

Satyam Speaks Neti



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With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

Satyam Speaks

Neti



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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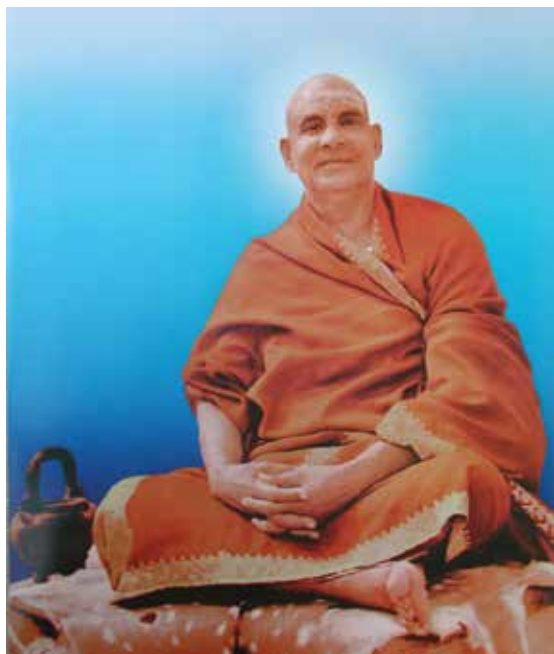
Published by Yoga Publications Trust
First edition 2020

ISBN: 978-81-943598-3-8

Publisher and distributor: Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan,
Munger, Bihar, India.

Website: www.biharyoga.net

Printed at Thomson Press (India) Limited, New Delhi, 110001



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.*

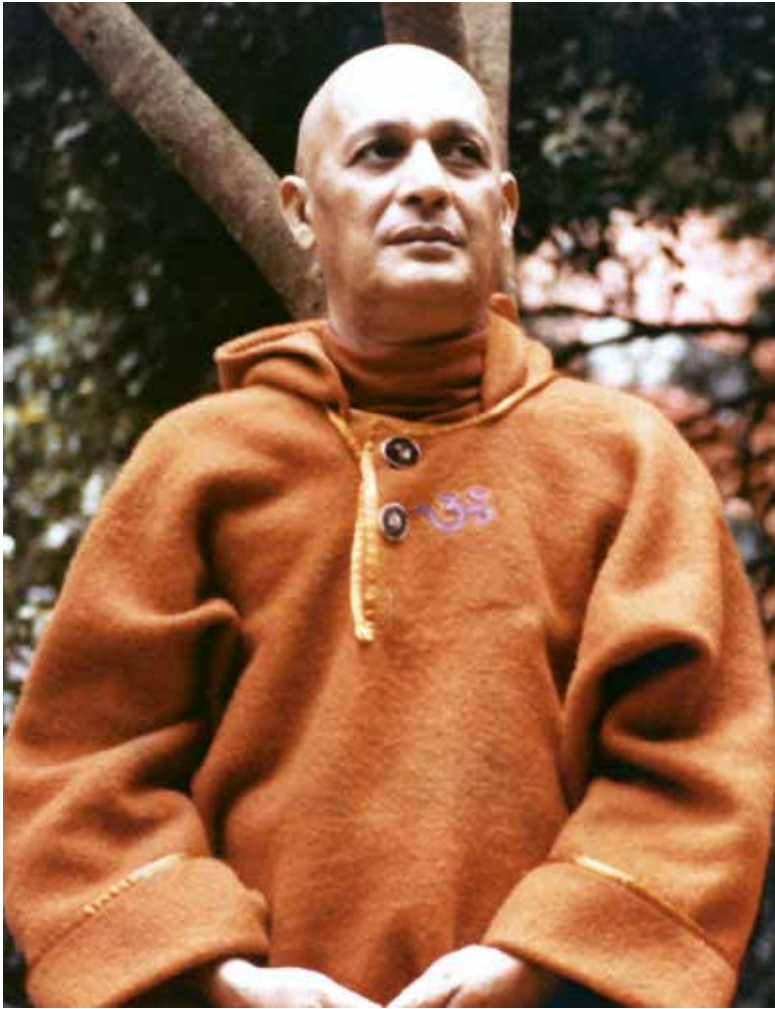
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Preface

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.



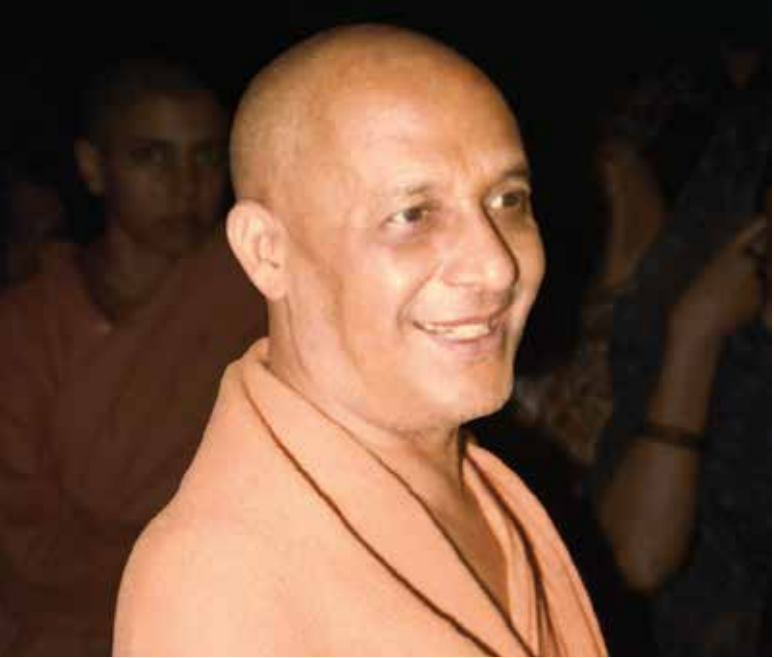
Satyam Speaks Series is a tribute to Sri Swami Satyananda, his teaching and to yoga vidya. *Satyam Speaks Series* is an invitation to all sincere aspirants to live yoga and thereby make the world a better place to be.

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

Part 1

1

Introducing Neti



Hatha yoga, as described in the early Yoga Upanishads, was made up of the shatkarmas and is a very precise and systematic science. *Shat* means ‘six’ and *karma* means ‘action’; the shatkarmas consist of six groups of purification practices.

The aim of hatha yoga, and therefore of the shatkarmas, is to create harmony between the two major pranic flows, ida and pingala, thereby attaining physical and mental purification and balance. The shatkarmas are also used to balance the three doshas or humours in the body: *kapha*, mucus; *pitta*, bile; and *vala*, wind. According to both ayurveda and hatha yoga, an imbalance in the doshas will result in illness.

These practices are also used before pranayama and other higher yoga practices in order to purify the body of toxins and to ensure safe and successful progression along the spiritual path. These powerful techniques should never be learned from books or taught by inexperienced people. According to the tradition, only those instructed by a guru may teach others. It is essential to be personally instructed as to how and when to perform the shatkarmas, according to individual limitations and needs.



