

Spinal Breathing Pranayama

Journey to Inner Space

Yogani

From The AYP Enlightenment Series

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“All the while my breath is in me,
and the spirit of God is in my nostrils...”

Job 27:3

Introduction

Spinal Breathing Pranayama is one of the most important practices in all of yoga. It can have a positive impact on our health and well-being, and in facilitating more effective functioning in every aspect of our daily life. But more than that, spinal breathing pranayama purifies and opens us to our ecstatic inner realms. To engage in this simple practice on a daily basis is to be on an exciting journey to *inner space*.

For thousands of years, methods of spinal breathing have been utilized by spiritual practitioners, and are mentioned in the ancient scriptures. Yet, the details of this practice have always been kept secret from the vast majority of the population. Now, in these rapidly changing times, there is a great need for many to have access to the means that have long been reserved for the few. No one owns this knowledge. It originates inside each of us, within our very own nervous system. We only need a few simple instructions, and the natural evolutionary processes present within us will take over, yielding marvelous results.

The Advanced Yoga Practices Enlightenment Series is an endeavor to present the most effective methods of yoga in a series of easy-to-read books that anyone can use to gain practical results immediately and over the long term. Since the AYP writings first began in 2003, we have been engaged in a fascinating

experiment to see just how much can be conveyed, with much more detail included on practices than in the spiritual writings of the past. Can books provide us the specific means necessary to tread the path to enlightenment, or do we have to surrender at the feet of a *guru* to find our salvation? Well, clearly we must surrender to something, even if it is to our own innate potential to live a freer and happier life. If we are able to do that, and maintain a daily practice, then books like this one can come alive and instruct us in the ways of human spiritual transformation. If the reader is ready and the book is worthy, amazing things can happen.

While one person's name is given as the author of this book, it is actually a distillation of the efforts of thousands of practitioners over thousands of years. This is one person's attempt to simplify and make practical the spiritual methods that many have utilized throughout history. All who have gone before have my deepest gratitude, as do the many I am privileged to be in touch with in the present who continue to practice with dedication and good results.

I hope you will find this book to be a useful resource as you travel along your chosen path.

Practice wisely, and enjoy!

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Breath and the Life Force	1
Chapter 2 – Spinal Breathing Pranayama	9
How to do Spinal Breathing.....	10
When and Where to do Spinal Breathing.....	12
Initial Questions on Practice	14
Enhancing the Effectiveness of Spinal Breathing....	20
The Possibilities	32
Chapter 3 – Journey to Inner Space	35
Managing Our Purification and Opening.....	36
Energy Experiences and Visions.....	63
The Evolution of Ecstatic Conductivity.....	86
Chapter 4 – The Cosmic You	93
The Marriage of Opposites	94
Ecstatic Bliss.....	96
The Infinite Self and Divine Love	98
Further Reading and Support	103

Chapter 1 – Breath and the Life Force

Breath is life. It sustains us and it is an expression of the life force within us. The fact that we are breathing is an affirmation of life. It means we want to be here. It means we want to be doing something here. But what?

So much of life is instinct. We breathe, we eat, we sleep, we become active, we procreate...

Within all of that, we are making choices about what to do with our life, going about our business – getting an education, pursuing a career, making money, raising a family, working for the things that matter to us, and so on.

All the while, something is wondering inside: “What is all this for? Why am I here? Is there something more?” We have an instinct to be asking these questions. Like breath itself, the questions are spurred through the impulse of life stirring deep within us. Indeed, the questions are an essential constituent of our life force, as essential as breathing itself.

What is this life force that sustains and animates every aspect of our existence, and spurs us on to find answers? We know that all of material existence is made up of energy. Physics tells us that all matter is empty space made to behave as solid by the polarities of energy whirling inside. All of this whirling in the vacuum of infinite space, making the appearance of

matter, is according to natural laws. That is, the nature of matter is predictable, at least as far as we have been able to determine with our scientific investigations over the centuries. Likewise, when matter takes the form of living things – plants, animals and human beings – much can be predicted about the physicality of life. But there is something more manifesting in living things. The whirling energies are still there creating the appearance of matter. Yet, something more is operating to bring the matter together into an intelligent expression – an intelligent and evolving system. This something else we can call the “life force.”

