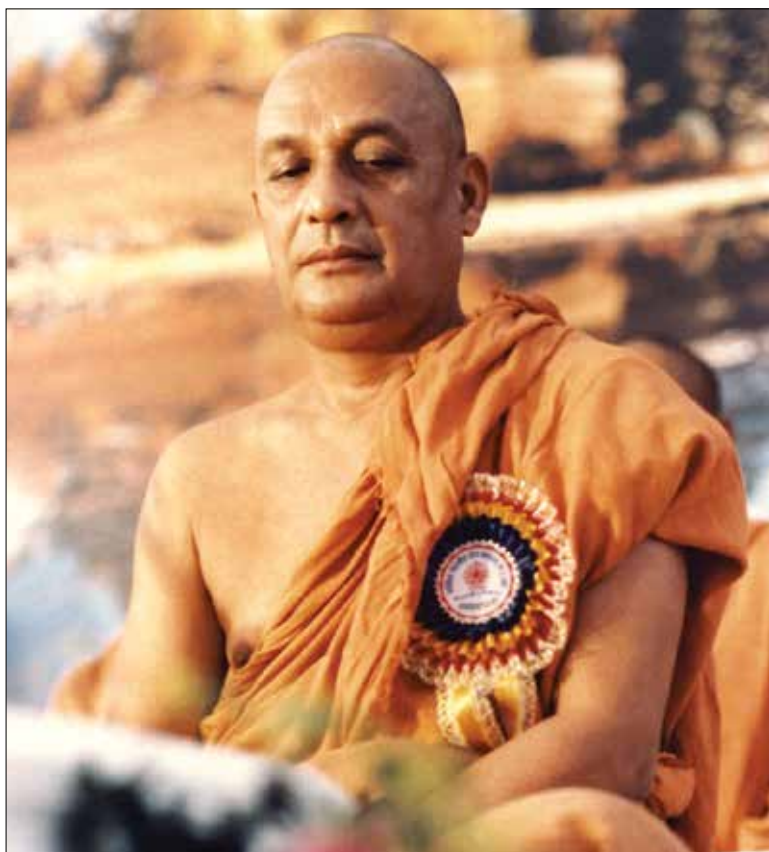


Satyam Speaks Antar Mouna



Satyam Speaks
Antar Mouna

With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

Satyam Speaks

Antar Mouna



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Satyam Speaks Antar Mouna

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

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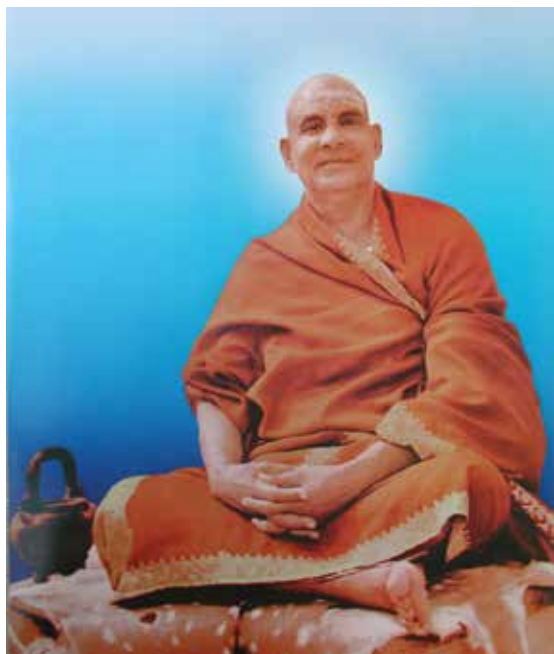
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*



Dedication

*To our guru Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati
who continues to inspire and guide us
on our yogic and spiritual journey.*

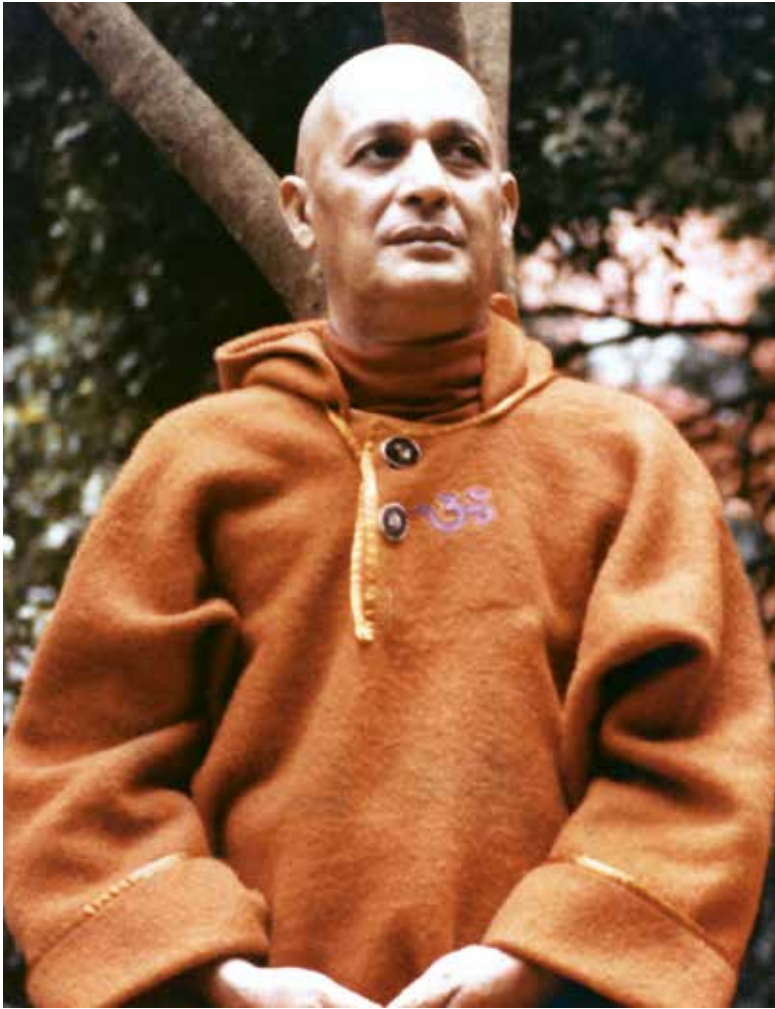
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Preface

Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati dedicated twenty years of his life to the propagation of yoga, and thus fulfilled the mandate given by his guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, 'to spread yoga from door to door and shore to shore'. He travelled around the globe many times bringing the message of yoga to people of all walks of life, regardless of caste or creed. Master of yoga vidya and creator of the Yoga Chakra, he adapted his knowledge and understanding of yoga to the needs and abilities of people. Swami Satyananda simplified valuable techniques and complex processes by giving systematic and clearly defined sequences. Everyone could understand and progress following the theoretical explanation and practical instructions. Everyone was able to benefit from yoga.

Satyam Speaks Series presents compilations of Sri Swami Satyananda's teachings on yoga. Each book explores a specific topic, concept or practice. The aim is to provide an easy way to understand and incorporate various components of the immense science of yoga vidya into one's daily life. For some titles, more information is provided of specific conditions or applications, which are for the information of the aspirant only and not for practice. These have been included to show the depth of understanding and experience Sri Swami Satyananda had of yoga vidya.



Satyam Speaks Series is a tribute to Sri Swami Satyananda, his teaching and to yoga vidya. *Satyam Speaks Series* is an invitation to all sincere aspirants to live yoga and thereby make the world a better place to be.

Learn from an accomplished yoga master, not from a book. This series is a knowledge guide and a yoga master is a practical guide.

1

Introducing Antar Mouna



Antar mouna is a technique where you do not control your thoughts; you allow your mind to witness what is happening within you. What you are seeing, feeling and thinking, your psychological and emotional personalities, your intellectual experiences, they all become objects of your witnessing. And thereby the karmas take flight and equilibrium prevails.

Yoga brakes

Yoga is the common heritage of mankind, though it was protected, kept secret and carefully guarded on the Indian soil by rishis and mahatmas. There have been people throughout the world, who were great yogis, but unfortunately this science was not preserved by any race, nation or religion except in India. This is because the Indian people have respect for higher and spiritual life, and because Indians look upon those who practise and preach yoga with great respect.

We have to note one important point about yoga: it is a method by which we can control the anarchical tendencies of the mind. Yoga is not for suppressing the mind. No, yoga is not an act of suppression. Even as we control the waters of a river through the method of canalization and use those channels for constructive purposes of irrigation in agriculture, in the same manner, the mental energy which is dissipated and distorted in emotional breakdowns, worries, jealousy, hostility, pride, egoism, passion, anger and greed must be channelled in the proper way or we will suffer dire mental problems. Who can say that a car doesn't need a brake? It may not be necessary to use a brake when the traffic is clear, but the car must still have a brake.

In the same manner, we have a mind, and the mind has its instincts. The mind has its own inhibitions and anarchical behaviour. Not all people are calm, peaceful and compassionate; not all people have a good mind. People are filled with lower thoughts, lower tendencies, and if no brake is applied, they can have an accident at any time. Therefore, yoga is a brake which allows us to control ourselves.

Transcending the environment

When your mind is happy, you must have the capacity to hold that happiness. If your mind is calm, you must have the capacity to hold it there. If the mind is taking you along the wrong path, you must say, "No, I don't want it," and you must bring it back. You must be like a trained horseman. You



must be like a good driver so that when the car is going at full speed and the traffic is according to your wish, you should be relaxed but still in control. You should use your car by all means. It does not mean that you should keep your car in the garage as an ornament and then go on foot. The message of yoga is to exercise the mind every day, just a little, so that you have conscious control over the reactions of the brain. This method is known as *dharana*, concentration, and *dhyana*, meditation, and can be done by each and every one. It is not necessary, nor is it right, to say that only sannyasins, saints, monks and mahatmas can practise it.

Everyone can and should do it. There is one widespread misunderstanding about *dhyana* which is that those who want *moksha*, salvation or liberation, can do *dhyana*, but those who are worldly people, given to the human needs of life, should not do *dhyana*. This is an unscientific and untenable statement. *Dhyana* is for those who want to have control over their mental tendencies whenever they need it, whether they have strong or weak minds.

Meditation or *dhyana* is very difficult as far as the practice is concerned. There are a large number of techniques. The first important aim in those techniques is to be able to transcend

the outer space or the environment. This is the first practice in meditation, one must be able to transcend the outer space, so that one forgets what is taking place outside. Any practice that can bring you to that particular point is called the practice of tranquillity. This space, this outer space about which one is aware twenty-four hours, should be transcended for a few minutes everyday, and when one has transcended the outer space or the outer consciousness, one develops peace and tranquillity within. The blood pressure throughout the body is completely adjusted, and not only that, carbon-dioxide, toxins, tensions in the cerebrum, in the cardiac region and everywhere slowly disappear. This practice of tranquillity is so difficult that one has to study a little about it.

There are numerous methods according to Indian tradition. One method is *nada yoga*, the method of tranquilizing the mind with the help of sound. The second method is *japa yoga* that is to coordinate a mantra with the natural breath. A third method is *trataka*, to look at a candle flame or concentrate on some point. There are other practices, such as the practice of *kundalini yoga*, in which the mind has to concentrate on the psychic centres in the body. However, if one practises the wrong technique which does not suit one's personality, then it will take years and years.

Approach of antar mouna

Yoga prescribes a method by which one can become the master of the thoughts. You need not control your thoughts. You need not kill your mind. You must only attain complete mastery over your thoughts. One who has attained mastery over the mind keeps it as a trained servant. When the mind is properly kept under control, it can help you in many ways.

In order to understand your mind, you have to practise *antar mouna*, inner silence. When you practise this yogic process, the suppressed *samskaras* or mental impressions are driven out from the deeper levels of the mind. While doing *shankhaprakshalana* or yogic cleansing you drink so much water; in the same way you have to do *japa* during

antar mouna. The mantra goes into the mind and scratches out the samskaras and tensions. According to the quality of your samskaras, sometimes you may see many insignificant thoughts; sometimes you will visualize terrifying ghosts or very beautiful scenes and landscapes. When the aspirant finds bad ideas or frightening figures coming out from the mind he becomes nervous. This is because he has never seen or experienced these things during the ordinary course of his life.

Especially when sitting for meditation, japa or prayer, a bundle of thoughts starts coming out. Why? The reason is that while meditating, you forget the outside world. The consciousness is withdrawn inside where you come across innumerable samskaras in various forms. These are the root cause of mental and physical ailments. When the aspirant looks at these petty and boring thoughts, he becomes desperate and stops his spiritual practices. He thinks that this process of sadhana is not suitable for him. Actually he should not stop, because this mental cleansing is necessary, it must happen.

When you enter a room after a long time, you find that everything is dirty, the floor and walls are covered with dust. In order to clean the room you have to put all the dirty things out. While sweeping, the dirt comes up. If you stop sweeping, the room will never be cleaned. Similarly, you cannot clean the mind unless you remove the dirt of worries, tensions and inhibitions by the practice of japa and antar mouna.

Most people have very vague ideas about their own problems; they have no liberal ideas. They think only on behalf of their society and traditions. The cause of disease is not only previous karmas; society is also responsible to a great extent. You have to make your mind very strong in order to attain mental peace. You have to separate yourself from the wrong habits and untruthful ways of society.

People try to escape from their adverse circumstances by playing cards, chess and reading rubbish novels. They go to see films for entertainment which means that they are not

self-content. They do not seek the real charm in life. This is not the solution to their problems. It is nothing but escape. The enmity or wars among the different countries, collapse of the societies, individual problems and worries are nothing but the product of unhealthy minds.

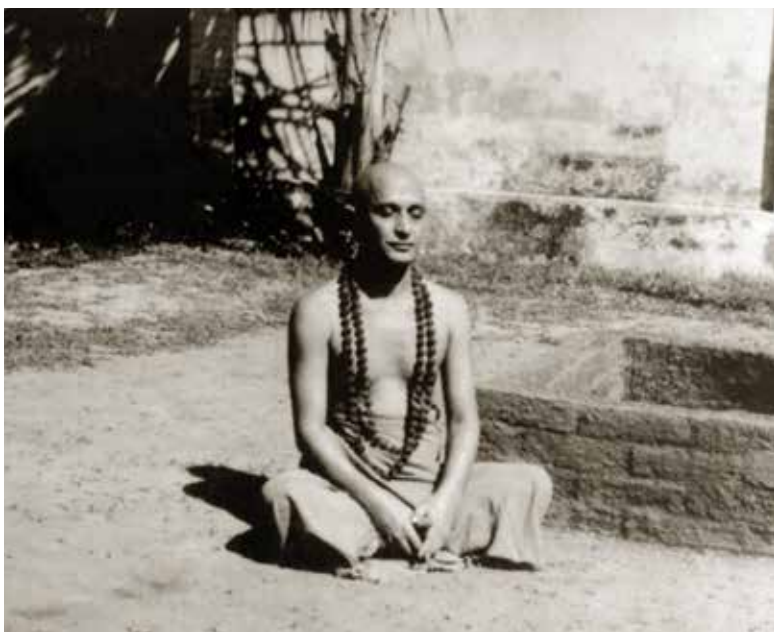
Everyone has mental suppressions. From a young age we have habitually suppressed 'nasty' thoughts and desires, and tried to forget bad experiences. But suppression does not solve the problem, for the thoughts merely stay submerged in the subconscious realms of the mind in seed form. Even if we are not conscious of them, these suppressed thoughts act from the subconscious to bring pain, unhappiness and frustration in life.