The six shatkarmas are as follows:

1. *Neti*: a process of cleansing and purifying the nasal passages. Practices included in this category are jala neti and sutra neti.
2. *Dhauti*: a series of cleansing techniques which are divided into three main groups: *antar dhauti* or internal cleansing, *sirsha dhauti* or head cleansing, and *hrid dhauti* or thoracic cleansing. The dhauti techniques clean the entire alimentary canal from the mouth to the anus. There are four practices:
 - a) *Shankhaprakshalana* (varisara dhauti) and *laghoo shankhaprakshalana*, cleansing of the intestines
 - b) *Agnisar kriya* (vahnisara dhauti), activating the digestive fire
 - c) *Kunjil* (vaman dhauti), cleansing the stomach with water
 - d) *Vatsara dhauti*, cleansing the intestines with air.

All of these practices require the guidance of a competent teacher.

3. *Nauli*: a method of massaging and strengthening the abdominal organs.
4. *Basti*: techniques for washing and toning the large intestine.
5. *Kapalbhati*: a breathing technique for purifying the frontal region of the brain.
6. *Trataka*: the practice of intense gazing at one point or object which develops the power of concentration.

Although there are six shatkarmas, each one consists of a variety of practices. They are all excellent practices which are designed to purify the whole body and bring about first class health. They also bring clarity and harmony to the mind.

The *Gheranda Samhita* and *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* have the following to say about shatkarmas and particularly about neti:

*Dhautirvastistathaa netih laulikee traatakam tathaa;
Kapaalabhaatishchaitaani shatkarmaani samaacharet.*

Performing the shatkarmas: dhauti, basti, neti, lauliki, trataka and kapalbhati, is essential.

—*Gheranda Samhita* (1:12)

*Kapalshodhani chaiv divyadrishitipradayini;
Jatrudhravjaatrogadham netirashu nihanti cha.*

Neti cleanses the cranium and bestows clairvoyance. It also destroys all diseases which manifest above the throat.

—*Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (2:30)

Neti – the first shatkarma

Neti is the kriya of cleansing the eyes, nose and throat with water, milk, urine or a catheter through the nose. These centres and their associated senses are cleaned and made free from impurities. Neti is the first shatkarma of hatha yoga. Most commonly, warm saline water is passed through one nostril and comes out the other. If there is any nasal blockage, a catheter which enters through the nostril and comes out through the mouth is used. It is a practice designed to clean the nasal passages, reduce the amount of waste material deposited there and allow a greater amount of oxygen to pass into the brain. Neti cures infections, colds, cataracts, sinusitis, migraine, infection of the adenoids, polyps and inflammation of the nasal membrane. Neti also activates the brain: neti is the cleaning of the nasal passage in order to awaken sushumna.

The science of yoga maintains that the flow of air in each nostril alternately changes. If you test this for yourself, you will find this to be true. At present one of your nostrils is admitting more air than the other. After some time, the other nostril will admit the greater amount of air. This alternate flow of breath through the two nostrils in turn has a profound influence on the energy cycle of man. It controls our thinking and physical activity, our introversion and extroversion. This



cycle has a great bearing on our mental and physical health. Now if one or both of the nostrils are permanently blocked, then this natural alternation of breath flow cannot occur. Our health can suffer. This is another reason why jala neti is so important; it cleans both nostrils and allows the breath to alternate freely between the two.

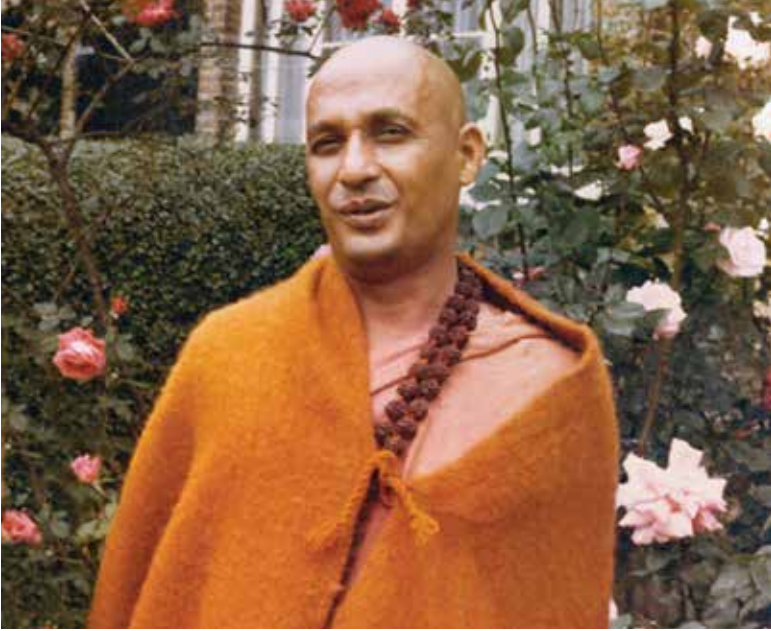
For the practitioner of laya yoga it is important that he practises neti. Neti is not cleaning of the nose, but it is irrigating or it is cooling the optic system, the frontal brain, the entire glottis and the whole mouth. By the practice of neti, if it is correctly done with water, rubber catheter, milk, butter, clarified butter, you are to awaken a certain gland which is situated in the interior of your nose behind the mucus membrane.

Yoga for Kali Yuga

In the raja yoga of Sage Patanjali, there are eight steps: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and then samadhi. Hatha yoga has different steps – better for the Kali Yuga: neti, dhauti, nauli, basti, kapalbhathi, trataka, then asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha, then yama, niyama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. The order is changed that's all.

2

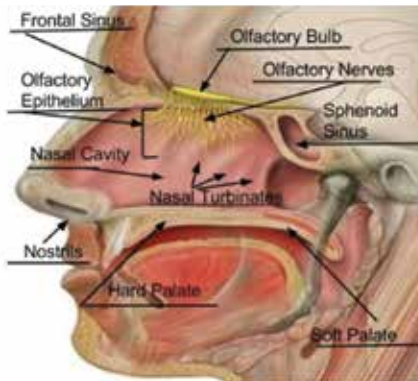
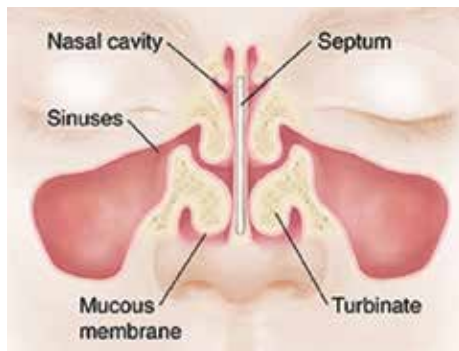
Influence on the Nose



The nose is the body's organ for ensuring that the air that enters the lungs is of sufficient purity and warmth not to cause harm. The air that we inhale is rarely suitable for entry into the lungs. It is generally too cold, too dirty and too germ-ridden. It is the function of the nose to rectify this situation.

First of all, the air we breathe contains dust and small insects. These larger impurities are initially screened out by the vibrating hairs at the entrance to the nasal passages. These hairs vibrate in the opposite direction to the air as it enters the nose and prevent impurities from proceeding further.

