

PRANAHUTI AIDED MEDITATION
AND CONSCIOUSNESS TRANSFORMATION
– A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Wandan Wendy Zeng

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of
the California Institute of Integral Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in East-West Psychology

California Institute of Integral Studies

San Francisco, CA

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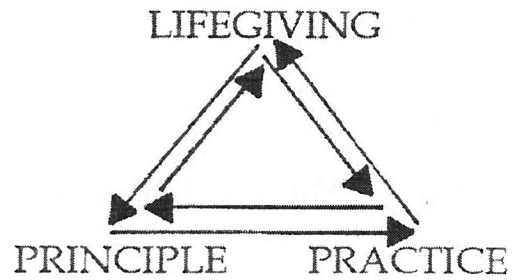
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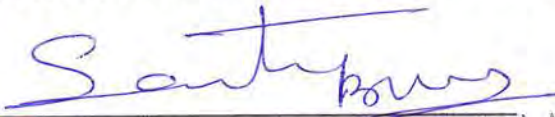
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California Institute of Integral Studies, 2017
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PRANAHUTI AIDED MEDITATION
AND CONSCIOUSNESS TRANSFORMATION
– A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research study aims to explore and provide a comprehensive descriptive record of the significant experiences of Pranahti Aided Meditation (PAM) practice and transformation by eight practitioners from the San Francisco Bay Area. It investigates the linkage between their meditation experiences and transformations to better understand this new phenomenon.

PAM, also known as Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga or Natural Path, is a new spiritual practice invented by Sri Ramchandra of Shajahanpur, U.P., India in the 1940's. It utilizes the technique of Pranahti (*Yogic Transmission* or *Transmission of Life Force* i.e. *Prana*) to aid individual's meditation practice and facilitate the process of consciousness transformation. Academic research on PAM has been scant so far. This is the first study using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to systematically explore the experiences of PAM practitioners with 1 to 10 years of practice experience.

The first major finding of this study was that this group of participants experienced a large number of positive non-ordinary states, of which more than 95% occurred during Pranahti. Some altered states were somatic in nature, and some psychological, noetic, and mystical; still some were particularly exquisite and profound. The first major conclusion that can be drawn from this is Pranahti

resulted in positive non-ordinary states experienced by the participants during meditation.

The second major finding was that participants experienced many positive changes such as acquisition of positive qualities, values and principles, psychological balance, and sense of wellbeing. They had progressed into what in PAM is known as the realm of upper, or altruistic, consciousness to a significant extent, and most had further development in the realm of divine consciousness. The study found a very close correlation between participants' meditation experiences and the transformations unfolding in daily lives. The second conclusion to be drawn from this is that PAM practice had enabled all participants move from the lower to the upper plane of consciousness to a significant extent. It also enabled many to move further into the realm of divine consciousness, resulting in various significant transformations including shifting of perspectives, and gaining positive qualities and attitudes in life.

DEDICATION

This work is a humble offering to

Our revered guide Pujya Sri. K. C. Narayana,

Whose sacrifice has transformed and lighted up the hearts of so many, and

Whose monumental research and training in

Pranahuti Aided Meditation

(Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga)

Has paved the way to life divine for generations to come.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There is no single event in life so great and important as to meeting one's real guide and teacher. I had the fortune of both. I am utterly indebted to my respected beloved teacher Dr. Sastry V. S. K. Bhamidipati and Srimati Sreevalli, whose infinitely kindness and mercy alone led me to the feet of my revered guide and granted me a new lease of life in the Divine. He has brought me through labyrinth of dark confusions in life, instilled in me great sense of hope, seen me moulded and transformed through Pranahuti, and brought out in me the higher potential I did not conceive capable of. Above all, he has steered all of us constantly striving towards that real purpose of life—the goal of Reality and the work for the good of humanity. It was his love that has carried me through the entire course of this work.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my dear parents - my father and mother - who gave me this life; whose sacrifice and unconditional support has allowed me pursue the real meaning of life and engage in this work; and my dear brother who lent me the support at the times of need.

I would like to extend my profound thanks to Dr. Wu Yi, who accepted me without question from the outset, agreed to guide me, and gave me the freedom to work. It is through him I got acquainted with my own culture and heritage authentically and profoundly for the first time, for he embodies the virtues and philosophies he teaches.

I would like to extend my deep gratitude to Dr. Janis Phelps, whose capable hand has guided me through the meandering path of qualitative research

into greater maturity. And it was her sagacious advice that led me to seek Dr. Wu's guidance.

My deep gratitude to Dr. S. V. Raghavan, Dr. K. Madhava, and Dr. B. S. Murty for being so kind and taking the pain in going through the draft and providing extremely helpful feedback.

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I would like to thank my company PG&E, whose generous education assistance program had made this at all possible. And all my superiors and colleagues in the company - past and present - for their warm support in this cause for the good of all.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

What is life. It is a state of being which should remain permanently, as long as we live, thoroughly in contact with the Being, smelling at each step the fragrance of the Being.

Sri Ramchandra, *Showers of Divine Grace*, 2005

The main purpose of training is that a man [human being] should begin to imbibe within him as much of divine attributes as possible.

Sri Ramchandra, *Reality at Dawn*, 2000

Transmission [Pranahuti] gives a new life to the sleeping condition of man, and prepares for the highest approach reserved for human beings.

Sri Ramchandra, *Showers of Divine Grace*, 2005

Background Context and Motivation of the Study

Once there was a philosopher fish. As he was sitting in great misery and worry, another fish passed its way, stopped and said, “Philosopher, why are you in such misery?” The philosopher fish said, “Wherever I go, everybody is talking about the ocean. I want to find this ocean. I went east, west, north, south, and I cannot find this ocean.” (Vasudev, 2003, para. 7)

This ancient story epitomizes the human search and aspiration for the ocean of Reality and the difficulties the search entails. For the philosopher fish, believing in the ocean is not enough, he wants to experience it for himself. “Now the problem is, he is also part of the ocean. He is unable to perceive the ocean because he has no adequate tool of perception” (Vasudev, 2003, para. 8). The prominent 20th century Indian philosopher K. C. Varadachari (2014) once said: “The permeating nature of Reality is such that it is the meaning and soul of all things. All things live and move and have their being in It without fully knowing it” (p. 287).

This is, in fact, the ocean of *Prana* or life force in which all beings live and move (Varadachari, 2014, p. 288). It is the very base and interior of all beings. It flows over them, and is within and all around. It enfolds one like one's own skin, and yet one cannot perceive it (Lin, 2007). In the ancient scripture, the Keno Upanishad, there is a poignant passage which asks:

By whom does mind, breath or life make one live, [it answers] There is a *super force* [emphasis added] which is the mind of the mind, breath of the breath, eye of the eye, ear of the ear, speech of the speech that moves all, by whom all are moved. (as cited in Varadachari, 2014, p. 273)

This *super force* is the force of *Prana*—the superconscious living force or life energy that emanates from the original Source¹ (Varadachari, 2014, p. 274).

It manifests as limitless pure consciousness² and permeates all beings in the universe. It is whole, free, omni-pervasive, and luminous. This life force or *Prana* is now what is sought for the purpose of rejuvenation of human life and solution of all problems through the method of Pranahuti (p. 273). Pranahuti, properly translated as *yogic transmission*, is the method by which the original consciousness or *Prana* is offered or transmitted by an adept into the heart of the spiritual seeker for his/her spiritual uplift and transformation. It formed the core principle in a new system of spiritual practice called Pranahuti Aided Meditation

¹ The terms such as “Source”, “Centre”, “Ultimate”, “Reality”, “Zero”, “Base, and “Divine” appeared in this dissertation are adopted from PAM literature in capitalized format and used in the same sense to indicate the highest point, or the state or condition of the highest, or that which is originated from the highest as per the PAM system.

² Pure consciousness or original consciousness is the original life force or *Prana* and emanates from the “Centre” or Source (see chapter two, the section on “Prana and Consciousness” for a detailed explanation). Its nature is unalloyed love (Narayana, 2006a). It is also termed super-finest super-consciousness by Ramchandra (2008). It is the base of all manifestation.

(PAM), also known as Natural Path, founded by Sri Ramchandra (2008, p. 70).

This study seeks to explore the experiences of this new system of spiritual practice using qualitative research.

The motivation of this study however lies in a much wider context. It is related to the condition of our modern world and human welfare in both a collective and an individual sense. In the past few centuries, the world has gone through a sea-change. It is reflected externally in the social, political, cultural, scientific, and environmental realms, and internally in the human psychical and spiritual realms. We are at the throes of a new birth as Dr. Varadachari (2014) observed (p. 32). Here lie the wondrous possibilities never imagined by our forefathers because science paved the way for us, and social, political, and religious reforms freed us from a number of dogmas of the past. Yet in contrast with our spectacular advancements in science, technology, and material abundance, increasing conflicts and strife are facing most nations and communities all over the globe. Our minds seem to be not yet catching up to a broader, holistic, harmonious, and unified vision, capable of thinking to the large scale and prospects that science and the world is offering (p. 32).

To the discerning, the disorders in the outside world are but a reflection of our internal world. World peace and collective well-being must necessarily be dependent upon individuals' inner making. Thus, the solution to the collective problem of humanity really rests upon each individual to first improve one's own mind, and then to develop freedom of thought, broad perspective, inner harmony, peace, and moderation. But how can this be achieved in an expedient way and the

collective humanity rise up to a higher state of being? For this, the help of a higher energy is needed.

In the earlier part of the 20th century, it was the promise of the prominent philosopher and yogi Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950) that divine life for the whole of humanity could be achieved through the influx of the supramental consciousness called the Supermind. According to Dr. Varadachari (2014) and Sri K. C. Narayana (2003b), Sri Ramchandra had radically modified the method and achieved this objective by bringing down a much higher power from the *Ultimate* or “*Centre*” itself, into the hearts of seeking individuals through Pranahuti (p. 91). It is this super force from the ultimate *Reality* or *Centre*, rather than the supramental force that can unfold and divinize the human individual into the stature of Divine and lead one to the ultimate Reality of one’s being (Varadachari, 2014, p. 430).

And so, in the middle of 20th century, a special personality came into the being for the task of overhauling the nature of human consciousness through divinization of man (Narayana, 2010b, ix). The advent of this special personality marked the new era of spiritual regeneration of humanity. The divinization is by “lighting a thousand lamps from the One (divine) lamp lit within a single heart” (Raghavan, personal communication) through the method of Pranahuti. The object of the new system is for the divinization of man to work out the will of the Divine in this world, that is, the uplift of collective consciousness and bringing humanity into a greater destiny that it has long yearned for (Varadachari, 2014, p. 582). Thus, the system can not only enable individuals to achieve consciousness

transformation within a relative short span of time, but also brings about the total divinization of willing individuals for the participation in the divine work of uplifting the collective consciousness (Narayana, 2007a, pp. 246–277).

A new era of spiritual renaissance was ushered in with the invention of the Pranahuti method (Narayana, 2012a, p. 161). When the original consciousness or *Prana* is infused into a seeker, new, direct experiences of higher nature are opened up for the person and his/her intuition becomes developed (Varadachari, 2014, p. 35). This transcendental thought-force or Prana or life itself is capable of transforming the consciousness to bring about deep peace and harmony that passes understanding (pp. 662–663). The growth of intuition is the development of cosmic consciousness that can enable one to “grasp all in one sweep of consciousness rather than in fragments”; it is “that which will integrate all knowledge and perceive the integral reality” (p. 35) through refined perception. One begins to find a “new energy, a new hope, a liveliness stirring at the core of their being” (Narayana, 2005a, p. 66) and a growth towards one’s own true nature.

Meditation has long been recognized as an important means for consciousness transformation because it deals directly with the function of the mind, and it has stimulated renewed interest in recent modern research. Studies suggest that transformations reflected in permanent character, trait, or behavior change may be the direct result of meditative practices (Kjellgren & Taylor, 2008; Laszlo, 2009; Schlitz, Veiten, & Amorok, 2007). Kjellgren and Taylor (2008) point to evidence that suggests some individuals have reached higher levels of

personal and transpersonal development through meditative practices. However, they cautioned that we are still in an early stage of research, because studies are far from conclusive regarding trait changes related to meditation practices (p. 245). Studies also observed practical difficulties in meditation progress (Brown & Engler, 1980) and note that permanently stabilizing in a state of enlightenment is an arduous process (Maslow, 1970) that may require an extremely long period of time (Yamada, 1986 as cited in Kjellgren & Taylor, 2008).

In the system of Pranahuti Aided Meditation, also known as Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga (SRRY), the difficulty of progress is addressed by first by linking the seeker with the central Source or Reality through Pranahuti. Once the connection has been established, continuous influx of the divine effulgence through regular Pranahuti, along with individual practice, help the practitioner in steadfast progress. As the pure and subtle energy is continuously channeled into the heart of the meditator, it molds the nature of the person according to its own higher nature. The nature of the original consciousness or life force, is that of love, peace, calmness, tranquility, aspiration, etc. Thus, it confers on the human individual mind peace and calm (Varadachari, 2014, p. 662). As a result, the practitioner becomes gradually transformed with less struggle or strenuous effort of their own (Narayana, 2003a).

This is a *raja yoga* system that utilizes the Pranahuti technique as the fulcrum. The new phenomenon is better known to the spiritual seekers from India, where it originated, and less so in the rest of the world. So far, very few formal academic studies on this subject have been conducted, especially on the

practical experiences of the new practitioners of the system and through qualitative lenses. Thus, this study employs the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to investigate, understand, and document the experiences of PAM practitioners with one to ten years of experience. It is hoped that this study would inform the general public as well as the academy about this new system and open up new insights on consciousness transformation.

It has been more than half a century since this new system of raja yoga was expounded. The system spread from its native India to Europe in the earlier days, then to North and South America and East Asia in more recent years. A number of recent books and journal publications by a few seasoned practitioners offer lucid, detailed, and authentic accounts of many extraordinary spiritual experiences, states, and stages (Sri Ramchandra, 2008; Narayana, 2006a; 2006b; 2007b; 2010c; 2011a; 2011b; 2012b). These records catalog extraordinary mystical experiences and transformations and growth of consciousness and suggest that many practitioners have indeed achieved higher stages of spiritual evolution aided by Pranahuti (Sri Ramchandra, 2008; Narayana, 2006b; 2011; 2012b). All these invite serious attention and further research. Yet, the phenomenon remains little known to the world at large. There have been few academic studies on the subject, and no qualitative studies focusing on the experiences of those who have practiced for only a few years. In this researcher's humble opinion, this is a critical time to bring out an effective method, by practicing which sincerely, one can first bring about one's own transformation

quickly, that is, obtaining higher thinking, noble character, and virtues, and then help others and generations to come.

The purpose of this study is to explore and understand the phenomenon of PAM practice better through the experiences of eight practitioners. The research questions are two:

1. What are the qualities of significant experiences in Pranahuti Aided Meditation?
2. What are the experiences of transformation associated with the practice?