The members of a family always quarrel, and they become very upset at the death of their 'loved' ones. They lose all mental equilibrium when they have some kind of loss in their business. Therefore, you must learn to accept every situation, then you will find your own solution for all problems whether physical or mental.

You have to change your thoughts. You have to understand the right purpose, philosophy and higher meaning of life. Unless you know the right way to solve problems, your life will not run smoothly. As long as the elephant is strong and untamed, you have to understand and watch him very carefully, otherwise he will throw you. In the same way, as long as the mind is not under your control you have to make friends with it. Once you have become master of your mind you can treat it as you like, but definitely not in the initial stages. So while doing *antar mouna* and *japa*, you should leave the mind entirely free and witness its movements. Thus you will gradually be able to understand the mind.

Definition

The word *antar* means 'inner' and *mouna* means 'silence'. Therefore, the exact translation of *antar mouna* is 'inner silence'. *Antar mouna* is a meditative technique that leads to inner tranquillity and silence.



Antar mouna is an important meditation technique for everyone with a disturbed mind, unbalanced emotions and confused samskaras. For all those who are unable to concentrate their mind on one point, the practice of antar mouna will provide a basis for the process of self-cleaning. Inner silence has many graduated stages beginning with mental relaxation.

The practice of antar mouna should be done for about ten or fifteen minutes daily. Sitting quietly one may ask oneself, “What am I thinking? Am I thinking about business, family, relations, the future, the past? Am I thinking useful, useless, negative or good thoughts?” Everything must be allowed to come. Close the eyes and follow the thoughts that come into the mind without suppression. One just remains a seer, a witness, without being attached or detached, just looking at the thoughts impartially. Tranquillity will come within twenty minutes. When the mind is purified, concentration arises spontaneously.

2

Exploring Antar Mouna



The mind is like a naughty child; it does the opposite of what you want it to do. So if you try to shut out sense impressions, the mind automatically makes them more intense. If, on the other hand, you force the mind to think of external things while the eyes are closed, it will after some time tend to lose interest in the external sounds, etc., and will not associate with sense impressions. This state of mind,

called pratyahara, is exactly what we want for meditation. This idiosyncrasy of the mind is utilized in the yogic process called antar mouna, which is an excellent method of attaining pratyahara and preparing for meditation.

Inner silence is not 'not thinking'; it is really a positive state. The practice of inner silence, inner peace, is essential for success in spiritual sadhana. Inner silence is the true definition of silence, for silence is not the silence of speech. In inner silence, thought vibrations are stopped and finally remain suspended. The true meaning of inner silence will be understood if the thoughts that enter the mind are regarded as forms of mental disturbance. These mental disturbances prevent the experience of self-realization.

Inner peace is dynamic. Sleep and lethargy do not represent inner peace. This will bestow mental strength as well as psychological diversion. Once inner peace is obtained, nothing can shake the soul. Once established in this peace, sadhana becomes powerful and leads to self-realization.

Even though the complete course of inner silence is lengthy, one technique must be adopted to create a state of thoughtlessness. 'Stop thinking' is the 'Open Sesame' of sadhana, so learn the real art of sitting quietly. Give up the habit of merely sitting or lying quietly, and do not daydream, as it will undo your achievements. However, it is very difficult to sit quietly because the inner mind is always active, except when you truly meditate.

The psychological aspect

If you want to improve the physiological condition of the body and brain, if you want to train this grey matter, if you want to put this grey matter under control, then you have to choose for yourself those practices of yoga which relate to the body. If you are undergoing stress and strain, if you are suffering from anxiety, neurosis, nervous depression, fears, psychosis and personality errors, then in that case, you will have to choose for yourself those practices of yoga which control and relate to the psychological behaviour of man.

We live in a family, in a society, in an environment, where we have to suppress ourselves. Mankind as a whole is not free to act as he chooses, because he is not disciplined. If people throughout the world were more disciplined, we would have evolved to what we call a free society. We would be free to do what we like, go wherever we want. But we can't do it, because humanity today consists of anarchists, undisciplined people. If you tell everybody, 'Think as you like, do as you like', you know what can happen.

Therefore, in this undisciplined society, you have to suppress yourself. You suppress your emotions, thoughts, passions, anger, hatred, worries and love. You suppress your understanding too. This suppression overloads the mind. It is as if you have accumulated a lot of garbage and there is no place to throw it out. Then what are you going to do with the garbage? You have to keep it inside your house. For one day, two days, one month, two months, one year, two years, ten years, you pile the garbage up, and finally what will happen?

There will be foul smell, stinking, looking bad, sneezing, coughing, feeling very bad, nausea. You understand? This is going to happen. Now, how are you going to deal with that garbage which you have piled up in your house for the last 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70 years? Let it remain there and suffer, or throw it out the back gate in such a way that you don't wash your linen in another's courtyard? Throw it away you must, but how? You must choose those practices of yoga related to the psychological behaviour such as yoga nidra – the psychic sleep, or antar mouna – inner silence. These will help you.

Pratyahara – sense withdrawal

The Sanskrit word pratyahara is made up of two root words: prati and ahara. These root words have the following meanings: prati 'opposite', 'in opposition to'; ahara 'to fetch', 'bring back', also 'to take food'. Therefore, the literal meaning of pratyahara is 'to oppose the bringing back' or 'to oppose the taking of food'. In yoga, the word has a specific

meaning in conjunction with sense perception. It means that sense perception is opposed. We are continuously receiving impressions and data from the external world through the medium of the senses: eyes, ears, etc. These impressions are the food of the mind. They keep the mind in a continual state of agitation and extroversion. Pratyahara implies that this bringing back of sense data is opposed. The taking of 'food' for the senses is prevented.

In most of our waking life, perception is directed towards the outside world, by inducing pratyahara and preventing external perception, our perception remains inside the mind. This allows perception of the different layers of the mind. Pratyahara does not only mean cutting off external sense perception; in fact, this is only the first stage. Pratyahara in the real sense of the word means the state where one's perception is completely cut off from the thought processes. The practice is concerned with checking and curbing the outgoing tendencies of the mind so that awareness can be directed inwards. It is impossible to explore the inner realms of the mind if one is addicted to, disturbed and distracted by external sense experiences. Therefore, the sense experiences, such as sound, smell, sight, touch and taste, are cut. This is usually called sense withdrawal.

The fifth limb of raja yoga is pratyahara, the process of withdrawing the mind from the objects of sense experience. These are the external objects and the interior objects. What are the internal objects? They are the manifestation of our samskaras which are the mental impressions we have collected from our society and from our previous life. They are the karma, the mental archetypes, and there are millions and trillions of them. They have to come out, step by step, in the form of experience.

At a particular point in this practice, there comes a state of introversion, where one becomes more aware of the inside and less aware of the outside. Inner experiences occur. These experiences are not an indication of spiritual enlightenment, but they prove that the mind is becoming introverted. They

are psychic experiences, seeing objects, colours, light, feeling something moving in the spinal cord, and so on. When these non-empirical experiences start from within, you are ready for the next step in meditation, which is to hold your mind on one object or point.

Perfected pratyahara implies that both external sense perception and the thought processes are transcended. When this state is achieved then *dharana* or concentration will arise and eventually the state of *dhyana* or meditation. What I mean to say is that, when you have these experiences, please do not think that you are somewhere on the mountain, and do not try to bypass these practices which are necessary and which are enjoined. Then, at the end of your pratyahara practice, such as nada yoga, trataka, mantra japa, *Om* chanting, antar mouna, or even drugs, you have the experience related to the perfection of pratyahara.

Samskara

The impressions or samskaras imprinted on you during childhood or even in the mother's womb are experienced by you later in life. During your childhood, you undergo a lot of experiences about which you have no knowledge. When you are born, when you are one year, six months or even three months old, you don't understand what is happening around you but the inner spirit, the inner man is exposed to everything clearly.

What you are experiencing today as grown-up people, you have already experienced from when you were a child. Parents are careless; they think that a baby is ignorant and so their expressions, their behaviour are not proper. With each and every action, they are exposing the child to a certain karma or samskara. This seed, which forms in the personality during childhood, grows and later that becomes your personality. Therefore, through the practice of antar mouna, you must try to go back to your childhood and realize what mistakes your parents have committed.

Learn to disidentify

When a thought comes into my mind, I begin to see that thought as different from me. And that can be done with every experience of the mind, whether it is the experience of pain or pleasure. Even if it is a divine experience, or if you see your guru or your deity, you should still disidentify yourself, separate yourself. That is witnessing. Usually, when I am thinking of something very pleasant, I become one with the process of thinking. I do not even know that I am thinking. Only after an hour or so, do I realize, ‘Oh, I have been thinking about this or that’. This is the identification between the thinker and the thought. What we are trying to do is to disidentify these two. I am not the thinker; I am not the thought; I am the witness of both of them. I am not the senses; I am not the sense object, but I am the seer of all of them.

Therefore, the karmas should not be suppressed. They should come out. Let them come! However, you must learn how to disidentify before you try to express them. This is an important point and this is where everyone is making a big mistake. You start to meditate without learning to disidentify. You do not know how to practise *antar mouna*, how to see a thought, a form, a vision, a colour, how to hear a sound or music within the mind. They appear and disappear. You must observe each one with an attitude of detachment – ‘I’m not that; that is different’.

Most of the time, however, you try to combine an experience with feelings – that’s the problem! Fear is nothing, but when you combine fear with feeling, then it creates fright. The idea of death is nothing. You can see yourself lying there in the coffin. There is no problem as long as you can just observe it, but when you combine that experience with feeling, then there is fright. So, *vairagya* or disidentification has to be learned first, then you can practise meditation.

When an experience passes through your consciousness and you have learned how to disidentify, that seed dies. If you take a few seeds of wheat or coriander and sow them,

they will germinate, but if you fry them first and then sow them, they will not germinate. A karma, a samskara or an archetype, becomes actionless when it is processed through disidentification. Therefore, in the scheme of yoga and meditation and in your life, you must learn how to disidentify: how to separate the seer and the experience. This is important.

Purging the mind

You have to see all these things in your practice of *antar mouna*, and if you don't want to see them, then the natural course of evolution will make you see them. That is why I have always and everywhere been telling people that in the field of concentration of the mind, the more the vacillation, the better it is for your spiritual evolvement. The more the karmas and the thoughts come to the surface, the better it is for your spiritual illumination. Let them come. If they don't, if concentration begins at once, there is something wrong.

Often the outward signs of this process of becoming aware are mistaken for symptoms of schizophrenia by our medical professors, teachers and scientists. If it is schizophrenia, then every man will become schizophrenic before he evolves into another plane of higher existence. Matter has to be split, only then can the energy explode, not in any other way. Matter cannot remain the same if energy is to come out. The mind has to be blown, broken and disintegrated. The *samskaras* must be broken. The emotions and the various aspects of the mind have to be separated.

The soul has to pass out all the karmas. The mind has to purge out its previous knowledge, its previous experience. Even if you don't believe in the previous birth, at least believe in this birth. During the years of your life, how many experiences have you had? How many things have you perceived? Where are they now, and where do they come from? Those karmas, those *samskaras*, those seeds, those latent impressions of this life or the past lives, have to be experienced, have to be thrown out, have to be purged.

Conclusion

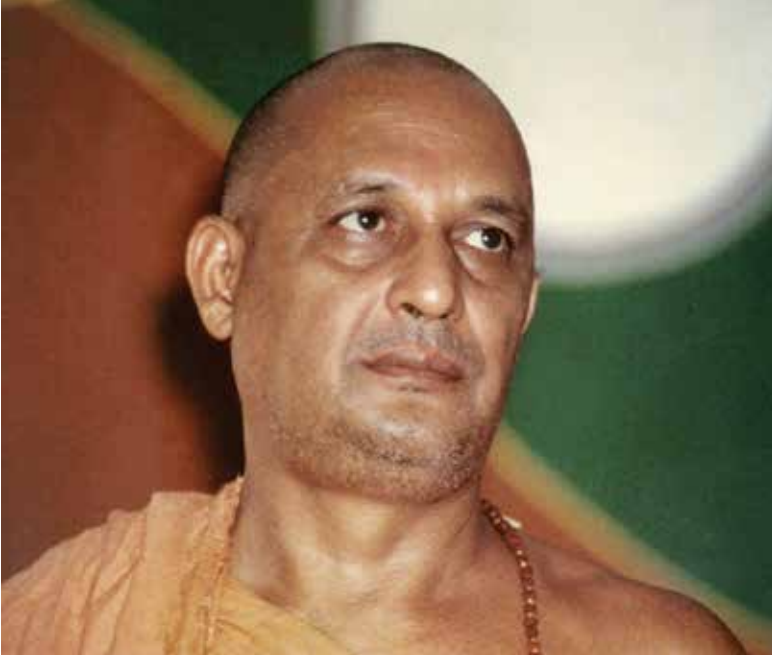
The entire process of antar mouna is concerned with inducing pratyahara as a means to meditation. Without pratyahara, meditation is impossible, and pratyahara itself is not easy. This is why so few people actually experience the higher state of meditation, but if one approaches one's mind systematically, then meditation will arise. If the approach is incorrect then meditation is unlikely to occur even if you practise twenty-four hours a day for twenty years. So remember the order carefully: firstly pratyahara, then dharana and then dhyana. If you follow the stages of antar mouna in the correct sequence and perfect each stage, then you will automatically tread the right path.

Antar mouna is very systematic. Firstly, it increases one's resistance to external disturbances. Then it allows subconscious thoughts and pent-up emotions to slowly bubble up to conscious perception. One directly confronts the contents of the subconscious mind: long forgotten memories, fears, hatreds and so forth. Thoughts and feelings that have been hidden for years come to the surface and are exhausted. Gradually the mind is harmonized over a period of time. The mind becomes progressively tranquil and one-pointed.

