

MEANS IV – PRANAYAMA – RIGHT CONTROL OF THE BREATH

Introduction

This meditation is based on the *Light of the Soul, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, discussing the 8 Means to Union with the Soul. Read *Light of the Soul*, Book II, Means IV (Sutras 49, 50, 51 on **Pranayama** to get a clearer understanding of this means.

Means IV.

Right control of the life-force. Pranayama. Suppression of the breath. Regulation of the breath. This refers to the control, regulation and suppression of the vital airs, the breath and the forces or shaktis of the body. It leads in reality to the organization of the vital body or the etheric body so that the life current or forces, emanating from the ego or spiritual man on his own plane, [Page 183] can be correctly transmitted to the physical man in objective manifestation.

The form, vitalized by the one who breathes in correct rhythm, is sent forth to do its work and fulfil its mission.

There is first the aspect of Inhalation. "The man breathes deeply." From the very depths of his being he draws the breath. In stage two, following inhalation, all the forces of the body are (through the medium of the breath) carried upward to the head and concentrated there; this moment of retention, when properly carried forward, produces an interlude of intense concentration and it is in this moment that the aspirant must seize opportunity. Then comes the process of exhalation, where the aspirant drives the thought-form from him." The form, vitalized by the one who breathes in correct rhythm, is sent forth to do its work and fulfil its mission. Study this idea with care, for it holds the secret of creative work. (*A Treatise on White Magic*, p149)

The right use of the Life-Breath is the whole art at which the aspirant, the disciple, and the initiate work, bearing in mind however that the science of the physical breath is the least important aspect and follows sequentially upon the right use of energy, which is the word we apply to the divine breath or life.

Breathing exercises when used to the exclusion of the three means to yoga may lead to disastrous results.

It should also be remembered that the key to the just response of the lower to the higher, lies in rhythm, and in the ability of the physical body to respond or vibrate in rhythmic unison with the etheric body. Students have found out that this is much facilitated by steady even breathing, and the majority of the breathing exercises when emphasized to the exclusion of the previous three means to yoga (the Commandments, Rules and **Posture**) have a definite effect upon the etheric centres and may lead to disastrous results. It is most necessary that students should

follow the means of yoga in the order in which they are given by Patanjali, and so see to it that the purificatory process, the discipline of the outer and inner life and one-pointedness of the mind should be aimed at, prior to attempting the regulation of the etheric vehicle through breathing, and the awakening of the centres. (*Light of the Soul*, p219)

“Pranayama” thoughts to register prior to meditation

Pranayama leads to the organization of the etheric body so the life current (forces emanating from the Soul) can be correctly transmitted to the physical man.

Consider what it truly means to breathe deep from the depths of the soul.

Understand why it is necessary to hold the breath prior to exhalation.

Basic Meditation Alignment

1. Sit comfortably with spine erect.
2. Breathe easily and normally and allow the steady rhythm of the breath help bring:
 - The etheric-physical vehicle into a state of quiet receptivity
 - The astral vehicle into a state of tranquility and quiet receptivity
 - The mental vehicle into a poised state of quiet receptivity
3. Focus within your mental nature.
4. Realize from this vantage point that you are the soul-in-incarnation.
5. Visualize light, love and power of the soul pouring into your personality vehicles.
6. Pause for assimilation.
7. Imagine yourself as the thinker focused within the soul-illuminated mind.

Meditation

Select for meditation a thought or concept from the "Pranayama" list:

- 1) What, in your understanding, is the meaning of “**pranayama**”?
- 2) Are you conscious of practicing **pranayama** in your life? If so *how*, specifically?
- 3) Ponder on the correct meaning of **control of the vital force**.
- 4) Feel the energy of **pranayama**- with mind silent and attentive, be receptive to the energy behind the thought.

Visualize the energies received during meditation flowing into and transforming your mental, emotional, physical / etheric bodies. Plan to apply what has been understood in meditation to your daily life.

Distribution

1. Imaginatively reaffirm your focus in the soul-illuminated mind.
2. With loving effort and due and elaborate care, create the image of yourself and the Master in the Heart within your etheric heart center and quietly cultivate the ideal relationship which exist between the two.

3. Inspired by the soul above and the soul-in-incarnation below (as the Master in the Heart) pour forth your blessings on those you love, on those you seem not to love and on humanity as a whole
4. Sound the Great Invocation followed by the Sacred Word, three times, visualizing as you do so, the redemption of humanity and the Earth.

THE GREAT INVOCATION

**From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.**

**From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.**

**From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men—
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.**

**From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.**

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth

OM OM OM