

Part- I

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES ON *BHRĀMARI PRĀṆĀYĀMA*

Part- II

**EFFECT OF *BHRĀMARI PRĀṆĀYĀMA* ON HEART RATE
VARIABILITY**

Dissertation Submitted by
NIDHISH J. NIDHIRI

Under the guidance of
Dr. SARASWATI MOHAN
Dr. R. NAGARATHNA
Dr. BALARAM PRADHAN



Towards the Partial fulfillment of Masters of Science in Yoga [M. Sc. (Yoga)]



To

Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samathana (SVYASA)
(Deemed to be University, Recognized by UGC)
19, Eknath Bhavan, Gavipuram Circle, Kempegawda Nagar,
Bangalore – 560019, India

Acknowledgements

I foremost express my gratitude to the almighty lord Jesus, *praṇāma* to my parents and to the blessings of my gurus for making my stay at *Praśānti Kuṭīram* meaningful and purposeful.

I hereby acknowledgement my deep regards to *Swāmi-Vivekānanda-Yoga-Anusandhāna-Saṁsthāna* (SVYASA) Bangalore for giving me an opportunity to complete the degree of Master of Science in Yoga.

I express my profound gratitude to my guides, Dr. Saraswatimohan, Dr. R. Nagarathna, Dr. Balaram Pradhan, Rajesh S.K for their encouragement, giving valuable suggestions, strenuous work during the sleeping hours of the night, and extended support always.

The lectures of respected Guruji Dr. H. R. Nagendra, Prof. N.V.C. Swamy, Shri Mohonji, Shri Raghuramji, Prof. Subramanyamji, Dr. Nagarajarao, Dr. Ravi kulkarni and others faculties have been instrument in shaping this study. I express my deeply felt gratitude towards them.

I am highly grateful to Dr. H. R. Nagendra, Vice-Chancellor, SVYASA and Dr. R. Nagarathna for providing me this wonderful opportunity for successful achievement of my Master's degree in yoga.

I thank all the members of dissertation committee for preparing a very nice format of dissertation and the faculty and administration of SVYASA

Finally, I would like to offer my *praṇāma* to the faculties of my university and thanks to my family members, my classmates of *Praśānti Kuṭīram* and my good old day's friends for their tremendous support, encouragement and gave me the golden opportunity to continue my studies at *Praśānti Kuṭīram* under SVYASA.

Date:

Praśānti Kuṭīram

Bangalore.

NIDHISH J. NIDHIRI

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that Nidhish J. Nidhiri has submitted this Scriptural Research i.e., PART-I on 'SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES ON *BHRĀMARI PRĀṆĀYĀMA*' and Experimental research i.e., on PART-II 'EFFECT OF *BHRĀMARI PRĀṆĀYĀMA* ON HEART RATE VARIABILITY' in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Science (Yoga) - January 12, 2009 to December 15, 2010 batch. He is doing this course at *Swāmi-Vivekānanda-Yoga-Anusandhāna-Saṁsthāna* (SVYASA) under the Division of Life Science. This is a record of his work he did in this University.

Date:

Dr. Saraswati Mohan
SVYASA University
Guide

Dr. R. Nagarathna
Chief *Yoga* Consultant Arogyadhama
Dean, Division of Life Science Guide
SVYASA University

Dr. Balaram Pradhan
Course co-ordinator
SVYASA University
Guide

Declaration

I undersigned Nidhish J. Nidhiri declare that I have done the work this presents. The literary research is under the guidance of Dr. Saraswati Mohan and the experimental research is under the guidance of Dr. Nagarathna and Dr. Balaram Pradhan and Rajesh S.K. I further declare that this work entitled:

PART- I: Literary Research

SCRIPTURAL REFERENCES ON *BHRĀMARI PRĀṆĀYĀMA*

PART- II: Experimental Research titled

EFFECT OF *BHRĀMARI PRĀṆĀYĀMA* ON HEART RATE VARIABILITY

Place: *Praśānti Kuṭīram*

Date:

NIDHISH J. NIDHIRI

CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. <i>Prāṇa</i> according to <i>praśna upaniṣad</i>	3
3. <i>Prāṇāmaya kośa</i>	5
4. Types of <i>prāṇāyāma</i>	9
4.1 <i>Sūryabhedana</i>	9
4.2 <i>Ujjāyī</i>	10
4.3 <i>Śītkārī</i>	10
4.4 <i>Śītalī</i>	11
4.5 <i>Bhastrikā</i>	11
4.6 <i>Bhrāmarī</i>	12
4.7 <i>Mūrcchā</i>	12
4.8 <i>Plāvini</i>	13
5. <i>Prāṇāyāma</i> according to the Hindu scriptures	14
5.1 The <i>Bhagavadgītā</i>	14
5.2 The <i>Yogavāsīṣṭha</i>	16
5.3 The <i>Patanjaliyogasūtra</i>	17
5.4 The <i>Haṭhayogapradīpikā</i>	19
5.5 The <i>gheraṇḍasaṁhītā</i>	21
6. <i>Bhrāmarī</i> as a <i>prāṇāyāma</i> , the science of breath control	22
6.1 Benefits and contraindications of <i>bhrāmarī – prāṇāyāma</i>	23
7. <i>Bhrāmarī</i> according to Yogic scriptures	25
7.1 <i>Bhrāmarī</i> according to <i>Haṭhayogapradīpikā</i>	25
7.2 The <i>Haṭharathnavallī</i>	27
7.3 <i>Bhrāmarī</i> a kind of <i>prāṇāyāma</i>	28
7.4 The <i>gheraṇḍasaṁhītā</i>	32
8. Conclusion	34
Appendix	35
References	38

Abstract

The present study is to have a comprehensive view of *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* according to Indian scriptures and *yogic* lore. Breathing is an art. With each inhalation we bring oxygen in to body and spark the transformation of nutrients in to fuel. Each exhalation purges the body of carbon dioxide, a toxic waste.

