

Pranic force and journey to absolute truth

Satsang on Aug 9, 2014

Namaste everyone! Today 9th August, I happened to be in Cary, NC. Let us start the **satsang**. Ushaji let us do **Guru vandana** please.

गुरुर ब्रह्म गुरुर विष्णुः गुरुर देवो महेश्वरः। गुरुर साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः।

हरिः ॐ ॥

Gurur brahma guru vishnuh gurur devo Maheshwarah !

Gurur Saakshaat ParaBrahma Tasmai Sree Guravenamah !!

Hari Om!

Namaste all. We are continuing with this subject of **prana** or the life force, the **prana tatwa** or the principle of the life force as well as **chaitanya**, the very universal power that prevails in the entire creation. This universal power as **Chaitanya**, is also the **prana**, and the **prana tatwa** or the principal of **prana**. How does this **prana** manifest and prevail in our human system? This human system has the five major instruments of action and the instruments of the senses, i.e. the ear, the nose to smell, the eyes, the tongue for taste, the skin together with all the implements of action. This **prana** is the very life force, is the phenomenal energy, and the power that is there in every human being. It is not only in the human being, but in every cell of the human being, as also in all other beings, such as the birds, the fish in the water or the 2 legged or 4 legged beings or the creeping creatures on top of the earth or in the bosom of the earth, and below the surface of the earth as well. So this is the power that keeps the life living, and perpetuating. Now this life, this **pranic force**, is the fundamental force. How does it manifest and act through the entire system? We will understand that.

This **prana** is the **shakti**. **Prana** is the power. **Prana** is like the mother. **Prana** is also the **kundalini shakti**. So many of you are fascinated with what **kundalini shakti** is. This **prana** is that **shakti**. That **shakti** is also the **prana**. **Prana** is the power. **Prana** is also the power of Almighty God or what we call as **Swa-Shakti**. It is because of this **prana** that the living beings live the entire life and do so many things within the span of life. Whether one is aware or unaware, this **pranic force** is constantly there. This **pranic force** is the **Shiva-Shakti** also. It is also **chaitanya**. That is how the living beings, particularly as far human beings are concerned, the living soul is in need of the **prana** in the body. With the **prana** or the life force in the journey of life, a living being continues to experience whatever as the life unfolds for this

individual. This **prana** is the one that moves all the other primordial elements such as the earth, air, **agni** or light, ether. This **prana** or the life force takes all the 5 primordial elements with it and moves in the human system as also in the entire creation. This entire creation is full of this energy. This energy is the very expression of the supreme power. We went through this earlier that on the earth, human beings have 5 different sheaths. Such as, the top sheath that is made from food, i.e. **annamayakosha**. Likewise the mind or **manomayakosh** or **vignanamayakosh**, all these, such and so forth. Similarly, the last shell, i.e., the **Anandamaya** or the enclave you may call or the cave as it is described in Vedas; that is where the soul dwells in itself. And as the **Kathopanishad** says

‘Angushta matra tishtantu..’

What it means is that the soul which is the very life force, the very nature of Almighty God, is so small and its luster, its radiating power or the light is like the shape of a thumb. It is in the heart center. In the heart center is the place of awareness of human beings. It is not the heart that is the organ that pumps blood. No! No! No! The heart center is entirely different. It is right in the center of the chest, slightly to the right. That is where, every human being has the store of information of its past life and all its passions and desires. Likewise, the **antahkarana** or the 6th organ of action, which cannot be shown like the five others, is also in the heart itself. That is where the **chitta, manah** (i.e. mind), **buddhi**(i.e. intellect), and **ahamkar** or Self as the ego principle dwells. And there too, the casual body and subtle body together, they manifest as past fashions, desires, their attributes and so on and so forth.

Now let us understand how the **pranic force** operates. We now know that the living being or the living soul, by virtue of the **prana**, is constantly there. This **prana** is the **chaitanya**. **Prana** is the being of the Self itself. The nature of this in an expanded macro sense is also Almighty God. This living being as a living soul is connected to this principal of **atma tatwa** meaning the divine being, the divine self. As it is wrapped up with all the passions, desires, wishes, and bags of massive data of information, of all the actions that one has done and the consequent reactions. Every action has a reaction. Particularly if you have an action of the nature of expectation, it leaves embedded information in your **casual body**. So, all the data are there. Hence every divine soul that is conditioned or wrapped up or attached to all these desires or passions, together with the action-reaction syndrome, becomes a living soul or **jeevatma**. Where ever this divine soul that is wrapped up with all the past, that is the one which is the living soul, and that is where all the 10 organs of action and organs of intelligence, relative to those organs are also there. Right there is the subtle Self of every human being together with casual Self, which is nothing other than the **jeevatma** or the living soul, which is also the casual body. So

this together is the **prana tatwa**. This together, is also the divine soul. Thus this principal of **prana** is also the principal of the Self, which is the divine soul. Can you understand now? Please understand this carefully, that the divine soul, the living soul and eventually, the principal of **prana** or the principal of **atma** or the divine soul- they are essentially same. Same, My dear, same!

Now having set this as the foundation, let us further understand how this principal of **prana** operates.

We breathe in air and we breathe out air. This air which is managed, operated, manifested by the **pranic force**, when it enters our body, it breaks down into 5 major **prana**. They are called **pancha** meaning 5 and **prana** meaning life force. They are essentially 1. **Prana**, 2. **Apana**, 3. **Samana**, 4. **Vyana**, and 5. **Udana**. We will now today try to understand how these 5 **pranic** principles, these energies manifest in our body.

This body is merely an instrument to experience the life as it unfolds. As also, it is the instrument of your own free will to choose what you must do, and also that you choose what you want to do. This is the same instrument that can free you from the entanglement of life and death, as also can keep you perpetuating in the cycles of birth, life and death ,and back to birth, life and death until infinity. This is God given gift of free will, together with the sense or intelligence of discretion or **vivek**. One is though equipped or committed to one's own passions, own desires, own inner longings, yet by virtue of sense of discretion or **vivek**, uses this same instrument, i.e. this body, to do what is right, and to do what he must. What he must do is seek one's own salvation or **atma uddhar**, or discovering the truth or understanding the divine nature of the Self i.e., the **atma tatwa** or the divine soul.

Please understand how important this instrument of human body is. You are given this **pancha prana**. You are given the **vivek** or the sense of discretion which is intelligent. You are given the ability to do and to choose whatever you want to. Hence, who is responsible? Nobody else, other than you or I or we or each human being as a living being.

Now let us come back to this **prana**. Among the **pancha prana**, the first is **prana**. The **prana** is like the supreme lord of all and dwells in the heart center. The body can be classified into 3 major parts. 1. that is from the neck and above that includes our mouth, our nose, both our ears, our eyes, then the **bhru madhya**, i.e. the center between eyebrows slightly up, and the crown of our head which is **brahma randra**. These are phenomenal energy centers. These energy centers are the ones that you have to know how to use. That is how the **prana** operates in all the centers - neck and above. It is from the **sahsrara** or the crown, where this **prana** or this energy i.e. **pranic force**, that dwells in the heart center, moves up towards the **sahasrara** or the crown of

the head. While controlling the **kanta** (throat), the center between the eyebrows, the crown of the head (as also crown meaning the front part of your head and **sahasrara** is slightly behind that). The **prana** establishes itself and controls the action of the heart as an organ; keeping it constantly pumping blood to the rest of the body; keeps the breathing constantly in sync, so that irrespective of what you are doing, this action of pumping blood or heartbeat together with sequence or the system of the cycle of breath going in, going out, is all regulated from the top of the head. Likewise the nose, knows the nature of the breath or the smell. Likewise the eyes that see and the brain that analyzes that. So also the ears being able to hear, and what is heard is understood by the brain. That is where the principle of **prana** is also established from the heart, into the heart, into the head, into the crown center. The senses are understood and the senses are instructed by the Self which is within the **antahkarana**, along with the mind, **buddhi**, **chitta**, (and that is where the **ahamkar** also dwells), and these control the entire functions of the body. The heart and the head together .i.e, **hruday** meaning heart, and **mastishka** meaning head; from these 2 centers, this principle of **prana** thus operates and controls all that I just told you.

