for at least 5 minutes.

The practice went smoothly without any difficulties. I decided to add Mula Bandha during each full lung retention and a very brief Mula Bandha at the end of each exhalation, just for an instant, enough to feel a slight vibration along my spine.

Result: Kundalini awakening after three months of this routine

I cannot describe how intense and beautiful this experience was, it was beyond words. It wasn't unexpected, but it was like a reminder of

something I already knew: a deep memory that I suddenly became aware of.

Nonetheless, it was accompanied by a significant vulnerability and an initial lack of orientation. Initially, it didn't appear to change my mental state, but over time, it greatly altered my life plans.

A multitude of thoughts emerged and demanded acknowledgment and integration. I knew that a practitioner who is truly prepared should have the ability to absorb this experience in a harmonious way. However, I have come to understand that this type of well-prepared practitioner is very rare.

Note

I shared in chapter 1 how I mastered the art of eliminating all thoughts from my mind to have a deep rest in a lying position. At the time, I had no idea that this was actually a form of meditation and not just resting. I have enjoyed this practice over the years, but I now practice it differently, always lying down. As far as I can tell, this is the description:

“With all consciousness fixed on Kutastha, mentally repeat Om three times during spontaneous inhalation and three times Om during subsequent exhalation. A brief pause after inhalation is suggested. Each of these breaths takes approximately six seconds. Repeat this as many times as your time permits. For a few minutes, thoughts vanish completely, and the mind receives a profound and perfect rest.”

[III] Second phase of my journey

Before being granted the initiation into *Kriya*, the organization that welcomed me as a student taught me two techniques: the “Hong So” concentration method and the meditative approach that involves listening to internal sounds.

Hong So. The primary challenge was that the ability to concentrate did not manifest itself in any way.

Solution

a) I allowed the *Hong So* mantra to permeate my mind. I gained the skill of fully absorbing this vibration and savoring its beauty. Continuing the practice in this manner caused my flawed approach to disappear.

b) I learned to avoid establishing a rhythm in *Hong So*'s mental chanting. Following a rhythm ensures it will always continue. Your mind will never be capable of bringing you to the state of calm breath.

The litany: "*Hong So, Hong So, Hong So, Hong So...*" will continue to repeat until infinity akin to the clatter of steel train wheels! If the body is in the physiological condition of not breathing for long periods, the rhythm must not allow the process of inhaling and exhaling to continue unimpeded.

If you do not allow pauses to exist, they will NEVER exist and you will never realize that you are in the condition to live the liberating experience of being in the state of breathlessness. So you must be fully aware of each pause. It's necessary for you to accept it, respect it, and immerse yourself in it, regardless of how short it lasts!

c) When breathing normally, the tendency is to exhale immediately after inhalation.

When inhaling, the rib cage expands, even if very slightly, and therefore, there is an elastic force, no matter how small, that tends to be released immediately at the end of inhalation.

Practicing the *Hong So* technique well means not allowing the natural reflex of exhaling as soon as inhalation is completed, which can make a pause (even very brief) impossible. It is essential to wait gently and without forcing for the exhalation impulse to appear naturally after inhalation.

My belief was that waiting for this impulse meant controlling my breath, which was against the main command of the *Hong So* technique to let my breath be natural.

Instead, the pause should be allowed to take place. It's important to not rule out this possibility right away. Therefore, one should only exhale when the need arises.

Technique for listening to internal sounds. Then I was taught how to listen to internal sounds. At first, it seemed as though it was impossible to hear any internal sound.

Solution

By persisting with the practice for months, following the instructions, and most importantly, relaxing deeply, the sounds came through with great sweetness and surprise. The internal listening process was successful because I decided to relax my efforts.

Kriya Pranayama (Kriya proper)

The technique appeared to me to be clear and simple, and its effects were immediately apparent. I was taken aback when I met people who, even though they had received the initiation, said they couldn't understand anything. I came to the realization that the difficulties were often caused by receiving Kriya Pranayama, Maha Mudra, and Jyoti Mudra simultaneously during the same session.

Difficulty

After a long period of practice, I attempted to increase the number of repetitions of the Kriya breaths, but experienced intense nervousness that made it impossible for me to stay seated:

I had no choice but to practice standing. I was absolutely sure that my practice was flawed.

Solution

The solution came from practicing with my mouth closed. After several years, I learned to practice Kechari Mudra from another source, and the problem was permanently resolved.

Second Kriya

This form of Second Kriya, different from that of the Lahiri Mahasaya tradition, initially seemed ineffective: there was no perception of what was being described and no significant inner experience. The expected effects seemed to be unattainable in any attempt to achieve them.

Solution and Understanding

The most powerful experiences occurred when I was exhausted and lay down and fell asleep.

Over time, I became aware of a fundamental flaw in my approach. The technique does not require the immediate achievement of complete experiences in each Chakra (internal sound, color vision, etc...), but move on to the next Chakra as soon as even the slightest sign of attunement with the one on which one is concentrating appears. By doing this, this technique reveals all its incredible power.

Later, I learned a **simple form of Thokar** that can be added to Kriya Pranayama.

At first, I didn't observe any significant outcomes. Then I realized that this technique worked fully only if, at the end of its practice, one resumed

Kriya Pranayama with a completely different attitude: allowing the Kriya proper to happen by itself, simply observing it. [I give my opinion on this technical detail in Chapter 16.]

These teachings have been followed by me for almost 12 years. This period was characterized by a lot of experiments. I give a description of the routine I carried out during the most successful time.

Since I wasn't convinced by the organization's advice to conclude the routine by simply remaining calm and observing the effects of Kriya, I invented an alternative practice that I called “mental Pranayama”.

Routine: Maha Mudra / Kriya Pranayama / a higher Kriya of my choice / my own form of mental Pranayama.

I explain this mental Pranayama:

“Observing the breath rising and falling spontaneously, the mantra Hong So was perceived moving along the spine, rising with Hong and descending with So; Immediately afterward, I followed the same course of action but only moved to Kutastha. In Sahasrara, I did the same procedure and visualized a crystal cube where my mind was entangled while my thoughts were blocked. I repeated the same process throughout my body, acknowledging that it was supported by internal energy. The practice ends when a beautiful natural landscape spontaneously appears and I surrender fully to this vision.”

[III] The third stage of my spiritual journey is the discovery of Japa

The introduction of Japa gave me the opportunity to experience the state of breathlessness. I regret to say that it took me three years to achieve this result. My initial error was wanting to practice Japa continuously all day. It was impossible for me to accomplish this.

Solution

I restricted my Japa practice to one session, practicing it in a whisper for 108 times, and then focusing on other activities while the mantra repeated itself automatically in my mind.

This experience holds a place among the most profound and meaningful moments in my life. [Chapter 3 has detailed information about it.]

One particular day stands out in my memory. I practiced in the tranquility of a wooded area. At the end of the routine, after experiencing a state of breathlessness for ten minutes, I stood up. Then, assuming that I still had

enough time, I sat down again. Without using any relaxation or meditation techniques, the state of breathlessness reappeared immediately.

Routine: Japa / Maha Mudra / Kriya Pranayama / One Higher Kriya of my choice / Start again with Kriya Pranayama / Slow concentration in the Chakras, ascending them until experiencing the breathless state.

[IV] The fourth stage of my journey. After receiving the original teachings of Lahiri Mahasaya from a different source, I began to follow them

The Hong So techniques and the procedure of listening to internal sounds are no longer practiced in this tradition. Kriya Pranayama is practiced with the mouth closed.

After a few months of consistent training, one can attain Kechari Mudra and experience its wonderful effects. If Kechari Mudra is not possible for someone, they can try the method explained by Swami Hariharananda.

The teachings known as Tribhangamurari were taught to me

Let's think about the Amantrak practice that is mentioned at the start of Chapter 9. Practicing the Tribhangamurari movement without a mantra created considerable difficulty for me. It wiped out all the joy from my days.

Solution

Shortly before finishing the incremental process that tradition established, I made the decision to abandon this practice. The joy returned after I added the mantra. There were no further problems. When I tackled the incremental practice of Tribhangamurari Thokar, I was able to dedicate entire days to it. I felt indescribable joy when I faced this demanding practice under these conditions.

I later learned the Tribhangamurari micromovement technique

Even small doses of this practice generated intense joy. [This technique is also described in Chapter 9.]

Difficulty

Keeping concentrated on the Chakras for a long time can cause images to appear in the Kutastha and travel into memory, accompanied by uncontrollable drowsiness.

The first sign that I was feeling drowsy was when my body left the correct meditation position.

Kutastha's internal screen would display images, almost as if it were happening in a dream. I would unconsciously allow myself to be absorbed by them before becoming alarmed. Then I would realize that I was losing myself in a state that was preparing me for sleep, so I would open my eyes and continue with all the necessary attention.

Solution

If necessary, I need to keep my eyes open and accept the drowsiness as a new approach to practicing Kriya. Be patient with yourself as you resign to this event and move forward regardless.

Other sources have taught me about higher Kriyas that rely on breath retention and I have added their simplest Thokar to my routine.

Practice various incremental routines

The incremental routines that this last source recommended to me were necessary for eliminating the most stubborn obstacles one at a time. [The definition of incremental routine is given in Chapter 13.]

These were the main incremental routines I practiced: Incremental routine of Thokar Tribhangamurari. Incremental routine of Navi Kriya followed by that of Kriya Pranayama. Incremental routine of Tribhangamurari micromovement.

[V] This is the final phase of my journey

A long phase of experimentation began, the goal of which was to solidify the experience of 'calm breath'. In chapter 16, the routine that seems most straightforward to me is described.

Routine: Kriya in loops / Kriya Pranayama following the teachings of Shibendu Lahiri / Calming the breath / Attempting to reach the state of breathlessness.

APPENDIX

I will give some minor information about the practice of Kriya Yoga in this appendix. These topics may be interesting, but I didn't believe it was appropriate to discuss them in earlier chapters.

1. The significance of the Tummo technique
2. An account of a search for a Thokar extended to the lower chakras
3. Gayatri Kriya
4. Kapalabhati Pranayama can be incredibly helpful
5. There are some techniques that can be beneficial
6. Are there any risks associated with Kriya Practice?
7. A solution for negative or disruptive moods
8. Final reflection

APPENDIX N.1 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TUMMO TECHNIQUE

Throughout history, different spiritual traditions have created inner pathways for the evolution of consciousness, frequently with surprising similarities despite geographic and cultural distances. Indian *Kriya Yoga* and Chinese *Nei Dan (Taoist Internal Alchemy)* are both valued sources of teachings on how to use life energy for spiritual awakening.

By examining carefully, it is possible to find significant connections between *Pranayama* and *Taoist breath work* techniques. The true guide is one's inner experiences, which help to distinguish what is essential from what may be just a cultural facade.

In this integrative approach, *Tummo*, also called '*inner fire*', is a practice that stands out for its transformative power. From time to time, I make use of this technique. Chapter 16 is where I describe it in detail.

A spiritual seeker explained it to me by recounting his experiences. As per his words, he was introduced to a technique known as the '*Third Level*,' or '*Third Cobra Breath*,' by a *Kriya* school. Although he had failed to achieve great results in the *First* and *Second Levels* of this school, he never thought this *Third Level* would have such an impact on him. [The initial level consisted of *Kriya Pranayama*, and the subsequent one was a simple form of *Thokar*.]

Upon achieving modest results with preliminary techniques, he experienced a drastic transformation through this practice, which resulted in states of ecstasy, emotional expansion, and inner transformation.

Immediately after hearing him describe the technique, I quickly recognized it as *Tummo*, a practice that I was already familiar with but whose importance I still had to fully comprehend.

According to him, the teacher had initially instructed him to restrict his daily repetitions. As he gained more experience, he increased the repetitions until he was practicing up to a hundred in a single session.

His life was completely transformed by this technique. He experienced significant things such as daily ecstasies, profound joy, and a broader emotional spectrum.

Over time, the practice started to interfere with his daily duties, and he started to let it fade from his life slowly. However, it took him approximately five years until the ecstasies and other effects, which had become a part of his daily routine, disappeared completely.