Description and Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is threefold. The first is to explore and provide a comprehensive descriptive phenomenological record of the experiences of individual practitioners with between one and ten years of experience. These experiences include those during their daily meditation practices as well as receiving Pranahuti in individual sittings or group meditation (*satsang*). The second is to document the inner transformations or changes felt by participants over the period of their practice. The third is to analyze the data, draw out common themes, and investigate the linkage between PAM practice and the transformations experienced in order to enable us to better understand this new phenomenon.

The interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) method is employed for this study to draw out vivid descriptions and gain deeper understanding into the nature and quality of the experiences of the participants. The IPA method

provides naturalness, rigor, flexibility and freedom of expression, and depth of meaning for the participants and the researcher, and is suitable for exploring experiences related to the transcendent realm.

Eight participants with between one and ten years of practice who have reported significant experiences in meditation and transformation were selected for the study. The data collection process consists of open-ended and in-depth interviews in person in the San Francisco Bay Area. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Participants reviewed and validated the transcripts.

Significance of the Study

Spiritual Significance

Significantly, Dr. Varadachari had proclaimed the new system of Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga as the New Darsana (New View of Reality) in the 1960s (Varadachari, 2014). There are *shad darsana* or six schools of philosophy in India. Each is a grand expedition into Reality in the hoary past of Indian thought: philosophical, spiritual, and religious. As Varadachari concisely observed, the *vaishesika* and *nyaya* schools present a perception-dependent formulation of Reality (including super sensory perception); the *samkya* yoga schools present a reason-dependent Reality (as dualism); and the *vedanta mimamsa* schools presents an intuition-dependent formulation of Reality. In this context, proclaiming a system as the New Darsana and the seventh school of philosophy is an epic event that needs serious and comprehensive investigation.

PAM is called the New Darsana for the following reasons:

1. As mentioned above, it brought forth a totally new means of knowledge that is beyond the sensory perception and intellectual reasoning through Pranahuti—the direct infusion of pure consciousness—to reach higher planes of consciousness.
2. The discovery of new frontiers in the spiritual and psychical realms, up to the highest super-consciousness, called the *Center* beyond the *sahasrara* (see footnote 4 in chapter 2 for more details), is the unique contribution of Sri Ramchandra through this path.
3. Opening up of such super-conscious realms for seekers to experience through Pranahuti is of paramount significance. Pranahuti is offered by a capable person who applies pure and simple will transmitting the thought to improve the spiritual condition of the seeker. This is a direct help that removes the blocks and hindrance for the seeker and makes higher approaches accessible to a large number of people.

As this is an entirely new venture, unique from the philosophical schools before it. For this reason it is a new Darsana.

This study is the first formal qualitative research on the experiences of PAM. Its goal is to venture deep into the spiritual inner realms of the practitioners and better understand the potential that is possible with this practice, even during a relatively short span of time.

Social Significance

From a global, societal perspective, if a new method exercised by the will of competent and compassionate individuals can directly infuse higher states of

consciousness into seekers and assist in their inner transformation, it will lead to larger numbers of people raising their consciousness and will bring tremendous good to individuals and humanity at large. Quantitative studies (Imperience, 2002) suggest this new method could bring forth the inner balance and peace that, in turn, help individuals unfold higher potential within themselves. However, the studies did not provide detailed descriptive insights into those personal experiences. To the best of the author's knowledge, there has not been a comprehensive qualitative research study on this practice based on the personal accounts of its practitioners. This is the first attempt to use personal experiences to inform the general public of the significance and possibility of the new system.

Academic Significance

Academically, the new fields of consciousness studies and transpersonal and integral psychology move beyond traditional psychology. It places the study of non-ordinary states of consciousness at their center, accepting a broad spectrum of genuine, sublime yet enigmatic, exceptional human experiences called by different names. Psychologist William James (1987), who was one of the first to try to look at these experiences scientifically, made an appeal to future researchers to compile empirical evidence in order to study and understand them.

An important topic stemming from these studies is whether and how these positive non-ordinary states might be connected with inner, permanent transformations. This study directly addresses this issue by compiling and documenting a large number of such experiences as they occurred in practitioners, thus furthering our understanding of them. It also explores the linkage between

non-ordinary states and transformation. This study contributes to the knowledge base of raja yoga as well as significant meditation experiences.

From the research viewpoint of East-West Psychology, this study enriches and broadens the field by introducing a totally new modern Eastern system of spiritual practice and exploring it in depth as a transformative process using Western qualitative research lenses. This is the first in-depth qualitative study on PAM that opens up a new foray for the East-West scholars in the fields of psychology, integral and transpersonal psychology, consciousness studies, and transformative practices. It also lays the groundwork for future research and study of this phenomenon.

Practice Community Significance

The invention of the techniques of Pranahuti, and all PAM individual practices, including Divine Light meditation, purification process, point A and B meditation practices, and universal prayer are entirely new methods for self-development and consciousness transformation. The growing community of practitioners of this new system explores and understands the system through their own personal experiences. But the experiences of others who are travelling along side can help tremendously on the path of transformation. This study will provide a substantial account of the phenomenon based on eight practitioners' personal accounts, detailed analysis of them connecting them with the current literature of the forerunners to bring out greater understanding of these experiences. This endeavor will prove to be very beneficial to the entire community of practitioners.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The purpose of this study is to systematically and comprehensively investigate, document, and analyze the experiences of Pranahuti Aided Meditation (PAM) practice and transformation of individuals who have practiced for less than ten years. The primary aim of this chapter is to provide an in-depth and synthesized background of the PAM system—its underlying philosophy, cosmology, phenomenology, and mechanics in effecting consciousness transformation. Secondly, it is to provide a review of the research studies done so far on the subject. Gaps of knowledge will be identified thereby, which in turn will support the significance of the research as described in the previous chapter. The chapter culminates in building a conceptual framework of PAM practice and consciousness transformation, that is, a map that will guide the data analysis and discussion of the study. The framework will draw connections between the various aspects of PAM and the research design.

The subject under this study embraces a vast territory related to topics such as cosmology, spirituality, philosophy, consciousness, yoga, meditation, and more. The strategy here is to progress from the specific topic area that is closely related to the subject and then bring in related topics as needed to provide a broader context for comparison and understanding. It aims to strike a balance between topics specific to PAM and the general context related to meditation and consciousness transformation.

Biography of the Chief Exponents and Primary Sources Review

There are three chief exponents for Pranahuti Aided Meditation: the founder and two forerunners of the path. Each author's writings are self-contained and cover the entire subject in its breadth and depth from different angles. They form the core body of literature on PAM and are the primary sources for the literature review. PAM has not been studied by academic researchers until very recently and publications are scarce. The few available research studies on the phenomenology of PAM experiences are reviewed under the "Phenomenology of Pranahuti."

Sri Ramchandra (1899–1983) is the founder of the system and the first author. He founded the new system of raja yoga around 1944, and called it the Natural Path. He lived an unostentatious life with his family in the town of Shajahanpur in the state of Uttar Pradesh, North India. A glimpse of his profound inner spiritual life could be seen in his letter to Dr. K. C. Varadachari, in which he described some of his early spiritual experiences and his first meeting with his master:

At the age of nine I felt a kind of thirst for Reality, and I remained extremely flustered, just like a man who is drowning in water. It continued for some time, but finding no solution I fixed my mind upon making myself deserving. . . . My fortune favoured me and I arrived at the holy feet of my Master, Samarth Guru Mahatma Ram Chandrajī of Fatehgarh U.P., on 3rd June 1922. I was so spellbound by the effect of Master's force entering into me that I found myself compelled to gain it, rather than to study philosophy in which I was deeply interested. This meeting was, to me, one of the most important events which contributed to solve my problem of life. I commenced abhyas [practice] under his guidance and gave up pranayam which I had been practising for 7 years or so. A feeling of perfect satisfaction prevailed upon me when I was graced by his (Master's) first glance. . . . In 1924 I felt a ubiquitous force present in every animate and inanimate object and particle. I was drowned in a sea of

wonder. I felt God pervading over everything, like broad day light. (Sri Ramchandra & Varadachari, 2009, pp. 10-11)

According to Sri Ramchandra (2000), his master Sri Ramchandra of Fategarh (1873–1931) was a spiritual genius who “could bring a man to perfection simply at a glance” (p. 21). He brought back the technique of Pranahuti that was long forgotten in the history of time (p. 21).

Sri Ramchandra expounded his system largely from a yogic, personal experiential, and semi-metaphysical angle. He authored four books: *Sri Ramchandra’s Commandments*, *Practice and Efficacy of Rajayoga*, *Reality of Dawn*, and *Towards Infinity*, all of which are collected under the title *Basic Writings of Sri Ramchandra* (2008). In these writings, he detailed the beginning or origin and the end state of spiritual evolution, the means (practices) for achieving it, the principles and logic for a spiritual way of living that is necessary for spiritual development. He also introduced the use of Pranahuti as the foundation for training in order to achieve direct awareness of Reality.

Narayana (1999), an ardent disciple and one of the chief exponents of the system, wrote poignantly about his master’s life and the significance of his spiritual contribution:

When Masters like Shri Ram Chandra are born, it is like descent of the Divine into human form which is essentially meant to disclose the Condition of being to which human souls should rise. . . . The descent, enables us to understand that there is no opposition between spiritual life and worldly materialistic life. . . . [he] points out the way by which men can rise from the animal to spiritual mode of existence by being an example. . . . His life dramatizes as it were the essential constituents of human life ascending to the fulfillment of human destiny. He knew hunger and thirst, happiness and misery, solitude and desperation. He by overcoming them all, asks us to take courage in His example. He taught us

by his actions how we can die to our separate individualised temporal selfness and come into union with timeless spirit. (para. 3–4)

The second important exponent is Dr. K. C. Varadachari (1902–1971), a prominent philosopher in India, one of the first and the foremost disciples of Sri Ramchandra. He was the head of the department of philosophy at S. V. University at Tirupati, south India and also the first person to chair the Vivekananda Professorship on comparative religion, ethics, and philosophy at the University of Madras. However, despite his deep knowledge of various western and traditional Indian schools of thought and personal connections with the great thinkers of his age, his inner spiritual quest was not fulfilled (Varadachari, 2014).

After long decades of seeking, this life-long aspiration and thirst for spirituality was finally quenched when he met Sri Ramchandra (Varadachari, 2014). As per his open disposition, he began to experiment with the new system with zeal. He said:

Thus I found myself made to abjure the old theoretical ways of approach. I had to remake myself in a new way. I had to take stock of my whole past. All sectarian and caste conceptions had to be rethought. Philosophies help bind people to set notions. Thus I was to meet the challenge of the New. (xiii)

Due to his enormous aspiration and sensitivity, Varadachari advanced at a great speed in spirituality and was able to verify the claims of various super-conscious states and stages in the works of Sri Ramchandra through his own personal experiences. He actively collaborated with Sri Ramchandra in the spiritual research of yoga and was instrumental in taking notice of several key super-consciousness states and working out the detailed method for training using Pranahuti.

He was a man of deep love and fellowship. It was typical for him to say that “mystic awareness is a human birth right and is not an exclusive privilege of a few” (Narayana, 2004b) and education of East and West was not for livelihood but to bring out the best of human potential (para. 5). He always tried to give a wake-up call through his lectures and writings to all those who were associated with him to “be lovers of spiritual beauty and harmony” (2007a, p. 104).

Recognizing the system as a complete breakthrough in spirituality, Varadachari (2014) proclaimed it as the *New Darśana* (New School of Philosophy or New View of Reality) in his writing *Sri Ramchandra Rajayoga: New Darśanai* (collected under Varadachari, 2014). Varadachari’s writings approached the subject from philosophical, psychological, and yogic angles. He expounded on the philosophy of PAM and gave expressive language to the new system. All of his writings are collected under the *Complete Works of Dr. K.C. Varadachari* (Volume 1) (Varadachari, 2014).

Sri K. C. Narayana (1939–) is the third chief exponent of the PAM system. He was known to be a brilliant student from a young age with phenomenal memory capacity and an “uncanny ability to understand the problems of others” and loved to help them (“Sri K. C. Narayana—Childhood,” 2016). He studied philosophy and psychology at university, and graduated as the first of First Class in M.A. (Hon) Philosophy and M.A. (Hon) Psychology. At the age of 18, he first met Sri Ramchandra through his father Dr. K. C. Varadachari and was introduced into the practice. As a person of impeccable character and dignity, he

treaded the path like a *Dhira* (brave), and reached the pinnacle stage described by Sri Ramchandra early in life (Subba Rao, 2006).

While serving in the government, he assiduously followed the practices of PAM and conducted research and training of others with a lot of concern and love. He is a person who knew sacrifice (Subba Rao, 2010), and was known to be a “very compassionate, kind and generous” person (2006), who would readily and easily “forgive others even when he had been offended and hurt or otherwise harassed in life” (Smt Santha, 2000). He has effectively used Pranahuti to assist many practitioners in attaining profound inner transformation and spiritual uplift. According to his wife Smt. K.C. Santha (Smt. Santha, 2000):

If I find in him any obsession it is his obsession to work for the Master and work for the betterment of what he calls always his abhyasi [practitioner] brethren. I know him to be a restless worker even when his physical health is not at its best and many times bad also. (para. 2)

Narayana reformed the training of PAM and advanced the research through his own study and teaching, keeping it true to the original spirit of the system. Over twenty books, including ten volumes of *Bodhayanti Parasparam* (*Mutual Learning and Teaching*) (2003–2016) were published by him on the research and exposition of PAM. His book *Pranahuti* (2007b), an original research work, gave a clear and comprehensive depiction of the Pranahuti technique, dispelling mystical beliefs and dogmas around the phenomenon and shed light on several important aspects that were not known before. He uncovered the importance of point A and B practices, how they are instrumental in bringing about moderation of senses, and development of fraternity and altruistic consciousness (see the section on “Points A and B Practices” below),

which are crucial for spiritual development. The concept of inversion of knots (see the section on “Formation of Knots” below) to bring a person to a higher plane of consciousness was addressed and elaborated with lucidity from a practical angle by him (Narayana, 2006a). He also expounded on the method of purification of *samskaras* (impressions or psychic imprints) through the exercise of individual will power as well as Pranahuti, thus solving a difficult problem in spiritual history. His novel research study of five *koshas*³ or sheaths of consciousness (2006a) and how they can be purified through the methods of PAM is a unique contribution to the field of yoga. He brought to light the necessity of spiritual way of living for the growth into higher consciousness (see the section on “Defining Transformation”).

Narayana’s original research work *Path of Grace* (2006a) is “an elaborate, comprehensive and exhaustive study” (Bhamidipati, 2006, back cover) on the evolution of consciousness. It offers an astonishingly fresh account of his personal experiences with various states and stages of super-consciousness in the journey to the highest. In particular, his delineation of the varied hues of sublime experiences of the newly discovered 64 points near *sahasrara*⁴ and the “Seven

³ According to Indian philosophy, there are five sheaths of being (called *koshas*) that cover the souls. They include *annamaya kosha* (foods or physical sheath), *pranamaya kosha* (energy or vital sheath), *manomaya kosha* (mind-logical thinking sheath), *vijnanamaya kosha* (intellectual or wisdom sheath), and *anandamaya kosha* (bliss sheath). The purification of these sheaths are essential to the freedom of the consciousness (Narayana, 2006a).

