

Introduction to Dr̥ṣṭi and Bandhas

excerpted from the book *Prāṇāyāma* by Swāmī Kuvalayānanda

NĀSĀGRA-DR̥ṢṬI OR THE NASAL GAZE

Fixing one's eyes upon one's tip of the nose is called Nāsāgra-Dr̥ṣṭi in Sanskrit. Nāsāgra means the tip of the nose and Dr̥ṣṭi means gaze. It is illustrated in Fig. 8.

It may be practised as a part of Padmāsana or independent of it. In the accompanying picture, the head is thrown back a little with a view to make the position of the eyeballs visible.

The Nasal Gaze is a fine exercise for the wandering mind. Its practice if undertaken with zest and carried over a period of some months continuously, has a perceptibly beneficial effect on the unsteady mind.

Caution--The Nasal Gaze directly works upon the brain through the optic nerves. Everybody should, therefore, develop this gaze very slowly and cautiously. Persons with weak nerves are warned not to undertake this practice except under expert supervision.

BHRŪMADHYA-DR̥ṢṬI OR THE FRONTAL GAZE

Fixing one's eyes between the eyebrows is called Bhrūmadhya-Dr̥ṣṭi in Sanskrit. Bhrūmadhya means *the space between the eyebrows*. It is illustrated in Fig. 9.

It may be practised as a part of Siddhāsana or independent of it.

Like the Nasal Gaze, the Frontal Gaze is a fine exercise for the mind. But the advice and caution given in the case of



the former are equally applicable to the case of the latter. Hence they should be carefully borne in mind by the enthusiastic student of Yoga.

UḌḌIYĀNA-BANDHA OR THE RAISING OF THE DIAPHRAGM

Uḍḍiyāna is an exercise of the diaphragm and the ribs. When expressed in a popular language its technique may be described as follows.

As this Bandha is practised either in sitting or in standing posture, the student poses himself as shown in Figs. 10 and 12 respectively.

In these pictures, hands are shown to be resting either on the knees or on the thighs. This position of the hands enables them to be firmly pressed against their support and thus to fix up the muscles of the neck and the shoulders. Having taken this posture the

student secures the deepest possible expiration by vigorously contracting the front muscles of the abdomen. The chest also stands contracted. While the breath is held out, the muscles of the neck and the shoulders are fixed up by firmly pressing the hands either against the knees or against the thighs as the case may be. Then a vigorous mock inhalation is attempted by raising the ribs and by not allowing the air to flow into the lungs. Simultaneously the front abdominal muscles are completely relaxed.

The fixing up of the neck and shoulders, the vigorous mock inhalation preceded by the deepest possible exhalation, and the simultaneous relaxation of the contracted front abdominal muscles, these three actions complete the technique of Uḍḍiyāna. Automatically the diaphragm will rise up and the abdomen will undergo a pronounced depression, producing the concave appearance shown in Figs. 11 and 12.

A slight forward bent of the trunk will be helpful in securing greater abdominal concavity. This position is required to be maintained throughout the exercise of Uḍḍiyāna.

When the student finds that he can no longer hold his breath out comfortably, he relaxes his neck and shoulders, lets go the ribs and slowly starts inhalation, allowing the abdominal depression to be

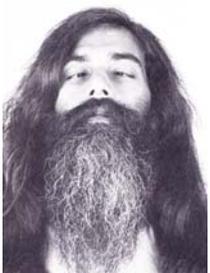


Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



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341 Fitzwater Street
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effected gradually. When inhalation is completed, one round of the Uḍḍiyāna exercise is finished.

In Sanskrit, Uḍḍiyāna means *raising up* and Bandha means *contraction of particular anatomical parts*. This exercise is called Uḍḍiyāna-Bandha because the muscular contractions described above enable the spiritual force to rise up. Anatomically this Bandha may be called Uḍḍiyāna because it raises up the diaphragm.

Uḍḍiyana is a very fine exercise for the abdomen. Its therapeutical value against constipation, dyspepsia, liver troubles, etc., is very great. Its spiritual worth is greater still.

Caution—People suffering from circulatory or serious abdominal troubles should not take to this exercise on their own responsibility.

JĀLANDHARA-BANDHA OR THE CHIN LOCK

कण्ठमाकुञ्च्य हृदये स्थापयेत् चिबुकं दृढम् ।
बन्धो जालंधराख्यः अयं जरामृत्युविनाशकः ॥ H. P. III-70
बध्नाति हि सिरोजालम् अधोगामि नभोजलम् ।
ततो जालंधरो बन्धः H. P. III-71

(kaṅṭhamākuñcya hṛdaye sthāpayet cibukam dṛḍham/
bandho jālandharākhyah ayam jarāmṛtyuvinaśakah)
(badhnāti hi sirojālam adhogāmi nabhojalam/
tato jālandharo bandhaḥ.....)

Translation

After contracting the throat (one) should tightly fix the chin on the chest. The name of this Bandha is Jālandhara. (Figs. 14 and 15). It prevents old age and death. It is called Jālandhara because it presses on the arteries going to the brain and also arrests the downward flow of nectar issuing from it.



Fig. 14

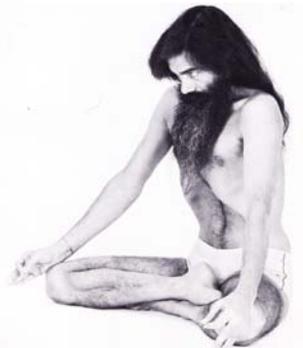


Fig. 15

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