The aim is eventually to transcend rational thought. When this occurs, meditation will take place. The aim of meditation is to dive deeper into the mind, beyond the realms of rational thought. A stage is reached where thoughts and emotions from the subconscious tend to be almost insignificant. These are merely the remnants, the most overpowering thoughts and emotions having previously been exhausted. These minor thoughts cause little harm and are more a nuisance than anything else. At this stage, the thought processes of the mind can be suppressed to induce a state of thoughtlessness. This can eventually lead to the state of meditation and perception of one's being. This perception, more than anything else in life, will transform one's understanding of existence and one's place in the universe.

3

Stages of Antar Mouna



Antar mouna belongs to the fifth step of raja yoga called pratyahara, withdrawal or retreat. Most aspirants would like to practise meditation immediately, without any proper understanding. They fail to understand that it is not possible to be in dhyana without the help of the senses and

the mind. Unless one is able to withdraw the senses in a systematic manner without any touch of suppression, it will not be possible to go into dhyana. Therefore, antar mouna, being one of the practices of pratyahara, is a wonderful practice to learn. Individual awareness is cut off from the sense perceptions, the mind is drawn within and one becomes aware of inner phenomena. This practice is divided into six stages.

Stages of antar mouna

1. Awareness of sense perceptions
2. Awareness of spontaneous thought process
3. Conscious creation of thoughts
4. Awareness and disposal of spontaneous thoughts
5. Thoughtlessness
6. Psychic symbol awareness

STAGE I – AWARENESS OF SENSE PERCEPTIONS

Withdrawal of the senses is pratyahara. There are five senses, five sense experiences and five sense objects. How is it possible to withdraw the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching? First you close your eyes and become aware of the remaining sense experiences around you however disturbing they may be. For example, there may be a sound in the next room or even in the same room with you. You must try to analyze the sound, understand it and grasp the significance of it. You must separate the sense from the sense experience and only become aware of the experience of sound vibration. To illustrate this further, imagine a bell is ringing. First we consider the ear, second the bell, and third the sound of the bell. You must be aware of the sound which is the sense experience. The bell, the sense object, belongs to the outer world. By realizing it you accomplish the first step of sense withdrawal.

It is important that you realize that it is not an absent-minded comprehension, but rather a present-minded

awareness of the objective reality which you are trying to grasp. You may take one experience and analyze it fully, or you may take many, one right after the other, but sooner or later you must come to the point where you are able to analyze and understand the perception. Then the experience alone remains – devoid of the object, and later it is devoid of the subject as well. If you can achieve this, then you have perfected the first stage of antar mouna where you get rid of external experiences.

It is possible to practise this stage anywhere. Become aware of external events. Intentionally direct perception to the outer world. Generally, the eyes are closed so that sense impressions will be received mainly through the ears in the form of sound. One can also be aware of the senses of touch and smell. The purpose of this stage is to reduce the influence of outside impressions on one's perception. It is a case of 'familiarity breeding contempt'. Intentional perception of the outside world leads automatically to disinterest. The mind ceases to be interested or disturbed by external sounds, etc.

Rationale

The purpose of antar mouna stage 1 is to eventually induce a state of introversion in preparation for stage 2. Most people have been conditioned since birth to remain extroverted; there is almost an addiction to outside stimuli. Until one becomes introverted it is impossible to start exhausting negative subconscious data from the mind.

The practice is designed to neutralize responses to external phenomena; to become detached and unaffected by the outer world, even if only for a short period of time. This introversion is essential for meditative practice. Many people know this and they try to force themselves to be introverted. They fight their mind and force it to ignore sense impressions. This merely builds up tension and prevents meditation. Therefore, the first stage of antar mouna does not try to suppress the inclination to perceive outer sense data. In fact, the method of this stage prescribes intentional

awareness of the outer world. Perceive outer impressions. Let them arise. In time you will automatically become introverted. You will spontaneously lose interest in the outside world.

The mechanics of external perception

For the sake of explanation, we can say that there are three main factors involved in external sense perception. These are:

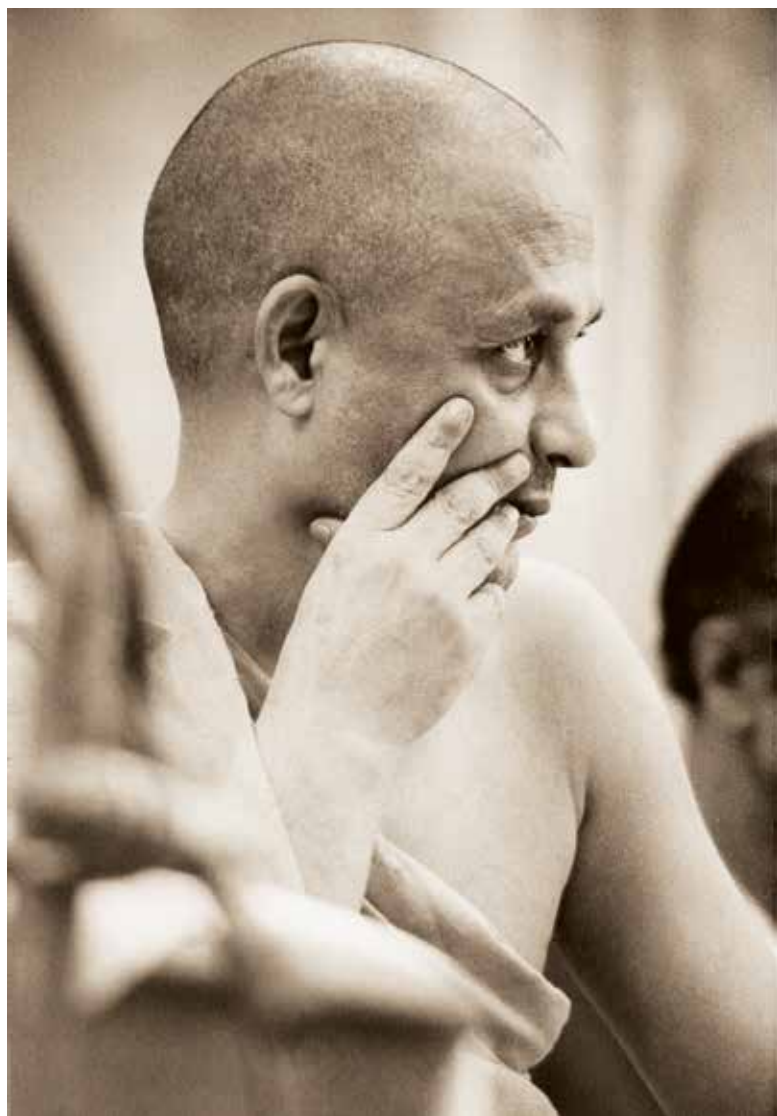
1. The sense organ – transmitter of perception
2. The object of perception
3. Consciousness – the inner perceiver

These three factors are involved in all sense perceptions whether hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting or touching.

Consider the act of hearing for example. The sense organ that receives sound vibration is the ear. The source of a sound is an external object, perhaps a car horn. The third factor is that which perceives sound – the inner consciousness. Without this inner consciousness nothing can be perceived. Furthermore, from the point of view of consciousness, both the ear and the source of the sound are external. This also applies to smell and the nose, form and the eyes, taste and the tongue and touch and the skin. They are all external to the inner consciousness. This consciousness is the *drashta* or seer in the innermost depths and centre of your being. When this consciousness can be separated and dissociated from the external sense organs and objects, then one can begin to explore the subconscious mind. This is the aim of stage 1.

Readiness for Stage 2

The aim is to reach a stage where one is completely accustomed to and detached from outside sensations, especially sounds, so that they do not influence the mind. It is possible to introvert and be unaffected even if a train passes nearby, or even if a mosquito starts buzzing around you. If you have reached this stage, then you are ready to proceed to stage 2.



Stage 1 induces the first part of pratyahara; that is disassociation of the senses from the outside world. This then, is the first step of antar mouna. It is the first step in the esoteric life and the first step to *samadhi*, self-realization.

STAGE 2: AWARENESS OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT PROCESS

Be aware of any spontaneous thought that may arise. You must have the awareness that you are thinking certain thoughts under compulsion and also that there are thoughts that are coming to you without your wanting them. The thoughts coming to the consciousness level from the subconscious level are called *samskaras*, impressions.

If you sit for a while, a number of thoughts will come to you without any reference or context. For example, you may be eating a delicious dinner and suddenly a thought comes to you that the previous night you did not have a good rest. This thought is irrelevant. While resting in bed various thoughts may suddenly come to you. These are called spontaneous thoughts. They are embedded in your personality and do not necessarily need any external stimuli. If you see a church and a pious or an evil thought comes to you, it is not considered to be spontaneous, but if the thought of a mango comes instead, then it is a spontaneous thought, because it was not stimulated by the sight of the church. It is a voluntary expression of a certain part of your personality, which modern psychology terms subconscious.

Layers of the mind

In Vedanta it is referred to as the *sukshma sharira*, or the subtle body. Sukshma sharira, or the astral body in the doctrine of karma, is known as a samskara, the latent impressions embedded in your life. As the smoke comes out of the coal in a kitchen, in the same manner a few thoughts come out of the accumulated thoughts. What we usually do the moment these thoughts come to us is take them up, if they are good ones, and send them back if they are bad or painful. The bad thoughts that are sent back are not exhausted or used up unless, of course, you are a jnani or viveki. Practically all bad thoughts are sent back to the subconscious while most of the good ones are exhausted.

The result is that the subconscious vessel is filled with bad thoughts and devoid of good ones. Therefore, in the practice of antar mouna we concentrate on calming down the disturbances of the *indriyas*, senses, and become aware of spontaneous thoughts which arise from the subconscious. The best way to accomplish this is to make your mind aware that you are going to practise 'being aware of your thoughts'. Say to yourself, 'I am trying to be aware of my thoughts'.

Usually it is different with each individual. Here are a few examples. You feel that you are sitting in a corner of your mind and looking at the inner space or *chidakasha*. You are constantly repeating the mantra 'I want to see my thoughts; which thought is passing through me? Am I thinking or am I not thinking? What am I thinking?' Sometimes, even while you are aware of the entire thought process, a thought slips by without you noticing it. Only when it has passed the area of your observation do you become aware of it. For example, 'I was thinking about a mango, but while I was thinking about it, I was not aware that I was thinking'.

Outwardly we feel that we think, but actually the thinking takes place in the subconscious plane of the mind. It is like looking out at a crowd of people where you are able to see all the faces but not any one individually. You may, however, remember them the next day. A thought does not take much time, especially if it is spontaneous. A conscious thought takes longer. While practising this, an aspirant should be constantly alert; never moving his body, never scratching, never sleeping. He should be aware of whatever he does physically, mentally, subconsciously, voluntarily, and involuntarily at all times.

Sometimes there is momentary absent-mindedness. For the correction of this there is another practice. If you sit down on your veranda, for example, and you look down the road – the road is clear, no one is on the road – think that it is your consciousness. Then, there appears someone on the road. You will see shadows moving. They are the shadows of your thoughts. That is the higher state of antar mouna. This

will be possible only for those who are good at visualization. Then, the road disappears and the shadows remain.

The witness

The other way is to act as a witness or *sakshi* as it is called in Vedanta. We say, "I am a witness and I want to know what thoughts are in my mind." Now, sit down anywhere and try to remain aware of your spontaneous thought process. You may experience that the whole chidakasha is empty and there is no thought. Then you should say to yourself, "Now, no thoughts are coming, and I am only aware of the empty space." This practice becomes more and more inspiring and enlightening as you proceed further and further.

If you practise this for about two months, you may see yourself in the lap of your mother at the age of two. In this process the mind usually goes back into the past and never into the future. Women find this practice easier than men.

In the second stage of antar mouna when you are supposed to carefully witness the spontaneous flow of your thoughts, you may be able to observe your thoughts either before they come to the conscious plane, while they are on the conscious plane or after they have left the conscious plane. It all depends on the careful observation and attitude of the mind. If you are alert you may be able to predict a thought before it comes to the conscious plane, but if you are absent-minded you may not be able to detect the thought until the next day. A person is not only able to think one thought at one time, but he can think of many thoughts in a fraction of a second.

Do not fight with your thoughts, maintain an impartial attitude. If thoughts come to your mind let them do so. With closed eyes remain a witness of various thoughts coming into your mind and do not try consciously to control the thought processes. Do not be disturbed when various thoughts overwhelm you. Nor should you try to trim or eliminate those thoughts. Just close your eyes and become a witness. Feel as if the thoughts are passing before you gradually as a goods train

does. In this process of inner silence, you should be aware that you are thinking; “I am thinking” – this consciousness has to be constantly kept alive in the mind. The only caution to be taken is not to become identified with the thoughts. The awareness of the thinking process should be maintained all throughout. This is the first practice in inner silence. This practice evolves a technique which operates subjectively and brings about a state of cessation in the process of thinking. In case of impure thoughts, awaken an awareness that you are only witnessing them while they are passing through your mental plane.

If you do not become identified with such thoughts, they will be suspended without any effort. You should not be disturbed by them. You should also not feel elated by good thoughts and think that your meditation is very nice, just because only good thoughts come to you. Thoughts of any type, shade and dimension, whether good or bad, should be merely observed without any involvement. By practising continuously for a few days, inner silence becomes clear and ultimately, the last stage of ‘seeing the thoughts’ is achieved. After a successful round of practice, thoughts will no more remain as gross ideas, but they will appear in their astral forms as visions. Every thought then will become an astral reality with subtle dimensions.

Awareness

The importance of awareness needs to be emphasized. Try not to identify with thoughts . . . try to remain a witness. Try to imagine that you are watching television: the thoughts and visions are the program and you are the viewer. This attitude is essential in order to gain the fullest benefits from the practice.

In the beginning you will definitely identify with the thoughts. You will become absent-minded and entangled in them. Then a few seconds or minutes later you will realize with a sudden jolt that you were totally absorbed and caught in the net of thoughts. You will know that you lost awareness. Do not worry, for this tendency to become lost in thoughts

and identify with them is part of human conditioning since birth. All you must do is to be more alert. Try to maintain the attitude of a witness . . . be aware.

Path of introspection

This is the path of introspection. It is not a good experience for most of us. In advance, you must always remind yourself of this. In practising introspection, the impurity comes up. It is only in samadhi, and not in dhyana, that all the purities such as peace, bliss and light appear. The practice of antar mouna expels negative thoughts because it is a kind of self-eliminator of the negative impurities. You either enter a state of chidakasha where there are no thoughts, a vacuum state, in which you only remember bad acts or you see all the people who caused you pain or trouble. The longer you practise the more experiences you will see. It only becomes clear in the end. Symbolic expressions come up. Events that your conscious mind hates to remember appear. This will only happen when you have stepped into the subconscious.