The next principal **prana** among the 5, is **apana**. It is very important to understand that the purpose of **apana**, is to filter out the nourishment and separate the nourishing element or the energy needed for nourishment and the waste. This waste is of 2 types. One that when we sweat, and other are the fluids that we reject as urinary discharge. Likewise the excretion of all the solid food that we eat and rejected part is excreted out. This function is an important aspect of **apana**. In other words, what **apana** does is to filter out the nourishment and also to reject all that is not nourishing and waste. Thereby it keeps the entire human system very pure, and very austere. The proper word really is keeping the whole system very clean and hence pure, or **pavithra**. Please understand that **pavithra** as a word is not a complete expression. There is no proper word in English for what is **pavithra** or what you think as austere. When this waste is rejected, excreted out, and purged out, the whole system is recharged. Similarly among the various aspects of **pranayama**, like **anulom**, **vilom** breathing exercise of air, then **bhastrika** or **khumbaka**, or the 4th one **kapalabhati**. **Kapalabhati** is the one that helps to reject all the waste from body. When this waste is gone, the body is clean. The body is pure. The body is healthy.

That is how this **apana** also gives you the ability of dynamism in your physical expression, or what you may call as one being very quick to action, very quick to speak, very quick to think, and very quick to react. This agility, (that is a good word), is possible by virtue of this **apana vayu**. This agility gives you the sharpness that you need, to be always in the action-reaction mode. Thus, the

no:1 **prana** I just spoke about, and **apana** both work in sync in cooperation and keep the health well of that being and keeps the body also, clean.

The 3rd aspect of **prana** among the 5, is **samana vayu**. So this 3rd **prana**, **samana** is centered where the naval is or the naval **chakra** is. That is from where the process of digestion, the process of absorption, the process of nourishing, process of rejection, process of purging out or excretion, happens. So, all the nourishment that is received is supplied to the various parts of body, like the blood, the muscle tissues, the bones, the veins, the arteries and so forth. So the life force that you need, the energy that you need to live, this energy is possible by virtue of **samana vayu** that distributes energy, the nourishment to the entire body. This may be news to many new ones as to how our human system is so infinitely complex, yet so simply arranged and how this body is merely an instrument and not **you**. We are trapped in this concept, that I am this body. Whereas this body is merely an instrument for you to use it, to do whatever you want to do. It is by virtue of this **samana**, the nourishment that it takes, the creation of **rudhir** meaning blood, happens. It is because of the **samana vayu** that the functions of the brain are possible because it distributes the nourishment to the brain also. This **samana vayu** is the one that gives nourishment to the eyes, to the ears, to the tongue, to the nose, and to our skin. It keeps all the 5 organs or instruments of knowledge always alert, active, receptive, so that they transmit the reception of any information to the brain, i.e. to the **prana as well** or to the mind as well. And this **samana vayu** when kept in a state of equilibrium that is **Samadhi**, it is by this **samana vayu** that one can go into a state of **Samadhi**. **Samadhi** meaning, a state of equilibrium.

Samana prana the third **prana**, by virtue of this **samana** which keeps the body healthy, by taking the nutrition as also **samana**, that purges out the waste by virtue of our sweat, by virtue of urination, by virtue of defecation, and so forth. Thereby, the **samana** keeps our body clean as you sweep clean your house. As you sweep clean your house and when you vacuum it clean, the house is completely nice and tidy and pavithra, meaning pure. It is this **samana vayu** also, that helps you to keep a constant equilibrium within your body as well as the mind.

When you try to meditate, you are trying to move to a state of **Samadhi**. **Samadhi** meaning that equilibrium, that neither of the internal or external disturbances disrupt or can cause an imbalance, and will not ruffle the feathers of the process of your intellectual persuasion, or understanding and venturing into the higher realms of creation, higher realms of power, higher realm of the universe, and higher worlds that are there. Earth is one area as **martyalok**. But there are so many other **loka** or worlds of astral beings such as the **gandharvaloka**, the **deva loka**, the **nakshatraloka**, **vaikuntuloka**,

goloka or the **loka** where all the great saints have gone to which is also called as **guru loka**. These are all in the ascending order. In the descending order are also the **tala, tala tala, rasa tala, atala, vitala** so on and so forth; what in English language is called as going to hell. But the English language does not know that there are 7 different layers of such hell as well. So it is through this **samana vayu** that one can go into that state of deep meditation. And it is possible by virtue of a clean body, by virtue of a healthy body, by virtue of an equilibrium.

Now let us understand 4th - the **vyana**. It is very important to understand what this **vyana** is. In our heart chakra there are 101 nadis. These are energy channels. These are the basic energy channels. There are 100 nadi or energy channels that go to lower body. There is only 1 nadi or 1 channel, that goes from the heart upwards, through the neck and between the eyes, into the head, into the area where the brain is or where the **sahasrara** is, or the top of the crown. In the top of the crown there is small hole, very tiny, small hole which is called **brahmarandra**. I will explain you about all these and how it works. Now every channel out of the 101, every channel has another set of branches. Each of these nadi or channels has 100 such branches. These 100 such branches together with 100 main branches going to the lower body, i.e. from the neck and below; each one having 100 branches, so totally there are 10,000 branches. From these branches again, there are 72000 branches further that go to every extreme point of the entire body. Thus, there are something like 72 crores or 7.2 million and 72000 total nadis or total channels of energy or total channels of communication that are spread all over the body.

Now, there is 1 particular channel of communication or **nadi** starting from heart. Let us look at this one. This also has 100 branches. These branches move to the upper torso, particularly the neck and above. This is called **sushumna**. It starts from the heart, and as it travels controlling the neck or **kanta**, the nose, the eyes, the center of eyebrows i.e. **ajna chakra** and spreading out into the brain. There is 1 another **nadi**, 1 tiny branch going to the top of the crown. So all these branches of the energy centers, all these branches of these channels, they are controlled again by fundamental **prana tatwa**. Every branch, every **nadi** is keeping the communication of **prana**, meaning the communication of the energy into all aspects of the entire body.

Let us say big city like Dallas. It may have a control center. The city of Dallas will also have so many subdivisions, huge as it is. But every part of the city must be energized, must have electricity, must have light, must have telephone communication, must have cable communication, whatever you need to communicate, to transmit business, to keep access and to keep moving. Similarly how complex is this entire setup in the city of Dallas. Similarly so complex, if not more complex, it is to keep the energy circulating in the entire

human system. This energy reaching every center of your senses receiving information, transmitting information, receiving this information to the **antahkarana**, to the mind, the mind that confers with the **buddhi** or the intellect, and understands what is going on, then decides what to do. This decision of what to do, the reaction mode of what to do, is checked with the ego or the Self and the process of the action starts. Similarly, this **prana** that is functioning through all these energy channels or the channels of communication are the channels through which energy flows into entire system.

Now, coming back to that one particular **nadi** that goes upwards in human system, which is the head, and is called **sushumna**. I have just explained how this **nadi** branches out into another 100 other branches and functions. It keeps all the functions above the neck operating. There is one particular tiny branch that goes up to the area of the crown of the head. Also, going through the throat, going through the eyebrows, and comes to the top of the head, where the **sahasrara chakra** is. Like the 1000 petal lotus, it is called. There, in this **sahasrara chakra**, there is a **sookshma randhra**. **Sookshma** means subtle or very fine and **randhra** means hole. There is a very fine hole at the top of the crown or top of the head. It is through that hole, that a human being can escape leaving the physical body in a state of **Samadhi**, and taking the senses with it, can fly out whereby the body is still living, and can be kept alive for as long as you want for 1000s of years, and nothing can effect that. So you can escape with subtle body through that **brahma randhra** and travel astrally to any world that you can. It happens at the speed of the mind. Speed is phenomenal. It cannot be measured as the mind moves. How swiftly, you know, your mind moves? That speed cannot be measured. That is the speed of the soul, which takes a divine soul position or becomes that, but still is carrying all the subtle organs of physical body with it. Because these subtle organs are necessary to receive information, so that the divine soul understands all that. My goodness! How amazing all this entire manifestation of **prana** and the **pranic energy** is! We did not even think, how detailed it could be and how important it is, and that keeps this entire body full of energy.