In the deeper regions of the nose there are special bony structures which are covered with a thick, spongy, germicidal mucus membrane, through which circulates a large, rich supply of blood. The mucus membrane follows a long-winding air passage which ensures that all the inhaled air comes in contact with the membranes. These mucus membranes remove millions of germs that are contained in the air and which could cause the lungs much harm, and in fact do in the case of pulmonary tuberculosis, bronchitis, etc.



This mucus membrane also removes small particles of dust that have passed through the first defence of the hairs. This membrane both heats and moistens the air to a level which will not harm the lungs. Cold and dry air can result in much injury to the lungs. Deeper in the nose there is a set of glands which further help to eliminate germs that have managed to escape the previous defences.

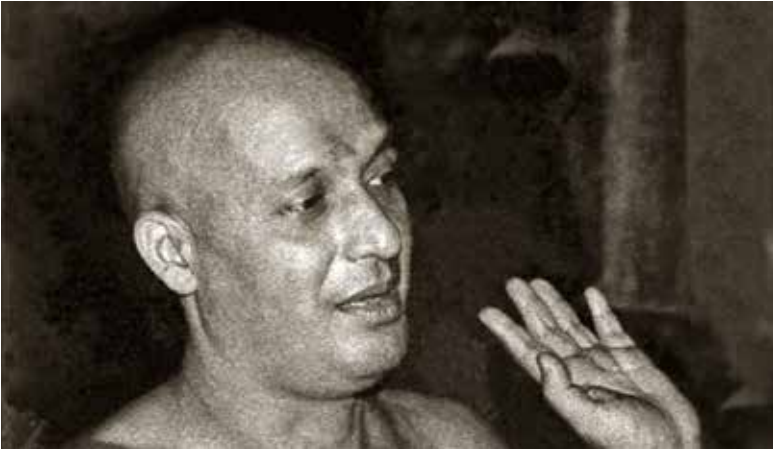
Additionally, our sense of smell prevents us inhaling noxious gases. As soon as we smell something unpleasant we immediately stop breathing, or if possible seek clean, fresh air.

By now the reader should be aware of the importance of the seemingly insignificant organ – the nose. It should also be obvious why it is so unhealthy to breathe continually through the mouth as so many people do. When air is inhaled through the mouth instead of the nose, it escapes all the mechanisms of the nose which prepare the air for admittance to the lungs. All the dust, germs, cold and dry air directly enter the lungs. The mouth and throat do have mechanisms for removing these impurities and air conditions, but they are nowhere nearly as efficient as the nose. If the nose is blocked, or if the mucus membranes are profusely covered in impurities, then the nose cannot perform its duties effectively. In fact, if the nose is completely blocked, then one is forced to breathe through the mouth. We have already explained the disadvantages of this process.

This is the reason why we blow our nose: to remove these impurities and to allow the nose to operate efficiently. However, the normal nose blowing does not remove all impurities. Ingrained, dry mucus can remain. This is one of the reasons that the practice of neti was developed: to ensure the best possible cleaning of the nose. There are other reasons for the use of neti such as the stimulation of various nerve endings in the nose; this leads to improvement in the brain and organs to which these nerves connect. It also helps in the stimulation of ajna chakra, the midbrain psychic centre.

3

Jala Neti



There are six techniques for cleaning the nasal passages, of which jala neti is the safest and most commonly used.

In the practice of jala neti, lukewarm, saline water is either sucked or poured through one nostril and allowed to come out of the other. While practising, the mouth is open and breathing is through the mouth. The same process is repeated with the other nostril. A small pot with a spout can be used to pour the water through one nostril and out the other, while breathing through the open mouth. This is the easiest method for beginners. (*For other types of neti please refer to Part 2*)

Equipment for jala neti

Neti pot: A pot or lota is used to pour salt water into the nostrils. There are various designs and even a teapot can be used if nothing else is available. This pot is known as a neti lota. It can be made of brass, stainless steel, plastic or any other suitable material which does not contaminate water. The important point to remember is that the nozzle on the end of the spout should be suitably sized so that the end fits comfortably into the nostril.



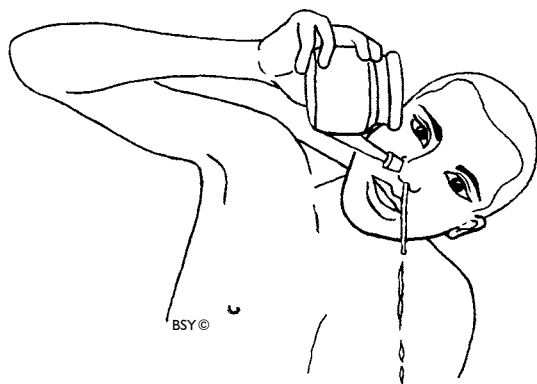
Salt water: The water used in the practice should be pure and lukewarm; body temperature is the ideal temperature for pouring the water into your nose. The water should then be mixed with clean salt in the proportion of one teaspoonful per half litre of water. Make sure the salt is fully dissolved in the water. People often wonder why salt water is introduced into the nostrils instead of ordinary water. The reason is simple and practical. Salt water has a much higher osmotic pressure than ordinary water, which means that salt water is not easily absorbed into the delicate blood vessels and membranes in the nose, whereas ordinary water is. If this practice is tried with ordinary water it causes discomfort or a little pain in the nose. Salt water is ideal for jala neti, as it thoroughly cleans the nostrils of impurities but is not absorbed into the delicate nasal membranes. This means that no discomfort is felt when the water flows through the nose. If you try this practice with ordinary water you will discover for yourself some discomfort or a little pain in the nose. However, we don't suggest you do this, though it is not at all dangerous.

JALA NETI

Posture: One may either sit in a squatting position known as kagasana, or one may assume a standing position, bending the shoulders and head forwards. This position is most suitable for doing neti into a sink or wash basin, while the other position, kagasana, can be done in the garden or in a shower.

Technique

Preparation: A special neti lota, 'neti pot' should be used.



This pot may be made of plastic, pottery, brass or any other metal which does not contaminate the water. The nozzle on the end of the spout should fit comfortably into the nostril so that the water does not leak out. Even a teapot may be used if the tip of the spout is not too large or sharp. The water should be pure, at body temperature and thoroughly mixed with salt in the proportion of one teaspoonful per half litre of water. The addition of salt ensures the osmotic pressure of the water is equal to that of the body fluids, thereby minimizing any irritation to the mucous membrane. A painful or burning sensation is an indication of too little or too much salt in the water.

Stage I – washing the nostrils

Fill the neti pot with the prepared salt water.

Stand squarely, with legs apart so that the body weight is evenly distributed between the feet. Lean forward and tilt the head to one side.

Breathe through the mouth.

Hold the bottom of the pot with one hand, as shown in the accompanying picture.

Gently insert the end of the nozzle into the end of the left nostril (or, if this is blocked, into the right nostril). There should be no force involved, but the nozzle should press firmly against the side of the nostril so that no water leakage occurs.

