

Soham Meditation

Universal mantra: The Soham mantra has been called the universal mantra because of the fact that its vibration is already a part of the breath, and everybody breathes. *Sooooo...* is the sound of inhalation, and *Hummmm...* is the sound of exhalation.

Natural mantra: The Soham mantra is a natural mantra because it is already part of your nature.

- *Sooooo...* is the sound of inhalation, and is remembered in the mind along with that inhalation.
- *Hummmm...* is the sound of exhalation, and is remembered in the mind along with that exhalation.

Systematic practices: The three methods described below can be used in order, going from outer to inner, from gross to subtle.

- First, work with the diaphragmatic breathing and awareness of Soham mantra at the space just below the breast bone, at the upper abdomen.
- Second, allow attention to flow up and down along the spine with the Soham mantra, exhaling down from the top of the head to the base of the spine, and then inhaling upwards.
- Third, come to rest at the bridge of the nostrils for meditation on the Soham mantra, feeling the touch of the air in the nostrils.

By doing the practices in this order, your attention moves systematically inward, through the dimensions, to one-pointedness. After these three, you may want to move your attention to the space between the breasts or between the eyebrows, depending on your predisposition, using whatever mantra or focal point you normally use for meditation.

Soham with diaphragmatic breathing: The Soham mantra is extremely useful when practiced along with diaphragmatic breathing. Allow your attention to rest in a space about the size of the palm of your hand, just below the breast bone, at the upper abdomen. As you exhale with *Hummmmm*, be aware of how that space gently pushes in, so as to exhale completely. As you inhale with *Sooooooo*, be aware of how that space moves back outward, and how the lower ribs flare slightly outwards, to the sides. Allow the breath to be smooth, with no jerkiness. Allow it to be comfortably slow, and have no pauses between the breaths. Exhalation gently rounds back into inhalation, and inhalation gently rounds back into exhalation. This may be done either in a seated meditation posture or lying on your back in the corpse posture.

Soham in breath along the spine: One of the deeper ways to use the Soham mantra is through spinal breath, by coordinating body, breath, and mind (Such practice has been popularized as a

part of kriya yoga or kundalini yoga, though it is universal practice). As you inhale, allow the mind to be aware of the vibration *Sooooooo* as your attention moves upward along the subtle cord of the spine (sushumna), through the chakras towards the crown of the head. As you exhale, allow the mind to be aware of the vibration *Hummmmm* as your attention moves downward along the subtle spine towards the perineum at the base of the spine, at the flat place between the genital area and the anus. Be aware of a thin, steady stream of energy and consciousness flowing up and down between this area near the base of the spine and the crown of the head. You may or may not be literally aware of the stream, and you may or may not experience it as a milky white stream of light. However you experience this flow is okay, and you will find it is a very beneficial meditation practice.

Soham at the nostrils: Meditation with Soham at the bridge of the nostrils is a very effective practice that stabilizes and purifies the mind, training the mind in one-pointedness. Meditation on the gross breath leads to awareness of the subtler energy of prana, and then to deeper meditation beyond. Focus attention on the feel of the breath, the cognitive sense of touch, as it flows in and out, remembering the vibrations *Sooooooo* and *Hummmmm*. Gradually allow the exhalation to elongate, becoming twice as long as the inhalation.

Steps of practice: While the Soham mantra can be used alone, it is most effective when practiced in conjunction with the other steps of meditation, including stretches or hatha postures, survey of the body or relaxation, and a variety of breathing practices.

Listening and remembering versus speaking: The vibrations of the Soham mantra are allowed to arise in the mind field and to repeat themselves. While you might initially be using your will power to remember the mantra, it gradually will be noticed more automatically, somewhat like a song or an advertising slogan might start to repeat in your mind. Though you may not be literally hearing an audible sound of the mantra, the stance of attention is more like listening or remembering than it is one of speaking the mantra.

Balancing chakras: By training the breath with Soham mantra, moving the attention up and down the central channel of sushumna, the chakras through which sushumna travels come into alignment or balance. This brings the mind into a pleasant, peaceful state that is preparation for advancing into the depths of meditation. The Soham mantra is a simple, straightforward method that can be done by virtually all people

I am that: While the English translation may not be as important as the quality of the sound vibration, Soham translates as *I am that*. When remembered repeatedly, it declares *I am that I am that I am that I am*. Remembering the Soham mantra often during the day can be a very useful practice.

Source : <http://www.swamij.com/soham-mantra.htm>