This power of Almighty God through this **vyana prana** is the one that circulates in this subtle body that has come out of the physical body. This is the power of Almighty God that also keeps the physical body healthy and all the functions operating. Now, coming back to the physical self in the state of **Samadhi**, where you are still in the body, and despite you having shut off all the senses, and enjoying the bliss, enjoying the union of the Self with the supreme Self, which is full of joy, full of life, full of **ananda** i.e. joy, full of love, and having experienced that over and over and over and again and again, without you knowing, you become THAT. You become THAT very embodiment of love. You become the very embodiment of the Supreme Truth. You become

the very embodiment of joy. There is no room for fear. There is no room for anxiety. There is no room for worry. Nothing, nothing. You are free of mortal turmoil that any human being may always go through. That is when you, though being in the physical body you can step out and look at your own body though it may be full of ailments, full of discomforts, full of some disease or problems; some may have high blood pressure, some may have high sugar, some may have high cholesterol, some may have hypertension, and so many varieties of different physical symptoms or syndromes you may call. Yet the Self is independent of this physical self and hence you achieve in this living body, in this living state itself, a state of divine living. Please understand this.

Now let us go and understand the last, 5th - **udana**. This **udana** is also established in the **hrudaya**, ie heart. The **Hrudaya aakash** it is called. This **hrudaya** space is so great, that this space even consumes the entire space of phenomenal world, in the skies above and all the worlds that are there- the 7 above, the 7 below and all that there is. The **hrudaya aakash**, the sky, the vacuum, the ether or whatever you may call it, it can envelope all the creation, My dear. This is very important. That you reaching that state of **Samadhi**, that state of super elevated awareness, whereby in that deep state of meditation, you have already enveloped the entire creation. In that sense, that entire creation is nowhere outside, but it is within you itself. This is possible by virtue of this **udana vayu**.

As I just stated earlier, the Self which is the soul, when it is encased in a living being, it is the living soul. When it is free of that, it is also the divine soul. The divine soul is no different from this supreme divine soul which is none other than Almighty God, or none other than **paramatma** or none other than Allah, or none other than Jehovah, or none other than Ahur Mazda, as a priest who taught Zoroastrian. See how it does not matter to what fellowship you belong, does not matter to what religion you may belong, eventually you transcend all these mental barriers, barriers of perception, and end up merely perceptions of your own mind. You transcended all of these into that supreme realm of the very expression of supreme truth. That expression of supreme truth is nothing different from what Almighty God is.

How wonderful this is! So, coming back to this **udana prana** that is scattered in our heart; There, we know that the soul is immortal. It does not die. When a person is born, surely the being born activity happens only when in that body, there is a soul that has entered. So the soul was there before. The soul now is encased in a living being as a baby and the baby is born. And along with the body that it has received, it has received all the 10 instruments of action- i.e. 5 instrument of action, 5 centers of intelligence, also the intellect, also the **chitta**, also the mind, together with ego, which is all the **aantahkarana**. This **udana** is connected to all of this. This **udana** is the **vayu**, is that breath that is

circulating in the entire body. When one meditates by virtue of this **sushumna nadi**, that is the one very subtle final branch or the **nadi** or channel of communication that goes through the head; from that there is one another fine channel that takes you straight to the **brahma randra**.

Now when a person dies, what happens? This body is kept in operation by virtue of all these 5 **prana**- i.e. **prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana**. We have understood what **samana** is. Now, I am talking about **udana** alone. **Udana** does not leave the body. All the other 4 **prana** will leave the body. It occupies the body till the body disintegrates, or the body is consumed by the earth, or it is cremated. Then, this **prana** called the **udana** leaves the physical body. But when it leaves the physical body, the casual body and also subtle body take another birth. It maybe is reborn as a human being or any other being depending on the last thoughts that were there when the person died. At that time depending upon the circumstances of the person that has died, what may be the last wishes of that departing soul? What may be the last longings of the departing soul? If one is the devotee of **Lord Sri Krishna** or **Lord Vishnu**, that soul, when that love of **Lord Vishnu** or **Lord Sri Krishna** is there prevailing at the time of death, perhaps that soul may go **vishnuloka, vaikuntaloka** or **goloka**. If someone is so fascinated, and in love, in adoration, in devotion to Lord **Shiva**, that soul may go to **shivaloka**. If that one is so devoted, in love of one's own beloved **sadguru**, that soul may go to the **guru loka**. Understand! When someone still has a thought in the mind, that my goodness! In my living life I have not completed my **tapasya**, meaning my austerities, meaning my search for the truth, the discovery of truth, and experience of supreme truth, and knowing that I am Almighty God, I and my father are one, until then, that person comes back to a human life.

When ignorant souls that die, having lived a mediocre, normal life and have done all the things that they should not do, for they don't know better, they die and along with their soul, goes the subtle soul together with the casual body, and they take a birth based upon their passions, based upon their deeper drives, based upon their action-reaction i.e. the **karma**, they may be born just a gnat, as a pest, or a fly, or a cockroach, or a fish, or a bird, or a crawling worm, or a 4 legged animal, or 2 legged animal, or a 2 legged human being as well. There is a great lot of information available on this, if you want to study what happens in **Manu Smriti**.

But I want to impress on all of you, take a good look at your own life. Nobody other than you and you alone are going to be the architect of your next life. You alone are going to walk towards your process of salvation. And in this journey, there is a major, major junction. That junction is the element of **Sadguru**. The **Sadguru** and his grace is no different from grace or what the power of Almighty God is. It is same thing as the Sun and its light, the

sunlight, that cannot be separated and is always all enveloping, so is this grace. And for this grace, one has to make efforts to achieve that, to achieve that acceptance by the **Sadguru** and follow those instructions given by **Sadguru**. Those instructions have to be followed very promptly, very earnestly, very efficiently, very honestly, very lovingly, and lovingly surrendering them to the holy lotus feet of **Sadguru**. **Sadguru** is not an individual. It is the same principle as that of the Almighty god. So any human being when one is well adept, and is well disciplined by virtue of the **udana vayu**, can travel anywhere in the universe. As also upon the fall of the body or the death of the body, reaches supreme state of being.

Glossary

satsang: **Sat** means the Absolute Truth or God. **Sat** also means the **Atma** which is the soul or the Self. **Sang** means in the presence of or in the company of. Hence **Satsang** is a sacred or holy gathering in the presence of the Absolute Truth where the knowledge essential for soul evolution or Self-Realisation is imparted.

Namaste: is a social greeting in Sanskrit. Namaste is made of 2 words- “Namah” and “te” which means “I bow to you”. Namaste recognizes the supreme truth that all beings are embodiment of God. As the Bible says – “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:21, King James Bible). The Brihadaraanyaka Upanishad (1.4.10) says – “Aham Brahmasmi”- meaning “I am the Brahman or the Absolute truth or Almighty God.” While the Chandogya Upanishad (6.8.7) says “Tat Tvam Asi” which means “You are THAT”, referring again to the oneness with the Absolute truth. Hence, Namaste also means- “The God in me bows to the God in you.” Namaste is said to a person along with Anjali Mudra or Pranamasana. Anjali Mudra is done by bringing both the palms together touching each other in front of the heart chakra, finger to finger and mound to mound with a slight gentle pressure between the palms. The elbows are held parallel to the ground in line with the wrists. The eyes are closed in inner awareness, the breath (both inhalation and exhalation) is even, smooth and long and the head bows down slightly with reverence and love. If done correctly, the touching of the palms charges the right and left hemispheres of the brain and connects the brain waves. This elevates a person to the most receptive alpha state of awareness, and thus centering the person with calmness and peace.

Gurur brahma guru vishnuh gurur devo Maheshwarah !

Gurur Saakshaat ParaBrahma Tasmai Sree Guravenamah !!

Meaning- The Guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara. I bow to that Guru who is the incarnate or embodiment of the Supersoul or Almighty God or the Absolute truth.

Word to word-

Guru- The spiritual master, one who dispels ignorance and darkness. Guru is made of 2 sanskrit syllables- “Gu” and “Ru”. “Gu” is all the darkness of ignorance within. “Ru” is the radiance of the Absolute Truth or supreme knowledge that dispels the darkness of ignorance forever, beyond any doubt.

Brahma- The progenitor of all creation in the Hindu belief.

