

# On Antharanga Sadhana

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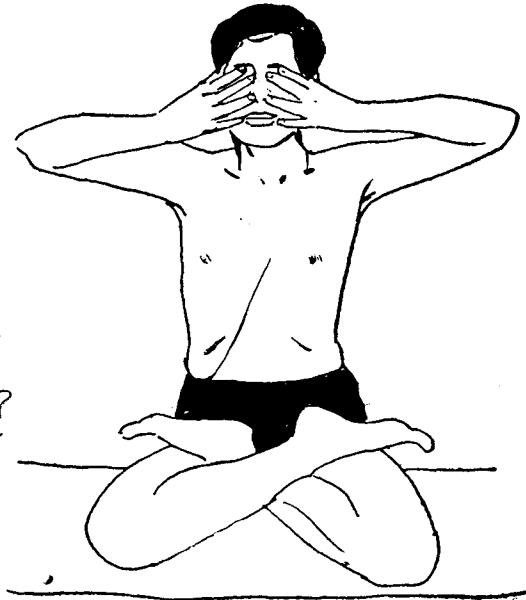
In the previous issues many groups of Yogasanas and Pranayamas have been explained and benefits indicated. While these practices according to Hathayoga-give many physical and physiological benefits, Patanjali would urge the aspirants to go beyond and work towards the transformation of the mind (chittaparinama) itself. This practice known as Antharanga Sadhana helps at qualitative and permanent changes in the chitta by means of practice; these increase and strengthen the habits (samskaras) of nirodha, samadhi, and ekagraha, successively to the exclusion of the distracted (vyuthitha) samskaras.

## GO FURTHER

Pranayama helps to reduce the painful and distracting tendencies of chitta when it tends to become predominantly sathwic. Such a mind also becomes capable of concentrating and holding on to subtle objects.

Many of us stop with asanas and Pranayama. While these by themselves give rise

to many benefits as a healthy frame, sufficient mental clarity to carry on the day to day work, - the psychological experiences and ultimate spiritual experience require further rigorous practice. Since we normally go back to the normal way of life after the two aspects of sadhana, the senses continue to distract the mind. Alternating between



yogabhyasa of the rudimentary kind and sensual activities, we wonder about the real efficacies of Yogasadhana.

Pratyahara, the fifth anga of yoga is to help prevent this slide back. Antagonist to further yogabhyasa is the indulgence through the sensual objects which lead again to passion and delusion. Having practised yama, niyama, asana and pranayama to achieve mental clarity, the indriyas' influence on the mind greatly reduces. When that happens, there is a better awareness of the spotless satwic aspect of chitta and the indriyas also become satwic. Hence they, as it were, merge with the chitta Satwa. That is, as the chitta is given other subtler Tatwas, the indriyas do not cause any interference.

### SHANMUKHI MUDRA HELPS

Pratyahara, some people aver, is an effect of Asana and Pranayama, while some say it is also a specific practice. Shanmukhimudra, a simple exercise mentioned in February 1978 issue helps strengthen the Pratyahara habit. But a fundamental decision about what object or Tattwa should be contemplated upon by the now free satwic chitta, should be made. Here there are as many views as there are schools. For instance Hathayogis refer to nadanusandhana or listening to the Anahata (that which literally means that sound produced without rubbing of two objects) made possible by Shanmukhimudra and this should be attempted.

The third chapter of Patanjala yoga is devoted exclusively to describe the technique of concentration, the tatwas to be concentrated and the benefits or siddhis that accrue to the abhyasi.

The technique itself consists of three stages, but put as one is called Samyama or

antaranga sadhana. The three parts, viz. Dharana, dhyana and samadhi are only different discernable stages each succeeding the other.

In the first chapter of Patanjala yoga, samadhi in its various ramifications are detailed. In the second, the prerequisite practises to make the mind fit for Dharana are described. In the third chapter to create interest and also for those so inclined, certain siddhis are described and the means of such attainments.

Going back to the question of what should be the object for contemplation, the Rshi is delightfully vague in this, mainly to accommodate the various classes of antaranga abhyasis - whether he be a devotee, religious person, Bhairagi gnani or a siddha. However, the commentators and the puranas have some specific guidelines.

Even though by means of the yama to Pratyahara, the basic defilement of restlessness of the chitta is greatly reduced, since the chitta is basically wandering and unsteady (Manaschanchalam Asthiram), without conjoining with an object, it does not become steady and hence the need for support of an object (Aasraya).

### SUBHASHRAYA

But we have excluded, by means of Bahirangasadhana those contacts which produce painful bondage. It is now necessary to find the support (ashraya) of that object (a form, a thought, a feeling) which without being the cause of a slide back to bondage, would progressively lead the abhyasi to Kaivalya (there are very many names given to this ultimate state of chitta), through stages of superior enlightenment.