Prāṇāyāma is the science of breath control. There are several types of *prāṇāyāma* described in yogic texts like *gheraṇḍasaṁhītā*, *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, *Haṭharatnāvallī*, etc. *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* is one of the important types of *prāṇāyāma*. This thesis work is a description of *prāṇāyāma* especially *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma*. One of the aims was to trace the word *bhrāmarī*, and this thesis work shows the therapeutic value of this *prāṇāyāma*, as well as for various other techniques of this *prāṇāyāma* is also described. This thesis work mentioned the proper way of practicing *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* in detail. The benefits and contraindications of this type of *prāṇāyāma* have also been highlighted.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Prāṇāyāma is a Sanskrit word meaning "restraint of the *prāṇa* or breath" .*prāṇa* is the first word of the compound word *prāṇāyāma*, and " *āyāma* " is the second word. A very simple and literal interpretation of *prāṇa* means breath or life force and *āyāma* means stretch control or restraint. Thus *prāṇāyāma* could be loosely translated as breathing control. *prāṇāyāma* is the fourth limb of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. *prāṇāyāma* is used in *yoga* as a separate practice to help clear and cleanse the body and mind. It is also used in preparation for meditation. *prāṇāyāma* introduces the practitioner to *pratyāhāra* (all special terms are explained in appendix), whereby the practitioner learns to control the senses before moving on to *dhyāna*. The Vedas celebrate *prāṇa* as godhead. By learning *prāṇāyāma* we learn control over our own mind and we do not become the slave of the external activities of the modern life. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the normal biological breathing and *prāṇāyāma*

The word "*bhrāmari* " comes from the Sanskrit name *bhramara* which is a humming black bee. There is a historical myth associated with the *bhrāmari prāṇāyāma*. It is mentioned in *Srimad Devibhagavatam* 10,-13. Dates back to the times, when the demons performed austerities and won boons of indestructible power and life from Lord *Brahmā*. Equipped with such a boon, once, a group of demons made life on Earth reckless and unbearable. Their power hungry greed led them to use weapons to destroy the earth and its mortals. Fearful of this insane action of the demons, the demi- gods and the mortals on Earth prayed to the World Mother, *Bhagavatī Bhramarī Devi*, to protect them. *Bhagavatī Bhramarī Devi* in her divine form appears as fully adorned with a dress and wears various garlands made of large bumble bees both male and female, constantly buzzing and singing the *hrīṅkāra mantra* to her. In her act to protect them with her divine

command, the goddess created and released swarms of bees from her garlands. The countless bees covered the whole sky and the entire earth. The whole earth was engulfed in darkness and the demons were unable to use their weapons. Further, the bees stung the demons causing them to succumb to the stings.

Thus the earth was protected by the World Mother *Bhramarī Devi* from the onslaught of the demons. According to the mythology the bumble bee is symbolic of protection from evil. In *prāṇāyāma*, the *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma*, the technique of breath regulation- helps the mind remove all negative and unwholesome, thoughts that could lead to mental instability. A stable mind is the sign of good health with actions used for a wholesome purpose. As *ujjayī prāṇāyāma*, *bhrāmarī* is also referred to as the snoring *prāṇāyāma*. . The sounds of the bumble bee are produced to induce positive vibrations.

This thesis work shows the importance of *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma*, how it affects the human mind and body, and also its therapeutical and spiritual benefits. This theses also mentions *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* according to various scriptures, And how it is positioned in the *prāṇāyāma*.

Chapter 2

prāṇa according to praśna upaniṣad

प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत् प्रतिष्ठितम्
मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व श्रीश्च प्रज्ञां च विधेहि न इति ॥१३॥

*prāṇasyedaṁ vaśe sarvaṁ tridive yat pratiṣṭhitam
māteva putrān rakṣasva śrīśca prajñāṁ ca vidhehi na iti ||13||*

O *prāṇa* All this (in the three worlds), as also all that in heaven is under the control of *prāṇa*. Protect us just as a mother does her sons, and ordain for us splendour and intelligence.

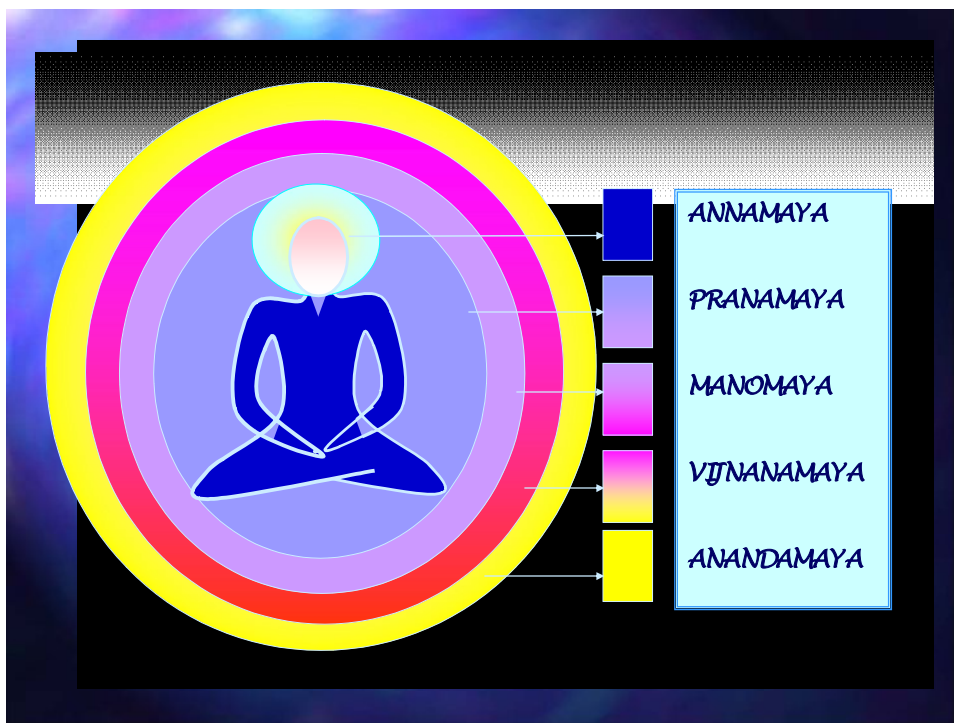
In short whatever enjoyable things there are in this world, *sarvaṁ idam*, all this; is verily *prāṇasya vaśe*, under the control of *prāṇa*. And *prāṇa* is even the ruler and protector of *yat*, whatever in the form of enjoyment for gods and others; is *pratiṣṭhitam*, located; *tridive*, in the heaven, in the form of enjoyment for gods and others. Hence, *rakṣasva*, protect us; *mātā iva putrān*, as a mother does her children. Since all the glories natural to the *Brāhmaṇās* and *kṣatriya* are at your disposal, therefore *vidhehi naḥ*, ordain for us; *śrīś ca* (is the same as *śrīyaḥ ca*), all splendour; *prajñāṁ ca*, and intelligence, that accrue from your continuance. This is the meaning. Thus, in as much as the greatness of *prāṇa* has been disclosed by the organs such as speech through his praise as the all-pervasive entity, therefore, *prāṇa* is ascertained.

The *praśna upaniṣad* discusses philosophical problems through the medium of questions and answers between six students and a sage, pippalada . the students approach him in accordance with the vedic tradition, with a desire to know the ultimate Truth. They are genuine seekers after Truth. They ask him various questions relating to the

source of all beings, the number of deities, and the chief among them, the nature and function of prana, the vital force, the nature of waking, dream, and sleep states, meditation on the sacred syllable Om.