⁴ *Sahasrara* (translated as “thousand-petal”) is the crown chakra or the seventh primary chakra in yogic tradition. It is said this is where *sat-chit-ananda* (truth-consciousness-bliss) is experienced. It is also considered the pinnacle of spiritual development. In the system of PAM which details the journey of 13 knots, *sahasrara* belongs to the area

Rings of Splendor” of the Central Region were his unique contributions to the field of yoga and spirituality. In the original work of Sri Ramchandra, though there was mention of these 64 points and Seven Rings, the actual experiences of them were brought to light by Narayana in this work.

Narayana’s decades of practice and training culminates in a comprehensive and original work of a spiritual self-evaluation tool called the Pind Desh⁵ Tool (Narayana, 2010c). In the realm of consciousness development, to map out and assess one’s entire spiritual journey and progress is a challenging task and there has not been a clear map or comprehensive tool or scale so far. This tool accomplishes such an aim and provides a practical guide for practitioners of spirituality not limited to PAM to measure and self-evaluate their own progress in consciousness transformation. It uses three sets of parameters: (a) the principles of spiritual living; (b) 141 psychical states, stages, positive qualities, and pitfalls in character traits in connection with the journey in the five knots of Pind Desh; (c) 48 liberating and binding psychical states of the five *kosas* or sheaths of being reflected in Pind Desh. Narayana (2006a) also developed a map in the format of a game called the Game of Life to bring out the intricacies of the dynamic play of the soul in its journey from the realm of particularized

between the 10th and 11th knot and is not the final approach. The final approach is in the Central Region where the experience of nothingness reigns (Narayana, 2006a). The existence of 64 points (psychical in nature) near the *sahasrara* was discovered for the first time by Ramchandra (2005, p. 110).

⁵ The region of the chest up to neck consists of five centres (five knots) related to the five fires and the region is called *Pind Desh*. This is because these centres control the physical existence of a person (Pind Desh, 2016). *Pind Desh* is the realm of shell consciousness or particularized consciousness. The characteristics and experiences related to these knots were described and applied in the analysis in chapter 5 extensively. See the section on “Formation of Knots” below and Appendix A for the explanation of knots.

consciousness, to the universal or cosmic, para-cosmic, and beyond. The qualities associated with the five knots of the Pind Desh region is reprinted in Appendix A for reference. This study draws heavily upon the Pind Desh Tool (2010c) and the map offered in Appendix A for the analysis of the experiences reported by the participants. The detailed elaboration of states, stages, qualities, and attributes were given in his books *Pind Desh Tool User Guide* (2010c), *Ecstasy and Agony in the Journey to Infinity* (2011b), and *Path of Grace* (2006a).

Introduction to Pranahuti Aided Meditation (Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga)

Pranahuti Aided Meditation is also known as the Natural Path or Sri Ramchandra's Raja Yoga (SRRY). From a broad perspective, it is a science that provides the technical tools to assist people in understanding themselves and their relation to the universe (Narayana, 2007a, p. 105). It is also a living art and practical teaching to help one "discover the true meaning behind every aspect of one's life, including morality, consciousness, spirituality, freedom, energy management, knowing oneself, and communication with others" (p. 105). The system is meant to enable one to answer and solve the life's most pressing questions through one's own inner experiences and wisdom developed in the course of traversing the path (p. 105).

The Basis of Raja Yoga

The Sanskrit word yoga comes from the root *yuj*, which means to yoke, to unite, or to link up by the means of thought (Varadachari, 2014, p. 513). This is the spiritual union of the individual self (consciousness) with the Cosmic Self (consciousness) or ground Reality. It means not only experiencing Reality, but

also living It as one's natural state of being. Some have called this ground Reality as the Base, or Brahman, or God, or other names. In the system of PAM, Sri Ramchandra (2008) called it the "Centre" or "Zero" or "Base". It is a "substanceless substance" (2007, p. 355) and "forceless force" (p. 468).

In describing this state as per his direct experience, Sri Ramchandra (2008) said it is the state of "Zero" or "Tam" [That] (p. 122), a "real state of Being" (p. 123) where there is "no light and no darkness" (p. 339). It is greyish, a dawn-like color—a reflection of colorlessness (p. 85). This is in fact our true nature—the natural condition or state of being where one feels the adequacy of being, of life (Varadachari, 2014, p. 342) without least trace of ego. In here, there is "every sense in living—not only in living but achieving the highest. The craving of the soul can be satisfied best, while one is living and existing" (Sri Ramchandra, 2005, p. 163).

The discovery of the Centre, which was not known to spiritual seekers of the past, is one of the key contributions of Sri Ramchandra in the history of spirituality (Narayana, 2007a, p. 56). Union with this condition means perfection and realization of one's nature (Varadachari, 2014, p. 6). "To live with it is to attain the real thing which is natural to the human individual" (p. 6). Another key contribution is to make it accessible for others to experience through the process of Pranahuti (p. 56).

Reality is the ultimate ground of manifestation—that from which arose all that is known as existence as well as thought (Varadachari, 2014, p. 6). The word *raja* in raja yoga means kingly. "The kingly thing in us is thought" (Sri

Ramchandra, 2008, p. 26). In fact, thought force in its original purity is the original expression of Reality. That which shares the same characteristic can be joined together (*yuj*). This is the basis that makes yoga, or uniting one's particularized consciousness with Reality, possible. However, as Varadachari (2014) pointed out, the thought here is not the usual intellectual discursive thought that is the servant of sensations (p. 113).

The real thought is akin to Vision, and it is this royal thought which has to be trained to come back to us by the purification of the thought. . . . Reality which is of the highest nature cannot be truly comprehended or apprehended by means of the senses or reasoning or comparisons or analogies, because it is subtler than any of the objects of the senses. . . . Thus Rajayoga aims at arriving at the highest Thought or purest thought to apprehend Reality as it is, having cleansed the subject of all desire and the means of all imperfection. (pp. 113-114)

The human mind, which is “closely identical with the root-force or the original Stir” (p. 26), can re-unite with its own Base when it is purified to the extent of its original subtlest state. And mind can, “through Transmission [of the original pure consciousness], be brought to its original state” (2005, p. 83). This original state of Reality is what is aimed at by practicing PAM (Natural Path), and the final point or state of transformation. One becomes Real in close conformity with his or her original Nature.

Prana and Thought

Prana, the life force, is the primal vibration, the subtlest transcendent force. *Prana* is in fact a very old concept in Eastern cultures and a main strand behind the developments in medicines, religions, philosophies, and spiritual practices, particularly yoga.

In Indian Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature, there are poignant extolment of the principle of *Prana* as the principle of life itself to be worshipped. In the Kena Upanishad, it is stated “Praanasya Praanah (The Life of all lives)” (Woodroffe, 1922, p. 1); in the Kausitaki Upaniṣad, it is stated “Sahovaacha Praanosmi (I am Life)”, “Praanosmi Mam upaasva (Adore Me who am Life)” (p. 1).

Expressed in a different, perhaps more scientific manner, Narayana (2010a) described *prana* as the subtlest energy arising from the supra cosmic level that supports the whole of the universe:

There is a flow of energy in a form that is subtler than light and / or sound arising from the supra cosmic levels of existence. Some according to their belief and convention call this as the flow from the Base, Brahman, Absolute, Ultimate or God. It would suffice to say that it is from That or It (Tam). The Flow is observed in the supra cosmic, cosmic planes and it travels in its purity even in the worlds of space, time, energy and matter. This Flow alone is the cause for holding the Universe together and therefore it has been called Life Force or Prana. (p. vii)

Similarly, the famous yogi Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902), who first brought Indian systems of philosophy and spirituality to the West stated that *Prana* is “the name for the energy that pervades the universe” (Swami Vivekananda, 1996, p. 638). According to him, it manifests in myriad forms in varied degrees of subtlety in this universe: “Whatever you see in the universe, whatever moves or works, or has life, is a manifestation of this Prana. The sum total of the energy displayed in the universe is called Prana” (p. 638).

Out of this *Prana* is evolved everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is *Prana* that is manifesting as motion; it is *Prana* that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism. It is the *Prana* that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve currents, as thought force. From thought down to the physical force, everything is but the manifestation of prana. (p. 592)

He pointed out clearly a century ago: “Thought is the finest and highest action of Prana” (p. 593). This is the most important revelation of the connection between the power of human thought and the original life force, Prana.

Formation of Knots

In the cosmology of PAM, all of this world, both in the individuals as well as the cosmos, arose out of the “Original Stir (Kshob)” (Narayana, 2010b). This “Original Stir” is the primal vibration which radiates from the “Zero” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 521) and it gathers momentum and spreads to form all the universes:

[C]urrents flowed out, vibrations intensified, formation of knots (Granthis) started, momentum gathered, churning process set in and actions and reactions began and continued till objects began to assume individual forms. (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 303)

During this descent of the original flow of energy or consciousness, inversions⁶ and twists took place and they led to the formation of knots:

This subtlest thought as power has become grosser and grosser till it evolved into cosmic world (Brahmanda) and the individuated worlds of beings (Pinda). Thought has thus become gross world of matter. A series of twists and turns or inversions of the original flow have attended this descending process of thought. These inversions lead to the situation where, that which was lower becomes higher and vice versa. These inversions in turn lead to the formation of knots or grandhis at each one of the stages of decent of Thought. These knots are the various bonds of existence. (Narayana, 2010b, p. iii)

⁶ The principle of inversion was explained by Dr. Varadachari (2014) in the following manner: “We can see that when anything flows down it is seen to twist itself in a wavy manner. Liquids twist as they flow down. Waves of light and energy flow in a wavy manner. Describing this we can say that things when they move or flow have the nature of twisting or inverting. This is also called serpentine. The top becomes the bottom, the right becomes the left and upper becomes the lower and vice versa. This principle is called the principle of invertendo by Shri Ram Chandraji” (p. 212).

Narayana (2016, personal communication) explained about these “twists” in the consciousness leading to the formation of knots in the following manner: Imagine a piece of thread. Holding it in both ends. As one continuously twists the thread, then finally releases it, the thread shrinks into a knot. This is how a knot gets formed due to continuous twisting. Due to the effect of the twists and inversions, the resulted knot “almost shuts off the flow of the higher [consciousness] into the lower or the inner to the outer, and vice versa” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 292). The removal of the gross effect in each knot leads to the untying of complexities and regaining the smooth flow of super-consciousness through them (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 53):

If all things are dissolved in toto you feel yourself as calm as you must have felt a little before coming to this world for the first time. Calmness prevails all over. Simplicity abides nearby. Plainness is the result. (p. 53)

Sri Ramchandra (2008) discovered 13 major knots in the human frame which are central to and governs the spiritual development of individuals. He gave the original account of the super-conscious states that are lying dormant in them. The precise locations of these knots, their intricate working, associated super-consciousness states, stages, and qualities—both positive and negative, were eventually mapped out and lucidly elaborated by Narayana in his monumental work *Path of Grace* (2006a). As mentioned earlier, Appendix A is a reprint of the location of the first five knots in the human physical frame and their qualities as revealed by him. In fact, the transformation of consciousness can be viewed from one angle as the unwinding of the intricacies of these knots as further discussed through the experiences of the participants in Chapter 5.

Offering of Prana in the New System of Raja Yoga

Ahuti or offering of *Prana* (life force) is *Pranahuti*. It may be more appropriately translated as *Yogic Transmission*. It is essentially the “influx of Divine grace” into the heart of the seeker (Narayana, 2011a, p. 103). It “strikes a concord between the individual’s *Prana* and the Divinity because it is the same nature” (p. 102). *Prana* manifests as pure thought and can be offered or transmitted by an adept through the exercise of will for the spiritual uplift of the seeker.

The method of *Pranahuti* was rediscovered by Sri Ramchandra of Fategarh (Sri Ramchandra, 2000, p. 21) and expounded by Sri Ramchandra (2008) of Shahjahanpur. It was then vastly elucidated, clarified, and researched by K.C. Varadachari (2014) and K. C. Narayana (2007). The discovery of the *Pranahuti* technique forms the very basis of the new system of Yoga—Sri Ramchandra’s Raja Yoga (SRRY).

According to Sri Ramchandra (2005), it was his master Sri Ramchandra of Fatehgarh, a “spiritual genius” (p. 108), who explored the vast fields of spirituality and “revived and brought to light” (p. 88) the age-old system of *Yogic Transmission* (p. 88). “Under this process the master [teacher], by the application of his internal powers, awakens and accelerates the dormant forces in the abhyasi [practitioner] to action, and diverts the flow of the Divine Current towards his heart” (p. 88). The result is it “accelerates the abhyasi’s progress by removing complexities and obstructions on his path” (p. 87) and makes the new system of

yoga “easy for all the souls to grasp it and a good deal of time [for practice] has been saved thereby” (p. 108).

Sri Ramchandra called it the giving of life—divine life— to the soul (as cited in Varadachari, 2014, p. 621). When this original life force gets poured into the heart of the spiritual seeker, a sort of “inner stimulation or ignition, or *ujjivana* (upward living)” starts (p. 366).

This is a significant experiment in spirituality according to Varadachari (2014, p. 625). The supreme Prana, the breath of breath, that is spoken of by the Upanishads is now brought down to be offered to the individual, lifting one to her or his own true state of being. As this primal energy modifies the individual mind according to its own freedom and restores the inner peace and balance, the seeker starts to move towards higher experiences and grows in spiritual dimension.

Reality “cannot be known through any phenomenalistic mediations” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 360). Direct linking of oneself with the Ultimate Reality is the only way by which It can be known (p. 360). “The manner of communication of this Reality is only through transmission of the Prana” (p. 389). Varadachari (2014) in the article “Transmission I” summarized what Pranahuti is all about:

[Yogic] Transmission is that process by which one is connected from above with that below, or by which the inward psychic being is awakened by the overhead, cosmic or supercosmic or primal Being. This is an initiation – literally it means the beginning of the evolution of man into a cosmic being. It is the beginning of passing from the individuated or personal, limited, circumscribed, physical being to the world of cosmic functions. One becomes energized as a member of that cosmic world. In a deeper sense it is not that also; but one becomes one with Ultimate Reality, or begins to be linked up with that Ultimate Reality. The result of the transmission is, as it were, the beginning of the experience of the Ultimate Reality, and this experience, at our human level, is experienced as vibration or movement. (p. 370)

Real transmission is a continuing act of transformation of the rhythm of being from the gross to the subtlest. The receiver feels it “as a series of vibrations—one’s entire rhythm gets modified” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 373). “One seems to be tuned, to something higher and more composing and harmonious. A new set of vibrations seem to be set up in the body which makes one feel happy, blissful and peaceful” (p. 373).

Narayana (2011b) stated that Pranahuti can greatly improve the spiritual life of a person (p. 125). The “direct, unmediated excursions into the Primal Consciousness are made possible only through the process of Pranahuti” (2007b, p. 43). And when it is offered,

[One can] get a glimpse of the Ultimate consciousness of a total Nothingness—Tam. . . . [When] that Universal consciousness . . . percolates into our ordinary human person we literally feel our ground reality and start being what we are in essence. (p. 125)

As one faces the “powerful and omni-potent energy” (p. 6), one is impelled to evolve out of one’s petty limitation (p. 7).