After hearing his testimony, I made the decision to experiment with this technique, searching for ways to incorporate it into my daily life. My understanding was that *Tummo* should only be introduced after completing a strong foundation of preparatory practices, including *Kriya Pranayama* and, if necessary, *Thokar*. By doing this, the energetic system is prepared to accept and transform the intense potential of the practice, reducing the potential for imbalances.

Activating the *inner fire* requires the use of deep relaxation and internalization practices. One can choose to lie in *Savasana*, abandon the dimension of the mind, or continue with *Tummo*, which becomes more subtle and internalized. This allows energy to integrate harmoniously and opens up the door to more subtle levels of perception.

Tummo is not just a way to generate heat, it is also a way to spark an inner light that can break through deep blockages and bring forth a primal joy that is free from the mind's contents. Like all genuine practices, it demands discernment, perseverance, and constant inner observation.

APPENDIX N.2 AN ACCOUNT OF A SEARCH FOR A THOKAR EXTENDED TO THE LOWER CHAKRAS

During the spiritual journey of *Kriya Yoga*, many individuals have wondered if there is a *Thokar* form that could stimulate even the *Chakras* below the fourth one.

There are accounts that suggest that such a method existed. However, precisely because of its power and the delicate nature of its effects, it was never widely disseminated. Researchers who have investigated it have reported the difficulty in fully integrating the energy released by it.

I made my own attempt to extend the *Thokar* downward to *Muladhara* before receiving initiation into the *Fifth Kriya*. The procedure was derived from a drawing that was featured in a text written by *Satyewarananda Swami*, which was claimed to have been taken from a diary written by Lahiri. I give an account of the specifics of that experiment.

Practical Teaching

Contract the muscles at the base of the spine moderately. Keep your chin down to your chest. Inhale while simultaneously enhancing your awareness along the spinal column. By placing the hands with interlaced fingers above the navel area, mental pressure is created on the first three *Chakras*.

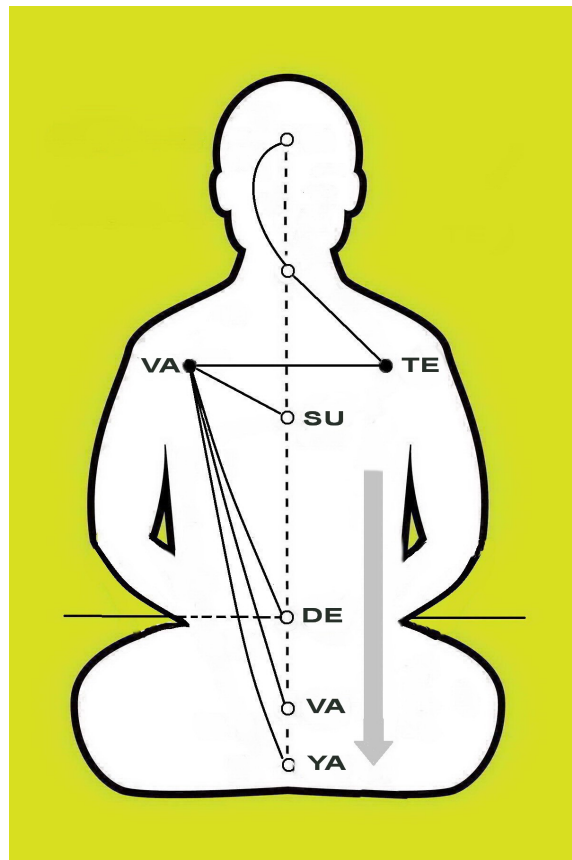


Fig.24 Special form of Thokar
– the person is seen from behind

While inhaling, raise your chin following the internal movement of *Prana*. Mentally chant the syllables of the *Vasudeva Mantra*. The syllable 'Om' is placed in the first *Chakra*, 'Na' in the second, 'Mo' in the third, 'Bha' in the fourth, 'Ga' in the fifth, and 'Ba' in *Bindu*. Hold your breath.

Move your head to the left, then bring it back to the center with a slightly raised chin. Without pause, turn your face to the right. The chin is gradually lowered towards the center of the right shoulder. There is no tension in this movement.

Mentally chant 'Teee' into the upper part of the right lung. Then slowly move your head to the symmetrical position, mentally placing 'Va' into the upper part of the left lung. Still holding your breath, lower your chin to the center of your chest, mentally vibrating the syllable 'Su' in the heart *Chakra*.

Keep holding your breath. Raise your chin to the left and then lower it near the center of your chest, mentally visualizing the third *Chakra* and vibrating the syllable 'De' there. Similarly, strike the second *Chakra* with the syllable 'Va', and strike the first *Chakra* with the syllable 'Ya'.

After exhaling, inhale very slowly to feel yourself truly enter the spine. Go to the highest point possible. Perform with great care and sensitivity. As you exhale, you will feel the energy descend and meet the energy rising in the heart center. Feel free to repeat this technique as often as you feel like it. In most cases, one repetition is more than enough. It's challenging to assimilate the effects as you increase the repetitions!¹³

The breath is allowed to flow freely at the conclusion of this practice. The focus is on discerning the power that emanates from the *Muladhara* to the spine and throughout the entire body. The energy is viewed as tidal waves that move upwards, reaching a *Chakra*, and then returning to the base of the spine to a higher center...

Definitive Solution

The study and practice of *Thokar Tribhangamurari*, who is known in *Panchanan Bhattacharya's* tradition as the *Fifth Kriya* (see Chapter 9) gave a definitive understanding of the best way to proceed. This technique,

¹³ Some teachers recommend lifting the body a few millimeters with the help of the hands and then letting the buttocks touch the floor with a slight jolt. This action is called *Maha Veda Mudra*, "Pose of the Great Perforation"—obviously, the *Muladhara* knot is being pierced and cut. If the jolt is accompanied by the correct mental intensity, an ecstatic shiver is felt.

which is both beautiful and transformative, is distinguished by its lengthy internal preparation that does not require *Thokar's* physical action at first. However, when one reaches the point where the five strokes of *Thokar Tribhangamurari* are performed, the effect can be so profound that it can evoke intense joy, even accompanied by tears. This technique doesn't need more inhalations to rebalance the energy. It is a technique that is complete and flawless, without any difficulties.

APPENDIX N.3 GAYATRI KRIYA

Some *Kriya* teachers refer to this technique as the *Fourth Kriya*. It is my understanding that this technique is very old and existed before Lahiri Mahasaya started his mission to spread *Kriya*. This technique is widely known in India and is regarded as the most subtle of the *Gayatri Mantra* methods. In several booklets, it is published with minor variations and extra ritual additions.

The *Gayatri Mantra* is considered the most effective means of achieving spiritual enlightenment. Its purest form is *Om Tat Savitur Varenyam Bhargho Devasya Dhimahi Dhiyo Yonaha Prachodayat*. (We meditate on your glory, O great Spiritual Light who created the Universe. You embody Knowledge. The One who eliminates ignorance is you. May our intellect and intuition be enlightened by You.)

This *mantra* is preceded by either a short or long invocation. The short invocation is: *Om Bhur, Om Bhuvah, Om Swaha. Bhur, Bhuvah, and Swaha* are used to invoke the deities who oversee the physical, astral, and causal planes of existence. The long invocation is: *Om Bhur, Om Bhuvah, Om Swaha, Om Mahah, Om Janah, Om Tapah, Om Satyam*. This invocation is more complete because it acknowledges the presence of multiple levels of existence: the seven *Lokas*. *Mahah* refers to the mental realm, which is the plane of spiritual equilibrium; *Janah* refers to the realm of unadulterated knowledge; *Tapah* refers to the realm of intuition; *Satyam* refers to the realm of ultimate and final truth. It is our understanding that these seven sounds activate our *Chakras* and connect them to the seven great spiritual realms of existence, and we can accept that. In our procedure, we use the long invocation, but not all the components of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Kriya* tradition we are following here associates *Om Mahah* with *Manipura*, and *Om Swaha* with *Anahata*. The reason for this is that the world of thought, evoked by *Om Mahah*, is more suitable for the nature of the third *Chakra*, while *Om Swaha's* evocation of the causal universe of pure ideas is linked to the *Anahata Chakra*.

Basic Instruction

Be mindful of the *Muladhara Chakra*. Contract the muscles near the physical location of the *Chakra* – the contraction can be repeated two or three times. Take a deep breath (not necessarily a long one, like in *Kriya Pranayama*), and imagine the *Chakra* rising to the point between your eyebrows, where it appears like a full moon. Concentrate on the “inner space” between your eyebrows while holding your breath. *Kechari Mudra* makes this easy.¹⁴ The screen between the eyebrows displays a color experience that differs for each *Chakra*. Mentally chant the specific *mantra* for the *Muladhara Chakra* at least three times: *Om Bhur*.

Finally, exhale deeply and lower the *Chakra* from its location between the eyebrows to its location in the spine. You now understand the procedures for the other *Chakras*.

The *mantras* used are:

Om Bhur for *Muladhara*

Om Bhuvah for *Swadhisthana*

Om Mahah for *Manipura*

Om Swaha for *Anahata*

Om Janah for *Vishuddha*

Om Tapah for *Medulla*

Now concentrate your attention solely on the region between your eyebrows. Inhale deeply; raise your eyebrows; become aware of the Light. Repeat *Om Satyam*. Now complete the “round” by raising *Chakras* 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, always using contraction, chanting of *mantras*, and awareness of any experience of Light in *Kutastha*. Retry the procedure 6 to 12 times, if it's possible.

Earth, water, fire, air, and ether are each related to one of the five *Tattwas* in the *Kriya* tradition. As we explained above, offering each *Chakra* and then each *Tattwa* individually to the Divine Light that gathers and

¹⁴ "Ke-chari" is literally translated as "the state of those who fly in the sky, in the ether." A particular "space" is created in the region between the tip of the tongue and the point between the eyebrows and is perceived as a "void," although it is not a physical void. By immersing oneself in this empty space, it is easier for a *kriyaban* to perceive the rhythms of each *Chakra* and distinguish them from one another.

intensifies in the region between the eyebrows is the definitive action to dissolve the last shell of illusion. *Kutastha* is a place where the entire universe exists.

The method followed by experienced kriyabans

For those who are capable of reaching the breathless state, this practice can be discovered spontaneously after months of practicing the method just described. The miracle of this procedure is that in each *Chakra*, a paradise is revealed to the kriyaban! The only obstacle is locating a comfortable body position that allows one to remain still for a prolonged period while maintaining a straight spine. With a short inhalation, the first *Chakra* is brought into *Kutastha*. The elasticity of the rib cage relaxes, resulting in a very gentle exhalation. The energy has remained in *Kutastha*. Mentally chanting the *mantra Om Bhur* takes place both in *Kutastha* and at the physical location of the *Muladhara Chakra*. Slowly and without rushing, the chanting persists. The *kriyaban's* entire skill lies in inducing a breathless state.

The best mental attitude to adopt is one that is known by an expert as the way to induce this state. A wonderful sensation is experienced when that particular reflex is activated. It's like the sun of perfection is shining down on our consciousness. It evokes a state of stillness and lightness, as if the body were composed of air. This is accompanied by a unique calmness of the lungs and heart. The *Chakra* is where awareness is fully located, and it can be seen as a large luminous sphere. This *mantra* is repeated about thirty-six times.

At a certain point, awareness senses that the time has come to move to the next *Chakra*, where the entire procedure is repeated, with inhalation, disappearance of breath, and so on. The repetition of *Om Satyam* in *Kutastha* can be increased from 36 times to 108-200 times.

APPENDIX N.4 KAPALABHATI PRANAYAMA CAN BE INCREDIBLY HELPFUL

Kapalabhati is a breathing technique where inhalation and exhalation are quickly alternating. Exhaling is a vigorous and active process that occurs by contracting the abdominal muscles and drawing the navel inward.

Inhalation, on the other hand, is passive and spontaneous: after exhaling air, the muscles relax and the breath comes in naturally and effortlessly.

The practice of breathing can be done through either the nose or mouth, but the main thing is to breathe at a regular rhythm of roughly two cycles per second, with equal duration for both inhalations and exhalations.

The abdomen is like a bellows, and the navel pumps *Prana* towards the energy center of the abdomen.