Vishnu- The protector of all creation in the Hindu belief

Devo- Lord or Deity

Maheshwarah- The Destroyer of all creation in the Hindu belief

Saakshaat – incarnate or embodiment

Parabrahma- Supersoul or Almighty God or the Absolute truth.

Namah- I bow

Pranic force- This is the all pervading life force that permeates every living unit of the cosmos, regulating all physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the living entity. The **pranic force** is also called **prana vayu**. **Vayu** means that which flows. Hence the **prana vayu** moves and expresses itself in the body like a wind. There are 49 different types of **prana vayu** in the body. But the important ones are **prana, apana, vyana, udana and samaana**. Each of these **pancha prana** controls specific physical, mental and spiritual centers in the body, and they work together in perfect harmony resulting in a healthy, holistic human being.

- **Prana** – **Prana** means forward moving force. It is responsible for assimilating energy from any input (breathing, eating, drinking, sensory stimulus and mental perceptions) into the body. It controls homeostasis and vital organ functions in the body. **Prana** is the king of all the **vayus** (life forces) in the body. It controls, regulates and directs all the other **prana vayus**.

Physical presence- base of the throat to diaphragm

Element- Air

Presence in subtle body- **Anahata Chakra** or heart chakra

Movement- It moves downward in a loop from the base of the throat (**Vishuddha Chakra**) to the navel (**Manipura Chakra**) and back.

Yogic control- **Jalandhara Bandha, Bhastrika pranayama, Nadi Shodana and Ujjayi pranayama**

- **Apana- Apana** means outward moving force. It ejects and eliminates any waste (excretion, exhalation, child birth etc) or anything not needed by the body. It is responsible for will power and motivation. When unregulated, **apana** creates a dull, lazy and confused state in human beings. It also controls the survival instincts in living things.

Physical presence- Excretory system (kidneys, colon, rectum, genitals and sweat glands).

Element – Earth

Presence in subtle body- **Mooladhara Chakra** or Root chakra

Movement- It moves downward in a loop from the navel (**Manipura Chakra**) to the perinium (**Mooladhara Chakra**) and back.

Yogic control- **Moola Bandha, Nauli, Agnisara Kriya and Ashwini Mudra**

*Spiritual evolution starts only when **Prana** and **Apana** are merged into one another. These 2 forces are oppose one another. i.e., during inhalation, **prana** moves upward from **manipura chakra** to **vishuddha chakra** while **apana** moves downward from **manipura chakra** to **mooladhara chakra**. On Exhalation, **prana** moves downward from **vishuddha chakra** to **manipura chakra**, while **apana** moves upward from **mooladhara chakra** to **manipura chakra**.

Apane juhvati pranam pranapanam tathapare; Pranapanagatee ruddhva pranayamaparayanah (Gita, Ch. IV-29.)

Meaning- Others offer **Prana** (outgoing breath) in **Apana** (incoming breath) and **Apana** in **Prana**, restraining the passage of **Prana** and **Apana**, absorbed in **Pranayama**.

- **Vyana- Vyana** means outward moving force. It is a centrifugal force that pervades over the entire body. It integrates and connects all the voluntary and involuntary systems of the physical body with the subtle bodies. It coordinates the digestive, skeletal, circulatory, nervous, glandular and sensory systems of the physical body with the **Chakras** (energy centers), the 72000 nadis (pranic pathways) and their networks that reside in the subtle body. It is responsible for physical and mental balance and mind and body coordination. It is responsible for the good feel during and after meditation

Physical presence- Skin. Essentially connects the skin of the physical body with the envelope of the subtle body.

Element – Water

Presence in subtle body- **Swadhishtana Chakra** or sacral plexus

Movement- Origin is at the navel and envelopes the entire body.

Yogic control- **Moola Bandha, Anthar Bahya Kumbhaka pranayama, Kevala Kumbhaka pranayama**

- **Udana – Udana** means upward moving force. It controls and regulates the 5 **karma indriya** and the 5 **jnana indriya** and their functions. It controls the sense organs, spine, muscular strength, growth, speech, enthusiasm and joy. It is also responsible for creativity, new approaches and ideas. It regulates all forms of speech- **vaikari, madhyama** and **pashyanti**. Unregulated **udana** causes respiratory disorders, shortness of breath, depression and uncontrolled limb movements. It accompanies **Kundalini** (the coiled primordial energy dormant in the **Mooladhara chakra**) arousal. Control of **udana** gives control over the five elements- earth, water, air, fire and ether. The aspirant in control of **udana** can levitate, float on water and attain all siddhis.

Physical presence- Throat

Element – Space

Presence in subtle body- **Vishudha Chakra** or Throat Chakra

Movement- It moves upward in a loop from the throat (**Vishudha Chakra**) to the fontanel (**Sahasrara Chakra**) and back.

Yogic control- **Jalandhara Bandha, ujjayi pranayama, sitkari pranayama, sitali pranayama, Brahmari pranayama, bhastrika pranayama and Viparitakarani Mudra**

- **Samana – Samana** means the balancing force. It controls metabolism, digestion and the digestive organs and respiration in the body. It regulates gastric juices, hormones and enzymes, eliminates toxins from the circulatory, lymphatic, nervous and glandular systems. It is responsible for sound judgement, intellect (buddhi) and the power of discretion (viveka). It influences the psyche and consciousness. It unites **prana** and **apana**. Unregulated **samana** causes delusions, hysteric tendencies, gastric disorders, fiery anger and confusion. Control of samana gives a lusturous, brilliant aura around the person that can be noticed even by those who do not have the ability to see auras.

Physical presence- Navel

Element – Fire

Presence in subtle body- **Manipura Chakra** or navel

Movement- It moves upward in a loop from the navel (**Manipura Chakra**) to the heart (**Anahata Chakra**) and back.

Yogic control- **Uddiyana Bandha**

Prana Tatwa: The principle of **Prana**

Chaitanya: is the cosmic consciousness or the Universal Soul or the pure consciousness or the pranic life force or the universal power that prevails in the entire creation.

Shakti: Power

Kundalini: is the same as the **prana shakti** or life force and it is a dormant force. It is an indwelling energy that can be awakened to the physical body, the subtle body and the causal body, to elevate a human being to realize the supreme union with the cosmic consciousness or the realization that “My Father and I are ONE”. **Kundalini** in Sanskrit means coiled or circular or annular. **Kundalini** is considered as a dormant, feminine energy that is metaphorically stated as a serpent with its tail in the mouth, sleeping in three and a half coils, at the base of the **Mooladhara** or the root chakra between the tailbone and the genitals, which is at the base of the spine. This serpentine power of **Kundalini** can be raised by **Shaktipat** or transmission of power from the **Sadguru** (also called as initiation or **Deeksha**) to the disciple or by regular, continuous practice of **yoga, kriya, bandha** and meditation, by **mantra sadhana** or by intense personal experiences like accidents, emotional trauma, childbirth or near death experiences. Spontaneous awakenings also happen due to possible spiritual practice in past lives and by the grace of God. **Kundalini** is a spiritual energy that is to be approached with complete surrender and unconditional love. It should not be manipulated with ego. Uncontrolled **kundalini** leads to many unpleasant and irreparable complications. In the yogic tradition, it is said that the **kundalini** power when awakened, tries ceaselessly to ascend from the **Mooladhara**, travelling across the chakras (**Swadhistana, Manipura, Anahata, Visshudda and Ajna**), while dissolving the attachments and purifying the chakras, to finally unite with the cosmic consciousness in the **Sahasrara Chakra** or the 1000 petal lotus on the crown of the head, through the energy channel or **nadi**, called **Sushumna**. The mouth of **sushumna** through which the **kundalini** ascends, has its opening in the **mooladhara chakra**. This union is also called **Shiva-Shakthi** union, where the cosmic consciousness is the **Shiva** and the **kundalini** is the **Shakti**. **Kundalini** awakening is also called **pranic** awakening. As the **kundalini** rises and moves through the **sushumna**, the seeker is endowed with supernatural powers and **siddhis**. Under the able guidance of a **Sadguru**, the seeker realizes the Self. Unrestrained or

uncontrolled **kundalini shakti** can produce serious psychological and physical effects.