It is beyond all conceivable thought and when he [trainer] does it for you, when he gives his connection for you and when he puts this influx into you, what happens is, the transformation automatically starts. It is just like the power that is in you is getting attracted to its source. It knows its source, it wants to get back, so what will happen to you would be, normally if you practice you cannot resist the call to get back to the Divine, you feel your source. (2011b, p. 126)

He expressed the experience with the Ultimate as “profound, sacred and wondrous” (2007b, p. 46), which one has “every time when one gets in touch with it through the process of Pranahuti” (p. 46). The experiences of calmness of mind and blissful states were often attained by a practitioner as noted by Sri

Ramchandra (2008, p. 307). They give one pleasure and one begins to appreciate them. These blissful states further tempt one's heart and "offers inducement to enter into the next stage" (p. 307).

In Comparison with Patanjali's Raja Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga)

Sage Patanjali is known to be the founder of traditional yoga system (Narayana, 2008b, p. 9). His system of yoga is also known as *raja yoga*. The compilation *Yoga Sutra of Patanjali* is considered classical work on yoga, which lays out eight concrete steps for practice. Patanjali's raja yoga is also known as *astanga yoga* (or eight-limb or step yoga). Sri Ramchandra (2005) stated that his system of *raja yoga* has "modified the [old] system of Raj Yoga so as to suit the need of the time and the capacity of the people in general" (p. 9). A very brief review and comparison of the two system as presented here. It is found that the modification is indeed a radical one and it is difficult to bridge the two.

The goal and definition of yoga in the Patanjali raja yoga system is the cessation of the modifications of *chitta* (*yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*), as stated in the second aphorism. At that time, the Seer (*Purusha*) rests in His own [unmodified] state, stated the third aphorism. At other times, the Seer is identified with the modifications, stated the fourth aphorism. *Purusha* is the eternal pure consciousness, and free from limitation of the manifested phenomenal world. *Chitta* is the "physical medium through which spirit or Purusha manifests" (Narayana, 2008b, p. 11). It is the mind or consciousness that consists of *buddhi* (intellect), *ahankara* (ego), and *manas* (the mind acting s mental screen of feelings). The five modifications of *chitta* (consciousness) include right cognition

(which includes perception, inference, testimony of Vedas or saints), wrong cognition, imagination, absence of cognition, and memory. When *jiva*, the individual embodied being, is wrongly identified with mental modifications, it suffers from ignorance, egoism, likes, dislikes, and clinging to life (fear of death) (p. 13). Thus, liberation means cessation of these modifications, leading to the *purusha* (spirit) realizing its own independent free nature. “The state of release is attained when the mind is illumined, purged of impurities and the effulgent mental essence attains oneness in purity with the Purusha” (Narayana, 2008b, p. 18). In fact, Patanjali’s yoga system does not talk about union as the word yoga (union) implies (p. 9). It talks about spiritual effort to obtain perfection (p. 9).

The *ashtanga yoga* or eight-limb yoga practice propounded by Patanjali to achieve perfection consists of the following: (a) *Yama*, which means abstention involving following the principles of *satya* (truthfulness), *ahimsa* (non-injury), *asteya* (non-covetousness), *aparigraha* (non-stealing), and *brahmacharya* (continence; one who seeks Brahman experience alone to the exclusion of all others). In PAM, the meaning of *brahmacharya* is moving with the Divine; (b) *Niyama* which means self-control or discipline. It includes the practices of *saucha* (cleaningliness), *santosh* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity), *swadhyaya* (self-study of sacred literature), and *Ishwar pranidhan* (surrender to God); (c) *Asana* which means steady posture for effective meditation; (d) *Pranayama* which means regulation or control of *prana* or breath to effect control of mind; (e) *Pratyahara*, which means control of senses by withdrawing them from external objects through the practice of introversion and contemplation; (f) *Dharana* which

is fixing the mind on an object and keeping it steadfast (e.g. mid-point of eyebrows, tip of flame, or lotus of heart, image of deity); (g) *Dhyana* which means meditation. Meditation means “undisturbed flow of thought round the object of meditation. It is steadfast contemplation without any break” (Narayana, 2008b, p. 16); (h) *Samadhi*, which means absorption, where the mind become one with the object of meditation. The first five limbs are called the external aids to yoga (p. 15), while the last three limbs are the internal aids.

In contrast to this, Sri Ramchandra’s raja yoga or PAM departs greatly in two aspects. First, Pranahuti was introduced as the main support and catalyst for progress. The steps presented in ashtanga Yoga is an individual practice similar to most meditation practices without the direct support of a teacher imparting his/her yogic power to effect change. Second, Sri Ramchandra’s raja yoga starts directly at seventh step which is the practice of meditation (*dhyana*), on the subtlest meditation object of Divine Light present in the heart (as to be detailed later on the section “Meditation on Divine Light”), and proceeds directly to absorption (*samadhi*), the eighth step. The absorption obtained is of intense, subtle, and subtest types (Ramchandra, 2007, p. 82).

Defining Consciousness Transformation

This section first broadly presents the various definitions of consciousness suggested by eastern and western thinkers as well as PAM in brief. Then it investigates the nature and quality of consciousness by connecting with the principle of vibration. It then proceeds to present the levels of consciousness according to the philosophy of PAM, and how *samskaras* or impressions or

psychic imprints hinder the improvement of consciousness from. This paves the way to defining consciousness transformation in the system of PAM. Once consciousness transformation is defined, the last section explains how it is practically effected through PAM—the role played by Pranahuti as well as individual practice.

Definitions of Consciousness

As stated earlier, everything in this universe is consciousness in a pure or grosser state (Narayana, 2005c, p. 64). In the context of human beings, consciousness is “the experience of ‘Be-ing,’ which represents everything that is possible for us to experience, [including] all of our senses, perceptions, and possible states of awareness” (Narayana, 2006a, p. 75).

In the classic work *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), William James defined psychology as the science of mental life, “both of its phenomena and of their conditions. The phenomena are such things as we call feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions, and the like” (p. 1). It is also the faculties of memory, volition, imagination, etc. (p. 1). These are referred to as the “the stuff of consciousness” by Susan Blackmore (2004, p. 14), a renowned contemporary researcher in the field of consciousness studies. Sri Aurobindo (1958) stated that consciousness is “not only power of awareness of self and things, it is or has also a dynamic and creative energy” (p. 234). It is a force. Consciousness, like energy, changes its form and is difficult to define. However, one can observe the changing phenomena and condition of consciousness.

In the system of PAM, consciousness consists of four functions: feelings (*manas*), memory including the subconscious (*chitta*), intellect (*buddhi*), and sense of self or ego (*ahankar*). The modifications or alteration of these result in all that one experiences in life. A similar concept is also stated in *samkya* yoga philosophy.

The Principle of Vibration

Following the principle of consciousness is the principle of vibration. “Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates” (Three Initiates, 1912). This principle of vibration governs all in this universe. Its “vibratory rate determines its quality and place in the world. A person, for example, can have a high vibration (peace, happiness, confidence, esteem) or a low vibration (depression, hate, greed, jealousy, fear, etc.)” (Narayana, 2007a, p. 107). Therefore, the nature and quality of thought content, feelings, and emotions is directly correlated with the energetic vibratory level of a person. Through the practice of Natural Path, one can “change a low vibration to a high vibration, and move steadily in spiritual life” (p. 107).

Furthermore, people of higher frequencies of consciousness support those at the lower frequency, similar to a balancing act on a global scale (Narayana, 2007a). What can anyone do to help? As one raises one’s consciousness to the universal mind level, one can contribute more and more to the spiritual quality of the global mind (p. 256). Therefore, “our greatest service to humanity is, surprisingly, the development of our own consciousness” (p. 256).

Levels of Consciousness

According to the philosophy of PAM, consciousness may be broadly categorized into three levels: *lower consciousness*, *upper (human) consciousness*, and *divine consciousness* (Narayana, 2004a).

Sri Ramchandra (2008) found that according to its spiritual subtlety, the heart (as an astral entity), which is a place for feelings, can be divided into U (upper) and L (lower) area as shown in Figure 1. The U portion is a bright region that is subtle, peaceful, central, and detached from the egoist self (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 58; Narayana, n.d., p. 63). The L portion is a darker region that is peripheral, disturbed, restless, base, and action-oriented (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 58; Narayana, n.d., p. 64). Furthermore, there is the point of *atman* (true-self) on the right side, which contains reflection of Reality in its gross form (see Figure 2 below).

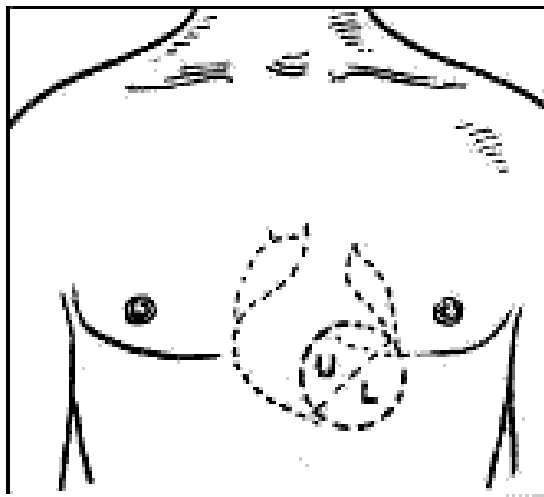


Figure 1: U and L portion of heart. From Basic Writings of Sri Ramchandra, by Sri Ramchandra, 2008, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers, p. 58. Copyright [2008] by Sri Ramchandra Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

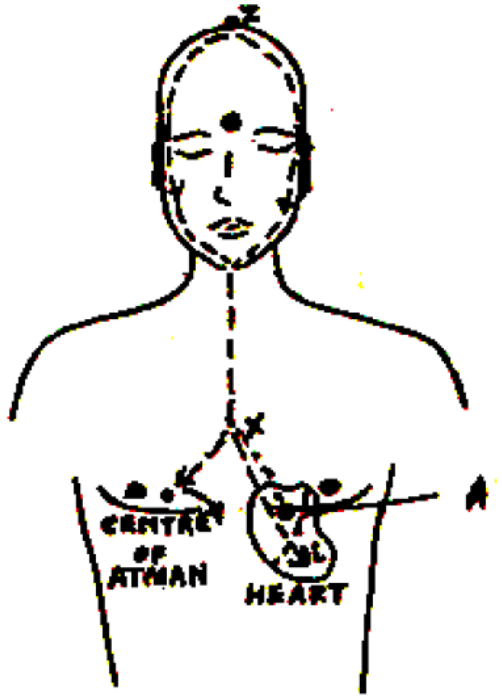


Figure 2. Flow of life energy from above bifurcates in the chest area. From *Bodhayanti Parasparam* (Vol 1), by Narayana, K. C., 2003a, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers, p. 444. Copyright [2003] by the Narayana. Reprinted with permission.

In the book *Bodhayanti Parasparam* (Vol. 1), Narayana (2003a), unraveled the dynamics of energy flow to these regions, as shown in Figure 2 above. He stated that life force or *Prāṇa* descends into each person from above (point Z on the crown) and this energy flow bifurcates in the chest area at point X. Part of it flows to the area marked U; part flows to the area marked L and part goes to *atman* or *true self* (p. 443).

When more thought energy goes to the L portion, one reflects the character of the lower consciousness, which is impulsive and self-centered. Various shades of lower qualities such as possessiveness, greed, envy, jealousy, anger, etc. may be more in display.

On the other hand, when more thought energy is settled in the U portion, one reflects predominantly the characteristics of the upper (human) consciousness, which is bright, calm, and peaceful in nature (Narayana, n.d., p. 63). Self-control and adherence to principles such as truth, non-injury, non-stealing, non-covetousness, and being in tune with nature are on display. One thinks good of others, and always tries to do good to others. Selfless-ness and altruism are natural to the person. Sri Ramchandra (2008) called this region the “Super-Consciousness of the inferior type” (p. 60).

Furthermore, when more energy flows to *atman* (*true-self*), one starts realizing the interdependency of life. The divine consciousness with the characteristics of compassion, mercy, forgiveness, service, and sacrifice get displayed in the individual. And genuine aspiration for Reality starts here.

Each individual is a mixture of these three types of energy flow or consciousness, and none of the strands can be zero. Depending on the amount of conscious energy settling in upper, lower, and *true-self*, one manifest the corresponding type of consciousness in a more predominant manner. Therefore, the goal for a seeker is to first increase the flow to upper, so that the upper consciousness gets awakened and one acquires noble character and treads life with higher balance. Pranahuti can and does alter this flow as further explained in the next section *flow diversion* under “Effecting Consciousness Transformation.”

Samskaras (Impressions or Psychic Imprints)

How each individual comes to be in the present state in life with varied experiences and qualities is related to the subject of *samskara* (impressions) or

karma. This is a vast subject in the eastern spiritual and religious context. Hinduism as well as Jainism and Buddhism all accept the theory of karma and *samskara*, although no scientific proof has been given as it cannot be measured using physical instruments. In the first of *four noble truths*, Buddha fully acknowledged suffering (old age, death, despair, and the like) as a condition of human life. In his second noble truth, he gave a detailed account of the cause of this suffering as the *samskaras*, or psychic imprints, which are largely due to ignorance.

This is agreed by Sri Ramchandra (2007) as well (p. 437). Indirectly *samskaras* are seen in an individual through his or her character, tendencies, aptitudes, inclinations, and desires (Narayana, 2007a, p. 189). According to the philosophy of PAM, when one does something by applying head (intellect) and heart (feelings), one forms impressions (*samskaras* or psychic imprints) thereof at the base, which remain there in seed-form till they are washed off by the effect of *bhagam* (fruition—the process of undergoing the effects) (p. 160). After innumerable actions (karma) and reactions over the course of a long period, more and more impressions (complexities) get stored in consciousness. Consciousness moves further away from its original simple and pure nature and shifts from subtle to intense. The original peace and balance is lost.

At one point or another, these impressions come to surface to express or undergo the effect because the original consciousness wants to rid itself of any weight (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 160). This is known as the process of *bhagam*

or fruition. The outcome is the various joyful or sorrowful experiences one undergoes in life in the physical, mental, and emotional planes.

How and whether *samskaras* can be removed, thus solving the problem of life (i.e., freedom from the bondage of these impressions that result in fixated and binding thought patterns and attitudes etc.), is a serious subject in religion as well as spirituality. Often part of the solution in tradition involves penance and austerity for purification, or simply going through each and every experience as part of the natural process and accepting them with forbearance.