After 15-20 quick exhalations, take a brief break and allow your breath to return to its natural rhythm. It's best to start with a few cycles and increase them as you gain experience.

In Chapter 15, we already discussed how to consciously guide *Prana*, directing it towards the *Chakras*. I'm referring to my explanation on how to breathe through a slightly open mouth with almost closed and joined lips, and produce a continuous series of "s" sounds: s-s-s-s-s...

I would like to add that sometimes it's beneficial to take a slow, deep breath and enjoy a brief pause of stillness.

Energizing the Heart

After obtaining a steady flow of energy, we can concentrate it on the fourth *Chakra (Anahata)*.

When you feel the energy rising to the *Medulla* after a series of fragmented exhalations, bring your chin down slightly and keep directing the *Prana* towards the heart while continuing the fragmented exhalations.

You can conclude with a sound that ends in s-s-t, clearly feeling the heat penetrate the heart center.

By regularly practicing this breathing technique, you can experience a state of joyful exhilaration in the evening, like a sweet and luminous force is completely pervading you.

Experiencing this can lead to intense bliss: you feel a burning fire of love and serenity in your heart, and the world appears to glow with a new and pure eye.

Weeks of experimenting with this latest practice produced remarkable effects

I was involved in a pilgrimage. The aim was to walk all night and reach a magnificent sanctuary before dawn. I experienced something new in my consciousness.

I walked as if I were carrying a burning brazier in my chest. My identity was now rooted in my heart instead of my mind. I experienced a feeling of

tenderness within me. The love that exists in other people's hearts was palpable to me. Suddenly, I witnessed my friends being surrounded by a love aura.

The intensity of this awareness increased. I saw with touching clarity how much love was present in their lives. I reflected on how each of them was capable of accomplishing amazing feats for the love of their children.

It dawned on me that love always brings with it pain. There was no protection. No assurance was given. Those who love deeply can also experience loss, separation, and tragedy. Human existence is entirely dependent on it. My chest was penetrated by this simple yet profound awareness. I felt a pang that broke my heart.

At that moment, the sun started to rise behind the hills. The sanctuary came into view before us. There was a melting sensation within me. From the pain came a bliss that was pure love. The pain was strong but it was a pain that was filled with light, sacred, and transforming.

APPENDIX N.5 THERE ARE SOME TECHNIQUES THAT CAN BE BENEFICIAL

[1] Deep and long breathing can be improved with exercise

Many *Kriya Yoga* practitioners find early on in their journey that they have difficulty maintaining a truly deep breath – for example, a breath (inhalation and exhalation) that lasts around 30 seconds.

In order to promote this, I propose a simple but efficient routine that alternates between two different breathing patterns.

The Routine

The first step is to take nine deep, but fast breaths, each lasting around 4–6 seconds. During this phase, it is crucial to be aware of the energy current rising and falling, like a vital flow, throughout the spinal canal.

As you breathe, you often experience a vibration that oscillates from below to the heart *Chakra*, as if the area behind it is being energetically cleansed.

Once this initial phase is finished, you move on to three extremely slow, deep breaths that are performed with great concentration in every *Chakra*, based on the teachings of Lahiri Mahasaya's *Kriya*. These three breaths are subtle and deep. It appears that the energy is becoming more relaxed and flowing with a new naturalness.

The sequence, which is made up of nine fast breaths and three slow breaths, can be repeated multiple times depending on your comfort level and time availability. The rapid and slow phases are mutually supportive: rapid breaths open and prepare the energy body, while slow breaths enhance its stillness and length.

Over the course of a few months, when you practice this routine regularly, you will observe that shortness of breath tends to dissolve spontaneously, and the breath becomes more fluid, natural, and prolonged.

The history of this practice

I learned about this procedure from a *kriyaban* friend, who told me about a curious discovery related to a small Buddhist group active in the late 19th century.

His research revealed that these practitioners employed a type of *Kriya Yoga* or a similar one, in which they alternated sequences of rapid and slow *pranayama* over several consecutive minutes.

My friend observed that by practicing fast breaths first and then slow breaths, the breath can easily be prolonged, which is beneficial for a deep and stable *Kriya Pranayama*.

As I don't have exact information about the exact composition of these sequences, I decided to experiment and codify the formulation I propose today, which consists of nine fast breaths and three very slow *Kriya* breaths.

Over time, this simple combination has proven to be extremely advantageous in expanding breathing capacity and stabilizing internal awareness while practicing.

[2] Nadi Sodhana (The classical version of this technique)

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.

The *Ida* and *Pingala* currents are brought into balance by this technique. *Ida*, which is feminine and linked to introversion and rest, flows vertically along the left side of the spinal column, while *Pingala* (which is masculine and connects to extroversion and physical activity) flows parallel to *Ida* on the right side. *Sushumna* flows in the center and symbolizes the ideal state to attain before starting meditation practice: the ideal state between the two lateral currents. Many individuals lack harmony between introversion and extroversion due to an imbalance between *Ida* and *Pingala*.

Thanks to this practice, a beginner experiences a very positive transformation. Various patterns of energetic imbalance disappear. The *attentive yet calm alertness* that is the very foundation of the *Kriya* meditative state cannot be achieved without this balancing action. It's a common occurrence that after practicing *Nadi Sodhana* for a long time, without adding any other techniques, one experiences a natural meditative state.

Healthy individuals have a balance between a life of positive relationships and a serene connection with the depths of their being. When a person is too introverted, they may lose touch with external reality. The consequence is that life's ups and downs seem to pile up against one, causing one to lose their sense of control and mastery over their life events. Being overly extroverted can reveal a weakness in dealing with emotions that arise from the subconscious realm and can lead to unexpected moments of anguish.

Brain waves can be divided into four categories. The brain waves that are used to meditate are alpha waves. They appear most when the person has their eyes closed, mentally relaxed, but still clear-headed and alert. The level of alpha waves indicates how relaxed the brain is. These waves are distributed equally throughout both halves of the brain. Practice of *Nadi Sodhana* leads to the alpha waves in each part of the brain becoming equal, which is a beneficial effect. *Nadi Sodhana* establishes the perfect balance, which is the ideal setting to enter into a meditative state.

[3] Nadi Sodhana performed using reverse breathing

This technique is highly effective. It plays a crucial role in promoting the free movement of *Prana* through the *Sushumna*. *Kriyabans* can greatly benefit from practicing this exercise every day with unwavering

determination. Due to its power, it is important to be cautious when using it.

Put your focus on the *Muladhara Chakra*. Close your right nostril and inhale through your left nostril while mentally repeating *Om* three times. But **unlike the classic Nadi Sodhana**, visualize drawing the energy contained in the inhaled air downward through the *Ida* channel to the seat of the *Muladhara*.

Close both nostrils and mentally repeat *Om* six times while holding your breath. At the same time, contract the muscles at the base of your spine, pull the abdominal muscles inward, and bring your chin towards your chest. Slowly raise the energy into the *Pingala* channel by exhaling through the right nostril and mentally chanting *Om* 6-12 times.

Reiterate the process by inhaling through the right nostril, lowering the energy, and then pause with the three *Bandhas* just mentioned (two contractions and lowering the chin) and exhaling slowly through the left nostril. These two breaths constitute one unit. Finish no more than three units altogether. In the future, you can increase this number with great care. Concentrating on the *Muladhara Chakra* is the top priority during this procedure. This exercise concludes by raising the energy activated in the *Muladhara* through the *Tadan Kriya*, which I will now describe.

Take a deep inhalation through both nostrils, feeling your breath descend to the *Muladhara*. Hold your breath. Practice the three *Bandhas* that were previously utilized. Use your hands to lift your body a few millimeters and then step your buttocks onto the seat with a small hop. Complete three hops while still holding. Exhale in a slow manner, relaxing each contraction and raising your chin.

Definitely, you will experience a sensation of ecstasy. This detail is crucial as it shows that the *Prana* has entered the spine and the *Kundalini* is embarking on its upward journey. It's the mental energy you put into this exercise that matters, not necessarily the physical aspect. The action of *Tadan Kriya* is called *Maha Veda Mudra*, which means “*Mudra of great perforation.*” Repeat the exercise two more times for a total of 9 hops.

The next exercise described in point [3], namely *Chaturtha Pranayama*, would be the ideal practice to follow the *Nadi Sodhana with reverse breathing* we described.

[4] Chaturtha Pranayama

Chaturtha Pranayama is a high-level practice in the *Kriya Yoga* path. The practice is done in the months before the final transition of the *kriyaban*, when the soul senses the moment of departure from the body.

It is believed that the enlightened practitioner knows the departure date approximately six months in advance, and during that time, they are introduced to *Chaturtha Pranayama*.

This technique is a combination of meditation and *pranayama*, as it blends the ability to observe the breath with the power of the mantra OM, the primordial vibration.

It is also called "*the pranayama of the fourth state*" because it leads to the perception of a transcendental level of consciousness, beyond words and thoughts: the *Turiya*, the state in which the mind is quiet as in deep sleep, but the consciousness remains fully awake.

By practicing *Chaturtha Pranayama*, you can gain a clear and intuitive awareness of the *Chakras* and their ability to perceive the life force that flows through them. It is not a practice that can be understood through logic or language: it reveals its meaning only through the practitioner's internal experience.

It is a belief that after six months of steady practice, the *kriyaban* consciously exits the body through *Thokar Kriya*, managing the nine gates of the body and directing mind and *Prana* to the heart. At that moment, the soul merges with the sacred sound of OM, dissolved into its own essence. *Kriya's* supreme goal is to achieve definitive liberation, and there is no return from this state.

The Six Stages of Chaturtha Pranayama

[I] Sit in a stable and comfortable position. Concentrate on the spot in the middle of your eyebrows (*Kutastha*).

Observe the calm, deep breath and begin mentally repeating the mantra OM: during inhalation, perceive the vibration of the 'O', and during exhalation, prolong the sound of 'M-m-m'.

The mantra is merely mental and the mouth remains closed. Proceed for 5-12 minutes, keeping your mind fixed on the region between your eyebrows.

[II] Now, take note of the *Sahasrara*, the crown. As you inhale, accompanied by the mental sound 'O', feel the flow of energy descending through the *Chakras*, from the *Sahasrara* to the *Muladhara*.

As you exhale, with the sound of 'M-m-m', follow the same path in the opposite direction, ascending towards the crown.

Perform multiple cycles of descent and ascent, for a period of 5–12 minutes.

[III] Remain focused in *Kutastha*. Bring your awareness successively to each *Chakra*, in the order: Ajna → Vishuddha → Anahata → Manipura → Swadhisthana → Muladhara, and then ascend from Muladhara to Ajna.

At each center, mentally inhale with the sound "O" and exhale with the sound "M-m-m." Pause for a full breath at each point. A complete journey from *Ajna* to *Ajna* constitutes a cycle: perform at least six.

[IV] Concentrate again on *Kutastha*. During the inhalation ("O"), feel the energy piercing the *Chakras* from top to bottom: Ajna, Vishuddha, Anahata, Manipura, Swadhisthana, and Muladhara.

When you exhale ("M-m-m"), you will feel the same energy rising up the spine, starting from *Muladhara* and continuing to *Ajna*.

Carefully observe the flow of breath and mental sound, like a luminous current. Do as many cycles as you can during your available time.

[V] Maintain a steady focus on *Kutastha* and mentally chant OM in sync with your breath.

Feel the vibration of the 'O' and 'M' resonating in the point between your eyebrows, until your awareness unites with the mantra itself.

As time goes on, your breathing becomes more subtle and almost imperceptible.

[VI] In the end, immerse yourself in *Kutastha*. Repeat OM internally, but don't pay attention to your breath.

Allow yourself to be completely still in the sound, until the mantra dissolves into the inner silence.

If your concentration is stable, you can stay in this state for 5-15 minutes or longer.

The gateway to deep meditation is through this essential phase of *Chaturtha Pranayama*.

Avoid rushing the process: allow the practice to mature naturally and your consciousness to open spontaneously to its completion.

[5] Experimenting with Kriya Pranayama variants

Exploring the most common variations in the practice of *Kriya Pranayama* is something I find very helpful. A seeker may discover that a *Kriya* variation can provide a solution to a problem or provide greater satisfaction by practicing in a new manner. It's possible that someone might adopt one of these variations as their permanent practice over time.

