THE SHAT KRIYAS

The two most important preliminary purification techniques in the practice of Kriya Yoga are jala neti (the cleansing of the sinuses with salt water) and chandra dhauti (the daily cleansing of the tongue). These two techniques will help you to keep the primary subtle channels (nadis) open, and they facilitate the absorption of oxygen and prana. They also stimulate the chakras in a positive way, enabling your consciousness to ascend from the physical realm to subtler awareness, and from there to super-subtle states. In addition to these two techniques, it is recommended that you bathe daily and fast at least once a month, preferably at the new moon.

Tongue Cleansing (Chandra Dhauti Kriya)

Included with your Month One materials is a stainless steel tongue cleaner. Use it to perform chandra dhauti kriya each morning and each evening after you brush your teeth. The daily cleaning of your tongue is a simple yet important part of your Kriya practice. Not only does the tongue absorb prana, it is an important part of your body's immune system. Cleaning it on a daily basis prevents the buildup of excessive mucous, which inhibits the absorption of prana and creates a breeding ground for pathogens. The tongue is also important because it is used in many of the kriya techniques you will be taught in Kriology. Mystically, it is linked to the chandra chakra (moon center) located at the back of your head, near the medulla oblongata. Prana flows into your astral body and chakric system through this vital center with each inhalation. It is a doorway, a portal, between your inner and outer worlds. Cleaning your tongue stimulates the moon center, encourages it to open, and permits a greater influx of prana into your mind and body with each breath. You will find this procedure to be very invigorating. Not only does it allow a large amount of pranic energy to be absorbed into the tongue, moon center, and astral body, but it will also make your eyes sparkle and your mind clearer.

Stir a pinch of salt into a small glass of room temperature water. After you finish brushing your teeth and have rinsed out any residual toothpaste, rinse your mouth again with a small amount of the salt water. Holding the tongue cleaner in both hands, open your mouth, extend your tongue, place the cleaner at the back of the tongue, and pull it forward while applying a gentle downward pressure. Do this two or three times. When you are done, rinse the tongue cleaner under running water and rinse your mouth out again with salt water.

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Apply enough pressure to remove the mucous, but do not scrape too hard. Cleaning the tongue should not be painful or cause the tongue to bleed. You will be amazed at the amount of material that comes off of it everyday, especially if your body is not well. Remember, always clean from back to front.

If you prefer, you can use something other than the tongue cleaner we have provided. Traditionally, a sterling silver spoon or silver-plated spoon is used. It should be set aside and used solely for this purpose. Some people prefer a silver butter knife. In either case, the procedure is the same. After you brush your teeth, rinse your mouth with a little salt water, and extend the tongue. Take the silver spoon or butter knife and gently pull it across the tongue from back to front. A spoon would be held upside down or at an angle. If a knife is used, it should be the knife's dull side. Reach back as far as you can, moving from the back forward.

Silver is traditionally used for two reasons. First, it is a substance that relates symbolically to the moon chakra. Secondly, using something made of silver leaves small deposits of silver on the tongue and protects it from infection.

* The tongue cleaner we have sent may need to be stretched out or widened in order to fit your tongue. To do this, simply hold it with two hands and pull it apart.

Jala Neti (Water Nasal Cleansing)

Jala neti is a shat kriya that flushes the nasal passages with salt water. It is an excellent technique for revitalizing and sustaining physical health, as well as an important method to enhance the absorption and storage of prana. Jala neti is an important prerequisite for Kriya practice because the nasal passages are vital to the practice of yoga. In one form or another, all yoga methods are pranayama. Pranayama is the ability to draw in, absorb, and control the movement of prana, especially through breathing techniques. Pranayama is only effective when the nose and nasal organs have been properly purified. Purification of the nasal passages also permits the unobstructed movement of the breath, resulting in the proper oxidation of the blood and greater absorption of prana. If the nasal passages are not clean and clear, the absorption of prana is greatly diminished.