Swa-Shakti: the power of the Self

Shiva-Shakti: See **Kundalini**

Kosha- mean envelopes. There are five envelopes surrounding the human body. They are-

- **Annamaya kosha-** The **Annamaya kosha** means the food envelope or the sheath made from or nourished by food and drink that a person takes and this comes from 5 primordial elements of earth, water, air, Fire (or light) and space (or ether). In other words, this sheath is the physical body. You are what you eat. The food that we eat gets broken down into nutrients to be absorbed by the body. It becomes the energy, the vitality, the aura and the strength to achieve our spiritual goal. The body needs to be nourished, trained and tamed to peel away this layer or envelope.
- **Pranamaya kosha:** The envelope of prana. See Pranic force
- **Manomaya kosha:** The mental body or sheath with the mind, **buddhi, chitta**, ego and the five inner organs of intelligence. All expressions are through **vrutti** or thought waves. **Ujjayi pranayama** helps silence the thought waves.
- **Vigyanamaya kosha:** The sheath of wisdom or superior intelligence. This kosha is the seat of intuition, will power and inner strength. It is peeled after the Manomaya Kosha is peeled away. Peeling this layer gives total freedom from thoughts leading the person to a state of pure awareness. Awareness in and of every action, every word, thought and deed.
- **Anandamaya Kosha:** This is the sheath of bliss. It is a state of being where one is in a state of joy or in a state of equilibrium no matter what situation one faces. When this layer is peeled away, one reaches the soul or state of soul consciousness. Anandamaya kosha can be experienced in moments when we so enjoy what we do and do not separate ourselves from the experience. It is like the state of bliss that a child feels when it is totally happy and engrossed in its play. It is not a creation or a state of the mind. It is a state of being and is felt only when we let go of all control by the mind. No words can describe the state. It needs to be experienced to be comprehended.

Kathopanishad- The **Katha Upanishad** or **Kaathakopanishad** belongs to **yajur veda**. This **Upanishad** narrates eternal truth through a story. The story is of a young **Brahmin** (the priest sect in India) boy, Nachiketas. Vaajasravaasa, Nachiketas's father, was performing a **yagnya** or fire ritual. As per the norm of

the ritual, the father is supposed to give away his most precious treasure in charity. However, the father gave away cows that were lean and do not yield any milk. It occurred to Nachiketas that he was his father's precious treasure and his father loved him deeply. So in order for his father to get the complete fruits of his penance, Nachiketas should be given away in charity. Nachiketas constantly pestered his father. He kept asking his father- "To whom are you going to give me away?" Unable to concentrate on the **yagnya**, the father said absent mindedly- "I give you away to **Yama**, the Lord of Death". Consequently Nachiketas goes to the abode of **Yama**. **Yama** was away and he came only three days later. Nachiketas waited without food and water for three days at the doorstep. It is a sin to let anybody wait at the doorstep. So **Yama** on his arrival, granted three wishes to Nachiketas. Nachiketas's first wish was that his father should forgive him and welcome him with joy when he goes back home. His second wish was that his good deeds never be exhausted. His third wish was that the Lord of Death reveal the secret of death to him. i.e. what happens to a person and the soul after death? Lord **Yama** grants him the three wishes and enlightens Nachiketas about the secret of death. This conversation that imparts the knowledge of the Self or reveals the secret of death and the knowledge of the Absolute Truth, is the essence and content of **Kathopanishad**.

angushTa maatrah purusho jyotirivaadhoomakah |
Ishaano bhutabhavyasya sa evaadya sa u shvah | aetadvai tat ||-
Kathopanishad- 2 chapter, 1 section, 13 sloka

Meaning: The jyothi or the glow or the radiance of the **Purusha** or the Self or the Absolute truth or the divine soul (who is very subtle in nature), is the size of the thumb. This divine soul resides in the heart chakra, in the **Aanandamaya kosha**, and shines like the light or fire without smoke. HE is the Lord of the past and future. HE exists today and tomorrow. HE transcends time and space. This indeed is THAT.

Word to word -

angushta – the thumb

maatrah- size of

purusho- the supreme being or the Self or the Absolute truth or Almighty God

jyotirvaa- like light or fire

dhoomakah- without smoke

Ishaano- the Lord

bhuta- Past

Bhavya- Future

sa- HE

eva- only

adhya- today

shvah- tomorrow

aetadvai- This indeed

tat- THAT

Chitta: **Chitta** is part of human mind, and is a very, very subtle part. And this **chitta** connects the casual body to the subtle body. The nature, the personality of a human being is exposed or made known or is nourished through this **chitta**. It is here, in the **chitta** that a thought emerges, and this emergence of thought is nothing different from a word called **pravrutti**. So there are pent up desires in your casual body, they impact the **chitta**. That's where, these constant impacts on the **chitta**, translate into a mental wave that the mind together with the intellect reads as a desire.

Manah- Mind

Buddhi- Intellect

Ahamkar- Ego, the awareness of the Self, the specialized awareness of the Self or the uniqueness of the awareness of the Self.

Anthakarna- The inner organ made up of 4 elements. They are **manah** or mind which is the conduit between physical body and the subtle body, **buddhi** or the intellect, **chitta** or the soul consciousness and **ahankaar** or ego.

Atma tatwa: Nature of the soul or the divine soul

Jeevatma: This is the conditioned Self or the soul that is wrapped up or encapsulated in the three bodies .i.e., **sthoola shareer** (the physical body), **sookshma shareer** (the subtle body), and **karana shareer** (the causal body). This encapsulated soul also identifies itself with the experiences of the three bodies and thinks that it is the body and not the soul. For example. When the physical body ages, the encapsulated soul identifies itself as this old man or woman, rather than this immortal soul.

Sthoola Deha – means the physical body. The physical body that has all the limbs, extremities, with nose, eyes, mouth, the brain, the intellect, all the faculties of thought, the faculties of mind, the faculty of making choices or ability to choose what you want and don't want or what you like and what you don't like. Also very important, it has the ability to know.

Sukshma deha or Sookshma shareer: This is the subtle body which is one of the three envelopes that wrap the soul. The subtle body has the **Anthakarna**, which is the inner organ made up of 4 elements. They are **manah** or mind which is the conduit between physical body and the subtle body, **buddhi** or the intellect, **chitta** or the soul consciousness and **ahankaar** or ego.

Kaarana shareer: This is the causal body. There are many, many impressions from so many past births, so many life experiences, so many unfulfilled desires, so many attitudes and baggage of memory and all that is embedded into the causal body. The causal body has the impressions of karma (actions) and Vasana (Subconscious tendencies, conditioning or predispositions) of all the past births and it is the store house for the upcoming births. Information about all your desires, all your passions, all your dislikes, anger, and all the karma-the actions that you have done, and corresponding reactions that you will have to endure, experience of all this balance, of all this data. The present life that you are born in and are experiencing the unfoldment day by day, everyday, till the end of last breath on this earth, is by virtue of the reactions, i.e. **karma phala** or the karmic unfoldment. The **chitta** connects the causal body to the subtle body.

Atma Uddhar: Salvation or deliverance of the soul

Vivek(a): Sense of discretion

Bhrumadhya- in between the eyebrows. The seat of the Ajna Chakra or the brow chakra.

Sahasrara- means 1000 fold. This is the Sanskrit name for the crown chakra or energy center on top of the head. It is usually visualized as a 1000 petal lotus. This visualization indicates the infinite nature of this chakra. In Reiki, this chakra is associated with violet color with the beeja of “OM”. When the **kundalini shakti** reaches this chakra, it leads the seeker to the highest state of awareness or the union of the Self with the cosmic consciousness. This is the seat of enlightenment.