Pranayama variations typically include a long, deep breath that is accompanied by an internal feeling of a flow of energy that rises during inhalation, very close to or inside the spine and it flows downward during exhalation.

In some schools, it is recommended to move consciousness around the *Chakras*, which involves following a path outside of *Sushumna*. For example, it is recommended that one ascends along the back of the spine and descends to the front, while others advise the other way. (Let's not even consider the *New Age* nonsense that men should follow one path while women should follow another.)

There is a variation that requires moving up inside the spine and down outside of it. The spine can be seen as a tube that is hollow, connecting *Muladhara* to *Kutastha*. Inhaling causes the breath and energy to move through this channel then, as we exhale, the breath and energy are guided to flow up through the front of the brain, back over it, and down the back of the spinal column to the *Muladhara*.

It's surprising that some teachers believe that the most appropriate approach is not to visualize any path at all. According to them, the functioning of *Pranayama* is unrelated to our imagination. To put it another way, a simple and slow *Ujjayi* will automatically bring *Prana* into the *Sushumna*, even without any mental focus on the spine.

Let's discuss the various timing ratios between inhalation and exhalation. Inhalation and exhalation typically take the same amount of time; this is expressed as a [1:1] ratio. There is a *Kriya* school that prescribes a ratio of [1:2], so the exhalation lasts twice as long as the inhalation. The [2:3] ratio is more comfortable and natural. According to [2:3], if inhalation lasts 10 seconds, the exhalation lasts 15 seconds. It is obvious that you can take a break after inhaling. For example, starting with 4 seconds, one can hold their breath for the length of their inhalation.

The [1:1:1:1] symbol is indicative of the “Square *Pranayama*”, which requires inhalation, exhalation, and pauses to be equal in length. Establishing an 8-8-8-8 mental count rhythm can be achieved by a

kriyaban through practice. It is said that by continuing with this rhythm, a *kriyaban* can reach a particular form of *Samadhi*, sometimes experiencing it within *Pranayama* itself, thus not trying to reach it after *Kriya Pranayama* through mental *Pranayama*.

The use of *Mula Bandha* can help to intensify the practice of *Kriya Pranayama*. During the final moments of breathing, one imagines the current reaching *Bindu*. Then the current "rotates" to the left, descends slightly, and enters the *Medulla Oblongata*. It is at this moment that *Mula Bandha* is practiced intensely, the breath is held, and the region between the eyebrows tightens. The sensation is that energy is being pushed from the *Medulla Oblongata* to the *Kutastha*. From *Kutastha*, a sensation of inner light spreads up into the upper part of the brain.

Then, after exhaling, *Mula Bandha's* tension is released, and the energy flows to *Muladhara*. *Kechari Mudra* assists this process: during the action of *Mula Bandha*, the tongue (located within the nasal pharynx) is pushed forward.

A specific perception of rotating energy can be present during *Kriya Pranayama*. The path along which energy moves along the spine is perceived as a helix. In other words, starting from the base of the spine, the energy ascends and rotates within the spine in a counterclockwise direction. The energy descends by following the same path, resulting in a clockwise rotation. A strong sensation of physical immobility is experienced, and the spine feels like a steel bar. A great sense of joy arises.

[6] Exploring the power of Thokar

Our approach is to start with alternating a single *Kriya Pranayama* with a single *Thokar* and repeating the process multiple times. You can sense that the *Prana* is gathered in the upper part of the chest. The vibration of *Om* can be easily sensed. The *Medulla* is slowly filled with it and it descends towards the cervical *Chakra*.

At this point, you have the opportunity to proceed with the practice called the *Consummation of Thokar*. According to tradition, this method pierces the heart knot and reveals the entrance to the *Sushumna*. Holding the breath, slowly lower the chin to the chest - you must spend no less than 20 seconds - making an effort to mentally chanting a long 'Oooooom'...until it becomes almost explosive when it reaches the fourth *Chakra*.

Ensure that the *Om* descent doesn't result in the breath leaving the lungs. If this has occurred, take a quick inhale and squeeze your breath. This detail is necessary to ensure that the final part of this technique has the full effect

of joy.

Continue to hold, pull in the abdominal muscles, and raise the pressure in the abdominal area. The vibration from above merges with the energy from the abdominal area. At a certain point, you touch the chest with your chin in a clear way.

Perform *Jalandhara*, along with *Uddiyana* and *Mula Bandha*, and hold for several mental chants of *Om* without feeling any pain. Following this action, exhale slowly and sweetly, feeling the energy flow pass through the heart *Chakra*.

To increase the amount of oxygen in your body, perform a few breaths of *Bhastrika Pranayama* at this point.

The whole process with *Thokar* is repeated a few times.

A variation that doesn't require you to hold your breath

The initial step is to learn *Bhramari Pranayama*. The practice is quite simple. You slowly exhale through your nose, producing a sound similar to that of a bumblebee. There are many online videos that demonstrate this practice. This sound has a strong reverberation that can be felt in the head.

The variation I am currently discussing involves inhaling, starting a long *Bhramari* exhalation, and bending the head forward to direct the vibration towards the heart center. The duration of this exhalation is at least 20 seconds.

The loudness of the *Bhramari* sound increases when you lower your chin and hit your sternum with it. At this point, the sound is so powerful that it resembles an explosion and brings about a new realm of consciousness. It is possible to repeat this variation a few times as well. By doing this, it is easy to perceive the inner sound of *Om*.

Effects

Your heart radiates a strong sense of joy that spreads throughout the universe. Be aware of this for as long as you can.

Feel that the heart *Chakra* is filled with an internal fire. The rib cage's *Prana* is calm and stable, allowing you to feel the freedom from your breath. With your chin lowered, dedicate yourself to mental silence. With this action, *Thokar* opens the door to the heart.

You will realize that elaborating on a single thought is not feasible. Acknowledge and accept the feeling of emptiness. Allow your mind to dissolve. Hold onto this state without allowing your abdomen and rib cage to relax, and allow the *Prana* to slowly slide downwards.

[7] Nauli

Nauli is one of the most potent *yoga* practices for purification and energetic awakening. The abdominal muscles are worked hard and the nervous system is deeply affected, promoting the awakening of *Kundalini* energy and the rebalancing of the vital centers.

First stage

Take a standing position with your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart and your knees slightly bent. Bend forward until your hands rest on your knees, keeping your back straight and your gaze forward. Producing a sound like “*huh huhhh*”, expel all the air from your lungs through your mouth.

With your lungs empty, hold your breath and perform the movement you would normally use to inhale, but without inhaling, this causes your abdomen to retract towards your spine. Use your hands to gently press on your knees to support the position. Hold your breath out for a few seconds, then take a deep breath and relax.

Practicing this first phase daily for three or four weeks is necessary until you have developed good abdominal control.

Second Stage

Once you are comfortable with the first stage, introduce the second stage. With your lungs empty and abdomen drawn in, bring your concentration to a point ideally behind your navel. Imagine a hand within you gently pushing your abdominal muscles outward. Maintain your eyes closed and hold your position calmly until you feel a genuine forward movement of the muscles.

Take a deep breath, let go, and repeat. Practice this for a few weeks until you have good sensitivity and control.

Third Stage

During the third stage, when the breath is held out and the abdomen is pulled back, focus on contracting just the right side of the abdomen. To facilitate this, increase the pressure of your hand on your right knee slightly.

Take a moment to relax, exhale, and repeat, this time focusing on contracting the left side. Alternate between the two sides multiple times until you are able to isolate them precisely.

Stage Four: Rotation

The final stage consists of contracting the right side of the abdominal muscles, then the center, then the left, and then the center again, in a continuous and fluid sequence, while keeping the breath out.

This movement creates the impression of a circular rotation of the abdominal muscles. It will seem as if the belly is actually rotating, while in reality it is a rhythmic succession of controlled contractions.

Perform at least twenty rotations and then take a brief break with a few deep breathes. If you feel prepared, repeat the sequence once again.

The only way to master *Nauli* is through consistency and repeated practice.

Stages don't happen automatically: it's the body, with patience and awareness, that slowly learns how to move like a wave.

APPENDIX N.6 ARE THERE ANY RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH KRIYA PRACTICE?

In today's spiritual world, it's not uncommon to encounter wildly different views on meditation, and *Kriya Yoga* in particular. There are those who warn about potential negative effects and claim that these practices can cause disconnection from reality, emotional instability, anxiety, or difficulty concentrating. When *Kundalini* awakening is discussed, there is a heightened level of concern due to its often sensationalized association with dark powers, paranormal phenomena, or harmful influences.

Online, there are some extreme stories about people losing sleep, experiencing disturbing visions, or developing psychological symptoms as a result of simple exercises or *mantras*. It's essential to not overlook these testimonies, but also to assess them with discernment. Many times, they can indicate pre-existing psychological conditions, the consumption of psychoactive substances, or spiritual practices undertaken without competent guidance.

There are also those who believe that meditation is a prelude to witchcraft or black magic, with some even claiming that repeating the *mantra Om* can bring about “negative entities”. There are accounts that describe extreme experiences, such as sudden levitation or recurring nightmares, that are followed by lengthy periods of emotional distress and hospitalizations. These narratives, which are often highly charged and impressionistic, occasionally seem to suggest a fear of losing their mental health rather than the actual benefits of meditation itself.

According to traditional teachings, *Kriya Yoga* must be practiced gradually, under the supervision of an experienced instructor, and with an awareness of one's emotional and psychological state. Meditation, just like any other transformative practice, can reveal significant inner content, and without proper integration, this can cause instability.

Gopi Krishna's case, which did not practice *Kriya Yoga* but a different technique, is often referenced in the debate about potential risks. His book, *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy of Man*, details how he awakened his *Kundalini* in 1937 without the guidance of a master and without following any structured tradition. His descriptions range from moments of intense bliss to prolonged periods of physical and mental hardship.

He practiced meditation for long periods of time in the morning, focusing on the *Sahasrara*, the lotus at the top of his head. During one of these sessions, he experienced a heightened energy flow up his spine, accompanied by internal sounds and a sensation of a liquid light piercing his brain. In 1967, he published his account, detailing how he was able to overcome that turbulent phase over the course of time.

The keen desire to sit and meditate, which had always been present during the preceding days, disappeared suddenly and was replaced by a feeling of horror of the supernatural. I wanted to fly from even the thought of it. At the same time I felt a sudden distaste for work and conversation, with the inevitable result that being left with nothing to keep myself engaged, time hung heavily on me, adding to the already distraught condition of my mind. [...] Each morning heralded for me a new kind of terror, a fresh complication in the already disordered system, a deeper fit of melancholy or more irritable condition of the mind which I had to restrain, to prevent it from completely overwhelming me, by keeping myself alert, usually after a completely sleepless night; and after withstanding patiently the tortures of the day, I had to prepare myself for even worse torment of the night. (*Gopi Krishna Kundalini the evolutionary energy of man*).

Through esoteric texts he learned that there were several simple practices that could aid in restoring balance to his body's energy. He proceeded to initiate a healing process. He was sure that he had raised the *Kundalini* through *Pingala* and attempted to activate *Ida*, ultimately neutralizing the internal fire that was taking hold of him. He made a clear decision and continued with fierce determination to generate a cold current that rose through the central channel of the spine. This was sufficient to save him! The practice is very similar to *Kriya Pranayama*.

With my mind reeling and senses deadened with pain, but with all the will-power left at my command, I brought my attention to bear on the left side of the seat of *Kundalini*, and tried to force an imaginary cold current upward through the middle of the spinal cord. In that extraordinarily extended, agonized, and exhausted state of consciousness, I distinctly felt the location of the nerve and strained hard mentally to divert its flow into the central channel. Then, as if waiting for the destined moment, a miracle happened. There was a sound like a nerve thread snapping and instantaneously a silvery streak passed zigzag through the spinal cord, exactly like the sinuous movement of a white serpent in rapid flight, pouring an effulgent, cascading shower of brilliant vital energy into my brain, filling my head with a blissful luster in place of the flame that had been tormenting me for the last three hours. Completely taken by surprise at this sudden transformation of the fiery current, darting across the entire network of my nerves only a moment before, and overjoyed at the cessation of pain, I remained absolutely quiet and motionless for some time, tasting the bliss of relief with a mind flooded with emotion, unable to believe I was really free of the horror. Tortured and exhausted almost to the point of collapse by the agony I had suffered during the terrible interval. I immediately fell asleep, bathed in light and for the first time after weeks of anguish felt the sweet embrace of restful sleep.