Chapter-3

Prāṇamaya-kośa



There are several layers of human existence. This chapter deals with *panca kośas* especially *Prāṇamaya-kośa*, the second layer of human existence and how *panca prāṇas* work on our human body. *Annamaya kośa* (food sheath) is that which is born from the essence of food grows by the essence of food and merges in to the earth. The *Prāṇamaya-kośa* pervades the food sheath. It is subtler than the food sheath. *Manomaya-kośa* (mental sheath) consists of the mind and the sense organs of perceptions. The mind is the seat of the emotions like anger, jealousy, love, compassion etc. it is constituted of thought in a state of volition. *Vijñānamaya-kośa* (intellectual sheath) is subtler than that and pervades the former three sheaths. It controls the other three. It constitutes the intellect and the five sense organs of perception. The five senses are common to both the mental and the

intellectual sheaths as perception involves both the mind and intellect. *Ānandamaya-kośa* (bliss sheath) is the subtlest and the most pervasive of the sheaths. It is otherwise called the causal body. It is of the nature of ignorance of the world and self, yet endowed with the bliss of the self.

The physiological (*prāṇamaya*) sheath (*kośa*), which along with the psychological (*manomaya*) and the intellectual (*vijñānamaya*) sheaths make up the subtle body (*sūkṣma śarīra*) enveloping the soul. The *Prāṇamaya-kośa* includes the respiratory, circulatory, digestive, endocrine, excretory and genital systems. A schematic structure of the outer edges of *prāṇamaya* is bigger than the schematic structure of the physical body, *ānandamaya-kośa*. Traditionally, the effulgent ‘aura’ depicted around the face and head of great masters, Yogis and seers represents a highly developed *prāṇamaya-kośa*

Prāṇa flows through the subtle channels called *nāḍīs*. The five dimensions of this *mukhya prāṇa* (*Vāyu* is a primary Hindu deity, the Lord of the winds, the father of *bhīma* and the spiritual father of Lord *Hanumān*. He is also known as *Vāta Pavāna* (the purifier) and sometimes *prāṇa*) flow result in these areas are called *panca prāṇa*. The downward force called *apāna* is responsible for functions like defecation, urination, menstruation etc. The *prāṇa* responsible for breathing, movement is called *prāṇa*. *Udāna* is responsible for upward activities like vomiting. *Samāna* is responsible for proper digestion and balancing *prāṇa* and *apāna*. *Vyāna* is responsible for all activities in the periphery like nerve impulses, blood circulation, and cellular activity in all cells.

Prāṇamaya-kośa according to Taittiriya Upaniṣad and yoga

3.1 Prāṇamaya kośa according to Taittiriya Upaniṣad

प्राणं देवा अनु प्राणन्ति । मनुष्याः पशवश्च ये । प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात्
सर्वायुषमुच्यते । सर्वमेव त आयुर्यन्ति । ये प्राणं ब्रह्मोपासते । प्राणो हि भूतानामायुः । तस्मात्
सर्वायुषमुच्यत इति ।

*prāṇaṁ devā anu prāṇanti | manuṣyāḥ paśavaśca ye | prāṇo hi bhūtānāmāyuh | tasmāt
sarvāyūṣamucyate | sarvameva ta āyuryanti | ye prāṇaṁ brahmopāsate | prāṇo hi
bhūtānāmāyuh | tasmāt sarvāyūṣamucyata iti |*

Taittiriya Upaniṣad 2.2.1

In Taittiriya Upaniṣad, *brahmānandavallī* describes *prāṇamaya kośa* in a detail which is mentioning here. The organs in a physical body follow *prāṇa*. *Prāṇa* enables them to perform their duties. Whether they are organs of animals or humans, the same principle holds good. *Prāṇa* gives life force to all living beings. This is why *prāṇa* is called *sarvāyūṣam*, the life of all living beings. Those who worship *prāṇa* as Brahman (God) attain the full span of life. This *prāṇa* is the indwelling self of the *Annamaya kośa*.

Translated by *Swāmi Lokeśwarānanda*

Suppose someone has died, and you find that all his senses are intact. His eyes look still good, his ears look still good, and so on, but they do not function. Because *Prāṇa* the vital force, is lacking. *Prāṇa* gives life to our sense organs. If there is no life in a person, then the sense organs cannot function. *Prāṇa* is the life of all living beings, not just human beings. The *Upaniṣad* says that if you worship *prāṇa* as *Brahman*, you attain the full span of life (*sarvāyūḥ*). *āyūḥ* here means span of life.

3.2. *Prāṇamaya kośa according to Yoga*

According to Yoga, the *Prāṇamaya -kośa* forms the fine network, through which *prāṇa* flows. It is also known as the pranic, etheric or bioplasmic body. This body is said to have the same shape as the physical body. However, through certain yogic techniques of concentration and visualization, the practitioner is able to make it expand and contract, especially through the technique of *prāṇa-vidyā*. If our perception is finally attuned to the pranic body, we would see a body of light in which there are thousands of delicate wires, called *nāḍīs* or energy flows. The *śivasamhitā* says that altogether there are 350,000 *nāḍīs* in the human body, the *Prapançasāra-tantra* says that there are 300,000 *nāḍīs* and the *Gorakshasartaka* says 72,000. There are thousands of *nāḍīs* with in the substructure of the gross body and they distribute consciousness and *prāṇa* to every cell of the body.

The yoga concept of *prāṇa* is very scientific. When we speak of *prāṇa*, we do not mean the breath, air or Oxigen Precisely. Scientifically speaking, *prāṇa* is the original life force. *prāṇa* is a Sanskrit word derived from the root ‘an’. meaning ‘to move’ with a prefix ‘pra’ meaning ‘constant’. Therefore *prāṇa* means ‘constant motion’.

The pathways of *prāṇic* current, which flow throughout the body are known as *nāḍīs*. Nerves and *nāḍīs* are two different things. Nerves relate to the physical body, where as *nāḍīs* relate to the *prāṇa*, or vital body and to the more subtle *kośas*. *Nāḍīs* provide energy. In *prāṇāyāma* we learn to manipulate the flow of these *nāḍīs* in different directions.

Chapter- 4

Types of *prāṇāyāma*

There are many types of *prāṇāyāma*. Here I explain all these varieties of *prāṇāyāma*.

सूर्यभेदनमुज्जायी सीत्कारी शीतली तथा । भस्त्रिका भ्रामरी मूर्च्छा प्लाविनि त्यष्टकुम्भकाः ॥

Sūryabhedanamujjāyī sītkārī śītalī tathā | bhastrikā bhrāmarī mūrccchā plāvini tyasṭakumbhakāḥ ||

(HYP) 2.44

These are the varieties of *prāṇāyāma*

Sūryabhedana

Ujjāyī

Sītkārī

Śītalī

Bhastrikā

Bhrāmarī

Mūrccchā

Plāvini

4.1 *Sūryabhedana prāṇāyāma* (vitality stimulating breath):



Inhale through right nostril and exhale through left nostril. Again do the same practice.