Progressively tilt your head to the right side while simultaneously raising the neti pot in such a way that water runs into the left nostril. Be careful to hold the head correctly and not to hold the neti pot too low. In order for the water to flow into one nostril and out the other, the water level in the pot must be higher than the region at the back of the nose, where the two nostrils merge with each other. If the head is tilted back too much, the water goes down the throat instead of out the other nostril. If the pot is tilted too much the water will overflow out of the pot. The position of the head and the pot must be adjusted so that they are at correct levels.

Make sure that you keep your mouth wide open so that you can breathe. Some people say that the mouth should be closed and the breath held during the practice, but we feel this complicates, especially for beginners, a practice that is essentially very simple. If the pot is in the correct position, if your head is tilted at a suitable angle and if there is a tight fit between the nozzle and the sides of the nose, then the water should flow in through one nostril and out through the other nostril. It doesn't matter if water flows into your mouth or throat, but if the practice is performed correctly with relaxation this should not happen.

Allow the water to flow through the nostrils for 10 to 20 seconds.

Then remove the neti pot and remove the water and impurities from your nose by closing the left nostril and breathing quickly and forcibly through the other nostril. Don't blow so hard, however, that you damage your nose and cause bleeding. In this respect the practitioner should use their discretion.

Now close the right nostril and blow forcibly through the left nostril.

Now pour water into the right nostril for about 10 to 20 seconds and repeat the same process.

Again pour water into each of the nostrils in turn, repeating the same technique just described.

Stage 2 – drying the nostrils

After completing this practice the nostrils must be dried and any further impurities removed.

Stand erect.

Bend forwards so that the trunk assumes a horizontal position.

Close one nostril by pressing the side of the nose with the thumb.

Breathe in and out vigorously up to 10 times in quick succession as in kapalbhati pranayama. The exhalation should be especially emphasized to expel the moisture from the nostrils.

Repeat the same procedure with the other nostril closed.

Then repeat the same procedure with both nostrils open.

Bend forward from the waist so that the trunk is horizontal.

Repeat the same process as described above, but tilt the head to the right, closing the right nostril.

Repeat again, tilting the head to the left and closing the left nostril.

Finally, repeat again with the head centred, breathing through both nostrils.



This simple practice should remove most of the moisture from the nose. If moisture remains the vigorous breathing should be repeated until the nose is perfectly dry.

Do not blow the nose too hard as the remaining water may be pushed into the ears.

If necessary, perform shashankasana for several minutes to allow the drainage of any remaining water.

Awareness: *Physical* – on relaxing and positioning the body, on the flow of water through the nostrils, and on relaxed breathing through the mouth, especially for beginners.

Spiritual – on ajna chakra.

Sequence: Jala neti is ideally practised in the morning before asanas and pranayamas. However, if necessary, it may be performed at any time, except after meals.

4

General Guidelines for Practise



Duration and time of practice

Initially jala neti can be done every day and those who suffer from excess mucus can continue to practise daily. Those who suffer from sinusitis, colds, insensitivity to smell, headache, eyestrain or eye infections can practise daily, otherwise only once or twice a week is necessary. If one has nasal catarrh, a cold or any other specific ailment, neti may be practised more than once a day.

Once the practitioner is familiar with the technique, the whole practice can be completed in a short period of time. Not including preparation of the water, the whole process should take less than five minutes. Neti is ideally practised early in the morning before breakfast.

Necessity of practising shatkarmas before pranayama

There are two differing opinions about the necessity of practising the shatkarmas prior to pranayama. Some hatha yoga teachers say that one should first clean the nadis through shatkarmas so that pranayama will be effective. Others believe that pranayama alone will remove the blockages in the nadis and balance all elements of the body. Both opinions are correct, but which to follow? In *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (2:37) it says:

Praanaayaamaireva sarve prashushyanti malaa iti.

Aachaaryaanaam tu kessaanchidanyatkarma na sammatam.

According to some teachers, pranayama alone removes impurities and therefore they hold pranayama in esteem and not the other techniques.

Shatkarmas provide a quick method of rebalancing mucus, bile and wind. If the body is first cleansed through shatkarma, pranayama will maintain that state of cleanliness. If one has excess mucus, bile or wind and practises pranayama only, the energy generated through pranayama will all be spent in rectifying the state of imbalance. If, however, the body is healthy, the nadis are clean and the whole system is functioning in harmony, pranayama can be practised without any need for shatkarma. If there is a slight imbalance, pranayama alone will be sufficient to rectify any problem. Excess mucus is the major obstacle which prevents pranayama practice. When the nose or respiratory tract is completely blocked, pranayama is impossible, so one will definitely have to resort to neti, kunjai or even laghoo shankhaprakshalana. For nasal congestion, neti and kunjai are sufficient, but for respiratory congestion, asthma or bronchitis, the three shatkarmas will be necessary.

Regular practice of neti, when one doesn't have a cold, keeps the nasal passages working at optimum efficiency and thereby helps maintain a healthy body. Remember, breathing through the mouth or insufficient treatment of the inhaled

air prior to entry into the lungs, due to nasal blockage and congestion, can encourage the onset of disease by allowing germs to infect the lungs, or by generally weakening the body.

Sequence of shatkarmas

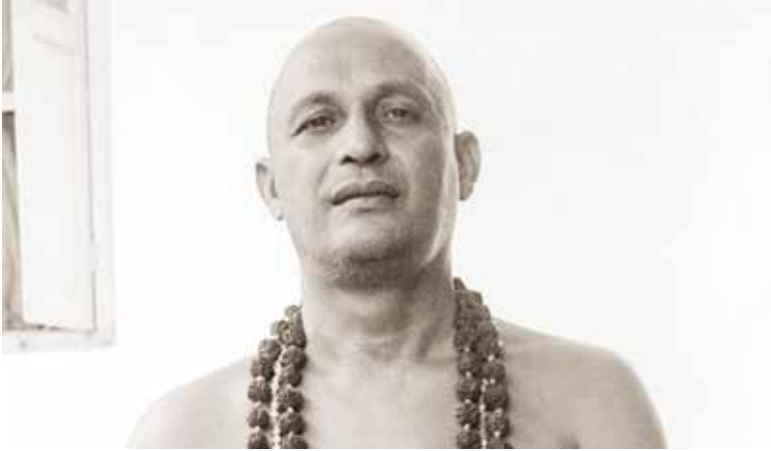
When integral yoga is practised with an emphasis on hatha yoga, practise of the shatkarmas is in the following order:

1. Practise dhauti before going to the toilet after rising in the morning.
2. Practise neti during the morning bath.
3. Practise nauli after neti and asanas, but before pranayama and meditation.
4. Practise kapalbhati after pranayama, on an empty stomach.
5. Practise trataka after asanas and pranayama, but before meditation and yoga nidra. During the hot season trataka should only be done in the morning. In winter trataka can also be done at night.
6. Basti should only be practised to remove constipation. In that case, practise before taking a bath.