Gopi Krishna's experience demonstrates the dangers of concentrating solely on higher energy centers (like *Sahasrara*) without sufficient preparation. The *Yogani* master who manages his AYP website gives a clear explanation of this fact.

The importance of activating and balancing the energy channels (*Ida* and *Pingala*) is often stressed by masters who focus on achieving a harmonious flow before concentrating on the crown of the head. *Kriya Pranayama* techniques are highly respected for their ability to work on vital energy in a progressive and safe manner.

B. S. Goel's case is also interesting because he provides an in-depth account of his spontaneous *Kundalini awakening* in his book *Psychoanalysis and Meditation*. Observing profound internal changes through a psychological lens was made possible by his psychoanalysis training. Throughout India, he searched for answers and developed an integrated vision that combined meditation and analytical introspection, despite suffering for a long time.

The ego's destruction and subsequent reconstruction is described by *Goel*, who accompanies it with dreams, automatic writing, and profound meditative experiences. His contribution is unique in that he reflects on the role of the *Bindu* (an energy center located at the back of the head), which is believed to be a point of access to higher consciousness. He includes sensitive passages about psycho-sexual experiences in his observations.

During the final section of the book, when discussing the signs that indicate one is approaching the final goal, he had the bravery to mention one particular fact. He talks about his great desire to be pierced and penetrated. According to him, "piercing" is like using a nail to pierce the center of the eyebrows.

He makes it clear that the ego's ignorance can lead to an absurd transformation of the desire to penetrate the *Bindu* into a desire for passive anal penetration. *Goel* makes it clear that if someone wants to find ultimate spiritual bliss, they need to be penetrated in the *Bindu*, and a common sexual act cannot satisfy them.

He mentions that until that point, the *yogi* can sometimes engage in excessive homosexual behavior. In his view, numerous saints from all walks of life would have remained great homosexuals had they stopped in the period before sainthood.

Final Considerations

The experiences associated with spiritual awakening, particularly *Kundalini*, are both complex and subjective. They can lead to a higher level of consciousness, but also to moments of vulnerability and confusion.

Prudence, honesty, and discernment are necessary when tackling these practices, with the aim of avoiding generalizations, naive enthusiasm, and unfounded fears.

Deep self-awareness and recognizing one's own limitations are valuable tools. The measurement of authentic spirituality is not based on exceptional experiences, but on the gradual and incremental transformation of consciousness that brings peace, compassion, and clarity to everyday life.

APPENDIX N.7 A SOLUTION FOR NEGATIVE OR DISRUPTIVE MOODS

In *Kriya Yoga*, especially when practiced by self-taught practitioners, it is crucial to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the human psyche's

mechanisms. The impact of *Kriya* techniques is not restricted to the body and breath, but also includes activating powerful internal purification processes that can bring to light repressed or suppressed unconscious contents.

It is common for individuals who practice intensely to experience internal resistance, mood swings, or destabilizing mental states. These phenomena may not necessarily indicate mistakes or failures in practice, but rather serve as an essential element of the transformation process. It's beneficial to cultivate inner calm by observing what arises without identifying with it, instead of reacting with fear or discouragement.

Even a basic understanding of the principles of psychology, particularly depth psychology, can be extremely helpful. One can recognize that *Kriya's* subtle work on the unconscious can cause emotions like anxiety, unmotivated sadness, or panic attacks. It's a paradoxical fact that reactions like this can happen precisely when one is approaching a broader experience of expanding consciousness.

Kriya is a spiritual path that not only moves towards the transcendent, but also works profoundly to reveal what has been hidden. It's crucial to stay hopeful in these moments. Having an attitude of silent listening, openness, and patience can aid in regaining balance and serenity. Instead of trying to “get rid” of what comes out, it's about allowing the process to unfold with awareness and trusting in the practice's inherent wisdom.

The question that frequently arises is *how to find calm when disturbed by inner turmoil, even during a sincere practice?*

The answer may not always be unique or immediate, but it can often involve the use of complementary tools. Here, I propose three very effective practices.

[1] *Sitali Pranayama*

Nadi Sodhana holds a central position among the most effective breathing practices for restoring energetic and mental balance. Also known as “alternate nostril breathing”, this technique is simple to learn yet has extraordinarily profound effects. It's recommended to practice it every day, even multiple times per day, particularly during times of tension, mental fatigue, or emotional imbalance.

Nadi Sodhana's harmonizing effects are linked to the realignment of the two principal energy currents of the subtle body: *Ida* and *Pingala*. *Ida* is associated with the moon, receptivity, and introspection; *Pingala* is associated with the sun, activity, and extroversion. When these two forces

are out of balance, there is a discrepancy between our inner life and our relationship with the outside world.

When there is an excess of *Ida* energy, it can result in strong introversion, which can make it hard to connect with reality and lead to a sense of isolation or passivity. When *Pingala* is predominant, it can result in excessive outward projection, making it challenging to deal with subconscious issues like fear or latent tensions. Reconnecting these polarities and restoring a harmonious flow between interiority and action in the world is made possible by *Nadi Sodhana*.

To strengthen this process, you can incorporate *Sitali Pranayama*, a refreshing and calming technique that works on both the physical and subtle levels. It's particularly useful when you need to cool down excess mental or emotional heat, such as anxiety, irritation, or hyperactivity.

How to practice Sitali:

Sit up straight with your back aligned, in a stable and comfortable position, ensuring your body is relaxed yet alert. Bring your attention to the point between your eyebrows, which is the seat of your intuitive center.

Form a “U” shape with your tongue, letting it protrude slightly beyond your lips. (Those who cannot roll their tongue can simply inhale with their mouth slightly open.) Inhale deeply through your mouth, noticing the cool air flowing over your tongue. Visualize cool air moving up your spine, bringing peace and lightness. Slowly exhale through your nose, distributing the refreshing energy throughout your body. Repeat the cycle for at least 12 times, maintaining a steady and present awareness.

This technique is particularly advantageous when dealing with situations of stress, confusion, or emotional overload. According to some accounts, such as those of *Gopi Krishna*, imagining a sensation of coolness rising up the spine can help transform difficult internal states, helping to reactivate a sense of balance and clarity.

[2] *Intense Mula Bandha Practice for 108 Repetitions*

Among the fundamental techniques of *yoga*, the practice of *Mula Bandha*, which involves contracting the perineum or pelvic floor, plays an important role in awakening and directing vital energy (*Prana*) along the spine. This internal gesture can have a profound effect on the physical, energetic, and mental levels when performed regularly and consciously. To practice effectively, perform 108 repetitions while maintaining a slow and conscious rhythm.

During the exercise, it is not necessary to pay attention to the breath; attention can be maintained at the still point between the eyebrows, which represents inner concentration.

To practice, sit comfortably with your spine erect and your body relaxed. Focus on the base of your spine. Contract your pelvic floor muscles as if you were holding back a physiological urge. Hold the contraction for approximately two seconds and then slowly release it. The duration of each contraction and release cycle should be at least four seconds. Proceed in silence, with intensity, and without hurrying. In case it's necessary, split the practice into short sessions until you complete 108 repetitions.

This simple practice, though simple, can generate almost immediate benefits, including greater centering, mental clarity, and a subtle perception of energy moving along the spine. Occasionally, it causes an internal shiver or a slight ecstatic sensation.

[3] *Complete Mula Bandha by reciting a mantra in Kutastha*

To enhance the effects of *Mula Bandha* practice, it can be beneficial to combine *Japa*, the mental repetition of a *mantra*, with concentration in *Kutastha*, the point of stillness between the eyebrows.

The first step is to inhale slowly and deeply. After inhaling, create a short, natural pause and create a tranquil environment. In this inner space, mentally repeat your *mantra*, allowing it to “move” in the *Kutastha* area.

It's a good idea to imagine the *mantra* as a circular motion or a vibration spreading in the area between the eyebrows, similar to a small rotating sphere that's both stable and alive. The image is linked to the fluid and dynamic movement of acrobats riding their motorcycles in all directions within a metal sphere. Similarly, the *mantra* can freely “rotate” in the inner space of *Kutastha*, generating a clear perception of presence and centring.

Repeat a few breathing cycles in this way with calmness and regularity. This simple yet profound practice can significantly enhance your sense of balance and connection with your deeper Self.

Don't focus on the Sahasrara for an extended period of time!

It is important to remember that prolonged concentration on the crown of the head is not recommended in the initial stages of the spiritual path. We have explained that this method of concentration is only applicable after practicing 48 *Kriya* breaths.

The reason for this caution is that very powerful practices – such as those that stimulate the awakening of the *Kundalini* or bring unconscious

contents to light – can cause destabilization for those who haven't yet established a sufficient emotional, psychological, and energetic foundation. In the absence of balance, it's possible for negative moods, inner confusion, or subtle forms of discomfort to emerge.

It's important to comprehend that focusing solely on a single *Chakra* for a long time can affect the energetic system's overall balance. In general, *Kutastha*, heart (*Anahata*), and solar plexus (*Manipura*) centers are exceptions that can be used without much risk.

Signs not to ignore

If during *Kriya* practice you experience persistent feelings of mental heaviness, a “gray” mood, or a loss of vitality and joy, it's important to listen to these signs. It's possible that they suggest that the practice should be re-balanced with more harmonious techniques, like the three techniques just explained.

When practicing *yoga* with attention and awareness, it should never cause harm or bring discord. To the contrary, it is a route to ever more freedom, clarity, and well-being. The key is to move forward slowly, respectfully, and intelligently.

APPENDIX N.8 FINAL REFLECTION

After reading my book, numerous individuals contacted me to thank me or discuss their experiences. Replying to emails is something I happily do. When it comes to in-person meetings, I take precautions.

Those who have truly embarked on an inner journey may find it difficult to engage with those who are only driven by curiosity. It's natural to share, but it's essential to maintain the quality of the encounter.

It makes little sense to discuss spirituality without having practiced meditation, as spirituality can only be understood through direct experience. Sharing ideas with other seekers can be helpful, provided you don't expect any immediate or concrete benefits.

The natural setting for practicing is silence. It's common for people to believe that a conversation with someone following a mystical path is necessary for inner evolution, but this is often not the case. Sharing with a few genuine friends can be valuable, but only if they accompany a genuine choice to change their lifestyle.

If you truly come together, the core of the encounter can be summarized by a single piece of advice: “Practice what you've learned. Cultivate silence. Act without waiting for confirmation.”

Every sincere seeker must eventually face the challenge of walking alone. At that moment, all words are no longer necessary.

I am not interested in giving personal instructions. This book is a way for me to share my experience and introduce *Kriya Yoga*, which I consider an excellent method. My objective is to motivate the reader to implement what I have outlined in chapter 6 and, if necessary, in the subsequent chapters.

When I meet a seeker, I am incapable of handling the psychological or personal problems that anyone can face. Each person must confront them in a calm manner. I am not a psychologist, psychiatrist, or doctor. Many meetings could be pointless because of this reason.

It would be wonderful to be able to convey the significance of staying centered on the natural awareness of existence and interrupting the constant work of the mind! But it takes years to gain an understanding of how this can occur.

The mind is reminiscent of a small and fragile engine that is only useful for sustaining human life. Speaking involves keeping it going and allowing it to continue to produce fantasies, not reality.

Authentic spiritual experiences happen when the mind is completely quiet. Obtaining this state requires constant and gentle discipline, not intense effort concentrated over a few days.

The breath can act as a bridge to the inner Self and is one of the most effective paths to take. *Kriya Pranayama's* techniques help refine awareness until the breath dissolves, leaving space for a vast and living silence.

The *Kriya Yoga* tradition is known for its most profound insight. Those who have gone through it know that they no longer require many words: they have discovered the key and the path becomes clear.