Sūryabhedana can also be practiced by inhalation/ exhalation through the right nostril only.

4.2 Ujjāyī (psychic breath):



Gently contract the glottis so that a soft snoring sound, like the breathing of a sleeping baby, is produced by the breath in the throat. Practice yogic breathing during both inhalation and exhalation while concentrating on the sound produced by the breath in the throat. The sound of the breath should be audible to you alone. The tongue may be kept flat or folded against the soft palate in *khecarī mudrā* (all special terms are explained in appendix).

Āsana prāṇāyāma Mudrā Bandha -402

4.3 Śītkārī prāṇāyāma (Hissing breath):



Hold the teeth lightly together. Separate the lips, exposing the teeth. The tongue may be kept flat or folded against the soft palate in *khecarī mudrā*. Now inhale through the teeth producing hissing sound and feeling cooling sensation. At the end of the inhalation, close the mouth and exhale through the nose in a controlled manner.

4.4 Śītalī prāṇāyāma (cooling breath):



Extend the tongue outside the mouth as far as possible without strain. Roll the sides of the tongue up so that it forms a tube. Now inhale through rolled tongue producing sucking sound. At the end of inhalation, draw the tongue in, close the mouth and exhale through the nose. A feeling of icy coldness will be experienced on the tongue and the roof of the mouth.

4.5 Bhastrikā prāṇāyāma (Bellows breath):



Breathe in and out forcefully with snuffing sound in the nose. The force of inhalation and exhalation must be equal. The abdomen should expand and contract rhythmically with the breath. The pumping action should be performed by the abdomen alone; the chest, shoulders and face remain relaxed.

4.6 Bhrāmari prāṇāyāma (Humming bee breath):



Raise the arms sideways and bend elbows. Bring the hands to the ears. Plug the ears or press the flaps of the ears with index or middle finger. Now inhale through the nose. Exhale slowly in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady and continuous humming sound like that of the black bee. The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous for the duration of the exhalation making the front of the skull reverberate.

4.7 Mūrccchā prāṇāyāma (Swooning breath):



Inhale through the nose. Hold the breath. Perform *jālandhara-bandha* and *śāmbhavī mudrā* (all special terms are explained in appendix) keep holding the breath for even longer than is comfortable. Now close the eyes. Release *jālandhara-bandha*. raise the chin slightly and exhale in a very controlled manner through both the nostrils.

4.8 *Plāvini prāṇāyāma* (Gulping breath):



Inhale through the nose and gulp the air into the stomach or inhale through the mouth in *kākī mudrā* (pursing the lips in the shape of a crow's beak). the air has to be swallowed food, retained inside and belched out for 30 to 90 minutes.

Haṭhayogapradīpikā - 266

Chapter 5

Prāṇāyāma according to hindu scriptures

5.1 *Prāṇāyāma* according to *Bhagavadgītā*

In bhagavat gita 4th chapter 23-33 slokas mentioned the varieties of sacrifices. 29th sloka Krishna explains *Prāṇāyāma* is one kind of sacrifice.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथाऽपरे । प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ भ. गीता.४.२९ ॥
*apāne juhvati prāṇam prāṇe'pānam tathā'pare | prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā
ssprāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ* || (B. Gita. 4.29)

Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the courses of the outgoing and incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restrained of breath.

Translated by: *swāmi chinmayānanda*

As a sacrifice some offer “the outgoing breath in to the incoming breath and others offer the incoming in to the outgoing.” The later is the technique of *prāṇāyāma*, called as the *pūraka*, meaning the process filling in; while, the former is the process of blowing out, technically called the *recaka*. These two process are alternated by an interval where in the ‘breath is held for sometimes,’ within and without which is called *kumbhaka*. This process of *pūraka - kumbhaka - recaka - kumbhaka*

When practiced in a prescribed ratio, becomes the technique of breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*). This technique is again explained here as a *yagna* by which the practitioner, in the long run, learns to offer all the subsidiary *prāṇas* in to the main *prāṇa*. *Prāṇa* is not the breath; this is a general misunderstanding. Through breath-control we come to gain a perfect mastery over the activities of the *Prāṇas* in us. When very closely observed we find that the term *Prāṇa* used in the Hindu scriptures indicates the various

“manifested activities of life in a living body.” They generally enumerate five different kinds of *prāṇas*, which when understood correctly are found to be nothing but the different functions in every living being.

They are 1, the function of perception. (2), the function of excretion. (3). the function of digestion and assimilation. (4), the circulatory system which distributes the food to all parts of the body, and lastly (5), capacity of a living creature to improve himself in this mental outlook and intellectual life. These activities of life with in, about which ordinarily man is quite unconscious, are brought under the perfect control of the individual through the process of *Prāṇāyāma*, so that a seeker can by this path come to gain a complete capacity to withdraw all his perceptions which indeed is a great help for a mediators.

5.2 Prāṇāyāma according to Yogavāsiṣṭha

जग्रतः स्वपतश्चैव प्राणायामोऽयमुत्तमः

प्रवर्तते यतस्तज्ज्ञ तत्तावच्चूरेयसेशूण ३.३.३४

*jaḡrataḥ svapataścaīva prāṇāyāmo'yamuttamaḥ
pravartate yatastajjña tattāvaccheyaseśūṇus 3.3.34*

knower of that (reality) since this excellent *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath) happens to one who is waking or sleeping, hear that first for four good.

प्राणायामं ततः कुर्यादन्तःकरणशुद्धये

इन्द्रियाण्याहरेत्पश्चाद्विषयेभ्यः शनैः शनैः ३.४.११५

*prāṇāyāmaṁ tataḥ kuryādantaḥkaraṇaśudghaye
indriyāṅyāharetpaścādvīṣayebhyaḥ śanaiḥ śanaiḥ 3.4. 115*

Let him then perform *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath) for the purification of the internal organs, (the mind and the intellect). Then, let him draw off the sense organs from their objects, slowly.

The *sloka* is telling let one perform *prāṇāyāma* for the purification of *manas* and *buddhi*. The *sloka* specifically mentioning 'then let him draw off the sense organs' means *prāṇāyāma* is followed by *pratyāhāra*. After success in *prāṇāyāma* one slowly detached from the sense organs.

Translated by SAMVID

5.3 *Prāṇāyāma* According to *Patañjaliyogasūtra*

In his *yogasutras* *Patañjali* has mentioned *prāṇāyāma* and its four types.