It is also crucial that your nasal passages function properly because the air around you is usually unsuitable to enter your lungs. It is not the proper temperature; it contains a considerable amount of dust and organic contamination; and it is laden with microorganisms. Your nasal passages and sinuses are designed to temper and filter the air before it reaches your lungs. If the air you breathe is too cold or too dry, it can damage your

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lungs. To prevent this, your mucous membranes and sinuses warm and hydrate the air you breathe. If the nasal passages and mucous membranes are not functioning properly, dryer air gets into the lungs and can cause the alveoli, which absorb oxygen in the lungs, to dry out. This makes it difficult for oxygen to be transferred to the bloodstream. If the nasal cavity is not functioning properly, the body will not get enough oxygen, it becomes more vulnerable to harmful pathogens and contaminants, and the absorption of prana is diminished. Jala neti prevents these problems from developing.

The hairs at the entrance of the nasal passages filter out dust particles. The way in which they vibrate prevents most of the impurities from moving any farther into the nasal passages or the respiratory system. Farther inside the nasal passage, there is a bony structure covered with a membrane. It is called the mucous membrane, and it secretes a mucous that contains a germicidal substance. As air circulates through the nasal passages and sinuses, it comes into contact with these membranes, which neutralize most of the germs contained in the air and trap the smaller dust particles that were not filtered out by the hairs in the nose. Deeper in the nasal passages, there are other glands that trap the pathogens that passed through these first two barriers or immune defenses.

If the nasal passages become blocked, the mucous membranes become heavily covered with impurities and the nose cannot function correctly. In addition, industrial pollution, car exhaust, and cigarette smoke dry out the nasal passages, and the mucous membranes become encrusted with dried mucous. You can have dry, encrusted mucous membranes and still absorb oxygen in the lungs, but you will not absorb much prana. Absorption of prana is not through the lungs but through the mucous membranes, and it will only be absorbed if the mucous membranes are moist and clean. The usual approach to removing dry or heavy mucous is to blow the nose, but dry mucous often remains even after blowing the nose. This is why the practice of jala neti was developed. It removes the encrusted mucous so physical health is maintained and greater amounts of prana can be absorbed. Jala neti is very beneficial in removing headaches, insomnia, and fatigue. It is also helpful in preventing and eliminating colds.

There are also mystical purposes for performing jala neti. By cleansing your right and left nasal passages, you clear and open the idic and pingalic nerve channels. This results in the absorption of vast amounts of prana, stimulating the idic and pingalic nadis. In time, due to this stimulation, the sushumanic channel is also stimulated. This produces Kriya Kundalini and moves you to deeper, higher, and subtler levels of consciousness.

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Mystically speaking, the nose and mucous membranes are also vital because they are linked to the sense organ of smell and the subtle sense of smell. Most humans have lost their ability to sense things, gross or subtle, by smell. Love, for example, is an odor. Fear is an odor that you can smell and taste. Your intuition is also linked to your sense of smell far more intimately than you may realize. Another significant benefit that results from the practice of jala neti is the stimulation of various nerves existing in the nose. This stimulation improves the function of the organs to which these nerves are linked and this, in turn, affects the brain. Mystically, and perhaps most importantly, it stimulates the ajna chakra, also called the sun center or third eye.

In addition to all the other benefits, breathing through the nose regulates, or should regulate, the ida and pingala astral channels. When prana flows predominantly through the left nostril, it activates the idic nadi. This stimulates the mind and produces internal phenomena, which has the effect of making you more introverted. When prana flows predominantly through the right nostril, it activates the pingalic nadi. This tends to make you more extroverted and stimulates activity in the body. In time, as the ida and pingala nadis are balanced with kriya practice, the inhalation and exhalation naturally balance out, and you experience a spiritual transformation that transcends your mind-body complex.

For all of these reasons, it is important that you make a conscious effort to breathe through your nose whenever possible. People who breathe through their mouth instead of their nose do not derive the benefits the nasal passages were designed to provide. There are Kriya techniques that use the mouth because it relates directly to the sushumanic channel. However, these Kriyas are only practiced for a short period of time and should not be breathed continuously.