The spiritual path ultimately culminates in a return to oneself. It does not require dogma, affiliations, or external performances. Sincerity and courage are all that is required. Silence is a threshold, not an empty space. If we approach each step with authenticity, we draw closer to the silent presence that has always been with us, waiting to be recognized.

GLOSSARY

This glossary provides a summary of key concepts that are relevant to the practice of Kriya Yoga. The explanations of terms aim to provide a clear and accessible understanding, regardless of whether or not the reader has prior experience.

Apana

According to the Yogic tradition, *Apana* is one of the five major energy currents (*Vayu*) that are present in the body. It is primarily involved in the lower abdominal region and involves the elimination and descent of vital energy processes. *Kriya Pranayama* involves drawing in energy from the outside and redirecting it towards the abdominal region, where it meets and unites with *Apana*, resulting in an energetic sublimation process.

Asana

Asana is the term for a 'stable body position' and is a key part of meditation practice. Patanjali emphasized the importance of *Asana* stability and comfort (*sthira sukham asanam*). The *half-lotus* position is a preferred position for many people in *Kriya Yoga* due to its ability to provide stability without causing excessive tension. For those with more advanced skills, *Siddhasana* is frequently viewed as the most beneficial posture because it promotes energetic awakening along the spine. Although *Padmasana* (full lotus position) is admired for its symbolic perfection, it is not always the right choice because it necessitates a high level of flexibility and may not be appropriate for everyone.

Aswini Mudra

Aswini Mudra involves rhythmic contraction of the muscles at the base of the spine, specifically the anal sphincter, at a rate of approximately two contractions per second. *Ashwa*, or horse, is the name used to describe the involuntary movement of the sphincter observed in horses after defecation. The power of this *Mudra* is that it activates and mobilizes stagnant energy that is located in the first *Chakra* (*Muladhara*), and it stimulates its ascent along the spine. It's essential to distinguish *Aswini Mudra* from *Mula Bandha*, as they affect similar areas but in distinct ways.

Bandhas

The flow of *Prana* within the body can be directed and contained through the energetic 'locks' or 'closures' called *Bandhas*. Their purpose is to prevent energy from being dispersed and direct it towards the spine and subtle centers. In order to achieve its full effectiveness, *Pranayama* requires the integration of *Bandhas*, which is essential. The three primary energetic locks, *Jalandhara Bandha*,

Uddiyana Bandha, and *Mula Bandha*, are used to store, boost, and refine vital energy in meditation practice.

Bhrumadhya

The third eye or *Kutastha*, or the sixth energy center or *Ajna Chakra*, is commonly known as the point between the eyebrows. This is regarded as a crucial point for inner perception and deep intuition in many yogic and meditative traditions.

Bindu

The *Bindu* is a subtle center located behind the head, which corresponds to the point where the hairline creates a small vortex. In some traditions, this point is known as *Sikha*, and Hindu ascetics guard it by keeping an intact lock of hair. Although the Bindu is not generally considered a *Chakra*, it is a vital part of spiritual practice, as it serves as a boundary between individual consciousness and higher levels of awareness, connected with the *Sahasrara*, which is the seventh energy center that is located at the head's crown.

Chakra

The term *Chakra*, which means 'wheel' or 'circle', is used to refer to the energy centers in the human body that connect the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of our being. The Tantric tradition believes that the *Chakras* are conscious expressions that progress through different levels of existence and culminate in the material reality represented by the *Muladhara*, the root *Chakra*. The base of the spine is where *Kundalini*, also known as latent energy, is found, which is a hidden spiritual potential. The objective of *Yoga* is to awaken and ascend this energy through the *Chakras*, which enables one to rediscover the subtle and spiritual dimension of life.

The Chakras are energy and symbolic phenomena, which cannot be scientifically 'proven' because they are not physical entities. Their description is based on ancient texts such as the *Ṣaṭ-Cakra-Nirūpaṇa* and the *Pādukā-Pañcaka*, systematized and made accessible to the West thanks to the studies of Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon) in his famous text *The Serpent Power*. However, the theoretical complexity of these texts has often led to misunderstandings or excessive elaborations, such as those found in some theosophical currents. The approach in *Kriya Yoga* is usually simplified, focusing on experiencing the *Chakras* directly through meditation and breathing, and avoiding abstract theories.

Kriya Yoga devotes special attention to the positioning of *Chakras* along the axis of the spinal column:

Muladhara is located at the base of the spine, near the coccyx.

Swadhisthana is located between the lower lumbar vertebrae and the sacrum.

Manipura is located below the navel, between the lower dorsal and first lumbar vertebrae.

Anahata is located in the heart region, in the center of the dorsal spine.

Vishuddha is situated at the junction of cervical and upper dorsal vertebrae in the throat region.

Ajna is located in the central part of the brain, connected to the point between the eyebrows (*Kutastha*) and the medulla Oblongata.

Sahasrara is located at the top of the head, in the fontanel area. This center is not simply a *Chakra* like other ones, it represents a higher state of consciousness, which is only accessible through deep and transcendent meditation.

The teachings are not meant to be dogmas or absolute truths, but rather **internal guides** that help the practitioner on their path to awareness. Their legitimacy depends on their direct personal experience and the gradual awakening of consciousness. Through silent and constant practice, these realities can become alive and transformative.

Some traditions, including some lineages of Kriya Yoga, also consider the so-called **Frontal Chakras**, which are the points corresponding to the front of the body:

1. Perineum
2. Genital region
3. Navel
4. Center of the sternum
5. Adam's apple
6. Point between the eyebrows

The primary idea is that mental concentration on these anterior points triggers energy in the respective posterior centers, which are aligned along the spine.

Dharana – Concentration

According to Patanjali's classical *yoga* system, *Dharana* is the act of mentally concentrating on a particular object, whether it is physical or abstract. *Kriya Yoga's* manifestation of *Dharana* is the focus of attention on subtle internal perceptions such as sound (*Omkar*), light, or sensations of movement. Deep perception is possible when the mind is calm and the breath slows down.

Dhyana – Deep Meditation

Patanjali believes that *Dhyana* is a state of constant and fluid meditation where the mind is absorbed in the essence of the object of concentration. In *Kriya Yoga*, *Dhyana* is the natural successor to *Dharana*: the consciousness, which has stabilized on the experience of *Omkar*, gradually enters a state of inner unity that leads to *Samadhi*, spiritual realization.

Flute-like sound (during Kriya Pranayama)

During *Kriya Pranayama*, a slight hissing sound naturally occurs in the throat. This sound becomes sharper and more subtle when the practitioner successfully performs *Kechari Mudra*. According to tradition, this sound is comparable to *Krishna's flute* and is described by master Lahiri Mahasaya as similar to “someone blowing through a keyhole.” The delicate and harmonious sound is both pleasing to the ear and beneficial for promoting deep concentration.

Breathing becomes more natural and prolonged due to its presence, facilitating continuity of practice.

Granthi – Energy Knots

The term *Granthi* means “knot” and is used to refer to specific points along the energy column, known as the *Sushumna Nadi*, that prevent the free flow of spiritual energy. According to tradition, there are three main Granthis:

- **Brahma Granthi** at the *Muladhara Chakra* (base of the spine)
- **Vishnu Granthi** at the heart (*Anahata Chakra*)
- **Rudra Granthi** between the eyebrows (*Ajna Chakra*)

Ida, *Pingala*, and *Sushumna* intersect at these points.

Lahiri Mahasaya also points out two additional significant obstacles: the tongue and the navel, which can be overcome using *Kechari Mudra* and *Navi Kriya*. The knot in the tongue is the factor that separates the practitioner from the higher center of the *Sahasrara*. The navel knot symbolically connects to the original trauma of physical separation at birth, through the cutting of the umbilical cord.

Guru – The Spiritual Guide

Many spiritual traditions place the Guru's role at the center of the path to Self-realization. The Guru is regarded not only as a teacher but also as a guide who assists the disciple on their inner journey. According to the scriptures, the “*Guru* is God, and God is the *Guru*.”

During the process of initiation (*Diksha*), the *Guru* conveys esoteric knowledge and techniques that pave the way for inner transformation for the disciple.

Lahiri Mahasaya presents a subtly different perspective on the role of the *Guru*. He declared, “*I am not the Guru. I do not want to interfere with the disciple's relationship with the true Guru, who is the Divine.*” He favored being perceived as a **mirror**, where the disciple could recognize their own potential spiritual fulfillment. In this approach, it is suggested that the true Master is within us, and the consistent practice of *Kriya Yoga* can reveal it.

The question arises: “Are *Kriya* techniques applicable outside of a direct relationship with a *Guru*?”

Numerous practitioners respond in affirmative, choosing to keep going with devotion despite the absence of physical guidance, depending on what they have received and internalized. In this way, faith and reason can coexist harmoniously.

Ida [see *Nadi*]

Jalandhara Bandha

Jalandhara Bandha is one of the three main “*Bandha*” or “energetic locks” used in *Yoga*. The procedure involves bending the chin towards the chest and maintaining a slight contraction in the neck and throat area. This technique

assists in regulating the flow of subtle energy and aids in promoting introspection during meditation or pranayama practice.

Japa – Sacred Repetition

Japa is a form of prayer or meditation that concentrates on continuously repeating a *mantra*, often the name of a deity or a sacred formula. The term stems from the Sanskrit root *Jap*, which means 'to whisper' or 'repeat internally'. A mantra can be devoid of any conceptual meaning. Vedic tradition holds that certain sounds are so filled with spiritual power that they can transform consciousness itself. It has been claimed that by repeating a *mantra* with concentration, human beings can activate their latent forces, much like how the splitting of an atom releases vast amounts of energy.

The term *mantra* is derived from *Manas* (mind) and *Tra* (protection), which is why it can be used to protect and stabilize the mind. Repeating can be done verbally, quietly, or internally. To keep track of repetitions without distracting the mind, many people use a *mala* (rosary of 108 or 100 beads). *Japa* practice can be conducted either in a meditative position or while walking, depending on one's preference and the circumstances. Using this method is both simple and powerful, it helps ground the mind in the present and cultivate a connection with the Divine.

Kechari Mudra

A traditional *yoga* practice called *Kechari Mudra* involves placing the tongue to touch a specific area on the palate. It can be done in two distinct ways:

- Pushing the tongue towards the uvula at the back of the soft palate.
- Inserting the tongue gently into the nasal cavity and trying to touch the nasal septum if possible.

Lahiri Mahasaya's teachings state that attaining this practice can be done naturally without using invasive methods like cutting the frenulum, but through specific preparatory exercises like *Talabya Kriya*.

The term *Kechari* can be translated as “someone who moves in the sky” or “in inner space.” The practice involves a profound internalization of consciousness, which is referred to as bypassing the mind's energy system. *Kechari Mudra* changes the flow of *Prana* (vital energy) by diverting it from being constantly involved in thoughts and encouraging **mental silence**. The mind, which is often agitated and dispersed, gradually approaches stillness and inner listening. When the mind is not present, discursive thought is replaced by deeper and quiet intuition.

We are unaware of the amount of energy we lose when we get lost in our thoughts and plans. *Kechari* turns this harmful practice of consuming all our vitality into its opposite. The mind begins to lose its despotic function: "inner activity" is now achieved through the development of intuition rather than

through the thinking process. It is significant when combined with *Kriya* to clarify one's complex psychological structures.

A theme often associated with *Kechari Mudra* is the experience of the so-called "nectar" or *Amrita* – a sweet-tasting fluid perceived by the tip of the tongue when it touches the uvula or a distinct bone prominence on the palate located below the pituitary gland. *Yoga* tradition states that a *nadi* (energy channel) passes through the center of the tongue. When activated, it transmits subtle impulses to the *Ajna Chakra*, the energy center situated in the brain and linked to intuition and higher perception.

Kevala Kumbhaka – The Breathless State

The term *Kevala Kumbhaka* refers to a profound state of *yoga* practice in which breathing ceases spontaneously, without any voluntary effort. This is not a repressed breathing, but rather a natural phenomenon that occurs when the mind is completely calm and the vital energy is absorbed. The body's support is provided by a more subtle flow of energy, so breathing in its usual form is no longer necessary in this state. The mind temporarily dissolves, giving access to a vast and silent inner space.