If you have these subconscious explosions during antar mouna, the best method of eliminating them is to write them down in a diary or to tell someone whom you trust. That is important. The most common experiences are: snakes, good food, hundreds of people moving everywhere, jungles, swimming in water, the fear of being drowned and flight in space. You now have the conscious manifestation of all the thoughts, desires and experiences that you do not want to know. They must constantly be analyzed. For example, if you have a thought about the fear of drowning, it is not sufficient to say that you just have a fear complex. Rather, it may be looked upon as a symbolic manifestation of some action or actions in the past which you do not want to remember. There must be an interpretation of these thoughts.

When should we give up the second stage and go on to the next stage? Thoughts come and go; that is the second stage. Next, visions appear and you cannot understand them; you are afraid of them, and conscious thoughts become less

and less. Now is the time for the yogi to go on immediately to the third stage.

The yogi does not continue on and on with the second stage because he knows that all his thoughts can never be exhausted. To a certain extent you have to manifest them and then you must check them.

Rationale

The purpose of this stage is to exhaust negative thoughts, complexes, phobias, etc. from the subconscious mind. Suppressed thoughts remain unexpressed and emotionally charged and act as a block in the mind. In life we build up a vast accumulation of suppressed thoughts. They cause unhappiness and tension in life. They keep the mind in a continual state of disturbance. They tend to cause states of depression and dissatisfaction without any obvious reason. The purpose of antar mouna stage 2 is to slowly exhaust these thoughts, to purge the mind. It is a process of mental shankhaprakshalana. In this stage one becomes aware of the spontaneous samskaras exploding from the subconscious realms of the mind. This is the stage where the grosser neuroses, phobias and tensions of the mind are released. You will relive many past experiences and experience the eruption of suppressed desires. There should be absolutely no suppression.

The progression of Stage 2

Antar mouna stage 2 is concerned with passive awareness of the thinking process. One should allow all thoughts to arise in the mind without suppression. Some thoughts may be disagreeable and repulsive, but don't reject them. Even if you have thoughts of murder, revenge, jealousy, hatred, etc. you should not suppress them. Allow all thoughts to bubble up without exception.

Do not make any effort to create thoughts. Let them arise naturally . . . and disappear naturally. It is not necessary to try to think, only let the thoughts arise spontaneously.

Simultaneously you should try to be a witness of the thinking. You should try to remain a disinterested spectator of everything that occurs in your mind.

You may experience periods of time where the mind seems blank, thoughts stop. It is unlikely that you are in samadhi. This period of blankness means that you have habitually fastened down the lid of the mind so tightly that thoughts cannot arise freely. That is, strong suppression prevents thoughts arising. Merely watch the mind and thoughts will soon start to arise again. Do not try to create thoughts during these periods of blankness. Only wait for the spontaneous flow of thoughts to start again.

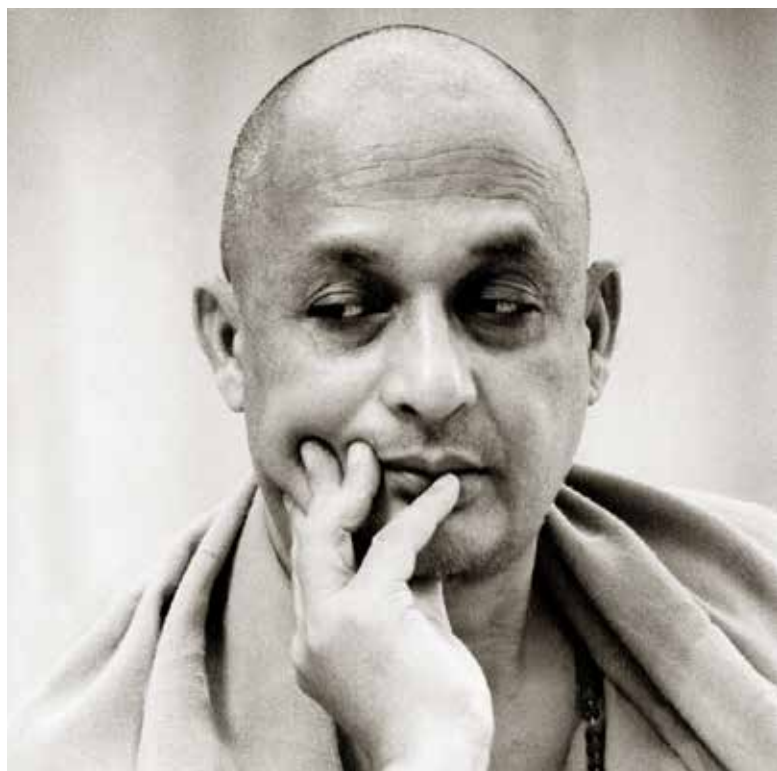
After regular practice over a period of time you may start to see thoughts that you did not think existed in your mind. You may relive childhood memories. Thoughts will arise which you tried hard to forget. Fears may show themselves very vividly: fear of snakes, spiders, mice, fear of drowning, fear of the dark and so many other mental phobias. Whatever arises, try to remain an impassive witness.

As you begin to perceive deeper parts of the subconscious mind you may see visions – they may be beautiful or they may be grotesque and frightening. These are the more subtle forms of thoughts. Let them arise without suppression. Merely observe them without like or dislike. These visions must also be exhausted for they too are part of the veil of the subconscious mind.

Regular practice of antar mouna stage 2 will gradually purge the mind of suppressed thoughts. Eventually it can lead to a state of mental tranquillity and one-pointedness.

Readiness for Stage 3

Total exhaustion of negative thoughts and emotions is impossible. Therefore, the second stage must be left at an earlier point even though it is not really completed. You should proceed to stage 3 when you have spent a month or so practising stage 2 and when your mind becomes reasonably calm and trouble free.



STAGE 3: CONSCIOUS CREATION OF THOUGHTS

The third stage is very important. It is one of the meditations that can be found expressed in a different way in Buddhist meditation. It is constant self-analysis, called *atma vichara*. This third exercise is the preliminary stage of *atma vichara*. Modern psychology has something similar.

Remember, the first stage is to be practised until an undisturbed attitude to the outer objects has developed. The second stage should be practised until the horrible dimensions of the psyche have appeared. Then and only then should you proceed to the third stage. Please remember that diary writing is an important method that can be added to this practice.

It will not be difficult for you to understand the third stage because you do the exact opposite of the second stage. You may say that it is a counterpose. Unlike everything being spontaneous in the second stage, in the third stage everything is done at will. You should not allow any spontaneous thought to arise unless you want it. If a spontaneous thought does come, then you should immediately try to dispose of it. Do not allow it to occupy your mind. This is very important.

This stage is meant to get control over the thoughts and their automatic flow. You have to create a new thought and mental image at will; after observing for some time, you cancel it and replace it by some new thought. For example, you think of a garden, visualize it, move in it, see its beauty and then replace the whole scene by a library hall with people reading books and newspapers. Then replace this by a flower, such as a rose. Watch it, then replace it with a church scene. Bring different things or scenes and go on replacing one with the other. Try to visualize as clearly as you do when you see with eyes open. Don't lose command or control over the thoughts.

Rationale

The mind is full of negatively charged thoughts, *samskaras*. *Antar mouna* stage 2 helps to release many of these mental tensions by allowing them to erupt without inhibition. However, many of these subconscious thoughts are deeply embedded in the normally inaccessible regions of the mind. They have been firmly fixed and rooted in the mind through habitual suppression. Therefore, they do not arise spontaneously. They have to be loosened from their hold on the mind by another method. One method is stage 3 where one chooses specific thoughts at will. These posed thoughts stir up a train of other associated thoughts, some of which may be deeply embedded complexes of the mind. That is, the consciously created thoughts tend to excite and arouse deeper thoughts and memories.

We can best illustrate the function of stage 3 with an analogy. If one goes fishing, bait is fixed on a hook; this bait

may be a worm or even another fish. This represents the consciously created thought. The bait is put in the water; this represents the subconscious mind. The bait attracts many hungry fish; these are the deeply embedded subconscious thoughts. Eventually a fish will be caught on the hook and lifted out of the water. This represents the removal of the previously suppressed thought. If you repeatedly put the baited hook in the water, then you will bring out more fish. If you create different conscious thoughts, then you will hook and exhaust more subconscious thoughts.

The posing of conscious thoughts stirs up the mind and releases knots and blocks. It helps you to relive suppressed memories and feelings. that adversely influence your life from behind the scenes. When the memories, fears, etc. are fully confronted then they lose much of their force. The mind slowly becomes more and more peaceful.

Eliminating spontaneous thought

How do you get rid of a spontaneous thought? First of all, you close your eyes and start thinking about some theme. It must consist of a sequence of events that were thought by you in a conscious manner. For example, you might say, "I have misplaced my notes. Now, where did I see them last? At home? No, I remember that I took them from home in the morning." You see, you must invite a thought and then expand it in a definite way, but do not let a thought come of its own accord. If a thought comes and says, "Please think about me," you should reply, "No, I do not want you, I want only thoughts which I will think." This is an exercise to develop a conscious thought and then to eliminate it. If any conscious thought or experience that has taken place in your life is not eliminated, or at least not immediately analyzed, it will proceed directly to the subconscious mind. Once it enters your subconscious mind, it becomes a *samskara* and is a behind-the-scene influencing factor in life.

Therefore, in spiritual life, you must be able to recall at will past experiences of your life. If you are looking at

impulses, you must give all thoughts to them. The whole thing should be clear before you. This is how you eliminate the conscious thought. Psychology also accepts the idea that if any conscious experience is properly analyzed it loses its force, and that is the purpose of this exercise.

Choice of thoughts and images

You can choose any thoughts that you wish, but don't waste your time choosing inconsequential thoughts. Choose negative thoughts in preference to positive thoughts; the more unpleasant, the better. Choose a thought such as: 'That man cheated me of money' or 'I really hate my boss'. This type of thoughts are much more likely to induce subconscious eruptions of other thoughts and emotions.

Try to remember the things that you did in the previous twenty-four hours, hour by hour. Or think about the train journey to your place of work. Let your mind follow all the events that happen on the journey. Or choose a thought such as: "Where did I lose my umbrella?" Expand this line of thought: "I left it in the train; no, I had it later, because I prodded someone with it when I reached my destination, yet it definitely wasn't with me when I left work." And so forth. Choose any thought and follow it. Do not let the mind wander off the chosen theme. Keep it on one track. Create as many thoughts as you can around the idea. Let your thoughts follow a sequence. Create vivid mental images, the more unpleasant, the better. These images can be integrated with the thought sequence. You will find that it is a good method of awakening suppressed subconscious thoughts, images and experiences.

Thoughts have no end, for one thought leads to another and that thought in turn leads to another. Therefore, after a certain period of time you have to cut your thought sequence, you have to leave it and create a new sequence. You can spend half an hour on one theme, especially if it is a thought sequence that is particularly disturbing. However, in general a few minutes on each thought sequence is enough.

Try not to repeat the same thought sequence, for this is a waste of valuable time. Create new trains of thought and exhaust them. Throw them out of the mind. You will develop the habit of confronting conscious thoughts and then exhausting them. This is a great help in bringing peace into the mind.

Good versus bad thoughts

When you are given the freedom to express any thought of your choice you should select a bad thought rather than a good one, because it is easy to think of good thoughts and it is also easy to get rid of them, but it is difficult to get rid of bad thoughts. Therefore, try to develop a method or technique by which you are able to throw out the negative thoughts from your mind. When a good thought comes to you about a certain person, and you think that he is a good person, a wonderful friend, and so on, but when you think one bad thought about him it destroys all the good thoughts. Now, you wish to throw out this bad thought and resume the good thoughts, but you find that you cannot. It usually happens this way and people spend sleepless nights and restless days worrying about the bad thought. They have probably tried several ways of getting rid of the bad thought, but almost always fail.

Therefore, in this third stage in antar mouna you invite a bad thought or at least a thought that you consider to be bad. You dwell on the thought for a while and become one with it, then you give your mind a jerk and throw the thought out. At this time, you should invite another new thought to your mind and start the exercise again. When the bad thought comes, think it over, dwell on it for a while and then throw it out. Only think of those thoughts that have a destructive influence on your mind.

You must always take thoughts of a very heavy dimension. A typical thought would be, 'I have an enemy who has been troubling me for so many years. Whenever I am conscious of him I feel terrible and want to kill him'. This is the type of thought you must dwell on and then dispose of at will, quickly.

I believe that if you think of more than three thoughts in one practice it will be too much for you. You must complete one whole theme and the theme must be of your own planning. By this I do not mean that you should complete the theme right up to the present – that is, you should think up to a certain extent and then cut it off. Do not repeat the same thought twice; that is known as brooding. When you think about a certain place in one thought scheme, and then the same place returns in a later thought, you should say, “What is the use of this same thought again?”

The mind has a certain brooding tendency and likes to return to the same thought again and again. When you finish a theme you must tell yourself, “Yes, now this thought is finished. This will not be thought of again.” If you like the topic very much, you will not completely stop thinking about it. Then, you must say, “I am going to think about this topic again,” and so on. There will come a certain movement in your thinking process and your mind will say, “Enough,” and the thinking of the topic will be finished. Possibly some portion of the thought will remain. There may be a mild suppression of the topic but it will be only mild, because most of the topic will have been analyzed.

Again, you should pose a thought, dwell on it for some time and then get rid of it. This process must be strictly followed. If any other thought spontaneously comes to you it is your duty to reject it immediately. After this you should practise a state of thoughtlessness for a few moments before you take up another thought.

In spiritual life eliminating bad thoughts is a useful practice. This is the only way that you can know the fundamental nature of a thought. If this practice is continued for fifteen or more days, you can develop a spontaneous psychological conditioning with which you will be able to set aside any thought at will. You will know how to set aside the bad thoughts. You must remember one important thing while you are practising – you are practising *antar mouna* and not just merely thinking.

There are also thoughts that have no form. They do not have any particular dimension. You will not have any trouble disposing of them. I am only concerned about good and bad thoughts, divine and undivine. The formless thought such as, 'I must take a bath' or 'I must go to the toilet', are called *nitya-karma* or routine thoughts. They do not create a *samskara*. You must not concern yourself about these thoughts.

Forms of thoughts

Sometimes you will find that you are thinking about a thought that came spontaneously. The spontaneous thought gets mixed up with your conscious posing of thoughts. Therefore, it is better if you choose more than one thought and then pick out a certain thought with which you develop a theme. In this manner you will make sure that you will not select a spontaneous thought. For instance, you may say mentally, 'Now I am going to think about this trip or that trip or my friend'. You must also remember to choose the thought that is the most difficult for you to get rid of. It is no use choosing an easy thought.