In the ancient teachings of yoga from India, the life force is given another name – *prana*, which means “first unit” or “first manifestation.” Yoga regards the manifestation of all matter as a manifestation of *prana*, and therefore “intelligent.” Indeed, all that exists, all that is born of energy is an expression of *prana*. The rocks and earth are expressions of *prana*. The seas are an expression of *prana*. The air is an expression of *prana*. And all of animate life is an expression of *prana*. In the Eastern way of thinking about it, the entire material existence is an expression of *prana* – the life force. And it is all imbued with an innate intelligence.

Where does *prana* come from? Whether we go to the spiritual teachings of the world, or to modern quantum physics, we will find a similar answer –

stillness is the source of prana, the life force that energizes the universe we experience. The stillness we speak of is of a special kind – a stillness that is filled with possibilities. It is an awareness that does not move. Yet, all that we see springs from it and is it. In the AYP writings we call it inner silence, or pure bliss consciousness. It has many names in many traditions. Whatever we call it, it is underlying all the activities of the life force, and everything we do in life.

The cultivation of inner silence in the human being is the subject of the first book in the AYP Enlightenment Series: *Deep Meditation – Pathway to Personal Freedom*. Now we are going to the next step, which is the cultivation of prana, the life force, in the human being in ways that promote the expansion of our inner potential, our inner silence.

To this end, yoga has a branch of practice called *pranayama*, which means “restraint of prana,” the life force manifested as breath. So pranayama is about breathing techniques.

There are many methods of pranayama, many breathing techniques. But one stands out above all the rest. It is called *spinal breathing pranayama*. The reason it stands out is because of its effectiveness in stimulating and regulating prana within us in a way that covers the three primary objectives of all pranayama:

1. Culturing the nervous system to become a steadily improving vehicle for inner silence rising from deep meditation.
2. Awakening the nervous system to a condition of permanent *ecstatic conductivity*.
3. Increasing and balancing the flow of inner energy (prana) over the long term to facilitate a progressive and safe unfoldment of the individual toward enlightenment.

The internal dynamics of implementing these three objectives are complex. Fortunately, the practice of spinal breathing is very simple. It is like this in the successful application of any complex technology in our society. The means of control are optimized and simplified to a level where nearly anyone can efficiently take advantage of complex principles found in nature.

For example, consider a car. We hardly give it a second thought when we climb into a car and drive off to an appointment. Even as we are driving, we will be thinking about our appointment rather than the complex technology that is operating smoothly under the hood of the car, whisking us off to our chosen destination. All we have to do is press on the gas pedal and hold the steering wheel, and away we go. Simple, yes? No, not simple at all, but it has been

made simple by virtue of the simplified controls that enable us to effortlessly transform a volatile substance, gasoline, into a speedy and safe ride to our appointment.

Pranayama is like that. In fact, all effective spiritual practice is like that. We can take complex principles of transformation found in the human nervous system and, with a series of simple procedures, apply these for great spiritual benefit.

In the case of spinal breathing pranayama, we are simultaneously capitalizing on numerous complex principles that are operating within our neurobiology, and we are enhancing these in a broad-based way.

As the name implies, spinal breathing involves doing something in the spine. From physiology and neurology we know that the spinal cord is the main highway of our functioning. From yoga, we know that the spinal cord is the main highway of the life force in our body. Yoga also recognizes that as we purify and open the nerves in the body, inner experiential openings occur. This is the central principle in deep meditation, where we systematically go from thinking to inner silence and come out into the body/mind with great purifying effects. This kind of process is also central in the application of spinal breathing pranayama, on the level of the breath and the body, where we are going in and cultivating the nerves in a specific and purifying way. In doing so, we are improving the ability of the subtle

neurobiology to serve as a much better vehicle for inner silence brought out through deep meditation. And, with spinal breathing pranayama, we are also gradually making the body a much better conductor of the inner energies which play an increasing role as the process of human spiritual transformation advances.