5

Benefits



Neti has a subtle influence on the various nerves which end in the nasal passages, such as the olfactory bulb and adjacent nerves which enervate the eyes and ears. Respiration is much easier when the nose is clean and clear, leading to an improved intake of oxygen, improved removal of carbon dioxide and consequently better health. These effects have a soothing influence on the brain and can help to relieve ailments such as migraine, epilepsy, depression, insomnia, hysteria and tension. Neti helps in no small manner to prevent and cure lung diseases such as asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, pulmonary tuberculosis, etc., for the reasons

already mentioned. Neti also helps cure colds, sinusitis, ailments of the eyes, nose and throat, tonsillitis, catarrh, and inflammation of the adenoids and mucous membranes. It leaves a general feeling of lightness and freshness in the head, and removes drowsiness. The benefits of neti kriya are many.

The practices of jala neti and sutra neti are both very useful for balancing the breath flows in the two nostrils. If you find that your nose is very blocked, then the best way to remove and to bring a degree of balance into the breath flows is to do either jala neti or sutra neti, or preferably both, one after the other. Jala neti will remove most of the gross mucus, while sutra neti will stimulate nerves within the nostrils to induce ida-pingala balance. We suggest you try these two practices before you start your daily practice program, preferably before commencing pranayama practice, and note any improvement.

If your nose is blocked due to a cold, you can do jala neti, followed by pranayama. If the problem is due to malformation of the septum, sutra neti is useful, but if the passage is blocked so much that the sutra cannot pass through, then it can be corrected by a minor operation. However, that is seldom necessary. If you practise jala neti or sutra neti daily, and follow it with bhastrika pranayama, that is usually enough. Kunjal is not necessary, but sometime it does help clear a blocked nose. Follow the practices of hatha yoga and you will get rid of this problem.

JALA NETI – PHYSICAL BENEFITS

Jala neti removes mucus and pollution from the nasal passages and sinuses, allowing air to flow without obstruction. It helps prevent and manage respiratory tract diseases. It helps to maintain good health of the ears, eyes and throat. Jala neti relieves muscular tension of the face and helps the practitioner to maintain a fresh and youthful appearance. It has a calming and soothing influence on the brain.

While doing neti, the nasal membrane is treated so that the sensation vibrates throughout the brain and awakens its entire system, thus removing all congestion and depression. Ladies in India put a few drops of lukewarm oil into the nasal passages as a treatment for colds. The oil causes sneezing, removes congestion of the passages and lubricates the mucous membrane. In facial paralysis, sniffing ghee through the nose is found to be extremely helpful.

Prevention of common colds

Neti is the best method of preventing and eliminating colds. An effective cure for the common cold has not yet been found. Neti is not foolproof, but it goes a long way to solving the problem. A cold indicates that the body is in a weakened condition. If this was not the case, the cold virus would be unable to penetrate the defences of your system; your autotherapeutic powers would be strong enough to withstand such an attack. The cold virus flourishes in nerve tissue, particularly the olfactory nerves in the nose. During a cold, neti greatly helps by removing the accumulated mucus in the nose, this being a breeding ground for the cold virus. Regular practice of neti during good health keeps the nasal passages working at optimum efficiency and thereby helps prevent disease.

Cure for sinusitis

The simplest way to manage sinusitis is with neti kriya and pranayama. Neti kriya is something that every practitioner of hatha yoga knows. It can be practised with warm saline water, with something that is a lubricant like ghee, butter or oil, or with a catheter. Many people practise neti with amaroli, which has been found to be extremely powerful. In addition to neti, one should practise pranayama. Pranayamas like bhastrika stimulate the nerves of the mucous membrane of the nose. If, however, the disease becomes acute, a specialist should be consulted.

Beneficial for the eyes

Jala neti has definite beneficial influences on the eyes. It stimulates the nerves of the eyes which in turn activates and tones the associated muscles and organs. The bloodflow to the eyes is also increased for a short duration which helps to flush out impurities and toxins.

Treatment for headaches

Headache is not a particular disease but a symptom. It could be a symptom of migraine or it could be due to high or low blood pressure, or to a defect of the eyes. Generally speaking, the practice of neti is helpful. If you have a constant headache, first of all you should practise neti - washing the nostrils with saline water. Also, shankhaprakshalana, the total cleansing of the alimentary tract, should be done, then ujjayi pranayama, which is one of the breathing practices. One of the best practices for constant headache is surya namaskara, to be done every morning.

Treatment for migraine

As soon as you get up in the morning, drink two or three glasses of warm salty water and vomit it out. Do this each morning for a few weeks, then practise it every third day. Secondly, practise neti, and follow it with bhastrika pranayama. Thirdly, the whole digestive system should be cleansed by the practice of shankhaprakshalana.

Help in ear ailments

Many ear ailments are caused by blockage of the Eustachian tubes. The ear is divided into three chambers: the outer, middle and inner sections. Sound vibrations are transmitted from the environment through the outer ear and into the middle ear via the eardrum, which also separates the outer ear from the middle ear. There is no direct connection between the two chambers. For perfect hearing the pressure of air in the middle ear must be the same as that outside the body – atmospheric. This is brought about by means of the

two Eustachian tubes, which connect each ear to the back of the throat. These tubes are about the same diameter as a pencil lead and easily become blocked with mucus deposits. The best way to remove this type of problem is by practising jala neti, as this helps draw blockages out from these tubes.

Role in cardiac management

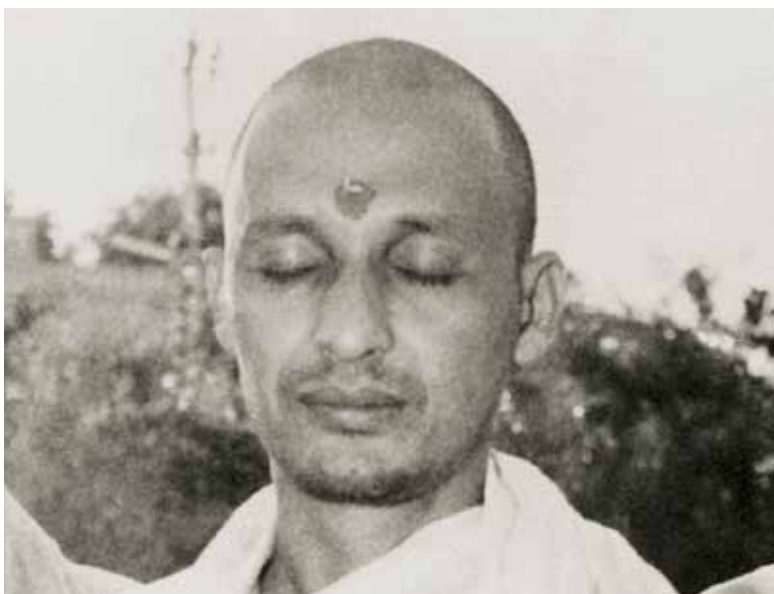
Jala neti is a simple and refreshing practice which releases blocked energy from the autonomic nervous centres in the region of the hypothalamus and the eyebrow centre (ajna chakra) where psychic tension accumulates. Therefore, it is recommended daily for cardiac patients. In general, kunjaj and shankhaprakshalana are avoided in the beginning, not because they are not beneficial, but because they require a large volume of saline water being taken into the body, and this can compromise the fluid and electrolyte balance of such patients. Certainly a patient with some degree of long-standing circulatory failure, who is taking diuretic medications to help the kidneys eliminate excessive body fluid, is recommended to avoid these kriyas.