Kriya Yoga

Kriya Yoga is a spiritual discipline that uses tools found in various forms in the world's great mystical traditions. The foundation of it comes from the change in the breath, which begins as physical and gross and gradually becomes more subtle, elongated, and eventually imperceptible.

Upon the cessation of internal and external movement, the practitioner receives a current of fresh and regenerating energy flowing through every cell of the body. *Kevala Kumbhaka*, or spontaneous absence of breath, can be manifested in this state.

This process is also called “*internalization of the breath*” and is often accompanied by the perception of crossing a threshold, entering a space of vastness and silence. Those who practice regularly can experience this state as an authentic spiritual experience, with a profound and transformative beauty.

Kumbhaka – Breath Retention

Kumbhaka, or the conscious holding of one's breath, is a fundamental aspect of *Pranayama* (breath discipline). Many traditional teachers believe that a *Pranayama* exercise cannot be complete without *Kumbhaka*.

Four main types of *Kumbhaka* are described in ancient scriptures:

1. **Bahir Kumbhaka** (external): holding the breath after a complete exhalation.
2. **Antar Kumbhaka** (internal): holding the breath after a deep inhalation, often accompanied by the three *Bandhas* (energetic locks).
3. **Kumbhaka** in alternate breathing: as in the practice of *Nadi Sodhana*, in

which one inhales through one nostril, holds the breath, and exhales through the other.

4. **Kevala Kumbhaka**: the highest state, in which breathing stops spontaneously, without any forcing or desire to breathe.

The four types of *Kumbhaka* are present in different ways in the practice of *Kriya Yoga*

- The first type is characterized by prolonged exhalations that culminate in a deep calm.
- *Yoni Mudra*, *Maha Mudra*, and *Thokar* are among the various techniques where the second type is present.
- During certain phases of *Maha Mudra*, the third principle is implicitly included, aimed at maintaining an energetic balance between the two sides of the spine.
- The fourth type, *Kevala Kumbhaka*, is a significant milestone in the journey of *Kriya*, a time when the practice transcends body and mind.

Kundalini

Kundalini, or 'coiled', is a Sanskrit term that symbolically represents potential energy, which is depicted as a dormant serpent coiled at the base of the spine, in the energy center known as the *Muladhara Chakra*. This image accurately depicts the latent and powerful nature of this energy, which is hidden beneath the ordinary levels of consciousness and waiting to be awakened.

According to numerous yogic and spiritual traditions, *Kundalini*'s awakening can be accomplished by maintaining internal discipline, but also by experiencing profound life experiences. Upon awakening, the energy initiates an upward journey through the central channel (*Sushumna Nadi*), traversing and activating the various chakras until it reaches the *Sahasrara*, the center at the crown of the head, where it is said to bring states of bliss, expanded awareness, or spiritual realization.

The *Kundalini* concept provides a powerful framework for comprehending the profound transformations that can take place on the spiritual path. Despite different languages and symbols, many traditions acknowledge the existence of a similar transformative energy, but do not always explicitly explain its details. Contrary to certain idealized representations, the awakening of the *Kundalini* doesn't have to be a pleasant or delicate experience. The experience can be intensely overwhelming, resembling an internal explosion or a rocket shooting through the spine. The individual may experience intense vulnerability or disorientation during authentic awakening episodes where the ego is temporarily set aside. If the individual is prepared, this process is generally absorbed with harmony.

Unfortunately, pursuing extraordinary experiences can result in practices that are disordered, unbalanced, or disconnected from authentic spiritual intent. The risk of premature awakening is clearly mentioned in traditional texts: the body, mind, and consciousness need to be well-prepared through purification, meditation, and a balanced life. It's easy for the ego to take over these concepts, causing some practitioners to underestimate the risks and pursue sensations instead of genuine inner transformations. *Kriya Yoga* sees *Kundalini* as a subtle life force that permeates the entire body, not just as an energy located in the *Muladhara*. It's best not to stress the concept of 'awakening' as a distinct or unrelated event in this context. *Kundalini* is the most pure and subtle aspect of our consciousness, and it's not something you can acquire, but something that needs to be recognized and integrated.

Kutastha

The center of the eyebrows (*Ajna Chakra*) is where *Kutastha Chaitanya*, commonly known as the 'third eye,' is located, and it is where we perceive immutable consciousness. During deep meditation, many practitioners report experiencing forms of spiritual light through this inner eye. The meditative process can start with observing a hazy darkness that gradually transitions to a faint luminosity, intermittent flashes, or vivid colors. There is a report of seeing a shape that consists of a golden ring, a blue area, and a bright white dot in the center; this is one of the traditional depictions of the spiritual eye.

There is a subtle link between *Kutastha* and *Muladhara*. The space between the eyebrows can be interpreted as the projection of the entrance door to the spinal canal – the path through which energy ascends. Some teachings state that a stable vision of this inner center is a necessary prerequisite for the advanced stages of *Kriya*; others hold that the desired state is characterized by a complete calm of energy at the base of the spine. In essence, these two conditions are equivalent: inner vision and energetic stability are both aspects of the same realization.

Maha Mudra

The combination of a stretching position (similar to controlled stretching) and the three main *Bandhas* (energetic locks) is what *Maha Mudra* is all about in *Hatha Yoga* and *Kriya Yoga*. Although it appears simple, this practice is highly effective in harmonizing the energy system, purifying the subtle channels (nadis), and encouraging the upward flow of energy. *Maha Mudra* has multiple functions, including stimulating the spine, toning internal organs, balancing the nervous system, and helping the mind focus. This is why it is often considered one of the essential techniques in the *Kriya Yoga* path.

Mahasamadhi

The term *Mahasamadhi* is used in Sanskrit to indicate the conscious departure from the physical body, typically at the moment of death, by someone who has reached full spiritual realization. In this context, death is not considered an end,

but rather a final act of union with the Absolute, carried out with complete consciousness.

A common testimony is the one of *Swami Pranabananda*, a disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya, who, according to certain sources, left his physical body knowingly using an advanced *Kriya Yoga* technique. He experienced no physical harm during his passage, which was said to be perfectly synchronized with the laws of his *karma*. The question is raised: what was the method used to accomplish this feat?

Numerous hypotheses have been proposed:

Some believe that *Pranabananda* utilized an advanced form of *Thokar*, or *Second Kriya*. He is said to have had the ability to consciously interrupt cardiac activity, directing vital energy with great mental power until it stopped the heart's movement. This view holds that it was not a violent act, but rather a form of profound control over the energetic system.

According to some, *Mahasamadhi* was only possible through a deep meditative immersion in the *Kutastha*, the point of spiritual consciousness situated between the eyebrows. The way to leave the body in this situation would have been through total absorption in the light of divine consciousness, not through physical action. Testimonies indicate that no movement was observed in his body or head, as in other cases of great masters who left the body in a meditative state.

In a more general perspective, *Mahasamadhi* is not a trick to die conscious, but rather a final expression of a long-lasting familiarity with the state of *Samadhi*, or complete absorption in divine consciousness. The heart can calm and the consciousness can free itself from the body when inner peace is perfect and the attraction to the Supreme Source is complete.

Spiritual maturity and the continuity of the meditative state are the key factors in all these visions. *Mahasamadhi* is not just a technical act but rather the culmination of a long journey to unite with the Self.

Mantra (see Japa)

A *mantra* is a sacred formula, a word, sound, or phrase that can be repeated with concentration (*japa*) to calm the mind, elevate consciousness, and awaken spiritual energy. Each *mantra*'s vibration has a unique effect on the subtle body and mental field of the practitioner.

Mental Pranayama

The practitioner, known as a *kriyaban* in *Kriya Yoga*, focuses their attention and vital energy (*Prana*) within the body in *mental pranayama*, ignoring the physical breath. At this advanced level of practice, breathing slows down to almost nonexistent, while awareness is focused on the energy centers (*Chakras*) and their internal manifestations on the spine and in front of the body.

The mind lingers on every *Chakra*, noticing both its deep component in the spinal cord and its frontal counterpart, until you experience a tangible sensation of subtle energy that radiates freshness, vitality, and support from within.

This meditation results in a state of profound stillness: the body remains still, movements cease, and the mind remains calm. During the most intense moments, the breath becomes invisible, causing the practitioner to have a clear awareness of being beyond ordinary breathing, and it is supported solely by *Prana*.

The purpose of this technique is not just to feel the *Chakras*, but to awaken a subtle intelligence within them that can transform the entire psycho-energetic structure of the human being. The Self is explored through a profound meditation, with each center becoming a gateway to a higher realm of consciousness.

Mula Bandha

Mula Bandha, also known as the 'root lock', is a *yogic* practice that involves a gentle contraction of the muscles of the perineum – the area separating the anus and the genitals – conscious mental pressure on the base of the spine is present. *Aswini Mudra*, which involves repetitive contractions of the anal sphincter, is not the same as this technique. *Mula Bandha*'s action is more refined, with an upward closing feeling, as if the pelvic floor was being lifted internally. This effect can be intensified by gently moving the pubic area upwards, engaging the pelvic diaphragm.

The flow of the *Apana* life current, which usually moves downward, is reversed by *Mula Bandha* at an energetic level. *Apana* is guided upwards by conscious contraction until it reunites with *Prana* in the navel region. This union is able to boost the flow of energy through the central *Sushumna* channel, which allows for the overcoming of the energetic duality represented by the lateral *Ida* and *Pingala* channels. Many *yogic* practices consider *Mula Bandha* to be essential in stabilizing the mind, awakening latent energy, and supporting deep meditation.

Nada Yoga

The path of union through inner sound is what *Nada Yoga* is all about. This form of *yoga*, which is also known as *Surat Shabda Yoga* in other traditions, is founded on the practice of directly hearing the subtle vibrations that spontaneously arise from the depths of consciousness. This practice is not intellectual or symbolic, but rather experiential meditation, accessible to anyone who is willing to listen silently.

It is believed that, on the mystical path, every seeker, regardless of their level of preparation or personal beliefs, soon or later encounters the manifestation of inner sound. The experience is universal, accessible, and often deeply satisfying, even for those who are not familiar with the theory behind it.

Sitting in a comfortable, stable position and gently closing your ears with your fingers, such as in the *Shanmukhi Mudra* position, is a practical approach. In this state, one directs their attention not to external sounds, but to the subtle ones that emerge from inner silence. To maintain focus, it may be beneficial to accompany this attention with the repetition of a chosen *mantra*.

Consistent practice leads to the refinement of listening. At first, one may perceive simple or physiological sounds (like the heartbeat or the flow of blood) but as one moves on, subtler levels are accessed, such as astral or internal sounds that have been traditionally identified as the buzzing of a bumblebee, the sound of a flute, a harp, a drum, or the murmur of distant thunder.

The sounds are not fabricated: some are real energetic manifestations that emerge from the subtle body, while others are even deeper vibrations that transcend the physical senses.

As practice progresses, the mind becomes quieter and more sensitive, until it reaches the primordial sound known as *Om*. Different traditions describe this cosmic sound as a continuous flow, similar to an infinite vibration. Lahiri Mahasaya compared it to the rhythmic tapping of many individuals on a large metal disc, with a constant, flowing sound reminiscent of oil dripping from a container.

Nada Yoga emphasizes that this sound is not just a physical phenomenon, but a means to connect the mind with the supreme reality. When listening becomes purely and silent, it becomes vision, presence, and ultimately union with the eternal

Nadis

According to *yoga* theory, *nadis* are the subtle channels that carry life energy (*Prana*) throughout the subtle body. Although there are many, three are considered to be the most important:

Ida, associated with lunar energy, is receptive and intuitive in nature. It flows along the left side of the spine.

Pingala, connected to solar energy, is active and dynamic, flowing along the right side.

Sushumna, or the central channel, is known as the pathway to balance and integration and is said to lead to the transcendence of duality.

Inner evolution and spiritual awakening are attributed to the correct flow of energy through these channels.

Nadi Sodhana

Also known as *alternate nostril breathing*, it is a *Pranayama* exercise aimed at purifying the *nadis*. Although it's not a direct part of the *Kriya Yoga* tradition, it's often included in daily practice due to its benefits, which include mental calm,

emotional balance, and inner clarity. When practiced in the morning, it is particularly effective as preparation for meditation or other advanced techniques.