During the practice of *antar mouna* you will find yourself, for a short time, engrossed in a state of momentary depression because the mind revolts against analysis. Every mind does not like to be analyzed. The more you try to practise, the more resistance you will meet. Minds that are attached to the worldly pleasures do not like to be analyzed. Therefore, it is best if you practise this exercise simply and as naturally as you can.

You will also come across the experience of rejecting a thought without completely analyzing it. This may take place for any number of reasons depending on what your thought was about. Here, part of the thought becomes suppressed. It will remain unexpressed in your subconscious mind. You will not be able to help it as you know *vasanas*, hidden desires, are endless. If you think that you should think of a thought completely, you can be sure that you can never finish it in this life. You see, there is no end to it; one thought leads to another and that thought to another, and so on. It is better

to think a thought two thirds through and then get rid of it rather than brood over the same thing day in and day out.

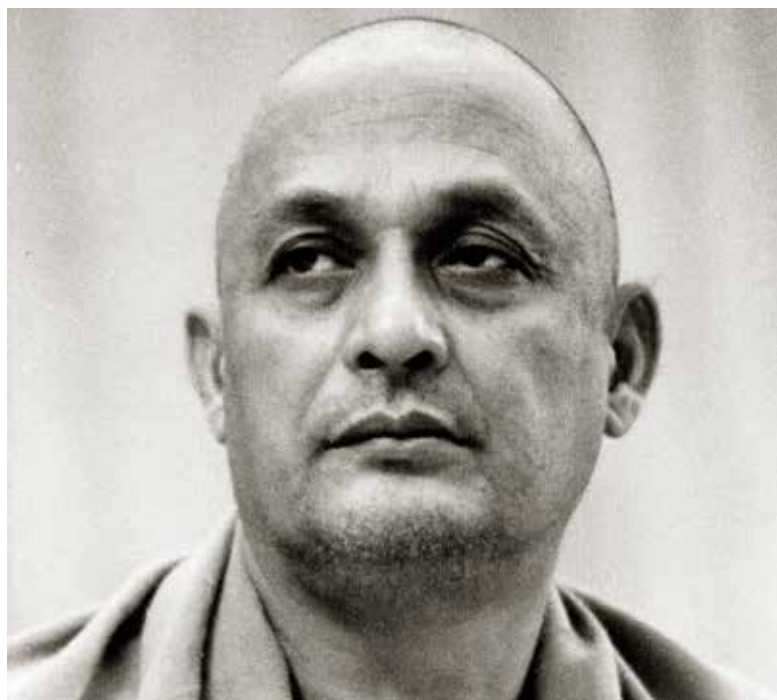
If you continue brooding, the thought will only embed itself further and further or deeper and deeper in your subconscious. You must think that a thought must be checked at a particular stage and not be allowed to continue further.

Attaining mastery over thoughts

Yoga has prescribed a method by the application of which an aspirant can become the master of his thoughts. He need not control his thoughts. He need not kill his mind. He must only attain complete mastery over his thoughts. He who has attained mastery over his mind keeps it as his trained servant. When the mind is properly kept under control, it can help you in many ways. One of the methods to train the mind consists of creating a particular thought voluntarily and dwelling upon it for some time, and then rejecting it altogether. Here, you voluntarily create any thought of your liking and after thinking it for some minutes, you set it aside by your will force. It is much better if you start with lower thoughts.

That is to say, you should voluntarily create and dwell upon the themes of jealousy, anger, greed and the like for some time, and finally set them aside with a mental stroke. It is because the mind is very much used to sticking to lower thoughts and, in fact, lower thoughts act as various centres of gravity to our consciousness. Pious thoughts are soon forgotten and the mind finds it easy to slip away from good thoughts, while it is almost a task to detach its interest from lower thoughts. Thoughts of jealousy, anger, greed, fear, emotion, passion, pride and the like seem to have greater affinity with the mind, while peace, compassion, love, forgiveness and the like are usually missed by the mind during meditation. Good resolves are always forgotten, while evil intentions stay on.

Do not get attached to the thought. Practise it with detachment. Have a vivid imagination of what you are thinking. Sometimes, while thinking there will be confusion. You will not be able to testify what you think. When this happens



you must at once meditate upon your ishta devata. Keep in view a few important points for meditation on the ishta devata. Try to think of the particular deity through general observances. Think of the whole picture of your ishta devata, the place where it is kept and the surroundings. Have a vivid imagination of all this, from general to particular. The third stage of antar mouna is now over.

Readiness for Stage 4

After a certain period of regular practice of stage 3 you will find that spontaneous thoughts occur before you can choose a thought on which to dwell. The frequency and intensity of these thoughts is so great and overwhelming that you will find it difficult to decide on one thought for analysis. There is a state of psychic confusion. You are then ready to proceed to stage 4.

STAGE 4 – AWARENESS AND DISPOSAL OF SPONTANEOUS THOUGHTS

After you have practised the three stages of antar mouna you will find that after the third stage, before you are able to pose a thought, thoughts will spontaneously come to your mind. Their frequency, the number of thoughts coming one after another, will create so much pressure that you will find it difficult to pose any thought at all. It is now that the fourth stage should come in.

In the third stage, occurrence and disposal of thoughts were at will. In this stage, occurrence will be spontaneous and disposal at will. Suppose you see a dog walking in the street. Go on looking at it and watch the changes, then suddenly remove that scene from your mental screen by willpower. Leave your awareness free. See what comes. Suppose you see a pandit doing the worship of goddess Kali in a temple. Watch him, then suddenly remove the whole scene and wait for a new thought or vision. This is the process to follow in this stage.

Rationale

The purpose of this stage is to face deeper, subtle thoughts and visions buried in the subconscious mind. At a certain stage on the yogic path these subtle thoughts will bubble up spontaneously. It is very easy to get attached to them, for they open up and indicate a new dimension of your being that you probably did not know existed. But you should try to remain detached, for they are distractions that prevent further progress.

Compare this to a man who sets out to see a friend. His destination is his friend's house; your destination is the inner core of your being. If the man is distracted by everything that he meets, if he smells each flower or talks to each person that he sees, then he will take a long time to reach his destination. It is the same if you become attached to and distracted by psychic scenery; it will take you a long time to reach your

destination. Go straight to the goal and do not waste time en route. Merely witness all these subtle impressions. The confrontation of these subtle impressions leads to progressive purging of the mind at deeper levels. Gradually the mind becomes more and more refined and lucid.

From confusion to clarity

In the fourth stage, you must learn to become a witness of the spontaneous thoughts. Sometimes you do not know which thoughts you have seen and which thoughts you have not. There are so many thoughts, you do not know whether you are thinking or not. At this time, you should just remain an impartial witness to all the confusion. It is something like shankhaprakshalana. In the beginning, undigested food comes out and later the mixed material comes. You do not know which is rice, bread or fruit. This is what the psychic confusion should be like at the end of the third stage and at the beginning of the fourth stage of your practice.

You are aware that you are thinking but you do not know what you are thinking of. Suddenly, during this psychic confusion, a very clear and prominent thought arises from nowhere. It is so clear that you are able to pick it up easily. You must follow this thought. It is a projection of your deeper consciousness. It arises from the deepest sphere of the subconscious. Unfortunately, this thought that arises is almost always related to a bad event or experience. Because it comes from the deepest sphere of the subconscious it may be a thought from the past or perhaps a future thought. It is a precognitive thought and is therefore spontaneous and as such, it must be got rid of. This thought should not be recognized; it should not be accepted. It is a very clear thought, but it is somewhere beyond thought dimensions.

So, in the fourth stage, you must become aware of the spontaneous thought and then dispose of it immediately. The emergence of a spontaneous thought from the confusion and pandemonium of many thoughts is in many cases precognitive and premonitory. We can safely attribute this

particular thought which has arisen from the confusing system of thinking to the deeper layers of the subconscious mind. As you probably know, the deeper you penetrate your subconscious personality, the more clear and realistic are the thoughts that appear. But the intellectual and emotional level of your thought will become impractical. They are impracticable and idealistic and not always true. These thoughts which come up from the deeper layers of the subconscious belong to the dimensions of truth, vision and the lower class or a lower quality of prophecy. It is in the light of this context that you should look upon and understand the psychological background of the different kinds of prophecies made by occultists, astrologers and fortune-tellers. These people have at their disposal their own method of reaching into the subconscious mind.

When you develop such clear spontaneous thoughts in the beginning of the fourth stage, you will find that it always informs you of an imminent accident or of some difficulties that you will encounter shortly. Aspirants who want to go still further in this practice should immediately dispose of these thoughts at will. But those who wish to immerse themselves in such spontaneous thoughts and keep on thinking about them for a longer period will find their spontaneous thoughts coming through unknown areas of the past. They will be surprised. However, with that the depth of the experience will end and they will have to begin their practice all over again from the beginning.

Beyond thought

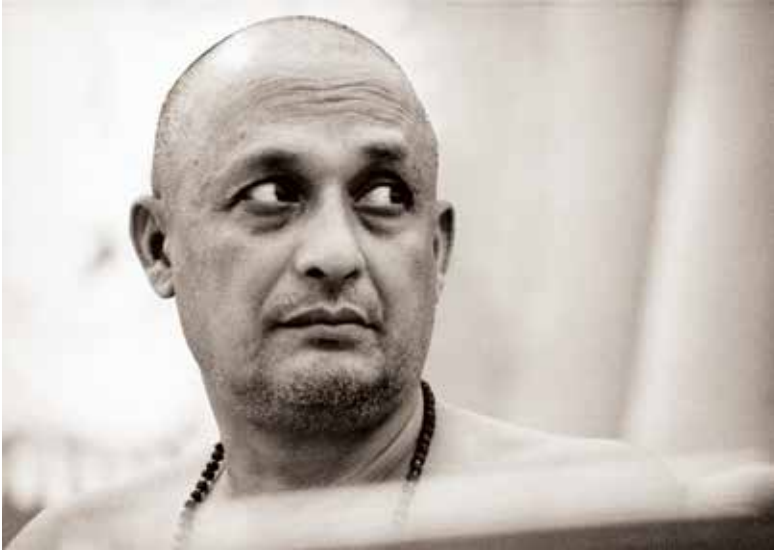
Now, a stage will come where the spontaneous thoughts will cease; there will be no more thoughts. There is a state of mental vacuum. In the case of those aspirants who will be able to rid themselves of the previously mentioned temptations, this state of vacuum will come. While in this vacuum state you should have the constant awareness that, 'I am practising antar mouna'. You are aware of yourself, *ahamkara*, the ego, remains and there is the feeling and

perception of external things from time to time. You become so quiet internally that you are unable to see any thought and at the same time you hear, for example, a train passing, the clock chiming and then you may not hear them. It is an off-and-on type of experience. It is a state when sometimes your faculties of perception are turned inward and sometimes they are turned outward. It is something similar to what is experienced during the first part of sleep. You call it drowsiness, when you are aware of everything and then for a few moments you lose the awareness of what has happened around you. Certain types of experiences come to you and others are blocked.

You might be awake at three or four in the morning just lying in bed thinking about something. You must have experienced this condition. You may be thinking about anything, spiritual or non-spiritual. While you are thinking, a train or car may pass and you do not hear it even though you are not sleeping. Then simultaneously there is a bell ringing in the distance and someone is banging your door – you hear the bell but you do not hear the banging. In Sanskrit this condition is called *antar mukha vritti*, modification of the internal mind, when the mind is looking inside. It is inert or dead to some of the experiences of the senses, but is capable of receiving certain sensations.

It is possible that you experience a temporary suspension of thoughts in the practice. That is, during the spontaneous flow of thoughts, there will arise a state of blankness. In this case, you should patiently wait for the inner flow to recommence. Try to remain aware: ‘I am practising antar mouna’ and passively watch the *chidakasha* – the space in front of the closed eyes.

When your mind becomes free from any kind of thought and when it is aware of only some sense experiences, then *pratyahara* is completed. The fifth limb of *raja yoga* known as *pratyahara* ends here. After this it becomes *dharana*. So, the fourth stage of *antar mouna*, which is the practice of *pratyahara*, opens the door to *dharana*, concentration.



Readiness for Stage 5

Stage 5 arises automatically when the thought process almost stops or stops completely. Stage 5 starts when there is a state of thoughtlessness.

Rationale

The aim of stage 4 is to induce a state of thoughtlessness. In Sanskrit it is called *nirvichara avastha*. The mind must be emptied of all thoughts. Every thought that arises on the screen of consciousness should be immediately rejected. They should be eliminated. You have to refuse to think of anything. The mind has to become perfectly blank, but while you watch with alertness and without sleep.

This stage leads to the state of antar mouna – inner silence, where all thoughts stop. There is a mental vacuum.

Become a spectator of your thought process. Let it move in complete freedom. Now you are in a deep state of your consciousness. The contents of the unconscious layers of consciousness will begin to manifest. Watch all the reactions going on within your own consciousness.

STAGE 5 – THOUGHTLESSNESS

The fifth practice of antar mouna does not require much effort on your part. It becomes an automatic development of your consciousness which was prepared by the practices of the four previous stages. You cannot practise this fifth stage without having first perfected the four previous stages. Each stage must lead into the other; each must prepare you for the next. You will have the experience similar to that of fainting.

You will have the experience of soaring between the consciousness, subconsciousness and small parts of the unconsciousness. You will be in the unconsciousness for a short while, in the consciousness for a short while, but you will be in the subconsciousness for a greater period of time. Your *chitta vrittis*, mental modifications, keep on floating simultaneously from this end to that end. The stage of unconsciousness becomes stronger and stronger, and more and more permanent. The spontaneity of thought has been checked by cutting the link in the chain of spontaneous thoughts. You will now find yourself in a thoughtless and thought-free state of mind, where you are sometimes aware of external affairs and at other times you are not. You will find that for a short while you are conscious, for a longer while you are subconscious, and for a very short time you are unconscious. The time you spend in the unconsciousness increases as you progress in this stage.

If proper methods are not followed in the fifth stage, you will find that within a few weeks you will be landing yourself in a state of mind where you become more non-conscious, less subconscious and still less conscious. You may find yourself non-conscious for about half an hour. For example, when you are practising you are aware of your surroundings and then you go to the different planes of your psyche. Then you find that you have been non-conscious for half an hour. You do not know how to check this. What will happen then? I can tell you that if it is not counter-attacked within a few weeks, you will enter into jada samadhi. *Jada* means inert,

dead or lifeless. You develop jada samadhi in which your consciousness enters into an unmanifested state, *avyakta*. There are hundreds of spiritual aspirants throughout the world who are practising this jada samadhi, never ultimately realizing that they have made a mistake. The practice of jada samadhi only leads them astray from the spiritual path and into the kingdom of tamas.