Pavithra: Austere, pure, immaculate, serene, sacred

Pranayama: It is a set of breathing exercises through regulation of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath in a controlled manner, in order to cleanse and energize all the 7.2 million **nadi** or the energy channels and purify the **prana** or the life force. **Pranayama** comes from two Sanskrit words- “**prana**” meaning the life force and “**aayam**” meaning “exercise”. **Pranayama** is one of the eight limbs advocated by **Patanjali Maharishi** in **Hatha Yoga** practice. Hence **pranayama** is the science of regulating and extending the breath, so that the **prana** or life force in the body energizes and provides vitality to each

and every cell of the body. The mind and the breath are correlated. When the mind is constantly pinged by thought after thought after thought, the person's breath is irregular, erratic, shallow and in some cases, the breath is very fast. The quality of the breath is affected by mood changes. When in a calm state of the mind, one's breath is long and effortless. Similarly, when one consciously controls the breath, the thoughts change, moods change and the entire perspective of the world changes. The main goal of **pranayama** is to raise the latent, sleeping power of **kundalini** through the **sushumna nadi** or the energy pathway. Normally the breath flows through either **ida** or **pingala**. The **pranic** pathway of **Ida** is through the left nostril and for **pingala**, it is through the right nostril. Thus **pingala** controls the left side of the brain and **ida** controls the right side of the brain. **Ida, pingala** and **sushumna** arise from the base of the **mooladhara chakra** or root **chakra**. **Ida** and **pingala** cross each other like the figure of 8 around the spinal column. However, **sushumna** is in the middle and is a straight path. All the chakras or energy centers are housed in **sushumna**. The goal of **pranayama** is to channelize the **pranic force** that is flowing through **ida** and **pingala**, into the **sushumna**. Such a surge of **prana force** or in other words, the upward movement of the **kundalini shakti** spells the spiritual progress for the **sadhaka**, to ultimately unite with the cosmic consciousness or realize the Absolute truth. **Pranayama** has 3 important processes. The process of inhalation of breath which is called **Puraka**, the process of breath retention called **Kumbhaka** and the process of breath exhalation called **Rechaka**. The quality of the breath (strong or weak), the length of the breath (long or short), the type of breath (from the lungs or abdomen), and the pace of the breath (fast or slow) have a significant impact on the **pranayama** practice. There are innumerable benefits of practicing **pranayama**. Regular practice of **pranayama** gives the following physical benefits and more:

- The body is always energetic, alert, supple, full of strength, with vigor and vitality.
- It helps to control blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and many other psychosomatic illnesses without taking dangerous pills.
- It energizes the neural networks of the brain, slows down the death of the brain cells, as well as activates and recharges the endocrine and glandular systems, especially the liver and kidneys.
- **Pranayama** is an excellent blood purifier as it flushes the body with oxygen and promotes lung capacity and heart health.
- It wonderful means for weight loss without any side effects.
- It slows the aging process and the related discomforts and extends life.
- It enhances the defense mechanisms of the body against diseases, psychosomatic illnesses, poisonous chemicals etc.

- **Pranayama** has been proven to cure many debilitating, fatal diseases that no medicine is known to cure

Regular practice of **pranayama** has the following mental benefits and more:

- **Pranayama** increases memory, sound judgment, enhances power of discretion, profound awareness and to be present in every moment in life.
- It promotes a calm mind and gives control over emotions. It propels one to be in a state of equilibrium or **samana stithi**.
- **Pranayama** fills one with unconditional love, attitude of selflessness and propels one to lead a virtuous life.
- The person has a charming countenance and other people, animals, birds, essentially all living beings or **prani** (meaning any being that has prana) are attracted and react with love to the person practicing **pranayama**.
- **Pranayama** grants freedom from six crocodiles of **Kama**, **Krodha** (anger), **Lobha** (Greed), **Moha** (attachment), **Madh** (Pride) and **Matsarya** (Jealousy).
- **Pranayama** impacts not only you, but your surroundings as well. It fills the people around you and the environment with peace, calmness and joy.
- **Pranayama** promotes inner strength, will power, resilience, intuition, wisdom and expands the consciousness and awareness beyond the Self.

Regular practice of **pranayama** has the following spiritual benefits and more:

- **Pranayama** is the only means to transcend the sheaths or **Kosha** that are wrapped around the soul. For more information, see **Kosha**
- Regular and proper practice of **pranayama** may give rise to super natural powers or **siddhis** in the person.
- It promotes spiritual progress in all the 3 states of existence- **Jagrut avasta** (awakened state), **Swapna Avasta** (dream state) and **Sushupti** (deep sleep state)
- It helps one to transcend the **rajo** and **tamo** guna (attributes) and be established in the **Satva Guna**.
- The entire **nadi** systems or the energy channel network in the body is purified, cleansed and charged. Through regular practice, a person's aura glows.
- The divine energies of **Ojas** and **Tejas** increases in the body
- It opens the chakra pathway and promotes **kundalini** awakening.

- **Pranayama** helps to attain the Samadhi stithi (see **Samadhi**) and break the cycle of birth and death. It serves to realize the true nature of the soul as well as the union of the soul with the cosmic consciousness.

Rules for practicing pranayama

- Early morning and the **Agnihotra** times is the best time for practicing **pranayama**. At the **agnihotra** times, the circadian rhythms of the environment are in sync with the biorhythms in the body that propels the mind and consciousness to a state of oneness. If morning is unsuitable, then it can be done during the evening, in a cool and pleasant atmosphere.
- **Pranayama** must be practiced in empty stomach. There should be a minimum of 3 hrs of gap after a full meal, at least 1 hr of gap after any meal and at least half an hour of gap after drinking water.
- **Pranayama** is best practiced when bowels are empty.
- If you are practicing more than one session, the sessions should be spaced evenly during the day. You can do 6 sessions in a day with a gap of 4 hrs between each session or you can do 2 sessions a day with 12 hrs between each session. Regularity and consistency is the key to **pranayama** practice.
- Pregnant women should not hold their breath at all.
- Never struggle or strain or force any breath. It is a smooth and natural process of progress and evolution.
- Bath should be taken after a minimum of half an hour gap after the **pranayama** practice.
- Follow all **pranayama** practice with at least 15 minutes of **shavasana** or the corpse pose and relaxation. **Yoga Nidra** is highly beneficial.
- **Pranayama** should not be practiced immediately after eating, after a bath or vigorous physical exercise like aerobics, swimming or running, or after sex or during menstrual periods.
- **Pranayama** should not be practiced when the body has fever, intense physical pain or under conditions of depression.
- **Pranayama** should be practiced under supervision of an expert teacher, if you suffer from asthma, heart problems, blood pressure problems, illnesses like pneumonia or while undergoing chemo therapy or rehabilitation from drugs and alcohol addiction
- **Pranayama** should be practiced under expert guidance if you suffer from severe depression, mood swing, suicidal tendencies, trauma or grief.

- **Pranayama** practice is not to be taken lightly. When in doubt, consult an expert and your physician.

Types of pranayama and practice

The basic rules for any **pranayama** practice are

- Wear comfortable loose and breathable clothing
- Practice in a stress free, peaceful, silent environment
- Sit comfortably in an erect posture like **padmasana** (Lotus pose), **arthapadmasana** (Half Lotus pose), **Vajrasana** (Thunderbolt pose), **Sukhasana** (easy pose) or **siddhasana** (the perfect pose). If you cannot sit on the floor or in any of these poses, sit in a high backed, straight chair that will keep your spine and torso erect, knees close together, with both feet firmly planted on the ground.
- Before practicing advanced breathing techniques like **Bhastrika** or **Ujjayi**, practice the cleansing breath of **Nadi shodana** for purifying the **nadi** or energy channels.
- Relax the body, while keeping the head, neck and the spine erect and in a straight line. No slouching or bending. The erect posture opens the **pranic** pathways, making energy flow possible.
- Bring your attention to the breath. Calmly watch the breath. Become one with the breath and watch the breath slow down. Now you are ready for practice.
 1. **Anuloma-viloma:** or alternate nostril breathing or **nadi shodana** is the first breathing technique taught in the practice of **Hatha Yoga**. This technique purifies all the energy channels. It fills the body with strength, vigor and vitality. Regular practice brings a shine to the face. It rejuvenates the nervous system, floods the brain with oxygen and blood, flushes out the toxins from blood and the cells of the body. **Nadi shodana** means cleansing of the **nadi** or the **pranic** pathways. It floods the body with **prana** and prepares the body for spiritual advancement. It energizes and balances both the right and left sides of the brain and enhances cognitive functions and logical thinking.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- While breathing, breathe into the lungs and not into the stomach.
- Using the right hand thumb, close the right nostril.
- Inhale through the left nostril calmly as per your lung capacity. You can count 1,2,3... to estimate the length of your breath.