JALA NETI – MENTAL BENEFITS

Jala neti stimulates the various nerve endings in the nose, improving the sense of smell and the overall health of the individual. It alleviates anxiety, anger and depression, removes drowsiness and makes the head feel light and fresh. A balance is brought about between the right and left nostrils and the corresponding left and right brain hemispheres, inducing a state of harmony and balance throughout the body and mind.

Neti for swara yoga

The science of swara yoga maintains that the flow of air in each nostril alternately changes. If one checks the nostrils it will be observed that one is admitting more air than the other. After some time, the other nostril will admit the greater



amount of air. In turn, this alternate flow of breath through the two nostrils has a profound influence on a person's energy cycle. It controls one's thinking and physical activity, one's introversion and extroversion: this cycle has a great bearing on mental and physical health. If one or both of the nostrils is permanently blocked, this natural alternation of breath flow cannot occur, and health suffers. This is another reason why jala neti is so important; it cleans both nostrils and allows the breath to alternate freely between the two.

SPIRITUAL BENEFITS

Preparatory practices

Jala and sutra neti can be practised for a few months to purify the nasal area and the important nerve junction behind it. This will help to sensitize ajna chakra and aid in its awakening. Apart from having a profound effect on the nervous system, neti removes dirt and mucus from the nasal passages, relieving colds and sinusitis, disorders of the eyes,

ears, nose and throat, as well as inflammation of the tonsils, adenoids and mucous membranes. At the same time, it profoundly alters psychic awareness, facilitating free flow of breath in both nostrils, so that the meditative state can be attained. It should be practised every morning before you commence your other sadhana.

Effect on nadis and chakras

Spiritually, neti aids in the awakening of ajna chakra, the third eye. Neti and other kriyas in hatha yoga are intended for the union of ida and pingala nadis.

Preparation for khechari mudra

Neti is an important practice, particularly for those who want to practise khechari mudra. In the practice of khechari mudra the tongue is folded back and inserted into the epiglottis.

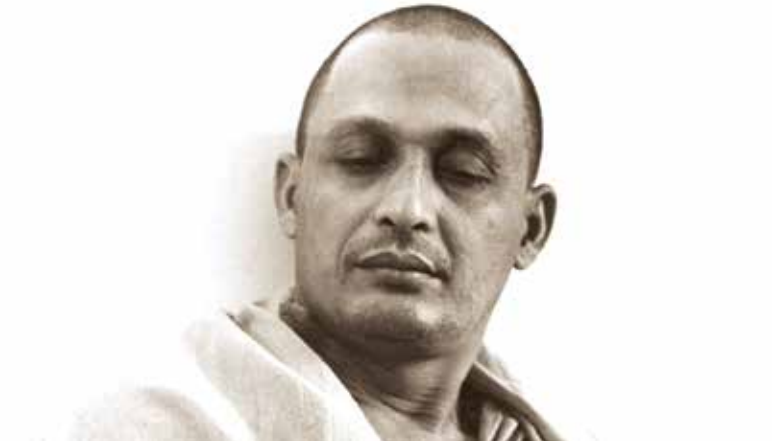
Neti and the sense of smell

The air we take in has a smell which changes with each breath. The smell of the breath outside in the fresh air is different to the smell inside your room. But your mind is not keen, creative or discerning, therefore you don't notice the difference in smell.

The different centres in the nose are insensitive, so we need to practise neti – not only jala neti, the water neti, but sometimes sutra neti also. As the smell goes in, it touches the hairs at the opening of the nostrils and they immediately discern the type of smell, the knowledge of which is conveyed to the brain. So when you are practising manduki asana, the concentration on the nosetip and the ingoing breath has to be absolute and total. All the diverse smells can be conceived and cognized. It is not necessary that you smell only sandal or jasmine. You may smell a burning body, a dead animal or a toilet; it does not matter. When you are able to discern and cognize a smell, it means that your mind has assumed the capacity of creator.

6

Precautions



Jala neti

- People who suffer from chronic bleeding of the nose should not do neti without expert advice.
- Make sure that the water is not too hot when you introduce it into the nostrils.
- Do not breathe in and out too deeply when removing the moisture from the nose; we are trying to improve the condition of your nose, not damage it. Also, if the sinuses are blocked with mucus, be careful not to blow your nose hard. It is very easy to push the mucus further into the cavities.

- Ensure that the salt fully dissolves in the water before pouring it into your nose.
- People who have great difficulty passing water through the nose may have a structural blockage such as a polyp. Expert advice should be sought.
- If there is a slight burning sensation in the nose during your first attempt with salt water, don't worry. This will disappear as your nose tissue becomes accustomed to contact with water.
- Make sure that the nose is properly dried after the practice, otherwise the nasal passages and sinuses may become irritated and manifest the symptoms of a cold.
- Only practise neti when necessary. Prolonged practice is not advisable unless instructed by a competent teacher.
- Neti should not be practised directly after eating or drinking.

Contra-indications

- People prone to or having ear infections should not do neti.
- During colds, flu or sinusitis, when the nose is totally blocked, neti should be avoided.
- It should not be done if there are any perforations in the walls of the nasal passages due to high blood pressure.



Part 2



Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati had a depth of knowledge on the topic of neti and its application for various conditions. He successfully used this practice to help cure a variety of ailments. It is recommended that the use of neti for the ailments mentioned in this section be done under the guidance of a competent yoga teacher. These practices work not just on the physical plane, but on other dimensions as well. A qualified teacher will be able to guide the practitioner not just in the intricacies of the practice, but on the outcomes as well. Therefore, the following text is for information only and not for individual practice.

In Part 2 of *Satyam Speaks – Neti*, different types of neti are described which have their roots in scriptural texts. However, these practices are not commonly taught and the aspirant is always advised to seek the guidance of an accomplished yoga master, and not to use the book as a teacher or for attempting the practices.

7

Sutra Neti



Sutra neti (nasal cleaning with thread) is an advanced process for cleaning the nose. It supplements and performs the same function as jala neti, namely it cleans and removes blockages in the nasal passages. In this way, free flow of air through both nostrils is achieved, this being so important for many yogic practices as well as general health. In jala neti, salt water is used to clean the nose; in sutra neti twined strands of cotton thread are passed through the nostrils. Sutra neti is beneficial if there is a deviated septum or chronic nasal blockage through which water cannot pass.

In *Hatharatnavali* (1:37) it is written:

*Atha neti karma aakhupuchchhaakaaranibham
sootram susnigdhanirmitam. Shadvitastimitam sootram
netisootrasya lakshanam.*

A smooth thread made like the tail of the rat, and of four and a half feet in length is the neti thread.

It is a good idea to practise jala neti before sutra neti to make sure the nostrils are clear.