According to PAM, there are three categories of impression based on its stickiness or deep-rootedness. Narayana (2003a) expounded on the subject, describing how they can be purified through the exercise of will (as detailed in the “Daily purification process” section under “Role of Individual Practice”) in his article “Purificatory Process.” The first type is *mala* or superficial dirt. These are nascent impressions or impurities caused by the lack of control over senses, such as laziness, sloth, attraction to trivia, and giving up to impulsive tendencies towards sensory pleasures in day-to-day life (p. 71). The second type is *vikshepa*—unreal projections of desires for enjoyment, such as greed, avarice, jealousy, and others (p. 71). The third type is *avarana*—the darkness, ignorance, deep attachments, habits, and layers of egoistic coverings around the soul. This is what forms the persona or mask of a person. They are the binding factors which appear as rigid thought patterns, inclinations, likes and dislikes, habits, addictions, and attitudes that prevent one from seeing the truth and being free. Instead of living according to one’s real nature, one lives according to the illusions and

habits created by these impressions and views the world through their lenses. To alter, loosen and remove these deep impressions is a daunting task, as various traditions fully acknowledged (p. 75).

Defining Transformation

Transformation of consciousness in PAM is defined as a two-step process. The first step is to grow from the lower consciousness to upper (human) consciousness. The second step is to move to the realm of divine consciousness (Narayana, 2004a) after stabilizing in the upper consciousness. In his research and study of consciousness and super-consciousness, Narayana came forth for the first time with a detailed mapping and classification of positive, negative qualities, various sublime states and stages of consciousness with corresponding energy centers, called *grandhis* or knots in the system of PAM. He presented these findings in his epic works of *Path of Grace* (2006a) and *Ecstasy and Agony in the Journey to Infinity* (2011b). They are used as a practical roadmap for the development of consciousness by PAM practitioners.

The movement from the lower consciousness to upper consciousness is a transformation from baser instinctual drives and impulsive tendencies to moderation and self-control. In a concrete sense, it is about removing certain negative qualities in oneself and acquiring positive and universal principles such as truthfulness, non-injury, non-covetousness, non-stealing, moving in tune with the divine, and thinking good of others (Narayana, 2003a, p. 167).

After dwelling in upper consciousness where principled living and various positive qualities are established, the person then grows into divine consciousness.

This is step two of the transformation process. Divine consciousness is correlated with various virtues, positive qualities, sublime states and stages in the super-conscious realm. For example, the qualities of service, sacrifice, cooperation, mercy, and forgiveness are among the core attributes.

Consciousness transformation can also be thought as a journey moving from gross (intense) existence to the original subtlest state of pure and simple consciousness by shedding the *samskaras* (impressions or psychic imprints) load collected by the individual (Narayana, 2005b, p. 219). Every impression imposes certain restrictions and boundaries on the individual's consciousness. The various negative qualities pertaining to the lower consciousness are in fact impressions of various types. By getting rid of them, the individual consciousness returns to its freedom.

According to Swami Vivekananda:

Every being is a perfect Soul, and the diversity of evolution and manifestation of nature is simply due to the difference in the degree of manifestation of the Soul. The moment the obstacles to the evolution and manifestation of nature are completely removed, the Soul manifests itself perfectly. (as cited in Narayana, 2005b, p. 214)

As described previously, each human individual is originally pure and simple consciousness expressing the same Divine energy from the Source or Centre. Because of impressions, “we lost our balance and are now trying to restore the same” (Narayana, 2005b, p. 214). This is also a process of “gradually annihilating the Ego and becoming Self less” (p. 219). Such a selfless person, who has reached a state of void or nothingness, is naturally in tune with the whole of manifestation (p. 219).

Effecting Consciousness Transformation

In the system of PAM, the two steps of consciousness transformation of the individual described above, that is, from lower to upper consciousness, then upper to divine consciousness, are effected by the process of Pranahuti as well as daily meditation practices. One way of understanding this is that half of it pertains to teacher's or trainer's assistance through the process of Pranahuti; while the other half pertains to student's or individual practitioner's own daily practices in following the methods. Each is a key component and plays important roles in bringing about transformation. The following sections explain the details pertaining to each. Appendix B provides the detailed techniques of all the daily meditation practices done by individual practitioners at home, which include Divine Light meditation, purification process, points A and B practices, universal prayer, and prayer at bedtime.

Role of Pranahuti

Pranahuti is offered to achieve two purposes: firstly, it is to give impetus to the aspiration of a practitioner; secondly, it is to bring about a change in very nature of the mind and its modification (Varadachari, 2014, p. 372). They are achieved through the process of *introduction*, *purification*, and *flow diversion* as explained in the following sections.

Introduction through Pranahuti.

The first step of PAM practice is introduction through Pranahuti. In the process, the new practitioner gets “introduced” to or strengthens his or her

connection with the cosmic consciousness through the support of Pranahuti. yoga must start with the other end, as Varadachari (2014) stated:

The real yoga should be started from the other end by inducing the original movement or vibration that had set in motion these organic creations, and whose impetus has not died out. This is the central force that has to be brought into activity, and it is here that, in yoga, one needs the person who can start it, or give it an impulse from the central point of oneself. (p. 365)

By infusing the original pure consciousness⁷ through Pranahuti, an impetus is given to one's own inner being, which is under the shrouds of coverings of impressions. This inner-stimulation or ignition leads to the development and greater awareness of one's own inner light (p. 243).

The “Introduction” process in PAM involves three one-to-one individual sittings between a trainer and the new practitioner. Each sitting is about 30 to 40 minutes, 24 hours apart and over three consecutive days. In these sittings, the trainer offers Pranahuti, performs *flow diversion* work (discussed below) for the new practitioner, and introduces him or her to the practice.

When this introduction is successfully completed, the person is considered introduced *into* the practice. Then they can then start regular weekly or bi-weekly individual sittings with a trainer and attend *satsangs* (group meditation) where Pranahuti is offered, and perform daily meditation practices at home (as shown in Appendix B and detailed in the “Role of Individual Practice” section later).

⁷ Pure consciousness or original consciousness or primal consciousness is pure unalloyed love – love that is not tinged with anything – love that can be transmitted.

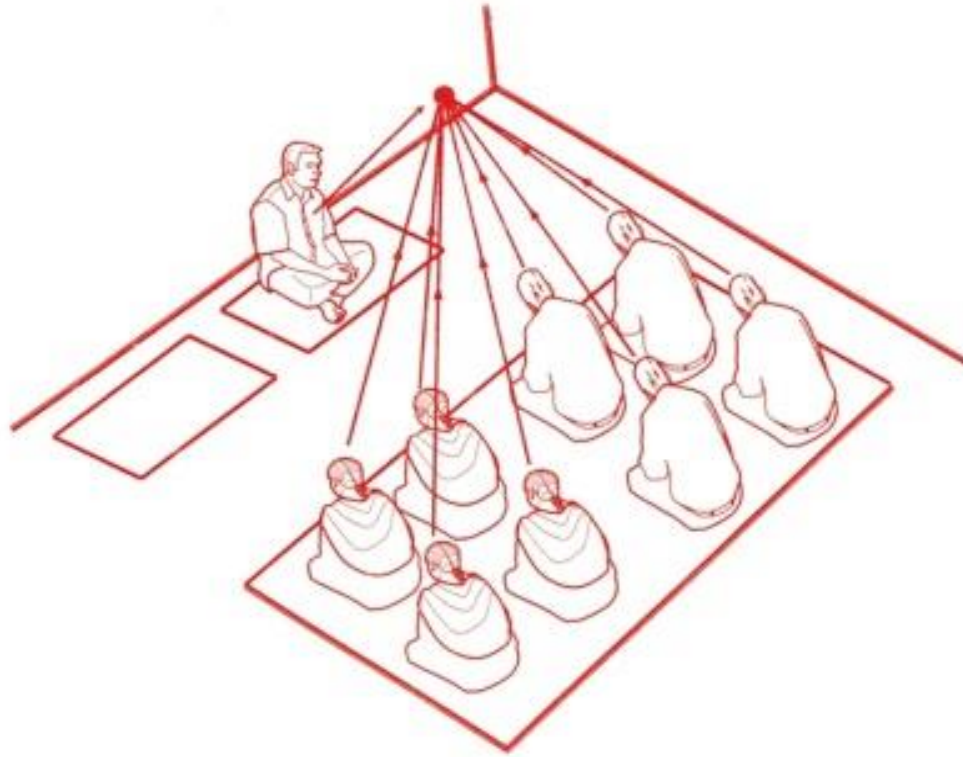
How Pranahuti is offered in individual sittings and group meditations.

Practitioners often have weekly or bi-weekly one-to-one individual sittings with a trainer after the Introduction process, and they attend group meditation (*satsang*) available daily in different centers for the regular infusion of Pranahuti. This enables them to become stabilized in their daily meditation practices and follow a balanced way of living. The one-to-one individual sitting between a trainer and a practitioner usually lasts for 30 to 40 minutes. Group meditation or *satsang*⁸ is between a trainer and a group of practitioners, which usually lasts for 30 or 60 minutes (Bhamidipati & Zeng, 2010). It is a silent process throughout. Neither visual image nor sound is invoked during this process. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate this process. Practitioners sit before the trainer who performs the work, while meditating on “Divine Light without Luminosity” present in the heart, as they do in morning meditation (please see the section on “Divine Light Meditation” below). The transmission is done from heart to heart. In group meditations, the trainer connects the participants to one point before him or her. Then he or she transmits the thought to that astral point.

⁸ The Sanskrit meaning of the word *satsang* (translated as group meditation) is being in the company of Divine (consciousness).



Figure 3: One-to-one individual sitting. From Experiences of non-ordinary states of consciousness in Pranahuti Aided Meditation and psycho-spiritual-behavioral transformation: A phenomenological study by Bhamidipati, S and Zeng, W, 2010, Paper presented at Toward a Science of Consciousness Conference. Copyright [2010] by Bhamidipati. Reprinted with permission.



*Figure 4: Group meditation in which Pranahuti is offered. From *Pranahuti* (front cover) by Narayana, K. C., 2007b, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers. Copyright [2007] by the Narayana. Reprinted with permission.*

While offering Pranahuti, the trainer exercises his or her will to transmit pure thought or Primal Consciousness to the seeker and enable the person's spiritual awakening and growth. The will exercised here is "a concrete idea that is acted upon within a certain spatiotemporal frame" (Narayana, 2007b, p. 35) through suggestions at different levels of subtlety (p. 117).

Purification through Pranahuti.

Purification plays a pivotal role in any meaningful and permanent transformation. It enables one's march towards realizing one's subtlest essence (Sri Ramchandra, 2010, p. 59). As discussed earlier, the removal or purification

of *samskaras* or psychic imprints that form the persona of the individual and all the binding factors in their consciousness preventing them from being free is a daunting task and a vast subject within spirituality and religions.

In PAM, the problem of purification of *samskaras* is tackled systematically by both individual effort and the help of Pranahuti. Among the three categories of impressions, the deeper impressions of *vikshepa* (unreal projections) and *Avaranas*—the deep coverings stored in the conscious and subconscious mind can be cleansed through Pranahuti. This is because higher, that is, subtler, energy or power is required to remove the deeper impressions. The purification of knots is also attended to through Pranahuti. The nascent impressions (*mala*) are sought to be cleansed by the practitioner's own effort through the daily purification process (see “Purification process” section under “Role of Individual Practice”).

During Pranahuti, often the trainer uses the Light or Ocean of Bliss cleaning method (see Appendix B for the detail description of these methods) to clean the astral (thought) body of the practitioner sitting before him or her. In each of the methods, the idea of light or Ocean of Bliss is being used and the trainer exercises his or her will to clear off the psychic imprints or Samskaras.

The purification through Pranahuti occurs during the Introduction process as well as the regular one-to-one individual sittings. During the *introduction* process, cleaning is done to the extent required for invoking the presence of Divinity (Narayana, 2003a, p. 80). This “makes the individual sensitive to the transmission, a feel of the glow (called light) and lightness of the entire system”

(Varadachari, 2014, p. 370). The purification of knots (i.e., energy centers) near the heart is also attended to during individual sittings (see Appendix A).

Flow diversion—the movement to the upper consciousness (Step 1).

As described earlier in the “Defining Transformation” section, individual consciousness is a mixture of lower, upper, and divine consciousness due to the corresponding amount of pranic or thought energy flow to the different regions of the heart. When more energy flow tends towards the lower portion of the heart, the mind becomes restless, peripheral, and is driven by baser instincts. Its attention is externalized with thoughts going hither and thither, orbiting around objects and sensory data, and the emotional and physiological needs of the body (p. 373). It tends to be self-concerned if not selfishly concerned. The first step in transformation for the individual, therefore, is to move from the lower consciousness to upper consciousness, thus treading a principled way of life, having a peaceful and clear state of mind, always thinking good of others and doing good to them. This is essentially the nature of altruistic consciousness.

The method for changing the very nature of the mind is through the exercise of will in Pranahuti to restrict and decrease the amount of thought energy going toward the lower portion of the heart, and then diverting the energy flow upward toward the upper portion of the heart (see Figure 1). From the upper portion, the flow is then further diverted onto the True Self or Atman. This process is known as *flow diversion* through Pranahuti and is the foundation of training in PAM (Sri Ramchandra, 2006, p. 14). When this is accomplished, the

modifications of the mind will automatically become infrequent; agitation and over-activities will gradually cease. Peace is the result.

This results in the first major shift in the person's thinking. The mind is diverted away from the baser ideas to higher ideals. Through repeated *flow diversion* during on-going regular individual sittings, more and more thought energy gets diverted and settled on the upper heart, the practitioner develops into upper (human) consciousness. He or she stabilizes here through individual daily practices, particularly the practice of point A, as discussed below. Larger perspective and a sense of greater-self get opened up. A sense of freedom, balance, and ease begin to dawn. Principled living make up the core values one cherishes. There is a good degree of self-control and mastery over oneself.

Growing into divine consciousness and the development of positive qualities and virtues (Step 2).

The second step in the transformation process is to grow into divine consciousness. This is brought out by the assistance of Pranahuti through the processes of *flow diversion* and Fomentation. As described above, after stabilizing in the upper consciousness, the thought energy settled in the upper heart can be further diverted to the True Self through *flow diversion*. This enables a person to develop dependency on the Divine; and the various divine qualities such as compassion, selfless service, and cooperation that were buried deep within receive a new energy and get activated.

Fomentation is a process in Pranahuti where higher type of consciousness (feelings) is infused into a seeker who determines to grow into higher spiritual

dimension and seeks such assistance while willing to cooperate with it. As Sri Ramchandra (2005) described how this is accomplished:

This can be best introduced by those who have imbibed the real characteristic within their own centres; who know how to draw in the power and piety from the higher centres to the lower ones, and who can transmit the effect into the abhyasi [practitioner] so that they may adopt the same character. (p. 58)

What is fomented is “a particular type of vibration, which elevates the status of the person” as Narayana (2011b) stated (p. 69). It serves as a catalyst in the seeker’s inner development.

The actual detailed process is explained by Narayana in the book *Pranahuti* (2007b). During individual sitting, the trainer first raises themselves to the desired level of higher state, and then transmits from that level (p. 105). For example, “If Viveka [discriminative intelligence] is sought to be brought in an individual, first lift yourselves to that level and being in that level foment the aspirants Viveka centre” (p. 105). Therefore, the desired super-consciousness is not only introduced to the heart of the practitioner, but “at each of the centre there occurs illuminations and peace of that centre” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 377).