- After complete inhalation, close the left nostril with your right hand ring and pinky fingers.
- Exhale completely through the right nostril by removing the thumb.
- Do the reverse- Inhale again through the right nostril, and close it with the right thumb
- Exhale through the left nostril by removing the pinky and the ring fingers.
- This is one round of **Anuloma-Viloma**.

After you practice 3-10 rounds, change position.

- Start by closing the left nostril by the left thumb and inhaling through the right nostril.
- After complete inhalation, close the right nostril with the left ring and pinky fingers.
- Now open the left nostril by removing the thumb and exhale completely.
- Inhale again through the left nostril, close it with the thumb
- Exhale through the right by removing the ring and pinky fingers.

There is no retention of breath here. Do 3-10 rounds in the alternate position. Your session is complete.

Try to practice with **sama vrutti** or equal duration of breath during inhalation and exhalation. Start with 3-10 rounds on each side and slowly increase it to 30 rounds on each side per session by 45 days. Try to breathe without making any sound. If done properly, you will feel a surge of energy, a sense of peace, relaxation and calmness immediately after practice. This **pranayama** can be done in all the seasons and throughout the year.

2. Bhastrika: or the Bellows breath is an intensely stimulating **pranayama**. It rejuvenates the entire body, giving it a new life. It increases supply of blood to the brain and increases memory. It improves eyesight, hearing and gives clarity of speech. It recharges the respiratory system. It stimulates digestion and enhances metabolism. This **pranayama** in combination with **Jalandhara bandha** activates the **manipura chakra** and pulls the **kundalini** up towards the **vishudda chakra**. Hence the focus for this **pranayama** is the **Manipura chakra**.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Using the right hand thumb, close the right nostril in such a way that the right elbow is on the same level as the right shoulder.
- Inhale and exhale in a fast and rapid pace for 20 breaths, through the left nostril as per your lung capacity. You can count 1,2,3... to estimate the number of breaths. The abdominal wall pushes in and out like the movement of bellows.
- After the 20th breath, deeply and slowly inhale, retain for as long as easily possible and exhale through the left nostril.
- Now close the left nostril with your right hand ring and pinky fingers.
- Inhale and exhale in a fast and rapid pace for 20 breaths, through the right nostril as per your lung capacity. You can count 1,2,3... to estimate the number of breaths. The abdominal wall pushes in and out like the movement of bellows.
- After the 20th breath, deeply and slowly inhale, retain for as long as easily possible and exhale through the right nostril.
- Now place the palms on your knees.
- With both the nostrils, inhale and exhale in a fast and rapid pace for 20 breaths, through the both the nostrils as per your lung capacity. You can count 1,2,3... to estimate the number of breaths. The abdominal wall pushes in and out like the movement of bellows.
- After the 20th breath, deeply and slowly inhale, retain for as long as easily possible and exhale through both the nostrils.
- This is one round of ***Bhastrika***. Take rest for a few breaths and repeat this entire cycle starting the next round with the right nostril.

This ***pranayama*** can be done to a maximum of 4 rounds for beginners. The count should not be increased without the expert guidance of a teacher. Before the practice of this ***pranayama***, ***nadi shodana pranayama*** should have been performed regularly for atleast 3 months.

3. ***Ujjayi Pranayama***: or the Conqueror's breath. This is a purifying or detoxifying ***pranayama*** that purifies the physical body and the subtle

body. It also purifies the **antahkarana**, the **karmendriya** and the **jnanendriya**. It drives away, negative thoughts, negative attitudes, laziness, depression and other negative emotions. This **pranayama** has profound effects when done in conjunction with the **Mula Bandha**. This **pranayama** is capable of destroying any poison in the body. There is a hissing sound produced when doing this **pranayama**. This **pranayama** brings **ekagratha** or one-pointedness to the mind and silences the mind.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Inhale deeply and slowly through both the nostrils
- Retain the breath for as long as easily possible
- Exhale slowly through the open mouth with a HAAAAAA sound or a whispering sound, by contracting the glottis or contracting the air passage. The breath actually hits the back of the throat.
- Repeat 5 times and close the mouth
- Now inhale deeply and slowly through the nostrils and exhale deeply and slowly through the nostrils, while focusing the breath towards the back of the throat. This will result in a hissing sound.
- Start the cycle again

This **pranayama** can be done for 3-5 times initially. Before the practice of this **pranayama**, **Anuloma-viloma pranayama** should have been performed regularly for atleast 3 months.

4. **Bhramari:** or the Bee breath is aa wonderful aid to combat depression and mental tension. This breath opens the **pranayama** and very beneficial to the **vedic mantra** chanters and singers. It also promotes intellectual wisdom, intuition and intelligence. **Bhramari** when practiced with **shanmukhi mudra** gives immense mental relaxation and spiritual progress.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Inhale deeply and slowly through both the nostrils, drawing the base of the tongue to the throat wall. This can also be done by closing your ears with the index fingers and inhaling the breath through the nostrils.
- Retain the breath for as long as easily possible
- Slightly tilt the chin and keep the lips closed tight.

- Exhale slowly through the nostrils, making a deep buzzing sound at the throat. It sounds like a swarm of bees.
 - Repeat 3 times and practice no more than 10 times.
5. **Sitali:** This is a cooling **pranayama**. It is practiced mostly during the summer months to cool the body down. **Sitali** when done with the **Jalandhara bandha** cools the entire body when it feels hot. It stabilizes the body temperature. This **pranayama** can be practiced when thirsty to moisten the throat. **Sitali** controls the **pitta prakruti** of the body.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
 - Relax head and shoulders, but stay erect.
 - Stick the tongue out while curling the lateral sides of the tongue to form a channel or tube.
 - Close the lips around the tongue channel in order to form an “O” around it. Such that the air can pass only through the tongue channel and there is no other gap available.
 - Now draw the air in through the tongue channel slowly and deeply. Feel the cooling air. Hear the smooth, hissing sound. Practice so that the sound is not rough or raspy or quivering.
 - Then use the tip of the tongue to softly touch the inner top roof of the mouth and exhale deeply. The breath will come out of the nose.
 - Repeat 3 times and practice no more than 10 times.
6. **Sitkari:** or the Teeth hissing breath. **Sitkari** controls hunger, laziness, excessive sleep and fatigue. The benefits are the same as **sitali pranayama**.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Relax head and shoulders, but stay erect.
- Stick the tongue out. Curl the tongue in such a way that the tip of the tongue touches the upper palate and the mid part of the tongue touches the lower lip to form a horizontal channel or tube from left to right.
- Now draw the air in through the tongue channel slowly and deeply with a sli..sli...sliiii sound. Feel the cooling air.

- Exhale deeply and slowly through both the nostrils.
- Repeat 3 times and practice no more than 10 times.

7. *Kapalbhati*: or the Skull shining breath. Kapalbhati consists of short rapid, forceful inhalations and exhalations that expels all the negative energy, pain, fear, misery, grief or stress. It is a very powerful ***pranayama*** technique that purifies the physical, subtle and the causal bodies. It is a wonderful ***pranayama*** for weight loss. It stimulates digestion and metabolism. It promotes healthy circulation, digestive and excretory systems. It floods the body with ***prana*** or the life force. Regular practice of the ***pranayama*** actually gets the aura of a person to shine brilliantly and can be seen even by an untrained eye. It strengthens the will, enhances the power of discretion, tones and energizes the physical body. The effects are best realized when practiced.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Keep your eyes and the mouth closed and focus on the lower belly.
- After a few deep inhalations and exhalations, quickly contract the lower belly muscle, forcing and expelling the air out of the lungs. It creates a “Hisshh” like sound. The other way to do it is to forcefully inhale and exhale out of the lungs. Due to the movement of the air, the belly will automatically move in and out. The belly is drawn in while you exhale.
- Inhale passively without any effort as the belly goes back to the original position.
- Exhale forcefully again.
- Repeat the steps continuously for 20 times and increase practice to upto doing atleast a 100 times continuously in one cycle.
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8. *Antar Bahya Kumbhaka*: or the Internal and External retention on breath. Kumbhaka means retention of breath. This is the most highest and very powerful spiritual practice. Here the in-going breath, the out-going breath and the retention is controlled. This is the highest form of Agnihotra, where the out-going breath is offered as the ahuti or offering into the in-going breath. When a seeker achieves perfection in this state, he is absolved from all the duties and karma. He easily attains the state of infinity or kaivalya stithi or state of

Samadhi. It is a very powerful **pranayama** technique that purifies the physical, subtle and the causal bodies. During this breathing cycle, no strain should be felt.

