



69

Shudhi Kiryas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Our body is like a vehicle. So to run smoothly, the vehicle must be cleansed both internally and externally. Just as we wash our hands we should also keep the internal passage clean as they are continuations of the outer covering of skin.

Sudhi kiryas is also known as Shatkarmas. It is a very precise and systematic science. Shat means 'six' and karma means 'action'; the Shatkarmas consist of six groups of purification practices. This specifically increases the vital capacity of the yogis or who practice kiryas. They were never designed for therapy, but to create harmony in the body and mind and to prepare one for further practices. As sudhi kiryas bring about smooth and perfect functioning of the bodily systems, through their practice, the mind will become free from turbulence and disturbances and thus be better able to concentrate and to move towards dhyana. One's capacity to work, think, digest, taste, etc. increases, and greater awareness develops.

2.0 OBJECTIVES OF SUDHI KIRYAS

Main objective is to create harmony between the two major pranic flows, ida and

pingala, thereby attaining physical and mental purification. It is also used to balance the three doshas in the body, Kapha, mucus; pitta, bile, and vata wind. And imbalance of the doshas will result in illness. The main aim of sudhi kiryas is the purification of the body. When the different systems of the body have been purified the energy can flow through the body freely.

3.0 TYPES OF SUDHI KIRYAS

When fat or mucus is excessive, sudhi kiryas; the six cleansing techniques should be practised. In hatha yoga there are six particular practices which were specifically designed to remove excess body fat, to remove mucus blocking the respiratory tract and to eliminate gas in the stomach and intestines. They are called shatkarmas.

Six shatkarmas or sudhi kiryas

(a) **Neti** : A process of cleansing and purifying the nasal passages. This includes Jala Neti and Sutra Neti.

(b) **Dhauti** : A series of cleansing techniques. This cleans the entire alimentary canal from the mouth to the anus.

(c) **Nauli** : A method of massaging and strengthening the abdominal organs.

(d) **Basti** : Techniques for washing and toning the large intestine.

(e) **Kapalbhati** : A breathing technique for purifying the frontal region of the brain.

(f) **Trataka** : The practice of intense gazing at one point or object which develop the power of concentration.

3.1 Neti : (Nasal cleansing)

Jala Neti (Nasal cleansing with water) In Jala neti a special neti lota or pot is required, which has a nozzle designed to fit into the nostril. The lota should be filled with warm water. The salt should be added according to the taste.

In this, stand with legs apart. Body weight evenly distributed, lean slightly forward.

Tilt the heads to right side and place the lota's nozzle in the left nostril or one can practice from other side which ever is comfortable.

Open the mouth slightly and breathe out through the mouth only.

Keep the body relaxed and let the water pass out through the nostril. After this practice remove the lota, remain in bending position and let the water run out of the nose. Close one nostril with the finger and blow gently through the other nostril, so that all the remaining water comes out. The nostrils must be thoroughly dried.

Sutra Neti (Nasal cleansing with thread).

In this, a length of cotton thread is passed through the nose. Several strands are tightly wrapped together and dipped in melted beeswax. But now a thin rubber catheter tube is used. Take any comfortable position, relax the whole body.

Tilt the head slightly back. Gently and slowly insert the narrow end of the catheter tube into the nostril which ever is flowing more freely.

Keep the tip pointing downward towards the floor of the nose. Do not put it straight up. As the tube or thread reaches the back of the throat, insert index finger and thumb into the mouth. Pull the catheter tube gently and slowly out through the mouth, leaving a few cms of thread hanging out of the nose. Hold each end with the fingers very slowly and gently pull it back and forward. Repeat the process with the opposite nostril. Neti destroys all the diseases which manifest above the throat.

3.2 Dhauti (Internal cleansing)

A strip of wet cloth, three inches wide and one and a half metres in length is slowly swallowed and then taken out. This is known as dhauti. The practice of dhauti must be performed under expert guidance. The cloth should be finally woven cotton which is unused and clean. The cloth must be trimmed neatly so that no loose threads fray on the sides. It should not be wider than the tongue or it will fold as it passes down the throat.

Wash and rinse the cloth well, then boil it. While practising keep the cloth in a container of warm water. A squatting position with heels flat on the ground and the buttocks off the ground or resting on a brick. Relax the body. As the cloth is used keep it spread and not to be folded. Spread one end over the tongue and start swallowing the cloth. If the cloth catches in the throat and could not pass down, then take a sip of warm water, but do not drink a large quantity. The stomach is to be filled with the cloth.

The cloth may tend to stick in the lowest point of the throat, so keep swallowing the cloth and resist the urge to vomit. Once the cloth passes further down the esophagus the feeling of vomiting will end. When two thirds of the cloth have been swallowed, leave the remaining few inches hanging out of the mouth and stand up ready to practise nauli. The cloth can be left in the stomach for five to twenty minutes. Then practise dekshin (right) and vama (left) nauli; then rotation and madhyama nauli Five to ten

minutes are sufficient to clean the stomach. Sit in a squatting position and slowly take out the cloth. The cough asthma, diseases of the spleen and many diseases caused by excess mucus are destroyed through the effect of dhauti.