As a result of this, the practitioner could practically experience different super-conscious states thus so far lying dormant inside and never consciously experienced before. Through constant practice of meditation and cultivation in life, one embodies those spiritual states and good qualities. They become part of one’s nature. This is step two of the transformation process.

Phenomenology of Pranahuti.

There are only a few academic research studies on the phenomenology of Pranahuti so far and they were presented recently in international conferences on consciousness studies. The research report “Experiences of Non-Ordinary States of Consciousness in Pranahuti Aided Meditation and Psycho-Spiritual-Behavioral Transformation: A Phenomenological Study” (Bhamidipati & Zeng, 2010) was the first qualitative study on the subject. The study found profound experiences of non-ordinary states of consciousness during Pranahuti sessions and inner transformations by practitioners with less than six years of practice.

Several conference presentations on the practices of purification, meditation on Divine Light, and point A & B meditation practices found that the practices were effective in calming the disturbed tendencies of mind, moderation of desires and anger, reduction of stress, internal conflicts, unreal projections, and ego, bringing clarity of thought, discipline, self-control, higher efficiency in every walk of life; and following principles and higher values (Bhamidipati & Zeng, 2012a & 2012b; Madhava, 2010; Murty, 2010).

Role of Individual Practice

The individual practice is the other key component for bringing about transformation. There were several traditional spiritual disciplines, such as Buddha’s Noble Eightfold Path and Patanjali’s Raja Yoga to help a person to realize his or her true state. These are individual practices with series of steps for self-cultivation and development. In all these traditional systems, moral development and control of senses precede meditation practices proper

(Nyantiloka, 1967). This is because they are essential for achieving purity of mind, which brings peace and calmness – a necessary condition for effective meditation. The regulation of mind and development of peace and tranquility are the responsibility of the student practitioner through arduous practices.

However, in PAM, the modified system of Raja Yoga, the practice starts directly with meditation on Divine Light after the introduction through Pranahuti (see “meditation” topic below). Due to the support of Pranahuti through *Flow diversion*, the practitioner is able to obtain a peaceful state of mind early in the practice. This active support of Pranahuti marks the key difference from all the traditional systems (Sri Ramchandra, n.d.). The PAM individual practices include the following aspects: (a) meditation on Divine Light, (b) evening purification process, (c) point A and point B meditation, (d) universal prayer, (e) prayer at bed time, (f) way of living. The following sections provide an overview on each practice while Appendix B details the techniques.

Meditation on Divine Light.

Sri Ramchandra’s Raja Yoga starts with meditation because “we are now gathering ourselves at one point so that our individual mind may leave its habit of wandering about, which it has formed” (Sri Ramchandra, 2010, p. 81). In meditation, “thought establishes a fine continuous link between the subject [meditator] and object of meditation, whereby the character of the object automatically flows into the subject and brings about a transformation” (Srivastava, 2001, p. 143). By this practice, the mind starts metamorphosing its habit (p. 81). This is the principle behind meditation. When “the practice

matures and mind becomes accustomed to it, a state of peace and calmness begins to develop within” (Sahai, 2010, p. 72).

The method is to sit for an hour at the hour of dawn and suggest to oneself that “Divine Light without luminosity” is present in the heart where heart beats. It is a mere supposition of light with the thought of Divinity at the bottom. After that, one simply waits and is unmindful of thoughts as they arise, neither suppressing them nor entertaining them (see Appendix B for the complete method instruction).

Since Reality as the final aim is the final state of subtleness, it is but essential that the object taken up must also be subtlest in nature (Sahai, 2010, p. 75). The “Divine Light without luminosity” meditation object transcends sensory grasp (i.e., Light without luminosity cannot be conceived in a concrete sense) and offers the subtlest thought that is the closest resemblance of the omni-pervading Reality. In fact, this is to suppose the “presence of Prana” in the heart (Narayana, 2011a, p. 99). The meditator is to meditate on the subtlest that is to be attained.

The dawn time for this meditation is an important element for effective meditation. The deepest peace and balance can be felt in the last two hours of the night preceding the day-break or sunrise. Thus one can connect oneself with the highest condition and draw in super-finest consciousness by meditating on the subtlest idea that is, Divine Light, at this time.

The prerequisite for doing this meditation is the “Introduction” process through Pranahuti described earlier. Through *flow diversion*, sufficient thought

energy gets settled on the upper heart. One acquires a calmer state of mind so as to be able to meditate on the Divine Light.

Purification method.

As discussed earlier, in various traditions of east and west, purification of impressions or Samskaras, though understood as an absolute necessity for spiritual development, is found to be an extremely difficult undertaking. As Narayana (2003a) explained in the article “Purificatory Process” (p. 69), when examining the thoughts that appear in one’s awareness, we see that some are merely passing thoughts, and some are pressing thoughts – thoughts which make one feel a sort of oppression and are circular in nature (Narayana, 2003a, p. 68). The mind’s quietude is disturbed because of them. How to get rid of them is the question.

Narayana (2003a) then further elaborated on formation of impressions and the solution to it. Though the mind comes in contact with a lot of sensory inputs during the day, it is only when one has the intention to identify oneself with the experience that the impression gets registered in the consciousness. Because of this, one is capable of getting rid of them through one’s own intention by exercising one’s own will. This is done by practicing purification methods such as Ocean of Bliss daily in the evening for 30 to 40 minutes. In this process, one uses one’s own will to purge the nascent impressions (Mala) collected during the day due to sensory inputs by actively thinking and willing that the ocean of bliss, which is the pure source of energy (Prana), is passing through him or her,

removing all the dirt and disease. The practitioner's will power also gets developed as his or her mind becomes increasingly purified.

Point A and B meditation practices.

Point A and point B are two psychic points in the chest region discovered by Sri Ramchandra (2008) that are of special spiritual importance. They are complementary processes for prevention and expulsion of the dirt (Varadachari, 2014, p. 134). The control over the senses or *Indriya*, and the much troublesome issues of anger and passion, which prevent mental and emotional balance, can be effectively checked using these processes (Narayana, 2003b, p. 225). According to Narayana, meditation on them produces results that years of austerity and penance cannot give (p. 225).

The method of point B meditation is an active process of willing that impurities are going away and the light from within is coming to the front (Narayana, 2003b, p. 227). It expels sensory influence and paves the way for Divine Light meditation.

The point A practice is to meditate on the thought that all men and women of the world are one's own brethren for 10 minutes. This meditation helps one transcend one's limited self, develop fraternal love, get rid of possessiveness, and learn sharing (Narayana, 2006b, p. 99). This also brings urges, excessive desires, and impulsive tendencies to moderation, thereby coming to a state of balance.

Universal prayer and the development of love (maitri).

The individual's meditation practices culminate in the daily Universal Prayer for the uplift of collective consciousness. This is a spiritual service woven

into the daily practice routine. The method is to maintain the thought at 9 P.M. local time for 15 minutes that “all brothers and sisters are being filled up with love and devotion and that real faith is growing stronger in them” (Sri Ramchandra, 2005, p. 5). The prayer purifies the environment and fills it with love. When one dedicates oneself whole heartedly to pray for the good of others, one transcends one’s own self and moves towards universal consciousness. It is the way by which one moves to higher realms of consciousness (Narayana, 2006b, p. 10).

Prayer at bedtime.

Prayer is a type of meditation and “the most important and unfailing means of success” (Sri Ramchandra, 2010, p. 59). Through it one establishes a link with the highest (p. 60). When one offers prayer “in the most suppliant mood, with a heart overflowing with Divine Love” (p. 59), one effectively creates within oneself a state of vacuity such that the flow of Divine grace gets diverted towards him or her (p. 60).

Way of living.

Sri Ramchandra (2008) gave a spiritual way of living that can lead a person to higher consciousness. It was his first book published in 1944. He called it as his masterpiece because it was written from “a very high state of Super Consciousness, where the reality is revealed only through vibrations” (2006b, p. ii). Each principle is linked up to the cosmic phenomenon (Narayana, 2005c, p. 120). They are steps to enlightenment and sagacious living (p. 42). It is a practical way of embracing life in full as an expression of the divine energy from

the Centre by applying the wisdoms gained through PAM practices. Included in these principles are practical directions for daily routine observances as well as inner attitude changes to achieve both character development and growing into transpersonal realms (Narayana, 2009, p. 118). Appendix B provides a listing of the principles for the spiritual way of living. They are in fact the benchmark for consciousness transformation from a practical angle.

Summary: Conceptual Framework of the Study

This chapter culminates in constructing a proposed framework for PAM and consciousness transformation. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012), constructing a sound conceptual framework is essential for a study as it “frames and grounds the entire study” (p. 89). It serves as a map for the research by tying in all key concepts, bringing out the linkages among them, and later used to test the relationships (p. 88). It “gives meaning to the relationship between variables” by illustrating how the theories could provide “insight and understanding regarding research topics” (p. 89). This is “the device that makes sense of data” (p. 89).

The proposed in the last section below was partly inspired by Dr. Wu Yi’s *integral life philosophy* framework (1992, p. 97). It ties in all the important aspects of PAM and consciousness transformation, including: transcendent experiences and wisdoms through Pranahuti (i.e., *imperience* as discussed in the section below), embodiment of the wisdom in the way of living (transformation), and the relationship and linkage between them. It serves as a map to guide, design, implement, and analyze the data of the study.

Non-Ordinary States, Mystical Experience, and Transformation

Pranahuti touches upon an important and yet little-known domain of the human psyche. This is the domain of mystical experiences as revealed through world traditions, religions and spiritual disciplines, and the studies of modern day transpersonal psychology. William James was perhaps the first person to systematically study the subject and bring its significance to light and make it available to the modern world. In his book *Varieties of Religious Experience, a Study in Human Nature* (1987), he described these mystical or religious experiences as something that defy expression and their qualities must be directly experienced. They are more like states of feeling and insight “into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect . . . illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance . . . they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time” (p. 343).

The various modern researchers also called these experiences by different names. For example, *peak experience* (Maslow, 1970), *akashic experience* (Laszlo, 2009), *exceptional human experience* (White, 1999), *holotropic states* (Grof, 2000), *non-ordinary states* (Kokoszka, 2007). They have been an important focus in the field of transpersonal psychology and consciousness studies. In the famous study of actualized individuals by Maslow (1970), he found peak experiences to be commonly reported and were, in fact, the main drivers for the highly actualized individuals.

Some researchers have conjectured that permanent trait changes, or transformation, are in fact the higher states experienced during meditation when it

is integrated into the person (Wilber, 2000). Vieten, Amorok, & Schlitz (2007) suggested that these experiences help shift the seeker's consciousness to a higher level when they occur within a spiritual practice, which provides a framework within which to understand them and integrate them into people's daily lives.

Therefore, one important question that has been facing transpersonal psychology is whether and how these positive non-ordinary states are connected with inner permanent transformations. Academic studies so far have not been able to optimally assess the relationship between non-ordinary states and trait improvement brought by spiritual practices (Cahn & Polich, 2006). The difficulties are many in researching this. The first and foremost difficulty is to find qualified meditators who may offer such extra-ordinary experiences (Kjellgren & Taylor, 2008; Kokoszka, 2007). This study, as further elaborated in the following sections, in a way addressed these important issues raised above in transpersonal psychology and spirituality.

Imperience

In the PAM practice, the occurrences of non-ordinary states due to Pranahuti are numerous and profound as suggested by one of the first qualitative research studies by Bhamidipati & Zeng (2010). These spiritual experiences are called "Imperience" in PAM. The term was coined by Varadachari. While moving in the spiritual realms, he found it was necessary to coin this new word to describe both the experiences of the transcendent states and the wisdom gained through them brought about by Pranahuti. Different from experience, imperience is an "inner intimate experience based on direct awareness of Consciousness

without any sensory medium” (Narayana, 2002). It is an “in-tuition rather than intellection or discursive and [dichotomist] dialectic” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 4). It is also wisdom through identity with a new state of transcending being or knowledge.

The direct infusion of that pure consciousness or primal Being makes such direct awareness possible. When the meditator receives Pranahuti, the “non-sensory direct awareness turns into an authentic interaction with Reality. The wisdom gained during such an interaction is called Imperience” (“Imperience Concept”, 2016, para. 5). Imperience can occur during meditation or afterwards during contemplation on the experience of interaction with Reality (para. 5).

The transformation of consciousness is by identity or embodiment of the super-conscious state of being. Embodiment is to “own up the conditions that we gain during meditations” and express them in acts in life (Narayana, 2007a, p. 188). This research is in fact a close study of imperiences had by various practitioners.

Integral Life Philosophy Framework

Wu Yi, a prominent contemporary Chinese philosopher, developed integral life philosophy (Wu, 1992) and integral life psychology (Wu, 2011) as a new method of representing, interpreting, and studying Chinese philosophy from a fresh angle. He emphasized that Chinese philosophy is a method of life. In a diagrammatical form (see Figure 5), he presented his Integral Life Philosophy as an inseparable unity of life-giving, principle, and practice (p. 97).

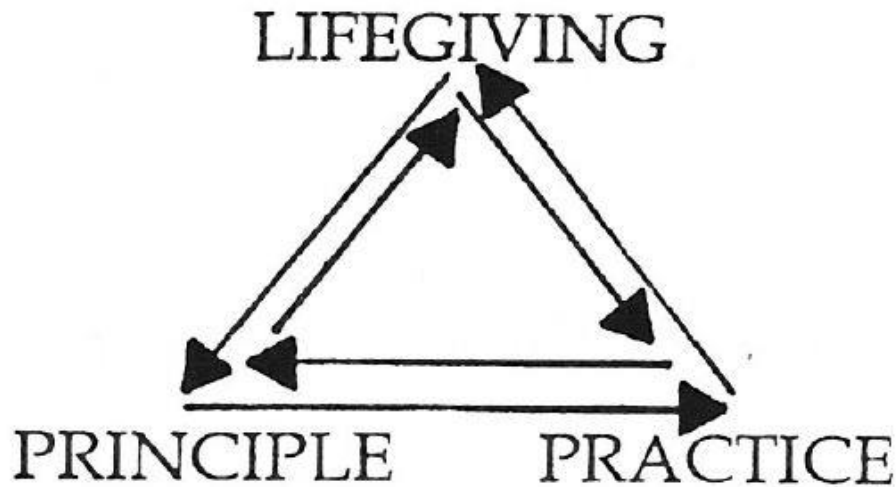


Figure 5. Integral Life Philosophy. From *Concerned Mind Tea* by Wu, Yi, 1992, San Bruno: Great Learning Publishing Company, p. 99. Copyright [1992] by Wu. Reprinted with permission.

On the top of the triangle is Tao, the way of heaven, whose main function is “lifegiving.” Though Tao in its essence is undefinable, its functions are both being and non-being (Wu, 2006, p. 14). As being, it is a continuous and incessant act of giving life to all beings (1992, p. 97). This life-giving virtue is in fact a “supreme state of human nature” (p. 97).