The Practice of Jala Neti

Four items are needed to practice jala neti:
1. Neti Pot
2. Sea Salt
3. Quality Spring Water (like Evian)
4. A Handkerchief

Begin jala neti by preparing a salt water solution. Mix two teaspoons of sea salt into eight ounces of water. The water should be body temperature or slightly warmer. Stir it well to ensure that the salt is completely dissolved.

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Allow the water to settle for a minute, and then pour 95% of the solution into a larger container. Discard the remaining 5%, which will contain any undissolved salt.

Pour the 95% back and forth from one glass to another once or twice. Add another eight ounces of spring water to it, and stir well. This will yield about sixteen ounces and will guarantee that all the salt has been completely dissolved. Rinse your neti pot with warm water so that it is at least body temperature, and fill it with salt water.

The best way to practice jala neti is leaning forward over a sink. Some people prefer to squat in the bathtub or shower. Having filled the neti pot with the salt water, hold the pot in one hand, bend slightly forward, and gently insert the tip of the neti pot into your left nostril. Make sure that it creates a good seal. There should be no force of any kind.

Tilt your head to the right and slowly lift the neti pot until the water begins to run into your left nostril, out your right nostril, and into the sink or tub. As the neti pot empties, you may need to lift it a little higher to empty it completely. The neti pot should be inserted firmly into the left nostril so that nothing leaks from the pot onto your body. Allow the water to flow in a continuous stream for about fifteen seconds or until the pot is empty. Then refill the neti pot, insert it into the right nostril, and repeat the entire process. If you check your nostrils before you start and find that your right nostril is more open than your left, begin the process with the right nostril instead.

It is important that you keep your mouth open while you are flushing your sinuses, so that you can breathe. You should also be aware that a small amount of water might flow out of the nasal cavity into your mouth; this is perfectly normal and is actually desirable. Simply spit the water out of your mouth, if and when you need to. There are teachers who say that the mouth should be closed and the breath held during jala neti. However, for beginners, it is better to breathe through the mouth. This will allow you to pour the entire contents of the neti pot through your nose in one continuous stream.

The next step is to very gently blow your nose with a handkerchief. This will clean out any excess water that may remain in your nasal passages. Be careful not to blow too hard. After blowing through both nasal passages, close one nasal passage at a time and gently blow your nose again.

Some people prefer to blow their nose after cleaning just one nostril. Then they clean the other nostril and blow that nasal passage clear. The choice is yours, but waiting until both nostrils are cleared before blowing gives the water time to soften any hardened mucous on the membranes. After blowing both nostrils, remove any remaining water in your nasal passages by standing erect, bending forward so your torso is

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horizontal to the floor, closing one nasal passage at a time, and breathing in and out vigorously in rapid succession five or six times. If you like, you can conclude by repeating this rapid breathing with both nostrils open. This should remove any excess moisture or water that still remains in your nasal passages. If you find there is still some water remaining, continue the rapid breathing with both nasal passages open until they are dry. Any water that does remain will be absorbed into the body.

Many people ask why salt water is used. If you did not use salt water, a large amount of water would be absorbed into the delicate mucous membranes and blood vessels of the nose, which could cause discomfort. More importantly, salt water has a higher osmotic pressure than the fluids in the nasal passages. Therefore, it will draw mucous and other fluids from the nose into the salt water and flush them out. Drawing the fluids from the mucous membranes into the salt water purifies the membranes and breaks loose any dried and encrusted mucous. Some people may experience a slight irritation or burning sensation the first time they practice jala neti. This soon disappears with practice. It usually indicates that the mucous membranes are excessively dry and/or encrusted. It can also indicate that you have used too much salt or that the water you are using has chlorine in it.

The practice of jala neti can be performed any time during the day or night, but the best time is early in the morning. The only time that it should not be performed is shortly after a meal. We suggest that you perform jala neti once a week for the first month, and then once a month thereafter. If you find that there is a considerable amount of mucous coming out or if you feel like your body is getting sick, perform jala neti twice a day for two or three days in a row. Otherwise practicing once a month, at the new moon, should be sufficient after the first month.

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