In *Hatharatnavali* (1:38–39) sutra neti is described:

*Naasaanaale praveshyainam mukhaannirgamayetkramaat.
Sootrasyaantam prabaddhvaa tu bhraamayennaasanaalayoh.
Manthanam cha tatah kuryaannetih siddhairnigadyate.*

Introducing it in one nostril, it should be taken out from the mouth gradually. By joining the two ends of the thread, it should be rotated through the nostrils. (38) Then one should churn it through (the nostrils), this is called neti by the siddhas. (39)

This is described in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (2:29):

*Sootram vitastisusnigdham naasaanaale praveshayet.
Mukhaannirgamayetpashchaat prochyate netih siddhairnigadyate.*

Insert a soft thread through the nose to the length of one handspan so that it comes out of the mouth. This is called neti by the siddhas.

The *Gheranda Samhita* (3:50–51) has the following to say about sutra neti:

*Vitastimaanam sookshmasootram naasaanaale praveshayet;
Mukhaannirgamayetpashchaat prochyate netikarmakam. (50)*

*Saadhanaanmetikaaryasya khechareesiddhimaapnuyaat;
Kaphadoshaa vinashyanti divyadrishatih prajaayate. (51)*

Take a thread half as long as the arm, insert it in the nose and take it out through the mouth. This is called neti karma. Its practice enables one to attain perfection in khechari, elimination of kapha and attainment of divine vision.



Benefits

When the nasal membrane is rubbed during sutra neti, the sensation vibrates in and through the brain, awakening its entire system, removing all congestions, contractions and depressions. Practise jala neti, followed by sutra neti and ghee neti. Sutra neti has an immediate effect on the memory and concentration centres of the brain. Ghee neti prevents allergic conditions from occurring around the inflamed mucous membrane. Just as Vicks is inhaled, ghee is inhaled.

The benefits of sutra neti are the same as for jala neti. In addition, however, sutra neti can rectify the problem of deviated nasal septum. If one or both nostrils are not flowing freely due either to deformed bone or fleshy outgrowths, the regular friction of sutra neti causes these obstructions to disappear within a few months.

Sutra neti stimulates many of the large number of nerve endings in the nasal passages. This improves the enervation of the various functions of the nose and their connections with the brain. This stimulation also causes a slight irritation to the mucous membranes, resulting in increased blood circulation in the nose which tends to encourage excessive secretion of mucus for a short period of time. This is beneficial, for it removes any stagnation of blood in the nostrils and flushes out the secretory glands. The organs in the nose are consequently encouraged to function far more effectively. This includes the eyes, since the tear duct outlet in the nose and the blood supplies are closely connected.

Sutra neti is an excellent method of preventing colds or other inflammations of the nose, especially if it is supplemented with jala neti. The nasal passages are rendered more resistant to attack by germs or viruses. The ideal combination is sutra neti performed in conjunction with jala neti. Jala neti removes the less ingrained obstructions and flushes out the nose, while sutra neti removes the more obstinate foreign bodies and dried up mucus deposits

Spiritual benefits

Sutra neti is an excellent preparatory method for all types of pranayama techniques. It will be most useful if done immediately before practising nadi shodhana pranayama. It will encourage the freest possible flow of breath through the alternate nostrils.

Precautions

- The nasal passages are extremely delicate; as such no undue force should be used to push the sutra through the nostrils.
- As you push the sutra into the nostril, it should be slowly twisted so that it overcomes obstructions more easily.
- If you find, even after persistent attempts, that you are unable to push the sutra into the nose, then seek expert advice from an experienced teacher.
- Make sure that the sutra is clean before inserting it into the nostril.
- It is best not to try sutra neti until you can perform jala neti without difficulty.

Contra-indications

- Persons who suffer from chronic haemorrhage (bleeding) of the nose should not do this practice without expert guidance.
- Anyone with nasal ulcers, polyps, or severe malformations of the nasal septum or turbinates should first seek the advice of a yogic or ayurvedic doctor.

8

Other Types of Neti



Dugdha neti

Using milk which has been boiled and strained, the same procedure is followed as for jala neti. This practice is not generally done independently, but as a follow up to sutra neti. Dugdha neti is essential for pranayama when the nasal passages are too dry. It is beneficial for problems of the eyes and throat. It also cures vertigo when it is due to nasal infections. It is an almost sure cure for various nasal diseases,

such as colds, inflammation and sinusitis. It should be done after jala neti and simple pranayama. It has been observed that eye sores and nasal infections have been successfully cured by milk neti. This is a yogic panacea.

Ghrita neti

Using melted ghee, the same procedure as for jala neti is followed.

Tel neti

Using pure mustard oil which has been slightly burned, the same instructions as for jala neti are followed.

Bhastrika neti

Breathing rapidly through the right and left nostrils independently and then through both nostrils together, this practice is done at the end of all the five netis in order to dry the nasal passages.

Bhalbhati and kapalbhati

According to the *Gheranda Samhita*, there are six groups of yogic cleansing techniques. They are called the shatkarmas and are as follows: dhauti, basti, neti, nauli, trataka and bhalbhati. Included in some of these groups are a number of different techniques. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* the shatkarmas are the same as listed here, but instead of bhalbhati the sixth shatkarma is given as kapalbhati. Often these are regarded as the same practice with different names, but actually they are completely different. These two classical texts have chosen to adopt two totally different practices for the last shatkarma.

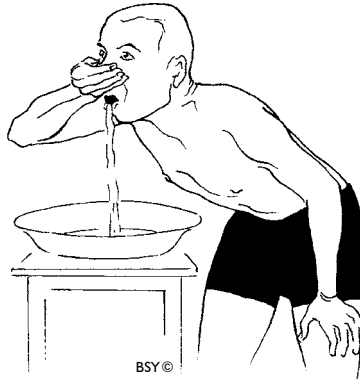
Bhalbhati is clearly explained in the *Gheranda Samhita* (1:56–60). Bhalbhati is of three types. These are vatkrama, vyutkrama and sheetkrama. They are useful for eliminating phlegm and excessive mucus from the body. Vatkrama involves inhaling the breath through the left nostril and exhaling through the right nostril; then again inhaling

through the right nostril and exhaling through the left nostril. The breathing should be slow and controlled. Vyutkrama involves drawing water through the nose and expelling it through the mouth; it removes mucus from the nasal cavity. Sheetkrama involves taking water through the mouth and with a sneezing sound expelling it through the nose. Bhalbhati will make the body like that of Cupid.

*Idayaa poorayedvaayum rechayetpingalayaa punah;
Pingalayaa poorayitvaa punashchandrena rechayet. (56)*

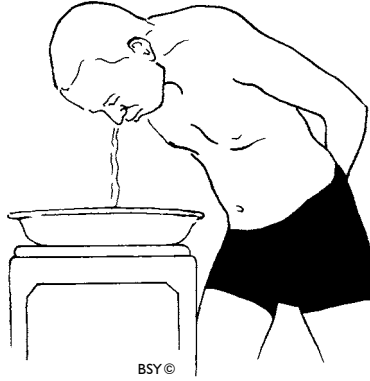
*Poorakam rechakam kritvaa vegena na tu dhaarayet;
Evamabhyaasa yogena kapha dosham nivaarayet. (57)*

The breath is to be inhaled through ida nadi (the left nostril) and exhaled through pingala nadi (the right nostril). Then the breath is inhaled through surya nadi (the right nostril) and exhaled through chandra nadi (the left nostril). Inhalation and exhalation should be fast; do not hold it. This technique removes kapha dosha.