Such an object is termed as subhasraya. It the mind, contacting an object, by which

does not suffer restlessness and subsequent bondage (Bandha), that object or support is known as subhasraya. This subhasraya is of two kinds. Bahya and Aantara.

It has been the practice to start with Bahya dharana. To focus the mind on the charming Murti of the Lord, made of panchaloha and as per the Agamas fortified by the mantra is Bahya dharana. However, when a devotee by repeated practice has the chittavirithi of the enchanting form of the Lord, even without the aid of the vigraha, then it becomes Antardharana. Bhakti is not merely unrestrained emotion of Love, but the channelising the chitta towards the divya form of Lord so that the Bhakta has it always in his chitta to the exclusion of all other thoughts or Vrithis.

#### OTHER KINDS OF DHARANA

The yogis, however, suggest other kinds of Anthardharana which will be helpful equally to Bhaktas, gnanis, dharmis and Bairagis. To focus attention, as taught by a learned preceptors, on such 'centres in the Body as naval (Nabhi chakra), heart region (hridaya pundarika) sahasrara, nasagra, jihvaagra, Bhrumadhya is also anthara dharana, which when developed to dhyana and samadhi leads to various siddhis.

Praanaayama Pavanam  
Pratyahaarena cha Indriyam  
Vasikritya Tatah kuryaath  
Tatstanaam Subhaasraye.

Having brought under control the neurological forces by Praanaayama, the senses by Pratyahaara, one should resort to contemplation on a peaceful principle for mental stability. According to Vishnupuranam, Antardharana is firmly fixing the enchanting form of the Lord in one's mind and this practice of dharana should be done until dhyana takes place. Srimad Bhagavatarm and many other Puranas also detail this practice.

The difference between dharana, dhyana and samadhi are subtle, but have however been described in yogic texts and also the Puranas. When the chitta having taken to a Subha object, continues to remain submerged in the vrithi without a switch to another, that state of the mind is called dhyana vrithi. Even though dharana is also a chitta vrithi on one object, there is considerable effort in warding off other intruding objective vrithis. In dhyana, without effort the mind stays with the object, effortlessly, According to Vishnu Purana :

Tadrupe Pratyayaikaagra Santatischa Arya nispunha  
Tad dhyenaihi Prathamairangaihi Shadbbihi Nishpad-  
yate nripa.

However in dhyana, the distinction between the meditator (dhyata) and the object of meditation (dhyeyam) remains.

In Samadhi, or more specifically the sampragnata or sabija samadhi, when the distinction between the dhyata and dhyeya vanish and only the object shines in its full glory, then it is samadhi. The technical term used by yogis for antaranga sadhana is samyama.

#### CAN BE CHANGED BY PRACTICE

One more pertinent observation may be made. The Antaranga sadhana produces its own changes in the chitta, it is said chitta is but the remainder of previous samskaras (Samskara sesham hi chittam); thus powerful samskara replace weak samskara (Prabalena durbalasya Badaha), which observation is common knowledge.

Due to repeated sensual experiences our chitta hss the samskaras of outgoing (vikshipta). Due to vasanas of them people repeatedly go for such experiences. Further a strengthening such samskaras also takes place by repeated indulgence. But it is possible to change it by practice, which is

detailed in the science of yoga. The Antaranga sadhana produces mutations in the brain. The Vyuthitha chitta full of outgoing samskaras is replaced by nirodha samskara, which is to refuse to respond to external stimuli. Then the samyama produces a samadhi parinama or the mental transformation to remain in one object, to the exclusion of all other chittavrithis including the feeling of separate individual identity. When this is continued, the chitta becomes completely transformed to being with one vritti only which is Ekagrata parinama. When such chitta parinama takes place, just as it is difficult to make the Vyuthitha or wandering chitta to even start on yoga, when this final sabija samadhi is achieved, the chitta transformation becomes so complete it is equally difficult to make such a concentrating mind to be disturbed. The Upanisads, puranas, smirti eulogize such states. It is the contention of yoga, that such stages are possible and are mechanical processes attainable by right practice and by practice alone.

## ANTARDHARANA

Vyasa commentary on Patanjala yoga refers to a number of places or objects for such samyama, each one leading to its own siddhis and supernormal powers and possession. Every chitta has the capacity for such transformation, and such accomplishments.

It is said that by samyama on the distinction between word (sabda), the object referred by the word (artha) and the formation in the mind (pratyaya) one can understand the language of all species. By samyama or deep concentration on the basic tendencies of an individual (samskara), one can understand one's previous birth. Then samyama on the moods (Prathyaya), mind reading becomes possible.

By developing tendencies of friendship, compassion, satisfaction and indifference to

persons who are respectively contented, suffering, righteous, and unlawful to the extent of samyama—one acquires enormous mental strength. And samyama on the principle of light known as jyotishmati vritti, the range of vision increases to long distances and fine objects.