Navi Kriya

A technique that is associated with contemplative practices in *Kriya Yoga*. The focus is on the navel, which is connected to the *Samana* current and is responsible for balancing vital forces. The practice involves focusing on breathing and gradually dissolving the rhythm of inhalation and exhalation into a state of inner balance. *Navi Kriya* has the potential to be both a preparatory tool for *Pranayama* and a valuable tool to complement it.

Nei Dan – Taoist Tradition (Inner Alchemy)

In ancient China, inner alchemy was a spiritual and meditative discipline known as *Nei Dan*. The method of energetic transformation and awareness that is depicted is very similar to the one proposed at the *first level of Kriya Yoga* in terms of structure and purpose. The similarities between the two traditions suggest a potential connection or at least an evolutionary convergence in the methods of inner awakening. In Chapter 12, there is a more detailed comparison presented.

New Age

Often, the term '*New Age*' is associated with the notion that our solar system has entered a new astrological era, called Aquarius. The New Age sensibility is characterized by a growing perception of a wider, "planetary" reality, in which humanity appears to be moving toward a more unified consciousness, beyond this symbolic origin.

Leading scientists, psychologists, and researchers have influenced this vision in some way. The discoveries of modern physics, the development of alternative medicine, and the exploration of the deep psyche and spirituality seem to converge towards a common intuition: the universe, body, mind, and spirit are profoundly interconnected.

This direction was taken significantly by human thought during the twentieth century. We have good grounds to think that this phase will be examined with the same level of interest and respect as we observe eras like Humanism, the Renaissance, or the Enlightenment in the future.

When we talk about New Age 'manias' in this context, we mean a tendency to arbitrarily utilize alternative remedies, sometimes without real discernment, or to superficially adopt esoteric theories, reducing their original depth. Recognizing between genuine intuitions and naive or commercial deviations is crucial.

Omkar

Omkar is used to describe *Om*, the primordial vibration and the Divine Reality that permeates and sustains everything in the universe. Sound, light, and inner movement are the ways in which this vibration is manifested. In a wider sense, *Omkar* can refer to any practice or process that fosters contact with this subtle

reality. These practices in *yoga* assist in awakening and refining our inner perception, leading us to a deeper understanding of the unity between human beings and the cosmos.

Paravastha

The concept of *Paravastha* is closely connected with *Sthir Tattwa*, or inner peace. The term, coined by master Lahiri Mahasaya, explains a state of consciousness that is a natural extension of the practice of *Kriya Yoga*.

This state is more than just peace or joy, it's also a state of vital and regenerating balance. During the early stages of practice, one can encounter moments of profound harmony and stillness, which sometimes go beyond meditation. The stabilization of true *Paravastha* is achieved through years of disciplined practice, when the state of breathlessness (*Kevala Kumbhaka*) becomes natural and familiar. Inner calmness no longer needs to be sought after; it is a constant background to everyday life. In that state, a glimpse of ultimate freedom is present, providing strength and clarity even during the most challenging moments of life.

Pingala – See entry: Nadis

Prana

Prana is the life-giving energy that animates all living beings and ties the body to the mind and consciousness. *Prana* in *Yoga* is divided into five main currents (*Vayus*) that perform a specific function.

Prana, which is located in the chest, is connected to breathing and the absorption of energy.

Apana is the one who presides over the processes of elimination and grounding in the lower abdomen.

Samana is responsible for balancing and harmonizing energy in the navel area.

Udana's role in the head and throat is to support expression, awareness, and spiritual growth.

Vyana, which is distributed throughout the body (including the limbs), is responsible for regulating circulation and general coordination.

Even though *Prana* is used to refer to both energy in a general sense and one of its specific manifestations, the context always helps to clarify the meaning.

At the beginning of *Kriya Pranayama*, *Prana*, *Apana*, and *Samana* are the most important aspects. One can get in touch with *Udana* by utilizing techniques like *Shambhavi Mudra* or *Mental Pranayama*. Techniques such as *Maha Mudra*, and in particular the experience of suspended breath, gradually reveal the subtle and regenerative qualities of *Vyana*.

Pranayama

Pranayama is made up of two Sanskrit words: *Prana*, which signifies the life force or subtle energy that permeates the universe and sustains all life forms, and

Ayama, which refers to either expansion or control. These roots allow for *Pranayama* to be interpreted as an expansion of *Prana* and as control of *Prana*. The two meanings are complementary as the practitioner learns to regulate and amplify the flow of vital energy in both the body and mind through specific breathing techniques.

Pranayama is more than just regulating the breath. It is a discipline that prepares the psycho-physical system for deep meditation, harmonizes vital processes, and gradually awakens the perception of the inner dimension. Even *Pranayama*'s basic practices, which don't necessarily require a direct perception of energy on the spine, can lead to intense and transformative experiences. Certain practitioners report feeling energy moving through the body along the central axis. Such experiences can be used as a first authentic contact with spiritual reality, inspiring a sincere desire for inner practice.

In *Kriya Pranayama*, inner attention and breathing are coordinated consciously and move along the spine. Slow and deep breathing happens while consciousness moves through the six main *Chakras*, along with the movement of vital energy. As the practice deepens, energy flows into the central channel (*Sushumna Nadi*). At more advanced levels, it can sustain the inner state even in the absence of physical breathing. When this happens consistently and naturally, *Pranayama* is deemed to have achieved its ultimate goal: the unification of consciousness with the most profound spiritual dimension.

Samadhi

As per *Ashtanga Yoga* from Patanjali, the final and highest state of meditation is where the meditator attains complete union with the object of their contemplation. The practitioner can enter *Samadhi* as a state of deep absorption, free from duality, after achieving concentration (*Dharana*) and steady meditation (*Dhyana*).

Samadhi extends beyond the mere perfection of meditation. This is an experience that goes beyond the normal mind, akin to a temporary suspension of the senses and the ego. At times, it is compared to a 'mystical death' that occurs without any trauma and is actually filled with bliss and clarity.

Consciousness can reach a higher level of perception during *Samadhi*, where ordinary thought structures are transcended. By integrating this awareness into everyday life, every aspect of existence is transformed. *Samadhi*'s direct experience represents a genuine and profound realization of the spiritual path, and provides a strong basis for living ethically, centered, and harmoniously.

Sikhism

Guru Nanak, the founder of *Sikhism*, founded the monotheistic religion in India in the 15th century and it was developed by nine later gurus. At present, it is the fifth most widespread organized religion in the world. The view of God as a non-anthropomorphic reality is one of its distinctive qualities: the Divine is not

depicted as a human being, but rather as a universal, impersonal, and omnipresent Being.

According to this viewpoint, God can be viewed as coinciding with the Universe itself or as the Consciousness that permeates all things. *Sikhism* encourages an active spiritual life that involves meditating on the Divine Name (*Naam*), serving others without self-interest, and promoting social justice through a daily devotional practice.

Sushumna

In *yoga* tradition, the *Sushumna Nadi* is seen as the primary energy channel. It passes through the spine axis, moving from the *Muladhara* (root *Chakra*) to the *Sahasrara* (crown *Chakra*). According to tradition, spiritual energy (*Kundalini*) ascends through this channel during deeper meditative practices.

Talabya Kriya

The practice of *Talabya Kriya* is designed to lengthen the tongue and frenulum and is a prerequisite for *Kechari Mudra*, which is an advanced technique where the tongue is drawn towards the nasal cavity. This exercise is both calming and stabilizing for the mind and thoughts. *Talabya Kriya* practice remains useful even after *Kechari Mudra* is fully achieved and when one needs to quickly restore a state of concentration and inner calm.

Thokar

Thokar is a *Kriya Yoga* technique in which *Prana* is consciously directed towards specific *Chakras* through a specific head movement, accompanied by visualization. Comparative research suggests that this practice is similar to the *Dhikr* of *Sufi* mystics, a set of devotional techniques designed to achieve conscious presence and connection with the divine. Lahiri Mahasaya's teachings state that *Thokar* is a refined blend of spiritual techniques that transcend cultures and traditions.

Tribhangamurari

The *Kriya Yoga* tradition describes a inner path called *Tribhangamurari* (which can be translated as 'the three-curved form') This subtle trajectory can be perceived during deep meditation, particularly after practicing *Kriya Pranayama*.

Lahiri Mahasaya portrayed this form with great accuracy. Starting at *Bindu* point, the path rises slightly to the left before descending down the right side of the body. At a specific spot in the back, it curves again to the left, passes over the heart region where the '*Vishnu knot*' is situated, and eventually descends towards the coccyx in the direction of the '*Brahma knot*.'

Tummo

Tummo is a practice from the Tibetan tradition that is not related to Lahiri Mahasaya's lineage but is still highly effective for inner work. Conscious activation of the energy center known as *Dantian*, located in the abdominal

region is the basis of it. The mental presence in this area increases, resulting in a profound state of calm and stability for the psycho-physical system. Practicing regularly can result in states of meditative absorption. Through this technique, the body can be used as an instrument directly for the transformation of consciousness.

Uddiyana Bandha

The yogic technique known as *Uddiyana Bandha* is a technique that is usually performed after exhalation. In *Kriya Yoga*, it can be employed during inhalation, particularly during techniques similar to *Maha Mudra*, *Navi Kriya*, and *Yoni Mudra*.

To perform it while breathing out, it can be combined with the use of *Jalandhara Bandha* (throat lock). The inhalation is simulated without allowing any air to enter while the abdomen is pulled in. In the version that allows inhalation, the abdominal muscles are held down to increase the sensation of energy in the *Manipura Chakra*. The energetic system is powerfully affected by this practice, which stimulates vitality and inner centering.

Yama and Niyama

The ethical principles of *Yama* and *Niyama* (observances) are the foundation for the spiritual path in the *Ashtanga Yoga* system, which is the eight limbs of *Yoga*.

Yama is the practice of non-violence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-theft (*asteya*), continence (*brahmacharya*), and non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*).

Niyama includes purity (*shaucha*), contentment (*santosha*), discipline (*tapas*), study of the Self (*svadhyaya*), and devotion to the Divine (*Ishvarapranidhana*).

In some traditions, these precepts are necessary before receiving initiation. An alternate – and equally valid – approach views *Yama* and *Niyama* as fruits that ripen naturally through authentic meditative practice. From this perspective, ethical transformation stems from direct experience, not from being forced to follow rules. Self-study or non-attachment concepts may initially be abstract. These qualities emerge spontaneously, becoming real in daily life through sincere and continuous practice.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* are regarded as one of the primary texts for *yoga* philosophy. *Raja Yoga*'s theoretical foundation is provided by its 195 aphorisms, which offer a profound synthesis of meditative practices and analysis of the mind.

The path that has been outlined is *Ashtanga Yoga*, which encompasses the eight limbs: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*.

The first five are based on ethical, physical, and energetic foundations, while the last three lead the mind towards concentration, meditation, and eventual ecstatic

union with the Self. In addition, the text explores concepts like *Karma*, *Samskara* (mental impressions), and *Purusha* (pure consciousness).

Although sometimes called 'the father of *Yoga*,' Patanjali is more accurately referred to as the one who created a synthesis of pre-existing yogic traditions. In his work, he balances spirituality and rationality, theism and non-theism, without being dogmatic. The essence of his teachings lies in practice, and his highest aspiration is directed towards *Ishvara*, the divine principle, by meditating on the sacred sound of *Om*.

Yoni Mudra

The path of *Kriya Yoga* includes *Yoni Mudra* which is considered one of the most advanced techniques. The purpose is to direct vital energy towards *Kutastha* (the point between the eyebrows), which symbolizes where individual consciousness begins and ends.

By using hand gestures, calming the breath, and maintaining internal attention, sensory closure can be achieved through the technique. When executed in a state of deep relaxation, it can create an intense and ecstatic experience that affects the whole being. Some schools place more emphasis on inner light perception, while others emphasize mental silence or activating *Chakras* through visualization. In every circumstance, the direction is always to return to the inner source.

Yoni, the name that means 'womb', symbolizes the complete separation of the senses from the external world: like a child in a womb, the practitioner is completely focused on themselves.

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