Now we are coming to the last stage of antar mouna, the stage where prominent spontaneous thoughts arose from the depths of the subconsciousness. They were of a precognitive and premonitory nature. You were allowing these thoughts to arise from the subconsciousness and you were merely an observer of them, no matter how many thoughts came. You will find that within a few days they will cease. You are experiencing a state of vacuum, of thought freeness. In this stage you will find it very difficult to pose a thought or even to see the manifestation or expression of any thought. This state is known as *nirvichara*, which means no thought, no contemplation and no thinking process at all. However, it remains only for a short time. It is always followed by a short period of non-consciousness of approximately five to ten minutes' duration. When this happens you must develop an awareness of the three stages of consciousness. How will this be done? This will be explained in the sixth and final stage of antar mouna.

Overcoming sleep

In order to avoid sleep during meditation, light dinner, yogasanas and pranayama will help you a great deal. There is also another yogic method for checking sleep. That is decarbonization of the system by the process of deep breathing in ujjayi, as is done by a sleeping healthy person.

Suppression of thoughts

In this stage, thoughts should be completely suppressed. This may seem to contradict what we have said in previous stages, such as stage 2, where we urged you not to suppress

thoughts under any circumstances. However, in the earlier stages, thoughts were likely to be quite compelling, in which case suppression would cause more harm than good. They had to be exhausted by allowing them to arise without hindrance or suppression. On reaching stage 5, however, the thoughts in the mind should be greatly attenuated and almost insignificant. Therefore, they can be suppressed in order to extinguish minor thought agitation in the mind and to bring about the state of inner silence. Here suppression is justified. But of course, this assumes that you have perfected the previous four stages. Therefore, we again emphasize that you should not start this stage 5 until you have practised and mastered the previous stages.

Readiness for Stage 6

When you can easily remain in a state of thoughtlessness, then you should proceed to stage 6. Do not continue with stage 5 for you will merely lapse into a state of *laya*, unconsciousness or sleep. You will have a nice deep sleep, but it will not take you anywhere on the yogic path. Therefore, proceed to stage 6 as soon as your mind is in a thought-free state.

STAGE 6 – PSYCHIC SYMBOL AWARENESS

How do we develop the awareness of the three states of consciousness? Much depends on the individual, but I will tell you by using myself as an example. When I sit for kriya sometimes I find the thought process becoming suspended and I am always entering into a state of semi-sleep or drowsiness. When this happens I immediately direct my awareness away from the spontaneous thought-freeness of the kriya and at once become aware of the sleep consciousness. I should become aware that I am sleeping. I should think, 'The sleep consciousness is manifesting in me'. I should recognize these symptoms: lightness or heaviness of the body, loss of memory and losing all sense of the surroundings. All kinds of symptoms may be present, physical, mental or psychic. Then

I must physically follow the descent of the consciousness. After all, sleep removes consciousness. It is not a startling event, but it is something usual. How does it take place? When my thought process is suspended, do I see visions and then become non-conscious for a few moments? You must remain alert and keep yourself so conscious that the whole process of sleeping should become clear to you.

Sleep awareness

Sleep is a mental condition where the contents of knowledge, which contain the objects of experience and thinking, are locked away from the mind. It is when the mind is free from any object or knowledge that sleep comes. Therefore, it is a condition of non-objective awareness. It should be closely followed through an alert attitude of awareness. If you blink for a moment you have lost the awareness for the small amount of time it took to blink. If you even break the continuity of consciousness for one second it will take you fifteen to twenty minutes to come to your senses. It is like a person going down into a deep well with the help of a strong rope. As long as he has hold of the rope he can go into the deepest and the darkest well without any fear or danger. He is always sure of coming back up. But suppose he loses his grip on the rope, even for a second? He will of course fall into the deepest depths of the well. The aspirant must think that these same conditions apply to him. It is easy to hold a symbol, but to maintain an awareness of it in the sleep state is very difficult – and this is the ultimate state of antar mouna, inner silence.

When the inner disturbance and the inner modifications caused by chitta vritti are quietened then sleep comes, but remember, we must also control sleep. Remember that in antar mouna, as in dhyana, the sleep state of consciousness is not to be eliminated, but the sleep consciousness should be checked and controlled by the awareness of sleep. You do not have to escape from yourself in order to find a method by which you can control sleep. You must be able to maintain

sleep under perfect control of your consciousness. It is known as a sleepless state or sleep awareness. Therefore, we have two events taking place simultaneously, sleep and awareness of sleep.

The ultimate goal of the methods is the same for all yogis. It may be antar mouna, kriya yoga, chidakasha vidya, yoga nidra or anything. The inner awareness is to be evolved and the outer awareness is to be dissolved. There is to be involution of outer consciousness and evolution of inner consciousness.

That is the way of yoga. You must find a method which you are able to maintain in order to control sleep. It is not avoiding sleep. The sleep should continue. Then you have the condition where a man sleeps and remains awake. This must be practised. Usually aspirants of meditation do not want to practise this. They want to develop concentration, but do not know how to do it. They have quite a particular notion about concentration, and they become nervous and disappointed when sleep comes. Some of them complain bitterly that when they sit for meditation sleep comes. It is difficult for me to make them understand that at this time they can sleep and that this sleep is necessary. If I tell them that the sleep consciousness is the necessary condition for the development of the inner awareness, perhaps they would spend all of their time sleeping. I must make it clear to you that unless you know how to sleep and unless you know how to remain awake during sleep (but not without sleep), it will not be possible for you to attain the higher states of yoga.

Psychic symbol

When sleep comes during the highest stage of meditation, please choose a symbol for yourself. It is important that you have a symbol at this time. It should be your symbol and it should not change, because if you change it, it will not come during that moment of sleep consciousness. Your mental faculties will become so weak and so dull that you will not have enough memory to keep thinking of different symbols.



The symbol should come spontaneously. The moment sleep comes, the symbol should also come.

At this stage when sleep is descending it is a must to have a symbol. It must remain fixed and shining brightly in your

psyche when sleep comes. It should be distinct from the black colour. The psychic colour during sleep is black. It is a dense black. You must find out the colour of your symbol; whether it is yellow, green, brown or any other colour. You must find out for yourself. The symbol must not be of an intellectual choice. It must come from the unconsciousness. The symbols have mostly been put forth by great seers. Your guru may give it to you or you may see it in a dream.

The symbol is also given by tradition. It is then called a hereditary symbol. For example, the same family has the same symbol passed on to it from generation to generation. It is not necessary to tell you again that you must always see the same symbol.

How do you know that you have slept and for how long? In sleep the concept of time is lost. The symbol should be kept during this sixth kriya and as long as the illumined symbol is before you, you will remain conscious of sleep, but if during a certain period of sleep the symbol is switched off, it means that you have slept.

As long as the symbol is there you will not enter into the state of laya. Laya means total suspension of consciousness. However, as far as spiritual awareness is concerned it is not wanted, because once you come out of this laya samadhi you will be the same person without any change in you. You will be the same type of man with the same *raga-dwesha*, likes and dislikes. There will be no spiritual change. Once you overcome this laya samadhi and enter into *chaitanya samadhi*, samadhi full of light, then when you come out you will be a polished man. Many of the samskaras of your previous lives will have dissolved.

This completes antar mouna. It will help to reveal and manifest many dormant and deep layers of your consciousness and psychic personality. For those who are keen to pursue meditation to the extent of realization of samadhi it is necessary to continue their sadhana under the guidance of a guru. Only a guru can lead a disciple from one practice to the higher one.

4

General Guidelines for Practice



Preparation, posture and timing

Antar mouna can be practised in any yogic posture like padmasana, siddhasana, vajrasana, sukhhasana, or, if these are not possible, in shavasana, lying down, or while seated and relaxed in a comfortable chair. Antar mouna, particularly the earlier stages, can be practised anywhere at any time. It can even be used to calm the mind in the most unpleasant surroundings and in the midst of intense noise.

If you want to include antar mouna in your daily sadhana program, the best time to practise is either late at night just before sleep, or early in the morning. At these times there will be the least noise and fewer disturbances. Try to practise for a fixed period each day for as long as you have time to spare.

It is also necessary that the mind should slumber partially when you start the practice of meditation. If there is controllable drowsiness, concentration will be keener and better. At night, when drowsiness overpowers you, if you meditate on your ishta devata, you will definitely succeed. It is better to meditate in the early morning hours. You are not fully conscious although you feel that you are. Meditation should be effortless and spontaneous. If you practise the right technique of concentration from the very beginning, you will have no difficulty.

Many people who practise antar mouna find that in the beginning a lot of strong negative emotions and thoughts or samskaras arise. Because they occur so intensely and rapidly they can make you very unhappy for a period of time. This is a necessary part of the process of purging the mind, but it should be done more slowly, therefore practise for no more than a day or so at first. The duration of mouna can be increased as your mind becomes more harmonized.

The mind

The present-day mind is different from the mind of a hundred years ago. It was easy to control the sattwic mind; it became one-pointed very easily, and if it wandered, it could be brought back by force. The rajasic mind, however, which is tossing here and there like a shuttlecock, should not be controlled. You must assume another outlook towards the mind, that is, whatever is happening there, the mental experience, whether you like it or not, just watch it impartially. This is antar mouna, a vedantic sadhana. You should try to be a witness to the expressions of the senses, to the expressions of the mind, to the expressions of the

emotions, and to disidentify yourself. Do not become the thinker, but just become the seer of your thoughts. In the beginning, you will have some difficulty, but in the course of time, you will be able to manage it.

Thought regulation

Many thoughts arise in the mind. Sometimes they arise with compelling force and it seems as if some unseen force within us is causing their upsurge. We may be averse to certain thoughts of passion, we may not like to enter into worries and brooding, but in spite of all our sincere efforts we fail to check the waves. This is proof that we lack control over the mind and we must evolve some effective method for settling these vagrant forces in their proper place.

If this is not done, mental exhaustion will result and sedatives will have to be introduced to ease the mental tension. When thought waves are not regulated, they become part of our habits and under their hypnotic sway many years of our life are wasted. The series of thoughts assail us unawares. We wake up at the instance of nervous breakdown, mental fever, neurosis and the like, when it is too late for us to overcome them. It is beyond the power of any physician. If care is taken well before the crisis takes place and thought regulation is rendered a part of our mental habit, then we can keep away various mental ailments successfully.

During antar mouna it is good to have many thoughts and problems, especially bad ones, passing through the mind. By observing and accepting them, they become weak and then you will be able to put them out. This process of purification will help you to pray, chant, contemplate on God or meditate more effectively.

In spite of all our efforts to progress on the spiritual path, we are unable to reach the higher stages of awareness because of the horrible faces, frightening symbols and dark corners within us. A person with cancer or a tumour will not regain health simply by eating fruits and other vitamin-rich foods. Similarly, no matter how much we pray and contemplate,

no matter how enthusiastic we are, enlightenment will never dawn as long as these ugly faces are within us. Our overloaded consciousness must be cleaned out first, and this is a very difficult task. It may take many months or even years to complete.

Negative thoughts

We are taught not to think particular thoughts by our parents, society and the scriptures. Gradually all these 'forbidden' thoughts are buried so deep that our mind can no longer bring them up. But sometimes perhaps due to the death of a close relative or friend, the loss of a prosperous business, a betrayal etc. an explosion takes place and these ugly faces come up. When decades of suppression have made them very powerful, we are unable to stand up to them. These old impressions explode like a bomb and often take people to the mental hospital.

To avoid this, we must boldly start to bring these dirty faces up and out of our consciousness. We can witness these powerful thought forms without fear by remembering to observe without identifying with them. I know of aspirants who imagined themselves killing thousands of people during their antar mouna practices, but today they are wonderful souls.

Concentration

When you concentrate and try to unify the vagrant tendencies of your mind, sometimes you feel strain. Because of that strain, you get a headache or some other complaint. Therefore, while practising concentration, you have to evolve a method in which there will be no strain. Just as a tired person goes to bed, falls asleep and has no struggle to get to sleep, even so there are various methods of achieving spontaneous concentration and meditation.

The best method of concentration starts with prayer. When we start concentration directly and abruptly, the influx of blood to the brain increases abruptly. Various ideas

keep on haunting the mind and hamper meditation. All the impressions of actions done during the day come rushing up to the surface of the mind. If you want to meditate on *Om*, you naturally desire that nothing else except *Om* should come to your mind. But for various reasons your daily experiences and impressions come to you during meditation. Therefore, the best time for meditation is in the early hours of the morning.

Sleep and suspension of awareness a barrier

I wish to give a warning, however, to all those who are keen to pursue meditation to the extent of realization and samadhi. Meditation should only start after the scientific process of relaxation has been completed. If not, they will always talk of sleep, lethargy and failures that follow entering meditation abruptly.

During the practice of meditation, the main problem is sleep, which you experience as you relax. First drowsiness dawns and then deep slumber. For those who want to remove tensions, sleep is necessary, but those who seek spiritual evolution will have to find a solution for this problem. If you want to attain samadhi or to contact the astral body, the mysterious kundalini and other higher forms of meditation, it becomes all the more essential to know the technique to overcome this difficulty.

The complaint of all aspirants is that when they succeed in attaining inner silence, they fall asleep and realize it only afterwards when the awareness revives. No doubt they feel fresh, but spiritual evolution is arrested there itself. Even in the case of earnest aspirants, their spiritual progress is arrested because they enter into slumber. Householders who have to discharge various duties remain ever busy and are under continuous strain. Naturally they fall asleep even with a little concentration.

The other difficulty is that if the consciousness does not slumber partially, inner silence is difficult to achieve. So, there is difficulty in both ways. The mind has to be drowsy to

a certain degree and, at the same time, one has to be careful not to sleep. Therefore, it is necessary for those who want to avoid sleep during meditation to keep a few points in mind. First, you will have to practise detachment. You will have to reject the continuity of thought by constant and persistent practice. This is the first solution.

The second solution is asana and pranayama. When you get up in the morning, have a wash and practise some asanas like sarvangasana or sirshasana. This will check the tendency to sleep. Deep breathing as in ujjayi pranayama decarbonizes the system, removing drowsiness while increasing introversion. When you feel that you are about to sleep, start nadi shodhana pranayama with kumbhaka, using the ratio 1:4:2. Practise five rounds and then concentrate. This is beneficial for those who face waves of depression due to tension and continuous thinking. If you can minimize the degree of depression, you will be able to visualize the object of your meditation very clearly.

Visions

Along with sleep, visions are another disturbing factor in the primary phases of meditation. When you meditate with closed eyes, visions begin to appear, then there is temporary suspension of awareness. Again visions, then suspension, and once again visions. All this happens because samskaras float upon the mental surface. You want to forget many unwanted things, you reject them, and therefore they go into the background. In due course this brings about bad after-effects.