Process-

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Keep your eyes and the mouth closed and focus on the breath.
- When one with the breath, do 4 cycles of **Anuloma-Viloma pranayama**.
- Now you are ready for **Antar Kumbhaka**, i.e. Retention of breath after inhalation.
- Close the right nostril with the right thumb.
- Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril for a count of 2.
- Now close the left nostril with the right ring and pinky fingers.
- Hold the breath within. If you inhale for the count of 2, then you should hold the breath for 4 counts.
- Now open the right nostril by removing the right thumb and exhale for 8 counts.
- If you can do the **mula** and **jalandhara bandha** during the retention, along with this **pranayama**, you would achieve tremendous spiritual progress.
- Repeat the steps with the other nostril.
- This completes one cycle of **Antar Kumbhaka pranayama**
- Repeat for 3- 10 cycles, as you feel comfortable.
- End with at least 15 mins of **shavasana or yoga nidra**.

For Bahya Kumbhaka Pranayama, i.e, Retention of breath before inhalation

- Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
- Keep your eyes and the mouth closed and focus on the breath.
- When one with the breath, do 4 cycles of **Anuloma-Viloma pranayama**.
- Now you are ready for **Bahya Kumbhaka**, i.e. Retention of breath before inhalation.
- Close the right nostril with the right thumb.

- Inhale slowly and deeply through the left nostril for a count of 2.
- Now close the left nostril with the right ring and pinky fingers.
- Now open the right nostril by removing the right thumb and exhale for 8 counts.
- Once you exhale completely, do not breathe in for 4 counts.
- Now start the inhalation for 2 counts in the nostril that you exhaled with.
- Repeat the steps
- This completes one cycle of ***Bahya Kumbhaka pranayama***
- Repeat for 3- 10 cycles, as you feel comfortable.

Both of these pranayama, help tremendously to silence the mind and give tremendous concentration. A seeker can make phenomenal progress in a short time of sincere practice. The count should not be increased without the expert guidance of a teacher. Before the practice of this ***pranayama, nadi shodana pranayama*** should have been performed regularly for atleast 3 months.

Chakra: Energy centers in the ***sushumna nadi*** located in the subtle body

Samadhi or Turiya state: This is the state of deep meditation when one transcends or goes beyond all 3 states of consciousness (i.e, the physical awakened state, or the dream state or the deep sleep state) and experiences oneself as the universal being or Almighty God. It is a state of infinite existence that is beyond the play of the physical body or the mind, or the intellect and ego. All duality, fears, emotions and limitations of time and space dissolves in this state of consciousness. As a cloud free sky or a calm ocean free of waves, the being is free of thoughts and its influences and one gets established in the cosmic consciousness. At this state, one is capable of involving the consciousness into the material world and at the same time transcends into the nothingness- a limitless, infinite existence. When on top of a mountain, one can see the foothills as well as the space above. The state of turiya or Samadhi is similar to that. Samadhi is the eighth and the last ***anga*** or limb of the ***Ashtanga Yoga*** tradition. This state is also called ***Kaivalya Stiti*** or the state of being in infinite awareness and intelligence (***Sarvagnyatha***).

Martyaloka- translates as the place of death. The Hindu scriptures state that each soul has to be born on Earth (or Martyaloka) as a human being to exhaust all their karmas and transcend to unite with the cosmic consciousness. This can be achieved in one birth or in multiple births. That choice is exercised

by each soul through its free will. That is why, any being that is born on the earth, faces death, unless it is liberated or attains salvation.

Gandharva loka: World of angels

Deva Loka: Heaven or the world of demi-gods.

Nakshatra Loka: The world of celestials

Vaikunta Loka: same as **vishnuloka**. It is the abode of Lord Vishnu and is described as the divine world of bliss. It is one of the highest planes of existence, where the supreme soul exists as Nirguna Brahman or in its formless state. It is believed that a true vaishnavite or devotee of Vishnu would exist in Vaikunta after death.

Goloka: is believed to be the supreme abode of Lord Shri Krishna and all his true devotees reach there after death.

Guru Loka: World or planet of saints or realized masters

Seven Hells- The **hindu** philosophy believes that there are seven hells or regions that are located under the earth. These are explained in detailed in the **Bhagavata purana**. They are seven in number in the descending order- **Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talaatala, Mahaatala, Rasatala, Patala**.

Brahmarandra: **Brahman** means the cosmic consciousness or the Absolute truth. **Randra** means hole. It is also called as **Sookshma randhra** or very subtle, fine hole. There exists a very fine, tiny hole in the crown or top of the head. This is the soft spot on a baby's head or fontanel that closes as the baby grows up. The cosmic consciousness is believed to have breathed the life force or **prana** into the human body through this hole. When the **pranic force** or the **kundalini shakti** is awakened and is pushed through the **sushumna nadi**, then at the time of death, the soul escapes through the **brahmarandra** to unite with the cosmic consciousness, breaking the cycle of birth and death and never to be born again. This type of liberation or **moksha** is called **Kapala moksha**.

Hrudaya or Hrudaya Chakra- This is also called the Anahata chakra or heart chakra. The awareness of the Self - that is the seat where the Soul sits. In tantric texts, this chakra is represented by a 12 petaled lotus with the Bija mantra or seed mantra of "yam". This energy center is located on the spinal cord and diametrically opposite to the sternum, next to heart. Anahata means unstruck. It is so called because when this chakra opens up during the Kundalini awakening, a pleasing sound is constantly heard. This sound is called unstruck sound as there is no agent causing this sound. Anahata is the seat of emotions, love, joy and compassion.

Hrudaya aakash- The **hrudaya aakash** is in the **hrudaya chakra**. This is where the “angushta matra” Self or the subtle Self dwells as the Jeevatma. When meditating on the Self, the Self expands into infinite consciousness. The Self envelopes all space and everything within that space; which includes the various worlds and the entire celestial creation. There is nothing beyond there. All that exists in the outer space is also within the **hrudaya aakash**. This **hrudaya** space is so great, that this space even consumes the entire space of phenomenal world, in the skies above and all the worlds that are there- the 7 above, the 7 below and all that there is. The **hrudaya aakash**, the sky, the vacuum, the ether or whatever you may call it, it can envelope all the creation. In that sense, that entire creation is nowhere outside, but it is within you itself.

Paramatma: the Universal being or the Super soul or Almighty God

Sushumna nadi: is the one very subtle final branch or the **nadi** or channel of communication that goes through the head; from that there is one another fine channel that takes you straight to the **brahma randra**.

Shivaloka: World of Shiva and his devotees and disciples.

Tapasya: Penance and austerities

Karma: Actions committed by a person during his life on earth

Manu Smruti: is a scripture written by Manu, the first man to appear on Earth and created by the creator Lord Brahma. Manu Smruti means Laws of Manu. This scripture details the rules and conditions that each human being must adhere to lead a fulfilling life.

Sadguru: **Sat** means the Absolute Truth or God. **Sat** also means the **Atma** which is the soul or the Self. **Guru** is the spiritual master. Sadguru is the Absolute manifestation in human form of the Supreme Truth that is Almighty God or as you may call it Cosmic Consciousness or Allah or whatever, THAT is the ONLY Supreme Truth that there is. Sadguru is the illumined or realized spiritual master who abides in the supreme Absolute truth and guides other souls to be one or merge with the Absolute truth or God. He is a **Brahmanishta** or one who abides in the **Brahman** (i.e, cosmic consciousness).

**Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya !
caksur unmilitam yena tasmai sri-gurave namah!! – (Shree Guru Gita)**

Meaning- I bow to my spiritual master, who opened my eyes that were blinded by the darkness of ignorance with the light of the Absolute truth or the supreme knowledge.

According to the bible, the characteristics of a Sadguru or spiritual masters are-

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.” - Luke 6:40

“Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”- Matthew 28:20

“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am.” – John 13:13

“It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” – Matthew 20:26 – 28

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” – Galatians 5:22-23