*Naasaabhyaam jalamaakrishya punarvaktrena rechayet;
Paayam paayam vyutkramena shleshmaadosham nivaarayet. (58)*

Suck water through both nostrils and expel it through the mouth. Practise this repeatedly. This vyutkrama kapalbhati removes kapha disorders.



*Sheetkritiya peetvaa vaktrena naasaanaalarvirechayet;
Evamabhyaasayogena kaamadeva samo bhavet. (59)*

*Na jaayate vaarddhakam cha jvaro naiva prajaayate;
Bhavetsvachchhanda dehashcha kapha dosham nivaarayet.
(60)*

Suck in water through the mouth with a hissing sound and expel it through the nose. Through this practice the body of the practitioner becomes as beautiful as that of Cupid and signs of old age do not manifest. Cleanliness and purity manifest in the body and kapha dosha is removed.

Vatkrama is exactly the same practice as nadi shodhana pranayama stage 23. Vyutkrama and sheetkrama are similar to jala neti. However, we regard jala neti as being superior in every way. We don't therefore teach bhalbhati because it is included in other practices. Those who cannot obtain a suitable neti lota may find vyutkrama and sheetkrama useful. Kapalbhati is the last of the shatkarmas. It is certainly a method of pranayama, but is included as a shatkarma by the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* because it purifies and awakens the brain. All of the shatkarmas are excellent for cleaning the body and bringing first class health.

9

Neti for Specific Conditions

Swami Satyananda had vast knowledge on the topic of neti and its application for various conditions. He successfully used this practice to help cure a variety of ailments. It is recommended that the use of neti for the ailments mentioned below be done under the guidance of a trained yoga teacher. These practices work not just on the physical plane, but on other dimensions as well. A qualified teacher will be able to guide the practitioner not just in the intricacies of the practice, but on the outcomes as well. Therefore, the following text is for information only and not for individual practice.

Epilepsy and hysteria

During respiration, when air enters the nostrils, a message is passed to the brain regarding the ion contents in the air. Then monitoring takes place at the septum of the nose, and the positive and negative ions are separated. Thus for the proper monitoring and separation of ions in the air, it is necessary that the whole nasal passage be cleaned by the practice of neti.

We have found that people suffering from epileptic and hysterical fits breathe through the mouth. Not only at night when they sleep, but even during the day, they unconsciously breathe through the mouth. This is because the mucus membrane at the nasal opening is inflamed. Therefore,

the air that enters through the nose smells, and the nose is allergic to that smell. When there is inflammation in the mucus membrane, there are certain allergic reactions. For example, the inflamed mucus membrane refuses to accept various odours - it will either sneeze them out, or, if they are forced in, it will cause a cold, headache, or vomiting.

So, those people who have a continuous inflammation in the mucus membrane of the nose are compelled to breathe through the mouth. When they inhale through the mouth, the bulk of oxygen goes straight to the lungs. The mouth does not have a mechanism to separate the ions into gaseous matter. So what happens is that the lungs create a great stress on the coronary system and also the brain. This in turn becomes a great strain on the sensory channels and the motor cortex, and results in hysteria and both types of epilepsy.

The treatment for these disorders is very simple: stop breathing through the mouth. Mouth breathing is due to the inflamed, sensitive mucus membrane. In order to correct this condition, you have to teach sutra neti, in which a catheter is inserted into the nose and taken out through the mouth. This creates a certain friction at the septum where the monitoring is received, so that the ions can be properly separated.

Schizophrenia

A lot of work has been done with yoga and schizophrenia. There are many people working on this. In my own ashram there are many schizophrenics being treated. We give them a combination of yogas – karma yoga, hatha yoga and especially kriya yoga.

In Sweden and Denmark, we have the Scandinavian Schools of Yoga. There they take the schizophrenic children and give them hatha yoga practices in combination with a meditation practice known as antar mouna. After the mixed postures and vigorous pranayama, they are asked to witness the various waves of the mind--sounds, visions, sensations, past memories, in a detached way. It is found that the children get better through these practices.



In 1968, I went to Denmark for the first time. I was invited by one of the mental institutions. I was there for fifteen days and gave the patients hatha yoga practices – neti, kunjal, shankhaprakshalana, surya namaskara and bhastrika pranayama. After that, I used to give them antar mouna, sometimes in the sitting position, sometimes lying down. The results were absolutely fantastic. Now all the mental institutions in Copenhagen have their own yoga teachers to teach the patients.

It is very hard to believe that yoga can be used to treat schizophrenia, but if you go into the principles involved, we see that the balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system is necessary for normal physical and mental functioning. An imbalance, if it is continuous, leads to certain abnormal behaviour. Imbalance does take place in everybody, but it changes every now and then. However, if it continues on one side for a long time on account of abnormal physical, mental or emotional factors, then the abnormal behaviour occurs. By practice of yoga, we can bring about the required balance in the actions of the nervous systems.

10

Conclusion

Our body functions along very simple lines. Just as a machine produces wastes, likewise our body continuously produces wastes. These wastes are of three types: mucus, gas and acidity. If we cleanse the body internally from time to time, the excesses of these three metabolic products are removed, and their formation is regulated and balanced. As with a car, one's body requires constant attention and care. It requires regular servicing and cleaning of its major organs and parts. The hatha yoga shatkarmas are prescribed for the constant care and cleaning of the body and mind. By the practices of neti, dhauti, nauli, basti, kapalbhathi and trataka, one is able to maintain the body against the wear and tear of life. Excess waste materials that build up in the different parts of the body are eliminated.

It is in this sense that the practices of the six hatha yoga shatkarmas are of very great importance. Cleaning the body of the three types of wastages accumulated in the system is an important aspect of hatha yoga therapy. Then perfect health can be maintained.

Yogasanas and pranayamas are very important for everybody, especially people suffering from diseases and insomnia. I have many yoga teachers who go to mental hospitals and teach hatha yoga, purification of the nadis and all the different systems of the body. Exactly as you clean your car, change the oil, tune it, do the servicing and the repairs, in the

same way hatha yoga is a system by which you repair the body and accelerate its functional efficiency by cleaning the whole nervous system. Hatha yoga practices are very powerful; the practice of neti kriya alone will help so much in sinusitis which doctors have been struggling with for decades. And what is neti? A simple technique. It is done with a small pot of saline water which you pour through one nostril and out the other – that is all. It takes barely five minutes. Cases of adenoids, polyps, sinusitis and mucus infections in the nose can be properly healed just by one simple kriya – neti. Hatha yoga practices are plenty, and they are the solution to the ailments of our present generation.



I have found these and many other yogic artefacts in the pre-Columbian culture and in the pre-Christian culture also. Yoga has survived the ravages of time and will survive in coming generations.

—*Swami Satyananda Saraswati*

Notes



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.

Neti, or nasal cleansing, is the first practice of the hatha yoga shatkarmas. It was a practice known the world over for its many benefits. This volume presents the theory, guidelines, techniques, benefits and precautions for this simple practice of daily use.

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