तस्मिन्सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥

Tasminsati śvāsapraśvāsayorgativicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ ॥

“*Prāṇāyāma* is the cessation of the movement of inhalation and exhalation.”

Patañjaliyogasūtra 2.49

Translated by *swāmi satyananda saraswati*

After one has perfected *yama*, *niyama* and *asana* sufficiently, the aspirant should take up *prāṇāyāma*. It is the cessation of inhalation and expiration. There is neither *recaka* nor *pūraka*; there is only *kumbhaka*.

It should be noted that *prāṇāyāma* is not deep breathing. Similarly, retaining the breath only once as long as one can do.

Prāṇa means breath, *āyāma* is lengthening or widening through control. When breathing is controlled so as to retain the breath, it is *prāṇāyāma*. It is interesting to note that serpents, elephants, tortoises live long, because they performing the act of respiration fewer times per minute than human beings. The life of human being can also be prolonged if the breath is retained, but this requires training as well as practice.

It is said that *prāṇa* is like a wild elephant. If you want to tame the *prāṇa*, you will have to take as much care as you would while taming a wild elephant. There must be steadiness and patience. There should be no hurry or haste. Retention must be practiced slowly and with care. If there is any drawback, either physically or mentally, then the practice must be stopped for a few days or months. Atmospheric conditions, food habits, age, physical conditions and other factors must be considered before beginning the practice. There should be sufficient caution.

In *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* it is clearly stated that breath-control should not be practiced in the physical *āsana*s. It is wrong to control the breath in certain physical postures. There

are certain other postures in which *prāṇāyāma* may be practiced, but the student must know, in which exercises to practice it and in which exercises to avoid it. For this, there should be a clear understanding of the meaning of *prāṇa*. It has nothing to do with the lungs and much to do with the life-current.

The ultimate aim of *prāṇāyāma* is to be able to retain the breath. There are three ways of holding the breath, *pūraka*, *recaka* and *kumbhaka*. The fourth type, called *kevala kumbhaka*(all special terms are explained in appendix), is of two types *antaraṅga* and *bahiraṅga*. Retention of breath brings about a certain condition in the brain, a certain change in the spinal cord, as well as in the physical body. *prāṇāyāma* influences the nervous system and thereby the brain. It does not have much to do with the lungs. *pūraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka* produce different effects in the body.

Thus, stopping the breath is either inside (*antar kumbhaka*) (all special terms are explained in appendix) or outside (*bahir kumbhaka*). (all special terms are explained in appendix) The *āyāma* is the stretching or lengthening of *prāṇa*. In *prāṇāyāma*, the number of respirations per minute should be decreased and the length of respirations (*āyāma*) should be increased. Normally human respiration rate per minute is fourteen cycles. That means, if we breathe normally fourteen times per minute, in *prāṇāyāma* we breathe once or twice per minute.

5.4 *Prāṇāyāma* according to *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*

In *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, *Svātmārāma* has described what happens through the proper and improper practice of *prāṇāyāma*. The correct practice of *prāṇāyāma* helps to vanish all the diseases and the incorrect practice brings danger to one's health.

प्राणायामेन युक्तेन सर्वरोगक्षयो भवेत् ।

अयुक्ताभ्यासयोगेन सर्वरोगसमुद्भवः

prāṇāyāmena yuktena sarvarogakṣayo bhavet |

ayuktābhyāsayogena sarvarogasamudbhavaḥ

“By proper practice of *prāṇāyāma* etc., all diseases are eradicated. through improper practice all diseases can arise.

Haṭhayogapradīpikā 2. 16

If one performs *prāṇāyāma* properly and systematically, one will active a greater *pranic* capacity and thus eliminate disorders and malfunctioning in the physical body, but if the practices are done incorrectly and unsystematically, more physical disturbances will develop. An irregular or incorrect practice can be very harmful and it is better not to practice at all

Even if one fails to observe this simple rule, sickness can result. For example, you should always practice on an empty stomach, whether he is performing *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *mudrā* or *bandha* (all special terms are explained in appendix). If any one performs *śīrṣāsana* after meals, definitely he is going to damage his digestive system. One must be very careful about the rules and precautions for *prāṇāyāma* and the sequence in which any of the *haṭha-yoga* techniques are to be done.

It is said that “*prāṇa* is like a wild elephant. If you want to tame the *prāṇa*, you will have to take as much care as you would while taming a wild elephant. There must be steadiness and patience. There should be no hurry or haste. Retention must be practiced slowly and with care.” For harmonious development one must have the guidance of a

teacher with a comprehensive knowledge of *yoga* and enough sensitivity to recognize what your individual needs are.

5.5 *prāṇāyāma* according to *gheraṇḍasaṁhītā*

The *gheraṇḍasaṁhītā* is one of the important text of *hatha yoga*. In this text *gheraṇḍa* is teaching *hatha yoga* to his disciple *caṇḍa kāpāli*. He came to him for learning *hatha yoga*.

घेरण्ड उवाच

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि प्राणायामस्य यद्विधिम् ।

यस्य साधनमात्रेण देवतुल्यो भवेत्तरः ॥५.१॥

gheraṇḍa uvāca

athātaḥ sampravakṣyāmi prāṇāyāmasya yadvidhim|

yasya sādhanamātreṇa devatulyo bhavetraraḥ 5:1

Gheraṇḍa Said:- Now I shall tell you the rules of *prāṇāyāma* or regulation of breath. By its practice a man becomes like a god.

आदौ स्थानं तथा कालं मितहारं तथापरम् ।

नाडीशुद्धिं ततः पश्चात् प्राणायामं च साधयेत् ॥२॥

ādau sthānaṁ tathā kālaṁ mitāhāraṁ tathāparam

nāḍīśuddhiṁ tataḥ pascāt prāṇāyāmaṁ ca sādhayet

Four things are necessary in practicing *prāṇāyāma*. First, a good place; second, a suitable time; third, moderate food; and, lastly, the purification of *nāḍīs*, (vessels of the body, i.e., alimentary canals)

Chapter. 6

Bhrāmarī as a prāṇāyāma, the science of breath control.