3.3 Nauli (abdominal massaging)

Lean forward, protrude the abdomen and rotate (the muscle) from right to left with speed, is called nauli. The word nala means a 'naval string' i.e. rectus abdomini muscles. It also means a tubular vessel.

When the rectus abdomini muscles are rotated from left to right (anti-clockwise), it is called dakshina nauli. When they are rotated from right to left (clockwise), that is a vama nauli. When the muscles are pulled together and the middle group of muscles protrude, it is a madhyama nauli. Before attempting nauli one must perform uddiyana bandha properly.

The rectus abdomini are the two long vertical muscles situated in front of the abdomen, which run from under the centre of the ribcage near the diaphragm to the pubic bone. At first nauli is practised with the hands just above the knees and the body bent forward. Once one is perfected then place the hands on the upper thighs. Nauli kindles the digestive fire, removing indigestion, sluggish digestion and all disorders, doshas, and brings happiness.

3.4 Basti (Yogic enema)

Basti is a general term pertaining to the lower abdomen, belly, pelvis and bladder, stand in pure water upto the navel. A flowing river is an ideal place. Lean forward and place hands on the knees. Expand the anal sphincter muscles and simultaneously perform uddiyana bandha and nauli in such a way that water is drawn up into the bowels. Hold the water in the bowels for some time and then expel it through anus.

By the practice of this the colon is cleaned and purified. Gas is expelled, and cool down the abdominal heat. Enlargement of the glands and spleen, and all diseases arising from excess

wind, bile and mucus are eliminated from the body through the practice of basti.

3.5 Kapalbhati (frontal brain cleansing)

Inhalation and exhalation is performed rapidly like the bellows (of a blacksmith). It destroys all mucus disorders. It also means perception and knowledge. It invigorates the entire brain and awakens the dormant centres which are responsible for subtle perception. In this inhalation is active and exhalation is passive. The breathing should be done like the pumping action of a pair of bellows when the bellows are closed the air is pushed out and when they are opened the air is sucked in due to the vacuum effect. Similar is the reaction of the forced exhalation in kapalbhati. Kapalbhati helps relax facial muscles and nerves, and keeping the face young shining and wrinkle free.

3.6 Trataka (concentrated gazing)

The word trataka means 'to look' or to 'gaze'. Trataka is the last of the shatkarmas. It acts as stepping stone between physically oriented practice and mental practices which lead to higher states of awareness. Looking intentionally with an unwavering gaze at a small point until tears are shed, is known as trataka. It means to gaze steadily.

The point of concentration is usually a symbol or object which activates the inner potential and can absorb mind. The most common object used in this is candle flame, because even after closing the eyes, the impression of the flame remains for some time and trataka can easily be practised. The purpose of focusing the eyes on an external object is to arouse the internal vision and to make that vision steady by stopping the eye movements. Trataka eradicates all eyes disease, fatigue and closes the doorway, creating these problems. It benefits not only eyes, but a whole range of physiological and mental functions. The eyes become clear and bright.

4.0 PHYSIOLOGICAL VALUES

1. Sudhi kiryas prevent and manage respiratory tract diseases such as asthma, bronchitis and pulmonary tuberculosis.
2. Jal neti removes mucus, and pollution from the nasal passages and sinuses, allowing the air to flow without obstruction.
3. Sudhi Kiryas helps to relieve allergies; colds and sinusitis together with various disorders of the ears, eyes and throat.
4. It has a cooling and soothing influence on the brain and is beneficial in the treatment of migraine.
5. Jal neti stimulates the various nerve endings in the nose, improves the activities of the brain.
6. It cures digestive disorders such as constipation, acidity, indigestion and other digestive upsets.
7. It helps to prevent urinary infections and the formation of kidney stones.
8. Vastara dhauti removes gas and wind and prevent hyperacidity and heartburn.
9. It massages the abdomen, stimulating the associated nerves, strengthening the muscles of the abdominal organs.
10. It prevents burdening the intestines when either excessive amounts of food or rotten food has been eaten.
11. By practicing of Sudhi kiryas excess mucus is removed from the body, helping to cure cough and cold, bronchitis, asthma and other respiratory ailments.
12. Vastra dhauti induces strong reflexes in the throat and chest region.
13. Nauli massages and tones the entire abdominal area including muscles, nerves, intestines, reproductive, urinary and excretory organs.
14. It generates heat in the body and stimulates appetite, digestion, assimilation, absorption and excretion.
15. It helps to balance the adrenal component of the endocrine system.
16. It helps to increase mental clarity and power by harmonizing the energy flows in the body.
17. It also cleans the colon and removes gas and wind.
18. It makes the eyes clear and bright.
19. It balances the nervous system, relieving nervous tension, anxiety, depression and insomnia.
20. It improves the memory and helps to develop good concentration and strong willpower.
21. It makes the mind sharp and the senses keen, and increase the body's resistance to disease.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by Shudhikirya ?
2. Write the objectives of Shudhikiryas?
3. What are the types of Shudhikiryas ? Write in detail.
4. Write the physiological effects of the Shudhikiryas.