If you dislike a person, it does not mean that he has gone out of your mind. Rather he is very much in your mind. His memory will disturb you in meditation. So whatever difficulties you may have, you should annihilate these impressions either by rationalizing them or sublimating them through detachment. If you want to attain higher meditation, you will have to go beyond sleep and also the expression of astral contents in the form of visions. This can be achieved by the practice of inner silence, which is a method of purging

the accumulated samskaras from the mind and a first step towards actual meditation.

Practising mouna

During the practice of mouna, besides not speaking, you should try to become indifferent to and unaffected by external activities. Try to be detached and feel as though you are alone – *ekaki* or by oneself. If you stop talking but still remain avidly concerned with the outer world, then you will gain little from the practice. Your interaction with the world will merely flow out through the sense organs of eyes, ears, etc., instead of the mouth. You will remain as extroverted as ever. Therefore, try to remain detached from things around you. In this manner, mouna will help you to become more aware of what is happening in your mind. This is essential on the path of self-knowledge.

The practice of mouna that we have just described briefly is concerned with inducing prolonged inner silence. The practice of antar mouna that we have been describing is concerned with inducing the same state, but it is practised for shorter periods of time.

Conclusion

The centre of meditation is the brain. If there is more or less flow of blood in the brain then meditation will not be possible. It is not possible to point out what the right proportion of circulation should be to create congenial meditation conditions. There is no instrument to point this out, but the saints have found a clue. When our thoughts assume the shape of dreams, and visions float, then the brain is regarded as being in the ideal condition for meditation. As long as your thoughts do not materialize or assume forms, you are not regarded as ready for concentration and you may not be able to meditate easily.

5

Applications of Antar Mouna



Antar mouna is a basic practice of yoga. It is a fundamental part of Buddhist practice, though it is known by a different name, vipassana, and is used in a slightly modified form. Some of the principles of antar mouna are also widely used in modern psychiatry. It is one of the most direct methods of tackling the problems of the mind. This is the reason why it is so widely utilized in religious, mystical

and psychiatric systems. The by-product of modern life is overwhelming mental tension that almost grinds man into the ground to the point of despair. If these mental tensions are released, even slightly, then life begins to show new promise and new meaning begins to awaken. One method, a very direct method, of releasing these oppressive mental tensions is antar mouna.

The aim of antar mouna is to help each and every person to become his own psychiatrist. That is, it helps a person to release and resolve the problems in his mind. Even the best psychiatrist, yoga teacher, swami or whoever cannot remove your problems for you. They can only stimulate you and encourage you to remove them yourself, by helping you to face fears and conflicts etc. You have to confront and relive these subconscious experiences for yourself. Antar mouna is a psychiatric tool that helps you to do this without the direct guidance of another person.

Mental shankhaprakshalana

Sometimes people come to a meeting and they pass wind and the people who are sitting nearby close their nose. Many people pass wind, but some people pass very bad wind. Now, what are you going to do, use a cork? No, that is not the solution. Or some spray? That is not the solution. Or open the window? That is not the solution. The solution is to take him to a shankhaprakshalana class the next morning. You should know what shankhaprakshalana is. You make him pass out everything which is the cause of that wind. In the same way, when negative thoughts come to your mind, it means there is something undigested in your mind, some experience during childhood, some experience in your life. It is rotting there. You don't know about it, because when it got into you, you were only one-year old or two-years old.

When that thought, when that karma, when that influence got into your mind you did not know, and you still won't be able to know it, because you do not allow the dirty, rotten matter to go out. When it is trying to come out, you stop it.

When bad thoughts come into your mind, you suppress them. You have been doing it since your childhood. Your mother told you to do that. Your father, your teacher, your priest told you to do that. “Don’t think bad thoughts.” So you are suffering.

I say differently. I tell even the little children, “When bad thoughts come into your mind, let them come! For how long will they come? They will be spent one day.” However, this is a very difficult proposition I am putting before you all, because you are religious people. You want to be one with divine thoughts. You do not want to face negative thoughts.

Therefore, if you want my suggestion about your problem, you must practise what we call ‘mental shankhaprakshalana’. You know what mental shankhaprakshalana is? Make your mind purge out everything. Just as the body purges everything out in the toilet, in the same way, during your mantra you must purge out that mental stuff. Doing it day after day, week after week, month after month, one day you will find that it is getting less and less.

Every one of us has sexual desires, samskaras, superfluous thoughts and worries, whether one is male or female, king or servant. Everyone has many problems; nobody’s mind is pure. How can you say that you have no toxins in your body and no disturbances in your mind? If you say this, it implies that you are not speaking the truth. Desires and thoughts are natural. A man without desires and thoughts is not mentally balanced. He is definitely sick.

You can know the thoughts in your conscious mind. But the subconscious and unconscious minds are as deep as the ocean. You can see the waves of the sea on the surface, but you cannot see the animals, scorpions, serpents or the valuable pearls in the deeper levels. Similarly, you are unable to know the infirmities or inhibitions deeply rooted in the subconscious mind. You cannot recognize your innermost samskaras which have been gathering there from your family, society or religion from time immemorial. But you have to become aware of them and start witnessing everything which

is in your subconscious and unconscious mind. If you want peace of mind you must first know the mind.

Emotional tensions

Emotional tensions are caused by the love and hate affairs of life. They are due to over expectation. Most people undergo the state of inner emotional tension sometime or another in life. What is the way out of it? In yoga we have two systems for releasing emotional tension. One is known as antar mouna, inner silence, and the second is known as yoga nidra or psychic sleep.

Antar mouna is a practice in which you are required to observe the behaviour of the mind without any partiality or obstruction. You let the mind behave as it wants to. Let the consciousness flow. Let the memories come. Let the thoughts pass through the mind. Do not stop them. Watch them. Be an impartial spectator of the flow of consciousness. The past will come. The future will come. Worries and anxieties will pass through. You are only an observer, an impartial witness to all that is happening in the mind, without being affected by any of it.

When your mind is brooding over a thought you either become panicky or very happy. In its fantasizing, the mind sometimes reflects on the past which can be either pleasant or unpleasant. When it is pleasant, you like it, you want to dwell on it. That is attachment, that is identification. But when the thought is very unpleasant and it is forcing itself upon you, you become panicky. You become very much disturbed and restless, you don't want it. That is called repulsion.

You are either attached to a particular thought or we are repelled by it. This attraction and repulsion, this attachment and detachment to your thought patterns should be carefully avoided during the practice of inner silence. Before meditation or religious prayers, you should practise antar mouna to see what is happening in your mind. Go deep and just try to be a witness. This is how the release of emotional energy takes place.

Dealing with negative thoughts

When you suppress your mind, then the same samskaras or the same thought-pattern comes to you again and again. Supposing you get angry. You don't like to be angry. You regret it so much. You hate it. You are sorry for it. This is called suppression. The same thing can be said about other negative tendencies.

Most of us have a very inimical approach to our negative tendencies. When evil thoughts come into your mind you don't like it. You are so sorry about it. You feel so bad about it. You can't accept it and don't want it any more. That is called suppression. Because of suppression, these negative thoughts come into your mind, not one thousand times but millions of times.

When a negative thought comes into your mind, let it come. Welcome it. If necessary, think it a little more, enjoy it. It will not come after some time. It will spend itself. It may come for a day, a month or a year, but ultimately it will be spent. The force will be spent completely. When you practise your mantra, you must see that all the thoughts in your mind do come. Do not stop them. You continue the chanting of your mantra. Don't stop the mantra, but let thoughts come and go. That is the only way.

Other ways are dangerous. You suppress them one thousand times, then they will not come. You will be very happy, but they will come now in the form of repressions. When they come to you in the form of repressions you will never know about it – they come like thieves. They will come in the form of emotional breakdowns, they will come in the form of a strong suicidal complex. Therefore, in my opinion, the persons who are having the same negative thoughts a thousand times should practise antar mouna with mantra.

Elimination of karma

In relation to karma, I must tell you, when you live in a pleasant environment, with loving parents and friends or a darling wife or husband, and when you have a cosy home

and comfortable conditions, you are not exhausting your karma. You are protecting it, and at some stage you will have to confront it. You may not wish to face the tiger either now or later, but face it you must. You cannot bypass karma and you know it.

In order to exhaust karma, we must design sufferings for ourselves according to our physical capacities. They can help us in exhausting the karmas, then they do not come into our mind anymore. When you practise antar mouna you go through the experiences of the past, subconscious, unconscious, sounds, meetings, love, hatred, neurosis, psychosis, schizophrenia, etc. You relive them and that eases the situation. But to completely eliminate the seeds of karma you must practise tapasya. Then, although you might remember past experiences in detail, they have no bearing on the processes of your mind. They will not affect your personality or behaviour and the course of events in your life.

Antar mouna as tapasya

There are many ways to practise *tapasya* or austerity. Fasting is an austerity and so is the observance of vigil. Vigil means to go without sleep for one night and to maintain one constant awareness. Well, it is easy to go to the pub and drink the whole night or to go to an all-night party, but that is not what I mean by vigil. Vigil means to maintain non-dual awareness for a prolonged period. Of course that's not something you can do every month. Just try it once or twice a year. If you decide to observe a vigil tonight, don't think you have to sleep all day so you won't feel sleepy at night. You should experience sleepiness during vigil because it is when you control sleep that you come nearer to an experience.

Mouna, silence, is also a form of tapasya. It can be practised quite a few times every year. From dawn one day till dawn the next day, do not talk to anyone. You should also avoid writing messages on paper or using signals. Be alone and feel that nobody else is existing. This will help, not only to intensify your awareness, but also to make you

more aware of the awareness. You come to know more about yourself as you become more aware of your sensual impulses, the movements of your mind and the motion of the inner experiences.

Behind this external consciousness, behind the thoughts that you observe in *antar mouna*, behind the sensations and feelings that you get sometimes, there is something else. I call it awareness. Although it has no form and it can't be put under classification, sometimes you can feel it like lightning. It is just there. If you can make that awareness constant, that is called an experience, and that comes to most of us.

That awareness is the basis of the mind. By choosing, accepting and following the path of suffering, you can definitely get closer to your inner self. However, there are rules and regulations that must be observed when you choose the path of suffering. You should never practise austerities in such a way or to such an extent that your body will fall ill. You must be sensible and cautious, otherwise you might develop pneumonia, hepatitis or some other sickness. Go according to your capacity, step by step.

As sadhana

A *muni* is described in the yogic scriptures as a person who has attained the state of inner silence. He is a wise man who has explored the depths of his being. He has made his mind perfectly silent so that it becomes an untarnished reflector of consciousness. His mind has been harmonized and harnessed so that it becomes the key to higher consciousness. This is the boon of a silent mind.

In order to induce inner silence many sincere sadhakas practise *mouna* – a vow of silence. They reduce interaction with external events. It can be practised in the form of *anushtana* or for a fixed period of time, for a day, a week, a year or even a lifetime. During *mouna*, perception and interrelation with the outside world are reduced to the bare minimum or even cut off completely. Generally, it is practised in the form of no speaking while carrying on with your



normal life. Sometimes a sadhaka will retire to a cave or room for a few years and totally cut off contact with society and other people. This induces perception of the mind processes.

Life and death, success and failure, love and hatred all cause emotional tension, and everyone experiences them day in and day out throughout life. Therefore, one should learn how to eliminate these tensions. Although yoga has many excellent techniques to offer, there is one short, effective sadhana. First practise the surya namaskara series. Afterwards

sit quietly, close the eyes and concentrate on the normal and natural breath for as long as possible. That is the practice with which meditation begins. Just close the eyes and concentrate on the breath flowing through the nostrils. After a short time the body and mind will become calm and quiet. Start with five minutes and then increase to fifteen minutes.

Then, start repeating a mantra. If any thought comes to the mind, do not try to block it. Just see what it is and continue repeating the mantra. Do not be disturbed by any kind of thought or feeling. Whether there is a vicious thought or a pleasant thought, do not interfere with the thought process. Bad memories should come, impure thoughts must arise and the purging must be complete. After that, a complete novice will feel totally relaxed as though he has come out of a mental crisis. This short sadhana can remove emotional tension.

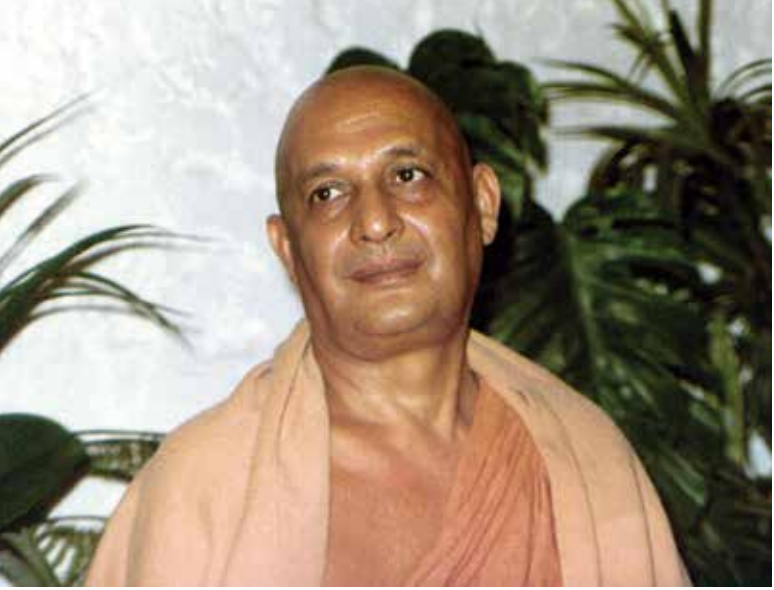
When the thoughts are suppressed, the mental energy becomes blocked, but when the thoughts are allowed free movement, the mind becomes relaxed. This is antar mouna, inner silence. In order to silence the mind, it is not necessary to suppress and punish it. When the stomach is upset, it is allowed to purge itself. At first, purging can cause discomfort, and be very tiring, but ultimately it will relax the whole stomach. It is the same with the mind.

Practise mouna occasionally – perhaps for a day or so. This will help you to calm the mind and become more aware of the inner realms. Also it will make you aware of how much energy each of us wastes in talking too much. Tell your family and friends beforehand so that they know your intentions; The best time to practise may be at weekends.

The mind is overloaded with various kinds of thoughts. There are worries, anxieties and passions, fear and insecurity, and many others. Some are known and some are not, but all these thoughts are lying hidden in the mind. Sometimes they express themselves during dreams or sickness, but it is far better if these grosser elements are cleansed from the mind through the process of meditation.

6

Benefits of Antar Mouna



Many people try to control the impulses of the mind and as a result have a lot of suffering. You must assume another outlook towards the mind. That is, whatever is happening there, the mental experience, whether you like it or not, just watch it impartially. This is antar mouna, a vedantic sadhana. You should try to be a witness to the expressions of the senses, to the expressions of the mind, to

the expressions of the emotions, and to disidentify yourself. Do not become the thinker, but just become the seer of your thoughts.