Together, inner silence and the awakening of our inner energies (prana, the life force) intermingle to produce a condition of unshakable inner steadiness and ecstatic bliss. As the process refines, we find this remarkable development overflowing through our conduct in daily living and into our surroundings, gradually transforming us to become a channel of divine love flowing into the world.

Along the way we find ourselves becoming intimately familiar with our vast inner dimensions. Indeed, the journey of spiritual practices is a journey to *inner space*. This is particularly true of spinal breathing pranayama, which, in the process of setting the stage for the purification and opening of our nervous system to ecstatic bliss and the outward flow of divine love, also opens us up to a direct perception of our inner realms. Interestingly, in the process of discovering our own interior, we also discover that what is in us is also the basis of everything and everyone we see in the outside world. In coming to know ourselves, we come to know all that is around

us as an expression of our own inner awareness and inner space.

While all this may seem an interesting theory, we are not here to discuss theory and philosophy much in this book. We are here to provide the means for direct experience of the things we are talking about.

So let's move on and talk about how to do spinal breathing pranayama, and also take a look at the specifics of what we may find in the way of resulting experiences.

Chapter 2 – Spinal Breathing Pranayama

We are all wired for enlightenment. We are all wired to be illuminated from within. It is only a matter of purifying the wiring, our nervous system, to know the truth of this. A primary means by which our nervous system can become purified is through spinal breathing pranayama. It is a mechanical process involving breath, attention and a few other simple components. As we engage in the practice, we will be brought in touch with our own inner anatomy, and begin to purify it step-by-step with each day of practice. The scenery we will see along the way will be dazzling at times, dull at other times, and perhaps even stuck at yet other times. But, all the while we will be traveling forward, if we keep up our daily practice.

For those who are reading this book before learning deep meditation, do keep in mind that with spinal breathing, we are preparing for deep meditation. Spinal breathing is a powerful practice. But, alone, it is not enough to complete the illumination we are talking about here. With spinal breathing we will journey to inner space. And with the addition of deep meditation immediately after our spinal breathing we will *become* inner space.

Further Reading and Support

Yogani is an American spiritual scientist who, for forty years, has been integrating ancient techniques from around the world which cultivate human spiritual transformation. The approach is non-sectarian, and open to all. His books include:

Advanced Yoga Practices – Easy Lessons for Ecstatic Living (Two Volumes)

Two large user-friendly textbooks providing over 400 detailed lessons on the AYP integrated system of practices.

The Secrets of Wilder – A Novel

The story of young Americans discovering and utilizing actual secret practices leading to human spiritual transformation.

The AYP Enlightenment Series

Easy-to-read instruction books on yoga practices, including:

- ***Deep Meditation – Pathway to Personal Freedom***
- ***Spinal Breathing Pranayama – Journey to Inner Space***
- ***Tantra – Discovering the Power of Pre-Orgasmic Sex***
- ***Asanas, Mudras and Bandhas – Awakening Ecstatic Kundalini***
- ***Samyama – Cultivating Stillness in Action, Siddhis and Miracles***
- ***Diet, Shatkarmas and Amaroli – Yogic Nutrition and Cleansing for Health and Spirit***
- ***Self-Inquiry – Dawn of the Witness and the End of Suffering***
- ***Bhakti and Karma Yoga – The Science of Devotion and Liberation Through Action***
- ***Eight Limbs of Yoga – The Structure and Pacing of Self-Directed Spiritual Practice***
- ***Retreats – Fast Track to Freedom – A Guide for Leaders and Practitioners***
- ***Liberation – The Fruition of Yoga***

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