The principles are derived from Tao. They embody the virtues of Tao—pure, true, and untainted (Wu, 2006, p. 15). By going upward pointing to Tao, it enriches the source. By going downward pointing to Practice, it directs and influences people’s daily life (p. 15).

Practice is the cultivation that makes Tao and its principles manifest in one’s daily life. For example, by practicing filial piety and following propriety, we make society harmonious, as in accordance to the way of Tao (Wu, 2006, p. 17). “Each affair dealt with virtuously enlarges the Tao in that particular space

and time” (Dietz, 2010, p. 34). Through such methodology, one could cultivate a way of life that “exalt[s] the truth of life and [finds] the wholeness of the Great Way” and creates meaning for life (Wu, 1992, p. 124).

PAM and Consciousness Transformation Framework

Figure 6 is created as a proposed framework to illustrate the dynamics of consciousness transformation in PAM. Through this method, we link up Pranahuti, Imperience, practices, and transformation.

Pranahuti, as indicated by the three "+ [plus] Pranahuti" signs in the figure, is the main aid throughout the process. The uniqueness and profoundness of the new system lies in this: the direct infusion of Life Force or pure consciousness into a seeker for spiritual uplift (Pranahuti). In his own humble expression, Sri Ramchandra wrote of the “recovery” of this technique in his letter to Varadachari on March 6th, 1958:

I tell you, Doctor, that the long forgotten Transmission will be the subject of attention for all human beings in existence. We have got that which seemed to have been lost, and now we have it and work with it, thanks to my Great Master. (Sri Ramchandra & Varadachari, 2009, p. 164)

In Figure 6, the inner circle (arrows 1, 2, and 3) resembles the interior journey of the person on the vertical path: a spiritual seeker strives for his or her higher evolution and ascension to the cosmic planes of consciousness through the self-effort of practice and the support of Pranahuti.

Pranahuti Aided Meditation and Consciousness Transformation

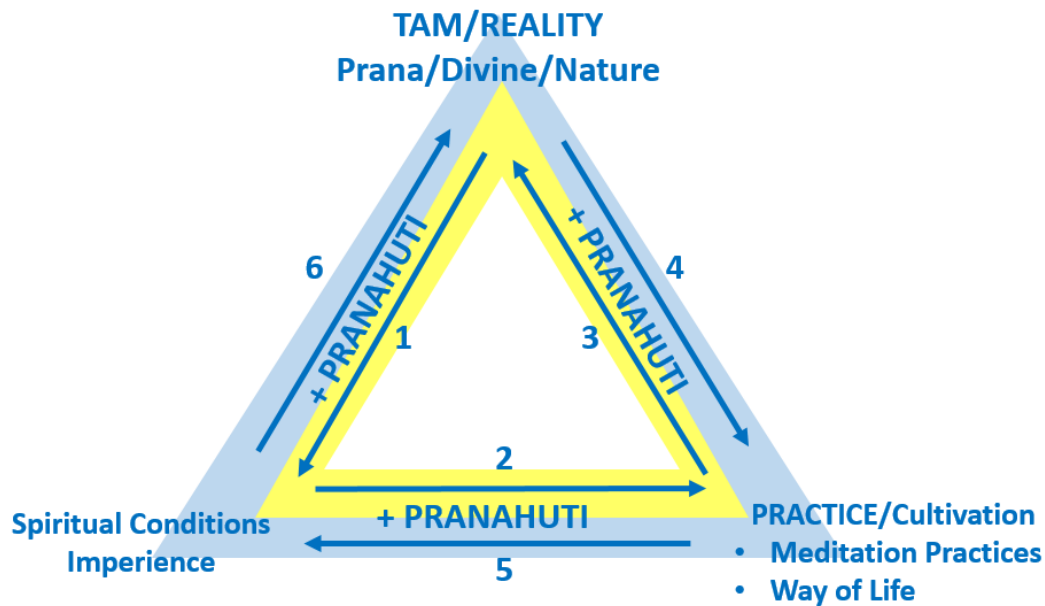


Figure 6. Proposed framework of PAM and consciousness transformation, Created by author with collaboration with Bhamidipati, S (2015, personal communication).

As indicated by arrow 1, the *Prana* or life force is offered through Pranahuti to the spiritual seekers. Inherent in the life force are the supreme natures of love, peace, beauty, grace, mercy, truth, simplicity, plenitude, Infinity, and many more. These newly transmitted spiritual conditions can be imperienced (arrow 2). It catalyzes the seeker's self-cultivation to reach the highest plane of consciousness of the Divine (arrow 3).

Put another way: The seeker receives Pranahuti, which gives repeated exposure to the spiritual conditions or super-conscious states. Now new awareness and wisdom get opened up (imperience). One imbibes them as one's own property through constant practice and cultivation. Thus, one evolves to the cosmic plane of being through such embodiment. The life divine is a life in

Reality, of sublime virtues. This is the process of the internal transformation of consciousness.

The outer circle (arrows 4, 5, 6) depicts the other aspect of this dynamic process. It resembles the exterior journey of the individual on the horizontal path: one shares and expresses the spiritual gifts and wisdoms gained through practice and serves the world as an expression of the original Divine energy.

The divine energy continuously and ceaselessly expresses itself through human individuals and the manifested world. As Pranahuti gets infused into and absorbed by the practitioner, one is enabled to live a holistic life of balance and happiness (Arrow 4). As one works to embody the various supreme qualities and wisdoms through practice and imperience, one gains mastery over them (Arrow 5). This increases the capability to offer the universal prayer effectively. The universal prayer is an act of willing positive change of the world (Narayana, 2007a, p. 270) by infusing higher cosmic energy to bring about peace and harmony and facilitate humanity's inner higher evolution. Thus, one serves universal good through one's own elevated state of being and comes closer and closer in conformity with nature (arrow 6). Each person's life is a unique opportunity to express and enhance the beatitude of the Divine. Each person's transformation is directly and consciously contributing to the collective consciousness transformation. This is the external expression of the transformed consciousness.

Both processes—the inner and the outer circles—work together as an integrated dynamic movement of the consciousness towards the Highest, and the

Highest having its play in this universe through each human individual. The current study, with its two research questions on meditation practice experience and transformation, will shed light on the linkage between the two aspects, the inner and the outer, the non-ordinary states or imperience and the transformation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore, document, and analyze participants' experiences of Pranahuti Aided Meditation (PAM) and its potential in bringing about consciousness transformation. The research questions this study seeks to address are the following:

1. What are the qualities of significant experiences in Pranahuti Aided Meditation?
2. What are the experiences of transformation associated with the practice?

These two primary inquiries are structured using a phenomenological research framework. They enable researchers to obtain detailed and vivid descriptions of significant experiences of PAM and transformations. Thereby the study could investigate these phenomena in depth and derive the essence from them.

The Spirit of Qualitative Research

This study utilizes qualitative research, more specifically a branch of phenomenological research called interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), to explore the significant experiences of PAM practice and transformation. Qualitative research is concerned with meanings (Willig, 2008, p. 8). It is about what it is like to experience some particular conditions; how one experiences certain events and makes sense of them in particular and the world at large (p. 8). The quality and texture of the experience and the participant's own interpretation and understanding of them are the key subject under study. This approach does not pre-suppose variable units from outside to be investigated. Rather it is an

open system that allows participant generated meanings and themes to emerge, be developed, and heard (p. 15).

The experiences of non-ordinary states during Pranahuti sessions or individual practices among practitioners are internal. Along with the lived experiences of transformation, they provide rich meaning and value to the experiencer. These are the focal points of the study as they provide a fertile ground for understanding the new phenomena occurring in the interior of our consciousness. As already pointed out earlier, little academic research has been done on this. That phenomena associated with the practice need to be better understood is one more reason that it merits further study. Because the ineffable nature of mystical experiences as James (1987, p. 343) pointed out makes it difficult to analyze quantitatively, the qualitative research paradigm, providing as it does an open space that is deep and wide enough to explore this phenomenon, is a better fit for an in-depth exploration (see Creswell, 2009, p. 18).

In IPA, both the researcher's participation and participants' involvement play an important role in shaping the whole process (Willig, 2008, p. 18). In fact, the researcher collaborates with the participant (Creswell, 2009, p. 9). The researcher's own experience, practice background, and sensitivity made it easier to understand, grasp, interpret, analyze, and validate the numerous subtle and complex feelings and conditions shared by the participants, and is an important part of the process.

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The study is phenomenological, one of the main qualitative research approaches. As formulated by Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) in the early 20th century, phenomenology is concerned with how the world is experienced by human beings within a particular context. To “go back to the things themselves” and accept things as they are was his call (Husserl, 2001, p. 168). It is concerned with the phenomena that appear in our consciousness (Willig, 2008), that is, the content of consciousness as opposed to abstract ideas about the nature of the world. The phenomenological approach “attempts to explore personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an object or event, as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). It “focuses upon the content of the consciousness and the individual’s experience” (Willig, 2008, p. 54), and is considered more effective in revealing and assessing internal states of consciousness. Because our goal is to capture the quality, texture, and essence of the experiences of various states during meditation as well as the experiences of transformation, phenomenology makes a suitable choice for this study.

Of the two major approaches to phenomenology, descriptive and interpretative, this study employs the IPA method. IPA is a recently developed and “rapidly growing approach to qualitative inquiry” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 1). The reason may be due to its ideographic focus as well as natural approach to understand and interpret data in order to draw out the significance of experience. Similar to descriptive phenomenology, interpretative phenomenology

“aims to gain a better understanding of the nature and quality of phenomena as they present themselves” (Willig, 2008, p. 56). However, it does not separate description from interpretation by the experiencer, because it believes that the lived experience captured in language is inevitably an interpretive process (Van Manen, 1990, as cited in Willig, 2008: p. 56).

There are three key aspects to IPA: (a) reflection of one’s personal experience as considered significant; (b) double interpretative process; (c) focusing on the particular. The first aspect may be explained as the following. There is a flow of lived experience; however, it becomes an experience when it takes a particular significance for the person (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 2). In other words, there is a hierarchy of experience. When people engage with “an experience” of something important, they begin to reflect on the significance of it (p. 3). IPA research aims to engage with these reflections (p. 3). Meditation experiences are myriad. When an episode of significant experience appears, IPA can help determine what the experience is like for the experiencer and how it is meaningful. In other words, how the experiencer makes sense of it. This is what this study is interested in. During the interview, when the participant recalled, described, and reflected on these experiences, it was invariably an interpretive endeavor on the part of the participant.

This brings us to the second key aspect: that IPA is a double interpretive process. As the participant describes the experience, the researcher is fully engaged in listening, and also trying to understand and make sense of the story. As explained by Smith and Osborn (2008), this approach is a “two-stage

interpretation process. . . . The participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world” (Smith and Osborn, 2008, p. 53). Therefore, this process involves a “double hermeneutic” (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 35). In IPA, data analysis always involves interpretation (p. 35). “There is a phenomenon ready to shine forth, but the detective work is required by the researcher to facilitate the coming forth” (p. 35).

In this study, as the researcher was led into the sacred space of the interior journey of the participant during the interview as well as the analysis, she approached each with the attitude that was befitting (as to be discussed further in the data collection section). The researcher wanted to adopt an “insider’s perspective” to see what it is like from the participant’s view and be in their shoes (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 36). As advocated by Smith et al., a successful IPA research combines both stances of being empathic and questioning, as captured by the word “understanding” (p. 36). “We are attempting to understand, both in these of trying to see what it is like for someone’ and in the sense of ‘analyzing, illuminating, and make sense of something’” (p. 36). The researcher recognized that the process of transformation in the PAM practice is about deriving wisdom from an intimate and illuminating non-ordinary state, and embodying that in one’s life. It felt sacred and at times exhilarating to be led into the expanse of consciousness during the interview and more so later while diving deep into the analysis. This process, which lent illumination on the way, was reward enough by itself.

The third important aspect of IPA is its idiographic sensibility (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 37), focusing on the particular. The particular here means both the individual participant as well as the instance of experience. It offers “detailed, nuanced analysis of particular instances of lived experiences” (p. 37), that is, going into the depth of it. At the same time, it is mindful of the context and does not preclude generalization. This is particularly apt in the study of mystical experiences and transformation, as a single episode of meditation experience, as to be seen later, can bring about profound impact and change in one’s core being. Its significance may shed much light on the overall phenomenon and should be brought to the foreground.

This study involved exhaustive research on the currently available PAM literature for an in-depth analysis of each of the experiences to derive understanding and significance from each. As the study moved from the instances of experiences of one participant to multiple participants, certain patterns begin to reveal themselves and yet the insights and essence of some particular instances are not lost sight of. The final presentation of findings and discussion in Chapters 4 and 5 “still allows one to retrieve particular claims of any of the individual involved” (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 32) by tracking each participant and their experience throughout. In the end, the study presents an integrated synthesis of the entire journey of consciousness transformation of the eight participants.

Data Collection

Selection of Participants

Eight participants were recruited from the San Francisco Bay Area, California for this study. The location choice was for the practical convenience of conducting in-person interviews. These participants had practiced the system of PAM between one to ten years and reported having significant spiritual experiences in their practice.

The number of sample size is an important consideration for qualitative research. Generally, three to six participants are recommended for IPA studies (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 51-52). While three is the default number for an undergraduate or Masters-level IPA study, a larger sample size of eight participants is suggested for a Ph.D study (p. 52). Finally, eight participants were chosen because the researcher felt this size offered a good balance between a wider coverage and depth of experiences, and the volume of data that could be handled.

The selection of the participants was purposeful and based on two main inclusion criteria. The first inclusion criterion was based on participants' reporting to have had significant experiences and transformations, and their readiness to share and express them.

The second inclusion criterion was the practice length of one to ten years, during which the participant was regular with their daily practices as well as receiving Pranahuti. In general, transformation in terms of getting rid of negative qualities and gaining positive qualities is an arduous process that takes a long

period of time (Maslow, 1970). The recent studies by Kjellgren & Taylor (2008) have, in a way, confirmed Maslow's observation (1970) about consciousness transformation: that permanently gaining positive qualities and residing in a higher state of being and ridding oneself of negative qualities is an arduous process that would take a long period of time. Against this background, this study is particularly interested in transformations and experiences within a shorter period of practice to examine the impact of this new system.

The exclusion criteria include those who (a) are under 21 years of age; (b) had significant break in their practice—defined here as more than half of the total years since the start of practice; (c) do not meet the selection criteria stated above. The parameters did not include age, gender, ethnicity, education level, family background etc., as the focus of the study is on the experiences themselves, which do not depend on such parameters. A demographic matrix table and a brief summary background narrated by the participants are however provided next to bring each participant up-close in order to ground the study and to highlight the ideographic focus of the IPA method.

Participants' Background

The eight participants selected for the study were English speaking individuals, 5 men and 3 women, age ranging between 30 and 44 years. The average age is 39 years, with a standard deviation of 4.7 years. The number of years of PAM practice ranges between 3 and 10 years, averaging about 6 years, with a standard deviation of 2 years. They are predominantly professionals

working and living in the San Francisco Bay Area with their families. The following table (Table 1) provides detailed demographics about them.