Bhrāmarī literally means ‘belonging to a bee, here the sound of a bee’ and the sound produced in this practice imitates the sound of a humming bee. Adopt one of the sitting postures, with the spine upright and straight. Close your eyes and become still and quiet, keeping the teeth apart, jaw relaxed, and lips closed throughout, so that the sound will be experienced as a vibration inside the head. Place your fingers or thumbs in your ears, inhale deeply and hum the breath out, keeping the ears tightly closed throughout. Allow the humming sound to be smooth and continuous until the breath is fully exhaled. As indicated by its name, the sound is like a humming bee. It will sound something like ‘hmmm’. Develop the practice with breath control into a smooth long stream of steady sound. It does not have to be loud, as the focus is on the sound vibration within the head. Continue the practice for five minutes, increasing to 10 minutes as you become more comfortable with it. When you have completed the practice, relax the hands, placing them in a comfortable position, keep the eyes closed, and with your awareness internalized, observe the after-effects of your practice. We are now ready to enter into a practice of deep silent meditation, where we may discover and explore the inner subtle sounds that are inaudible to the ears. In *nāda-yoga*, we move from focusing on the outer or ‘struck’ (Sanskrit *āhata*) sounds such as humming, toning, or music, to a more subtle awareness of the ‘unstruck’ (*anāhata*) inner or psychic sounds.

As a science of breath control we are practicing two forms of *kumbhaka* while doing *Bhrāmarī*. After inhalation one is doing *antar kumbhaka* and after exhalation one is doing *bahir kumbhaka*. In the science of breath regulation or *prāṇāyāma*, the practice of *Bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* comes a little later, after the initial practices are mastered by an

aspirant learning the technique of *prāṇāyāma*. ‘*Bhrāmarī*’ comes from the word ‘*Bhrāmara*’ meaning bumble bee.

6.1 Benefits and contraindications of *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma*

1. Relieves anxiety, stress and anger
2. Reduces blood pressure
3. Enhances natural healing process of the body
4. Improves quality of sleep
5. success in *samādi*
6. Indescribable happiness.
7. *Bhrāmarī* is an excellent *prāṇāyāma* for those who have the problem of insomnia.
8. It lowers blood pressure which has been increased by tension.
9. *Bhrāmarī* enables the person to develop confidence and positive thinking towards any situation.
10. Correcting nocturnal enuresis in children and treating alcohol and drug addicts.
11. It removes mucus, inhaled particles and unwanted materials with breath.
12. *Bhrāmarī* has been proved very helpful to the patients of bronchial asthma and bronchitis.
13. Chanting 'MMM' or *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* with both external ears closed using the thumb of both hands also is another very useful trick to rest and relax the scalp muscles. This works through slowing down the mind. When you start enjoying the deep internal massaging effect of the resonance of the sound in the entire head, you can feel the tension getting released

14. It is tremendous breathing exercise for meditation and helpful for *kunḍalini* Awakening.
15. The mind becomes calm and peaceful. It helps in spiritual enhancement of an individual. It is beneficial in mental tension, agitation, high blood pressure, heart disease etc.
16. “With regular practice of *bhrāmarī* bliss arises in the yogi’s heart” – (*Haṭhayogapradipikā*)
17. It enlivens the practitioners looks, improves the glamour of the face.
18. Modern medical science has proved, if *bhrāmarī* practiced regularly during pregnancy it keeps the endocrinal system regulated to maintain the pregnancy successfully and may facilitate easy and trouble-free childbirth.
19. Excellent breathing exercise for meditation, the mind concentration enhances.
20. Mental tension, agitation, hypertension, high blood pressure and heart diseases are positively affected.
21. Helps to cure migraine and paralysis.
22. It has immediate positive effect on ears, nose, eyes and mouth.
23. This *prāṇāyāma* should be done with the thought that your individual consciousness merges with the supreme and cosmic consciousness. Your mind should be full of the thought that divine bliss is descending on you, that deep divine wisdom fills your entire being. Exercising this *prāṇāyāma* with such thought will endow you with divine light and you will be able to meditate effortlessly.

Contraindications:

- Ear infection
- Lying down position

Chapter 7

Bhrāmarī according to *yogic* scriptures

7.1 *Bhrāmarī* according to *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*

वेगाद्धोषं पूरकं भुंगनादं भुंगीनादं रेचकं मंदमंदम् । योगीन्द्रणामेवमभ्यासयोगाच्चित्ते जाता काचिदानंदलीला ॥
vegāddhoṣaṁ pūrakaṁ bhruṅganādaṁ bhruṅgīnādaṁ recakaṁ mandamandaṁ |
yogīndraṇāmevamabhyāsayogāccite jātā kācidānandalīlā ||

Haṭhayogapradīpikā 2,- 68

Breathe in quickly, making a reverberating sound like the male black bee, and exhale slowly while softly making the sound of the female black bee. By this yogic practice one becomes lord of the yogis and the mind is absorbed in bliss.

Translated by *Swāmi muktibodhānantha*

This is *bhrāmarī*, ‘the humming bee’ *prāṇāyāma*, so called because the sound we make during this practice imitates that of a black bee.

Here we see three techniques for *bhrāmarī-prāṇāyāma* according to *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*

Technique 1

Sit in any comfortable meditative pose, relax the body and practice *kāya sthairyam* (all special terms are explained in appendix).

Keep the eyes closed throughout the practice.

Inhale slowly and deeply through the nose, listening to the sound of the breath.

Close the ears with index and middle fingers by pressing the middle outer part of the ear ligament into the ear hole.

Keep the ears closed and exhale, making a deep soft humming sound.

Concentrate on the sound, keeping it low-pitched.

When exhalation is complete, lower the hands to the knees and breathe in slowly.

Continue the practice in the same way, performing ten to twenty times.

When finished, keep the eyes closed and listen for any subtle sounds.

Technique 2

Stage 1: Practice in the same way as technique-1, but after exhalation perform *bahir-kumbhaka* and *jālandhara-bandha* (all special terms are explained in appendix).

Practice ten to twenty rounds, taking a few normal breaths between rounds if necessary.

Stage 2: Practice as in stage 1, but add *mūla-bandha* (all special terms are explained in appendix) after *jālandhara-bandha*.

Technique 3

Stage 1: Practice technique 1 with *ṣaṅmukhī - mudrā*. That is, after inhalation do *kumbhaka* and close the ears with the thumbs, the eyes with the first fingers, the nostrils with the middle fingers and the mouth with the ring and little fingers.

Hold for as long as comfortable, then exhale maintaining the same hand position.

Keep your awareness on the subtle sound vibrations or any images that may appear in front of the closed eyes.

Stage 2: Practice stage 1 with *ṣaṅmukhī - mudrā*, but add *mūla-bandha*.

Bhrāmarī should be practiced after *nādīśodhana* (all special terms are explained in appendix) and other forms of *prāṇāyāma*, and before meditation and sleep. It is best to practice on an empty stomach. *bhrāmarī* helps to awaken psychic sensitivity and awareness of subtle vibrations, therefore, it is better to practice in the early hours of the morning or late at night. The sound produced in the *bhrāmarī* is very soothing and thus the practice relieves mental tension and anxiety and helps reduce anger.