When the mind is silent and peaceful it becomes very powerful. It becomes the receptor of bliss and wisdom, a perfect instrument. Life becomes a spontaneous flow and expression of joy. All this arises naturally when the mind is in a state of inner silence. However, this inner silence can never arise when there is a continual stream of disturbing thoughts and turbulent emotions. All the inner noise of thoughts and emotions has to be removed before one can experience the soundless sound of inner silence. Antar mouna is designed specifically to eradicate mental noise and induce calmness in the mind.

Overcoming fear

To overcome a fear complex, practise shashankasana and antar mouna. In antar mouna, let the fear come and witness it, observing the effects it has on your mind, body and emotions. After some time, you will realize the cause of your fear and find that it is rooted in a forgotten childhood experience.

If shashankasana is practised for half an hour daily, the secretion of adrenalin can be controlled and the fright and fear will gradually diminish. With the practices of shashankasana, antar mouna and pranayama, after some time you will relive the childhood experience in your mind and all fear will vanish like a miracle.

Managing anxiety

There are levels of anxiety. Simple anxiety is felt by everybody – “I have to do this and run to do that and at 8.30, I have to go there.” This is normal anxiety. It is necessary to have this kind of anxiety in order to have proper control of the mind. Anxiety has a psychological and biological basis: it has much to do with the relationship between parents and their children.

Imbalance in the hormones is another cause of anxiety. The endocrine glands, such as the adrenal glands and the gonads, play an important part in how one feels. Anxiety may be suppressed or over-expressed. People who suppress their sexual feelings tend to have more anxiety. The problem of hormonal imbalance can first be tackled with hatha yoga, then by working out one's feelings.

Free expression of all sentiments will not work because society is a mixture of many types of people, and if one starts dancing and singing it won't be accepted. Some respectable, civilized way of expressing feelings has to be found; one must try not to express anxiety and neurosis in a wild way. What can be done? Practise antar mouna: in antar mouna, whatever comes into the mind, let it come! Sing kirtan. Like-minded people must join and go slowly; they must become one with the rhythm. When one identifies totally with the rhythm, inhibitions are overcome and things begin to happen. This gives temporary relief from anxiety.

Mental suppression

Everyone has mental suppressions. Since a young age we have habitually suppressed nasty thoughts and desires and tried to forget bad experiences. But suppression does not solve the problem, for the thoughts merely stay submerged in the subconscious realms of the mind in seed form. Even if we are not conscious of them, these suppressed thoughts act furtively from the subconscious to bring pain, unhappiness and frustration in life. To find happiness, real happiness, these mental impressions or samskaras have to be rooted out through the practice of antar mouna.

Managing modern diseases

A vast number of diseases such as cancer, high blood pressure and asthma are caused primarily by mental disturbance, tension and suppressed feelings. Other factors are also involved, but we feel the main cause lies in the mind. Mental tensions reflect in the body. Extreme tension, dissatisfaction

or frustration in the mind over a long period of time leads to manifestation of physical malfunction in some form or another, that is, disease.

Regular practice of antar mouna brings about a gradual release of pent-up mental tension and suppressed emotions. This in turn leads to more relaxation at a pranic and physical level. That relaxation of the mind leads to the removal of blockages in the pranic channels of the body; the flow of prana is allowed to circulate to every part of the body without any impediment.

There is a progressive removal of chronic muscular tensions. Organs such as the digestive organs are allowed to function more efficiently, unhindered by turmoil in the mind. The endocrinal system begins to function smoothly without being continually overloaded. In this manner, physical and pranic disorders can be gradually alleviated. The whole body finds its lost state of good health and becomes infused with a new level of vitality. There are many benefits to be gained by including the practice of antar mouna as part of your daily life.

Overall benefits

When a thief goes out to steal, he first evacuates his bowels. Why is this so? Because at that time his mind is tense and full of fear, affecting his digestive system. In the same way, various kinds of tensions, whether they are mental or emotional, affect the different centres of the mind and consequently ruin health.

Again, when one achieves tremendous success in business, in passing examinations or in winning fame and reputation, the mind becomes very relaxed. There is no excitement in the brain cells and consequently the circulation of blood is obstructed. In this state one can become a victim of coronary thrombosis. Similarly, those who are highly ambitious generally suffer from cancer. It is the mind which is responsible for all sorts of physical and mental disturbances whether they begin in the spinal cord or the stomach.

Antar mouna is an important technique for everyone with a disturbed mind, unbalanced emotions and confused samskaras. For all those who are unable to concentrate their mind on one point, the practice of antar mouna will provide a field, a basis for the process of self-cleaning. When the mind is purified, concentration arises spontaneously. Antar mouna is an excellent remedy for schizophrenia. Most of us are schizophrenic to some degree, because when we have an undesirable thought we fight with it and this creates conflict. Whenever we are thinking something which we don't like or don't want to think about, one portion of the mind is in total conflict with another.

Modern scientists proclaim that mind is the root cause of all physical and mental ailments. For instance, diabetes outwardly seems to be a physical disease which occurs when the pancreas is unable to produce insulin. But medical scientists have proved that when one constantly thinks about the abuses which one has received from somebody, then he becomes neurotic. This constant speculating has an adverse effect on the neurons of the brain. When the mind is tense, the brain – being the controller of bodily activities – affects the pancreas by stopping its regular function of producing insulin, thus diabetes occurs.

Many times we have seen that when a thought emerges on the conscious plane, it immediately releases a particular disease from the body. I have seen so many cases where the most deadly diseases have just gone away miraculously overnight by the witnessing of one thought and the expansion of it. Witnessing the thought, the images, the whole process, and everything that is taking place in the mind during the mantra or meditation is the powerful sadhana known as antar mouna.

7

Scriptural References



Bhagavad Gita

Pratyahara means withdrawal of the senses, as hinted by Sri Krishna in the second chapter of the *Gita* (2:58):

*Yadaa samharate chaayam koormo'ngaaneeva sarvashah;
Indriyaaneendriyaarthebhyastasya prajnaa pratishthitaa.*

When one can withdraw the senses from association with objects, as a tortoise withdraws its limbs from external danger, then one is firmly fixed on the path towards wisdom.

Not by force but by a technique the senses should be withdrawn from the respective objects of the senses. The senses should be calmed down by the drashta or sakshi attitude. The senses should be calmed down by the attitude of 'I am witnessing the experience'.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

Pratyahara is conscious introversion, withdrawal of the mind and senses. Patanjali, the author of yogic philosophy, calls pratyahara 'retreat' or 'return'. This important part of human life must be understood by everyone. At night during sleep the consciousness is withdrawn, disassociated from external objects, and we are not aware of our parents, friends, environment, pain and pleasure, profit and loss, not even of ourselves. This withdrawal of consciousness which nature has so benevolently provided saves us from mental crisis. It is nature's greatest gift to mankind; without it the human race would be mad.

Pratyahara would be the easiest of all human activities if it were not for the one difficulty of maintaining awareness. Withdrawing the mind from external experiences and perceptions is not a difficult task, but once it is withdrawn how will we stay awake? This is where yogic practices come in. They provide a focal point for the mind which keeps us from falling asleep. This is why they are so necessary.

Sleep is not a physiological state; it is a state of mind. According to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, sleep is one of the *chitta* vrittis, the fivefold modifications of mind. In pratyahara as in sleep the objective awareness is withdrawn, but we still remain wide awake. Pratyahara is a yogic state of consciousness; sleep is a state without consciousness.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika

Yogi Swatmarama says that the mind should be devoid of all thoughts that are irrelevant to spiritual life. Under normal conditions the mind can never be thoughtless. Anxieties and worries caused by family and business should be absent

during sadhana, as such disturbances affect one's ability to concentrate. It is a natural tendency of the mind to dwell on past events and to contemplate the future, but this tendency must be controlled. The mind must be concentrated on the practice at hand and it must be kept in the present (1:14):

*Evamvidhe mathe sthitvaa sarvachintaavivarjitah;
Guroopadishtamaargena yogameva samabhyaset.*

In this manner, dwelling in the hermitage, being devoid of all thought (*excess mentation*), yoga should be practised in the way instructed by the guru.

'Dwelling in the hermitage, being devoid of all thought', means that by living in a place of spiritual vibrations the mind is free from unnecessary thoughts cultivated by society and the modern lifestyle.

In the days of Yogi Swatmarama, people may have been more sattvic by nature. Nowadays people tend to be either tamasic or rajasic. A sattvic person will have a quiet mind and his sadhana will progress unhindered by the chitta vrittis or 'mental modifications'. However, a rajasic person will have a very restless and oscillating mind, while a tamasic person will have a dull and lazy mind. Therefore, concessions must be made. It should also be remembered that in Swatmarama's day, more people were able to devote their whole lives or a considerable portion of their lives to sadhana. It is not possible for people today to leave all their social commitments and simply practise sadhana all day. Few people can even manage to take a month off work to retreat into seclusion for intensive sadhana. This is highly recommended, but if impractical, further lifestyle modifications need to be made. For the average person it is enough to have a room set aside and to devote thirty minutes to sadhana each day.

At man's present stage of evolution the mind is weak. However, one has to start somewhere so it is better not to be concerned with mental activities; just do the practices and let



the mind do what it likes. If one does not try to constantly block and suppress the mind, it will automatically become obedient and concentrated through the process of sadhana.

There is a constant and habitual mental chatter which has to be nullified, and for this the practice of antar mouna, inner silence, is very useful. An undisciplined mind is like a boisterous child, telling stories, continually distracting one from sadhana. If one is working in one's study, children are not allowed to come in and create disturbance; the same principle should apply during sadhana practice. When the mind is assailed by unwanted and irrelevant thoughts, cultivate the habit of putting these thoughts aside until later, when the sadhana is finished. This does not mean that those who have no control of the mind are excluded from practising. Few people have real control of their mind.

The mind is the greatest opponent for those who are the slave of it, but the same mind is the greatest friend for those yogis who have brought it under their control. Therefore, it is your duty to understand and then subdue the mind by the practice of yoga. Then only can you attain the mental strength necessary to meet the challenges of life, of suffering and sorrow, without being affected.

8

Conclusion



The twentieth century is a time of suppression. Man is not free. He digs holes for himself and moves around within their circumference, unaware of anything beyond them. He has created certain definitions, beliefs and etiquettes which bind and cause him suffering. Yoga can show people of this century the way to self-purification.

In our daily life our minds are almost continually externalized. We see and hear only what is going on outside of us, and we have little understanding of the events taking place in our inner environment. The practice of antar mouna is designed to turn this around, so that for at least a short period we can see the workings of our mind and understand them. In reality antar mouna is one of the few 'permanent sadhanas' which can be practised spontaneously all the twenty-four hours of the day by anyone who is really determined to know oneself. By maintaining awareness of one's internal environment, thoughts, emotional reactions, etc., one can speed up one's personal evolution to the utmost degree. It will make one understand the workings of one's own rational and irrational mind, as well as giving one an understanding of what makes other people tick. It is a great sadhana designed to make the aspirant aware of the inner silence as well as the inner noise which generally prevents one from knowing the silence.

Antar mouna is a complete training system for the awareness process; it teaches one how to know the processes of the mind and ways in which one can bring them under control. It can be practised at any time by simply reflecting on the question, "What am I thinking? What is occurring now in my mental sphere?" When practised many times daily, this witnessing process becomes an automatic occurrence continuing by itself and showing you who you are, what you are doing here and where you are going. Antar mouna or inner silence is easily practised after pranayama or if one is exhausted or in a place where the atmosphere is restful, happy, contented and joyful. Inner silence can be practised in the midst of noise and crowds. It can truly be said that in this practice through the awareness of inner noise you will come to know the voice of silence, the golden sound that sings of eternity.

The samskaras hidden within us act as powerful barriers to spiritual enlightenment as well as day-to-day happiness. If you know of a way around them then follow it. But I know

of no other way except to bring them up and eliminate them. They smell and feel bad, I know. They are unpleasant thoughts of crime, violence, powerful passions, horrible depressions, terrible fears. When by chance they come out in an unexpected explosion, the mind may be unbalanced. Therefore, you have to start bringing them out little by little, item by item, so that in the course of time you will be purified. In yoga this stage is called *atma shuddhi*, self-purification, or *chitta shuddhi*, mental purification. All spiritually minded people must understand that until this stage is reached, the superconscious entity, God or whatever you wish to call him, will not be clear to you. You can say your prayers for fifteen hundred years, you can roll your beads, I am not discouraging you – continue. But troublesome samskaras, the greatest barrier between ‘me’ and ‘that’, will still be there. Antar mouna is the only way over it.

The technique for the meditational practice of antar mouna is the first step toward attaining this permanent state of inner understanding. Although it is to be practised for a maximum of one hour a day, its effects carry on after the practice is over and one will automatically start to know one’s own ‘hidden side’ and to see how one is reacting to life’s situations in a clear and honest manner. First, see as a witness all the thoughts which come and go, appear and disappear in your mind. In the second stage, pose any one thought at will and remove it and then enter a state of vacuum. The third is to rotate the mind in any one centre after thinking about it. In the fourth stage, be alert and careful and create a state of vacuum. In the final stage, you have to be completely detached.

Inner silence or the state of thoughtlessness gradually envelops the three worlds: the gross, the subtle and the causal. When it envelops the causal region, all worldly desires are dissolved and the sense of duality ceases. For all those who wish to devote their life to God, attain samadhi through yoga and meditation, expand their consciousness, I have only one message: get the boulders out of the road first, and

then you can proceed safely on your journey. How can the incapable, finite mind, bound by shackles, experience super-consciousness? Just as a dirty mirror cannot reflect your image, so the dirty mind cannot reflect pure consciousness no matter how long you chant, sing or meditate. Therefore, spiritually minded people as well as those who are sick must work on self-purification, antar mouna, as a means to pratyahara. When this is achieved, the door to meditation and spiritual awareness as well as health and happiness will open by itself.





Satyam Speaks Series presents compilations of Sri Swami Satyananda's teachings on yoga. Each book explores a specific topic, concept or practice. The aim is to provide an easy way to understand and incorporate various components of the immense science of yoga vidya into one's daily life. *Satyam Speaks Series* is a tribute to Sri Swami Satyananda, his teaching and to yoga vidya. *Satyam Speaks Series* is an invitation to all sincere seekers to live yoga and thereby make the world a better place to be.

Antar Mouna, or inner silence, is a practice through which thought observation leads to understanding and ultimately to a state of mental stillness. This volume presents the systematic development and the benefits of the practice.

Note: This series is for knowledge only. The practices must be learnt from an accomplished yoga master.