By samyama on the sun, knowledge of universe dawns. On chandra, if one does yogic sadhana, knowledge of the galaxies become known. The polar star, samyama on which provides the key for the motion of the stars and the galaxies.

## INTERNAL SIDDHIS

Nearer home, within oneself, by samyama on naval region (Nabhichakra) one gets to know about one's anatomy (kayavyuha). Concentration on the inside of the throat (near the glottis) leads to control of the physiological functions, thirst and hunger. A nadi called Kurma is identified as the bronchial area. Concentrating on that, steadiness of mind (breath) accrues. By samyama on Brahmastrandhra, one communicates with siddhapurushas.

## PRAATIBHA

Then certain people have intuitive knowledge. All have it but in some it is more manifest and frequently so. It is called Praatibha, which is indicative. By concentrating and developing this intuitive power, everything comes to be known. By concentrating on one's own heart region, as described in such vidyas as Dahara vidya, one understands one's own mind.

The Chitta is of Trigunas, but the purusha is pure consciousness. By concentrating on this distinction one gets to know the real nature of one's own self.

The samyamas referred to so far are on specific principles leading to various know-

ledge (sampragnata). It can go upto realizing the nature of Jivatma. There are other yogic feats possible which are due to channelising the active sakti. (kriya rupa sakti). However Srimad Bhagawata catalogues siddhis in a different way, but always with Bhakhi towards the Lord.

Chitta by nature has the capacity for subtlety, but due to the particular dharmadharma of individuals is confined to one's body. The above samyamas help to slacken the knots (granthi) that cause the bondage. Hence these yogic exercises literally remove all restrictions of the Prakriti and the mind knows the means to transcend such physical restrictions, and enter into other bodies. The para sarira avesha is seen to be achieved by many even in the present day.

### BHUTA SIDDHIS

Just as the senses act in external matters the five vaayus, are the causes of the abhyamantra vrithi or the physiological activities, such as respiration, circulation etc.

By the mastery of a vayu, called udaana one is able to fly like a hovercraft over water thorns and marshy land. One becomes lustrous as the devas with the conquest and voluntary control of samaana. Samyama on ear which is a Sattwic evolution of ahankara principle and the Tamasic evolution of Ahankara which is space (Akasa) and their relationship (which is sound) one can hear the subtlest sound. Such hearing is called Divya srothram. It may be extended to other Indriyas, by concentration on corresponding karana. Buta and Tanmaatras Other siddhis include levitation, animadhisiddhis, grouped as Bhutasiddhis.

It is suffice to say that practice with faith in sastras and proper guidance from a guru will lead to the siddhis mentioned. The limit to such powers is Lordship or Ishwaratva. Having by samyama suppressed the Rajas and Thamas aspects from chitta if one repeatedly resorts to samyama on the distinction between Prakriti and puraha (viveka), then as Ishwara, he gets the powers to create worlds and knowledge of Trikaala. Such a chitta is known as Visoka chitta. However, even when this is renounced because of paravairagya, then Kaivalya the ultimate

aim of yoga is achieved. Then there is nothing to achieve and none desiring achievement.

Purushartha Sunyaanaam Pratiprasavah Kaivalyem  
swaroopa Pratishtava chitisakthirathi



It is the contention of Patanjali that all siddhis are possible. In fact achievement is a mechanical process, requiring the right practice. He compares the activity to that of a farmer who has only to break or raise the bund to divert water. So with chitta sakti. There is no other coordinating agency (nimitha) that helps or hinders in one's endeavours (aprayojaka). Considerable emphaais is therefore placed on individual effort.

The one dhyana that is necessary and sufficient is Bhagawad dhyana. When Tshwara is meditated upon, his form constantly kept in mind, all the siddhis are given by Him. This contention obviates the need for different kinds of samyama. The repetition of Srinivasa mantra-that of the Lord with Goddess Lakshmi with all the Sreyas or riches-is said to give both Iha sukha and para sukha.

According to Sri Sankaracharya, the repetition of the mantra "Brahmaivaham na samsari muktoham" gives the 8 fold siddhis. Obviously this is only a sop for gaining Atmaghana.

Whether he is a sidha, Bhakta or a gnani, yoga is a necessary practice for success. The sidha has to resort to samyama for all the siddhis,—samyama is a yogic process. A bhakta has to do Bhagawat dhyana, which again is facilitated by yoga as mentioned in various puranas, which help to achieve parabhakthi. A Vedanthin, who sees the identity of the individual soul with Paramatma, or the non-difference of the two apparently different phenomenon also has to constantly meditate on the Mahavakya (nidhidhyasana) which again is a yogic discipline. A Bhakta, a gnani, a sidha are basically yogis.

Yoga is a means for both Iha and Para sukham.