7.2 *Bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* according to *Haṭharatnāvallī*

वेगोद्धोषं पूरकं भ्रुंगनादं भ्रुंगीनादं रेचकं मदमदम् ॥

योगीन्द्राणां नित्यमभ्यासयोगाच्चित्ते जाता काचिदानन्दलीला ॥२६ ॥

vegodadhoṣaṁ pūrakam bhruṅganādaṁ bhruṅgīnādaṁ recakaṁ madamadam ||
yogīndrāṇāṁ nityamabhyāsayogāccite jātā kācidānandalīlā ||26||

One inhales forcefully producing a sonorous sound resembling that of a male bee and exhales quite slowly, while making the sound like that of a female bee. This technique, if practiced daily, fills the mind of the *yogi* with exceptionally ecstatic feeling.

The humming sound resembling that of a male bee and a female bee during *pūraka* and *recaka* is produced by pronouncing the nasalized sound as in the word *gaṅgā*, accompanied by the vibrations of the soft palate.

7.3 *Bhrāmarī* as a kind of *prāṇāyāma*

Bhrāmarī is one of the types of *prāṇāyāma*. *Bhrāmarī* is the name of the humming sound made by a black bee *bhramara*. In this *prāṇāyāma* the practitioner imitates the same deep, low pitched sound as the bee. It is used in *nāda-yoga* (all special terms are explained in appendix) to awaken awareness of the inner psychic sounds. The vibrations of *bhrāmarī* produce a soothing effect on the mind and nervous system.

Here we see six techniques of *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma*.

Technique 1: Basic method

Sit in a comfortable meditative pose.

The position of *nādānusandhāna āsana* may also be used by sitting on a rolled blanket with the knees upward and the elbows resting on the knees.

Close the eyes and relax the whole body.

The lips should remain gently closed with the teeth slightly apart throughout the practice.

Make sure the jaws are relaxed.

Raise the arms sideways and bend the elbows, bringing the hands to the ears. Use the index or middle finger to plug the ears. The flap of ears may be pressed without inserting the fingers.

If sitting in *nādānusandhāna āsana*, plug the ears with the thumbs, resting the other four fingers on the head.

Breathe in through the nose.

Keeping the mouth closed, exhale slowly and in a controlled manner while making a deep, steady humming sound like that of the black bee. The humming sound should be smooth, even and continuous.

Listen to the sound with the awareness focused in the centre of the head. The sound should be soft and deep, making the front of the skull reverberate.

This is one round. At the end of exhalation, breathe in deeply and repeat. Practice 5 to 10 rounds.

Technique 2: With *ujjayī prāṇāyāma*

Inhalation may also be performed by contracting the throat while inhaling as in *ujjayī prāṇāyāma*. In this way a humming sound can be produced on inhalation as well as exhalation.

Technique 3: With *jālandhara-bandha*.

Once the basic method has been mastered, *jālandhara-bandha*.

may be incorporated in conjunction with internal breath retention.

After inhaling, perform *jālandhara-bandha*.

Do not strain when performing *kumbhaka*, one or two seconds is sufficient at first.

Release *jālandhara-bandha*. Plug the ears and exhale with a humming sound, as in technique 1. Practice 5 to 10 rounds.

When comfortable with technique, *ujjayī* may be practiced during inhalation.

Practice note: if you are sitting in *nādānusandhāna āsana*, you will not be able to practice *jālandhara-bandha*.

Technique 4: With *jālandhara* and *mūla-bandha*.

After inhalation, retain the breath and perform *jālandhara* and *mūla-bandha*. Release *mūla* then *jālandhara-bandha*, plug the ears and exhale with a humming sound.

ujjayī may be practiced during inhalation.

Technique 5: *prāṇava prāṇāyāma*

All techniques of *bhrāmarī* may be practiced using the *mantra*, Aum. Instead of humming sound in pronunciation, the A and U sounds very short, and the M is longer: Mmmmmmm...

Inhale with *ujjayī*, ascending the awareness in the spinal passage from *mūlādhāra* to *ājñā cakra* (all special terms are explained in appendix)

With exhalation, the *mantra* Aum descends in the spinal column from *ājñā* to *mūlādhāra cakra* (all special terms are explained in appendix)

Practice for 15 minutes.

Now listen to the inner sounds.

Technique 6: With *ṣaṇmukhī mudrā* (all special terms are explained in appendix)

All technique of *bhrāmarī* may be done while performing *ṣaṇmukhī mudrā*. In technique 1, while performing *ṣaṇmukhī mudrā* allow the nostrils to remain open throughout the whole practice.

In technique 3 and 4, during internal retention close the nostrils with the middle fingers of each hand.

Concentrate on the subtle sound vibrations in the centre of the head and any images appearing in the closed eyes.

In order to get better results, the following ratios (inhalation/ retention/exhalation) along with the prescribed duration should be applied. Last but not the least, contraindication and benefits are given here

Ratios: Breathing ratios may also be included for these techniques.

Initially breathe to an inhalation/retention/exhalation ratio of 1:1:1

Increase the ratio to 1:1:2 and over a period of time gradually extend the count to 10:10:20. with time and practice change the ratio to 1:2:2. Reduce the count initially to prevent strain while adjusting to the ratio initially to prevent strain, then gradually extend to a count of 10:20:20.

Over time a spontaneous urge to extend the retention may be experienced. At that time reduce the count and change the ratio to 1:4:2. Increase the count gradually to 10:40:20.

Duration: Practice *bhrāmarī* 10 to 15 rounds in the beginning. Gradually increase the duration of inhalation/exhalation and the number of rounds. *bhrāmarī* can be practiced for up to half an hour, particularly to assist the healing process, or in cases of extreme mental tension or anxiety.

Contra-indication: *bhrāmarī* should not be practised in a lying position. Heart patients must practice without breath retention. Those suffering from severe ear infections should not practice *bhrāmarī* until the infection has cleared up. Those who are overly introverted or depressed should avoid technique 5.

Benefits: *bhrāmarī* quickly introverts and calms the mind and emotions. It is extremely useful for relieving mental tension, anxiety, hysteria, anger and insomnia. It helps to reduce blood pressure and eliminate throat ailments. It speeds up the healing of body tissue and may be practiced after operations. Awareness of subtle vibrations and sound is aroused. For awakening psychic sensitivity, practice at night before sleep or in the early morning while it is still dark.

7.4 Bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma according to gheraṇḍasaṁhitā

अर्धरात्रे गते योगी जन्तूनां शब्दवर्जिते ।

कर्णा पिधाय हस्ताभ्यां कुर्यात् पूरककुम्भकम्

*ardharātre gate yogī jantūnām śaṣḍavarjite |
karṇā pidhāya hastābhyām kuryāt pūrakakumbhakam ||*

At past midnight, in a place where there are no sounds of any animals, to be heard, let the yogi practice *pūraka* and *kumbhaka*, closing the ears by the hands.

शणुयाद्दक्षिणे कर्णं नादमन्तर्गतं शुभम्

प्रथमं झिञ्झीनादं च वंशीनादं ततः परम् ॥७९॥

मेघझर्झरभ्रमरी घण्टाकांस्यं ततः परम् ।

तुरीभेरीमुदङ्गादिनिनादानकदुन्दुभिः ॥८०॥

*śaṇuyāddakṣiṇe karṇa nādamantargataṁ śubham
prathamam jhiñjhinādaṁ ca vaṁśīnādaṁ tataḥ param ||79||
medhajharjharabhrmarī dhaṅṭākāṁsyaṁ tataḥ parama |
turībherīmuḍaṅgādininādānakadundubhiḥ ||80||*

He will hear then various internal sounds in his right ear. The first sound will be like that of crickets, then that of a lute, then that of a thunder, then that of a dum, then that of a bells, then those of gongs of bell-metal, trumpets, kettle-drums, mridanga, military drums, and dundubhi.

एवं नानाविधो नादो जायते नित्यमभ्यसात् ।

अनाहतस्य शब्दस्य तस्य शब्दस्य यो ध्वनिः ॥८१॥

ध्वनेरन्तर्गतं ज्योति ज्येतिरन्तर्गतं मनः ।

तन्मनो विलयं याति तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम् ।

एवं भ्रामरीसंसिद्धिः समाधिसिद्धिमाप्नु यात् ॥८२ ॥

evam nānāvidho nādo jāyate nityamabhyasāta |
anāhatasya śabdasya tasya śabdasya yo dhvaniḥ ||81||
dhvanerantargataṁ jyoti jyetirantargataṁ manaḥ |
tanmano vilayaṁ yāti tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam |
evam bhrāmarīsaṁsidghīḥ samādhisidghimāpnu yāt ||82||

Thus various sounds are cognized by daily practice of this *kumbhaka*. Last of all is heard the *anāhata* sound rising from the heart; of this sound there is a resonance, in that resonance there is a light. In that light the mind should be immersed. When the mind is absorbed, then it reaches the highest seat of Vishnu (*parama-pāda*). By success in this *Bhrāmarī kumbhaka* one gets success in *samādhi*.

APPENDIX

ājñā cakra

energy centre located behind the forehead, also called psychic centre. One of the seven centers.

antar kumbhaka

holding the breathe inside.

bahir kumbhaka

External breath retention. The stage of *prāṇāyāma*, where breath is retained after exhalation.

bandha

a posture in which organs and muscles are contracted to create energy lock in a specific area.

jālandhara-bandha:

jālandhara-bandha is the chin lock, one of the three internal locks or *bandhas* described and employed in *haṭha yoga*.

kāya sthairyam

kāya sthairyam is a practice of concentration on the steadiness of the body. In Sanskrit, the word, “*kāya*” means “body” and “*sthairyam*” means “steadiness“. Because of the inter-relation between the body and the mind, when the body becomes steady and still, the mind follows suit. Therefore, each of the body is absolutely steady and immobile should the actual *dhāraṇa* practice begin.

kevala kumbhaka

Spontaneous cessation of the breath without any conscious effort.

khecarī mudrā

Applying elongated tongue to the posterior palate in *Hatha Yoga*

mudrā

Literally means 'gesture' – *mudrā* expresses and channelizes cosmic energy within the mind and body.

mūlādhāra cakra

Lowest energy centre in the human body where the *kuṇḍalini śakti* (serpent power) resides - situated in the perineal floor in men and the cervix in women.

mūla-bandha

Energy lock created by the contraction of the perineum in the male and the cervix in the female.

nāda-yoga

Nāda-yoga is the exploration of consciousness through the vehicle of sound and the discovery of its source. The Sanskrit word *nādam* means sound current or cosmic vibration. The aim of *nāda-yoga* is to harmonize the gross and subtle energy fields and bring them into alignment with their natural vibration.

nāḍīśodhana

Sit down in any meditative posture. Close your right nostril with your right hand thumb and inhale through left nostril. Close both the nostrils and hold the breath for some time. Then slowly exhale through the right nostril closing the left (use your ring and little finger). Thereafter close your left nostril and inhale through the right nostril and then closing both the nostril holds the breath in your body and ultimately exhale the breath through your left nostril.

pratyāhāra

Sense withdrawal; first stage of concentrating on the mind during meditation

śāmbhavī

A Yogic technique of concentration

ṣaṇmukhī mudrā:

ṣaṇ means six and *mukha* means the mouth. *ṣaṇmukha* is the name of the six headed god of war, also known as *kārtikeya*. *mudrā* means a seal or closing up.

References

- B.L Atreya, The vision and the way of Vasishta, Indian heritage trust, Madras, 1993.
- Dr. Manmath M. Gharote, *Haṭharathnavalli*, The Lonavala Yoga institute, Pune, 2009.
- H.R Nagendra, *Prāṇāyāma* -The art and science, Vivekananda, Kendra yoga prakasana, Banglore: 1999.
- S.C. Vasu, *Gheraṇḍasariṅhtā*, Sri Satguru publications, Delhi, 2005.
- *Srīmad Devībhāgavatam*, NAG publishers 11 A / U.A (post office building) Jawahar nagar, Delhi-110007 (India), 2000
- Swami Sathyananda Saraswati, Four chapters on freedom; Yoga publications trust, Munger, Bihar, India, 2008.
- Swami Muktibodhananda, *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*; Yoga publications trust, Munger, Bihar, India, 2008.
- Swami satyanada saraswati, *Āsana prāṇāyāma Mudrā bandha*; Yoga publications trust, Munger, Bihar, India, 2008.
- Swami Niranjananada, *Prāṇa prāṇāyāma prāṇavidhyā*; Yoga publications trust, Munger, Bihar, India, 2002.

Conclusion

Bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma is one form of *prāṇāyāma*. It is highly studied and investigated. It has been described in great detail in many scriptural texts. *Gheraṇḍasaṃhītā* describes in great detail the techniques used to practice this *prāṇāyāma* along with the scriptural aspects. *Bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* changes the breathing rhythm, with very long exhalations and short inhalations, which may have a physiological effect. *Bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* practiced for 5 to 10 consecutive minutes induces subjective feelings of mind refreshment and blissfulness, and even sometimes a state close to *dhyāna*. Therefore, *bhrāmarī prāṇāyāma* is a *prāṇāyāma* technique, but also a meditation technique.

Other *yogic* texts like *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, *Haṭharatnāvallī* etc also mentioned this type of *prāṇāyāma* with therapeutical and spiritual benefits. It widely practiced in almost all *yoga kēndrās*