Table 1

Participant Demographics Matrix

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Family	Occupation	Education	Years of PAM Practice
A	M	44	Married with Child(ren)	Software Engineer	B.S. Physics	7
B	F	42	Married with Child(ren)	Home maker; School volunteer	M.S. Management Science	6
C	M	40	Married with Child(ren)	Software Engineer	B.E. Computer Science	8
D	M	42	Married with Child(ren)	Quality Engineer	B.A. Math, Statistics & Economics; M.S. Computer Science	10
E	F	30	Married with Child(ren)	Medical Doctor (Pediatrician)	M.D. Pediatrics	3
F	M	37	Married with Child(ren)	Hardware Engineer	M.S. Electrical Engineering	4
G	F	36	Married with Child(ren)	Pharmaceutical Scientist	Ph.D. Pharmaceuticals	4
H	M	39	Married with Child(ren)	Senior manager in consulting	MBA	5

Note. Average age 39, with a standard deviation of 4. Average years of PAM practice 6, with a standard deviation of 2. Table created by author.

Each participant narrated their background briefly to the researcher for this study. Looking back at their own lives, many of them spoke of the conscious and unconscious motivation inside that drove them to embark on this journey of spiritual development and transformation.

Participant A.

Participant A was born and raised in Mumbai. He came to the U.S. when he was in his mid-twenties. In his childhood memories, the land was drenched in the spiritual lore of stories of the avatars, saints, sages, and kings. He was fond of the stories and read many of them as a child. Later when he grew up, he read Swami Vivekananda's complete works which helped him immensely in understanding the basics of spirituality. He studied physics in college. While working in his first job after graduation, he was searching for a spiritual practice and someone who could guide him through. Coming from a culture rich with *japa* (repetition of mantra) and *kirtan* (singing in praise of God), he wanted something which was completely silent: "I think it was some search. I didn't know what I was looking for. But somehow I found it in the U.S." He had practiced PAM for about 7 years at the time of interview.

Participant B.

Participant B was born in a small village in the state of Maharashtra, Northern India, where her mother was originally from. She grew up in Mumbai, and lived there until after her post-graduate education and first job. She had a very happy childhood growing up with her brother and 13 cousins living in different parts of the city. Her future husband was the best friend of one of her

cousins. The family visited temples as part of the regular activities in Hindu life, and she used to offer prayer in the morning and evening as a child. She did not, however, consider her family spiritual because none except her grandfather meditated. After moving to the U.S. with her husband, she was first exposed to the practice of meditation. “I don’t think I was looking for this when I joined” she said. Later she found it immensely helpful, giving her a very different perspective on life. She was able to instill good values in her child because of this practice, that is, which to her meant that which really matters in life. For example, the values of sharing, helping others, being grateful for what was given, etc. “Now I see how it helps us”, she said, as she looked back. At the time of interview, she had been practicing PAM for about six years.

Participant C.

Participant C was born in the holy city of Varanasi, also known as Benares, in Northern India. He was brought up in Mumbai with his two older sisters and one older brother. He had a normal childhood and was good in academics. He said his mother was not mentally well, and that the family required assistance at home. From an early age, the question “What is the purpose of life?” had always stirred him inside. During those formative years, he was always interested in listening to spiritual discourses and the spiritual side of religion. Soon after coming to the U.S. in the late 1990’s, he fell ill. Doctors found a cancerous tumor in his stomach. He went back to India to undergo surgery and chemotherapy for one year, and was healed, but this difficult experience made the question regarding the purpose of his life all the more

pressing for him. With illness, there was time. He started exploring meditation. Later, after returning to the U.S., he began looking for someone to guide him. By chance he attended a Bay Area PAM training course and started meditating. By the time of our interview, he had practiced PAM for about seven and a half years.

Participant D.

Participant D was born in Machilipatnam, a city in Andhra Pradesh, South India. He was brought up with orthodox Hindu values under the strong influence of his mother and grandmother. From childhood, he was inclined to pray to God and regularly performed the *Gayatri* mantra and *sandhya vandanam*, the accompanying process to *Gayatri* mantra for salutation to *sandhya*—the transition moments of the day, namely the two twilights of dawn and dusk. “But there were many questions unanswered,” he said. For example, he used to ask his mother: If everyone says God is One, then why are there so many gods? What is this life? Everyone seems to go through the same routine of education, jobs, marriage, and kids. Is that all there is to life, or is there something more? As he matured, these questions troubled him more and more.

When he was about 22 years old, D’s father took him on pilgrimage to the Lotus Temple in Delhi. The temple was open to all sects and all people. He sat in the hall in prayer, and for the first time he experienced a profound silence inside. A few years later he paid visit to the famous Temple of Seven Hills in the holy city of Tirupati, in South India, with his father. In the early morning, he once again experienced a profound silence, saying of it in his interview: “I was again attracted to silence, calmness, freshness and peace.” Many years later, when he

attended the PAM training course in the San Francisco Bay Area, he felt the same silence in all its intensity during guided meditation sessions. “After the training program I was desperately waiting to join the practice. . . . It was the Pranahuti that was pulling”, he realized later.

He had a tender-hearted nature, and displayed a lot of sympathy and empathy. He could not stand the sight of poor or old people’s suffering. It used to move him so much and filled his heart with such emotion that he would give out all that he had with him to them. After working at the PAM practice, he said that while the heart mellowed even more and sympathy and empathy increased further he also became more balanced, could regulate his emotions, and could return to his normal state faster when he was confronted by such sights. Sharing was easy and natural for him, as he had a twin sister, but he was a bit timid and lacking in confidence. This timidity completely vanished after some period of practice in PAM, and he gained enormous confidence in himself. He said this was one of the significant transformations he had.

D’s mother and grandmother taught him values, and had always asked him to look into the essence of stories and teachings. They also spoke to him about karma—doing one’s action or duty without being attached to the results. “But I don’t know how to do it,” he said. “Finally, I got the answer in this system.” He said what motivated him to attend the PAM training course was the promise of overcoming his ego, short temper, and drives, which affected his focus. Later, as he practiced the methods, he had profound experiences, particularly with point A

and B meditation, which helped him overcome those problems. At the time of interview, he had practiced PAM for about 9 years.

Participant E.

Participant E was a 29-year-old medical doctor, trained as a pediatrician. Born and raised in Bangalore, she was intellectually and academically inclined as a child and liked going to school. She was not raised religiously by her parents and had always been granted freedom of thought, and freedom to do what she wanted. As she grew a bit older, however, she became restless about the purpose of life. She felt life ought to have a larger purpose and yet she could not figure out what it was. She chose medicine because she thought it would answer the bigger questions about life for her; but it did not. She was feeling a lack and incompleteness. At one point the universe seemed to be random to her. She felt there was no purpose to the whole scheme of things and therefore one need not follow rules either because ultimately nothing quite mattered. This made her a bit of a rebellious person. When she stumbled onto PAM, the incredible experiences she had during the practices completely changed her. She felt an inexplicable satisfaction in the heart such that she knew she had finally obtained a path that would lead her to answer the questions she had. At the time of interview, she had practiced PAM for a little less than three years.

Participant F.

Participant F was born and raised in New Delhi, and lived in various parts of India. There had always been change and movement in his life. As a child, he believed in God and liked to follow his parents to visit the temples. This took a

sharp turn as the teenage years dawned, and he became a staunch atheist who strongly believed in science and the random universe theory. But he had always been interested in philosophy, religion, and martial arts. After practicing tai chi for a few years in India and the U.S. he experienced the energy movement inside the body. Later he became a vegetarian in order to improve self-control. He felt this had led him to become more spiritual. He said that before he started the PAM practice, he had no goals in life, saying: “Till then I was floating.” Science was interesting but it did not provide fulfilment for him. After practicing the PAM system for some time, he began to perceive life as an integrated experience and understood more about the fabric of society, the function of family, and how everything falls into its proper place. “Things start[ed] to make sense” for him, and he began to settle down. He felt happiness inside. At the time of the interview, he had practiced PAM for about 4 years.

Participant G.

Participant G was born in Ooty, a beautiful town sitting deep within the hills of Blue Mountains (the Nilagiri hills) in Tamil Nadu of South India. Her father was a pilot in the air force and the family used to move all over the country every few years. Consequently, she and her brother learned to adapt quickly at an early age. Her mother was a doctor whose values of honesty, duty, and sacrificing one’s own interests for the good of others had enormous influence on G as a child. Later as G began her spiritual quest by practicing meditation, she realized “they all connect.” Both her parents took a liberal view on their

children's education. "What you want to do, you do," was their stance. They held the same approach regarding her meditation practice later on.

G had a keen interest in research, and liked delving deep into a subject. Never comparing herself or competing with others, she was yet driven by her own study and work. She obtained a Ph.D. in pharmaceuticals. But it was always the feelings that she experienced in life that made her remember the most and attracted her towards others. Around the time she began attending college, she started volunteering to teach blind children. Sometimes she would go to ashrams with close friends to sit in silence. They would clean the shoes of those who came for worship. She said it was just something inside making her go do something for someone other than herself. This brought her great satisfaction. Earlier, she was exposed to *sahaja* yoga and Art of Living, which were practiced by her parents, but she could not find satisfaction in them. One time she attended the PAM training program. During the first guided meditation, she had a phenomenal experience. She felt as though she was going through a tunnel, completely aware of everything around her. "Then I realized I had come to the right place and this is the right direction to go, and I need not look at anywhere else." At the time of our interview, she had practiced PAM for about four years.

Participant H.

Participant H was born and brought up in a small village called Kothachervu in the Andhra Pradesh, South India. His father was the head master of the local elementary school. Even though he was the only child of his parents, he grew up in a large joint family with many aunts, uncles, and cousins all living

together. Thus, sharing was never a problem for him. His grandmother was the head of the family; she had five sons and five daughters. His late grandfather was a very pious person. *Atithi devo bhava* (treating guests as gods) was something that was well practiced by the family. He said he learned two things as a young boy that helped him greatly in life. One was respecting elders and the other was following what the teacher said. The family was an agricultural-based family and did farming in paddy fields, and cultivated sugarcane and oranges. Everyone used to get up early in the morning, leaving the house by 5:30 A.M. for the field. Dinner was served by dusk. It used to be an amusement for him to sit with his family while they spoke to each other in pitch darkness after having dinner in the courtyard after sunset. They were honest and simple folk. Never did he feel unhappy moments. He used to study under oil lamps as there was no electricity till his 7th grade. Later, looking back, he felt very fortunate to have been brought up in that atmosphere with so few external influences.

His father used to take him to the temple town of Tirupati for pilgrimage every year. He felt calmness in that atmosphere and used to look forward to it. There was a saint in the village who told him stories of past saints and scriptures like the Gita. As an adult, he used to pray for others regularly, “but the goal of life was not there,” he said. He had always felt real knowledge had to come through a teacher (guru). At the time of our interview, he had practiced the system for about five years. He felt fortunate as he reflected on the journey of his life so far: “For someone who’s from a remote village, getting a guide, a teacher

and this system, is something that I could never foresee.” For this, he felt very grateful.

Interview Questions

The two research questions stated above were translated into the following six open-ended interview questions, which were posted to each participant during the interview:

1. Please share and describe your significant experiences with the practice of Pranahuti Aided Meditation so far?
2. Please share and describe the significant experiences of group meditation or one-to-one individual meditation session with Pranahuti (*Yogic Transmission*) offered by a trainer? Please describe any bodily sensations, thoughts, perceptions, emotions and feelings experienced during these intervals.
3. Please share and describe the significant experiences of your own daily PAM practices (during which no Pranahuti is offered)? Please describe any bodily sensations, thoughts, perceptions, emotions and feelings experienced during those intervals of practice.
4. Please share and describe any experiences of transformation in your life that you believe are related to the PAM practice. For example, please describe the experiences of transformation in terms of thoughts, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and behavior.
5. Have you experienced any difficulties with the practice? If so, please describe.

6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

The term “significant experience” in the interview questions means any experience that is considered important and meaningful to the participant in the context of their practice, which they felt particularly valuable and important to share with the researcher. It was not considered necessary that they should be able to articulate as to why they are important or valuable. Also, there could be different levels of significance associated with different experiences and participants were free to describe a full range of significant experiences as they saw fit.

Participants were informed that they could use their diaries or writings when addressing these questions. Some participants did use their diaries to help recall and describe their experiences during the interview. Two participants shared writings they had, which summarized their experiences. These were useful for the researcher for the validation interviews and during the data analysis stage.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection consisted of the following steps. First, a general email with the introductory letter (Appendix C) stating the purpose and selection criteria, was sent out to the Bay Area PAM practitioner community through the community group email administrator, to seek volunteer participants. Potential research participants who responded were then provided with further explanation about the purpose, nature, and process of the study by the researcher and given the package which included the introductory letter, consent form, participant information form, and the participant bill of rights (see Appendix C). At this

stage, based on the conversation with the participant, the researcher gained a sense of whether the participant fit the main selection criteria.

The potential participants returned the filled-out consent form and participant information form. Based on the information provided, they were formally included in the study. An interview date and location were tentatively set. During this second-stage contact, the researcher also explained in detail the interview process, the research questions, and the nature of the research study, with the intention of preparing the participants for the interview. It was particularly emphasized to the participants that the researcher was seeking detailed and vivid description of their personal experiences. This engagement and preparation was a very important step as the researcher learned through her previous qualitative research experiences. Given the diverse background of the participants, detailed explanations of the open-ended research questions and the emphasis on elaboration of the experiences helped tremendously in orienting the practitioners, and garnering the kind of descriptive data that the study sought. All participants were assured of total confidentiality and their information would be kept in separate locked files that were to be maintained for a period of seven years.

The researcher then conducted an in-person interview with each participant at an agreed upon location comfortable for both. The resulting locations were usually the meditation space in participants' own homes. In this regard, the researcher felt extremely grateful for their being so open and inviting for the cause of research. The atmosphere of the environment proved to be a very

important part of the process, as detailed further below. All interviews were tape-recorded and guided by the six interview questions listed above. The interview duration varied from person to person, between 1–3 hours.

The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Re-checking of the transcripts against the audio recording ensured the accuracy of transcription. To ensure confidentiality, all participants' information was coded alphabetically and no identification information was retained on audio recordings, transcripts or any other materials used in the data collection process. The coded materials were kept in a separate locked file.

Once the transcripts were ready, they were analyzed as per IPA methodology. The researcher took guidance from members of the dissertation committee on methodology application and data analysis. The inputs and critical comments from them were invaluable and enabled the researcher to organize and analyze the data to bring out the essence of participants' experiences.

After the data analysis, the researcher sent the transcripts via email to the participants for review and verification. Each participant went through the transcript and confirmed the transcripts were true to the original interview. At a later stage, after all theme analysis and the write-up of the theme findings for each participant was completed, the write-up was also sent to each participant for verification. This particular step was not originally planned. The researcher felt it important that participants should have a voice and opinion as to how their themes were analyzed and categorized. Therefore, after consulting with the methodology expert of the committee, each write-up was sent to the participant to

ensure the data analysis agreed with their own reflection and understanding. This verification step was also important in ensuring the accuracy of the presentation of the data and is a key element of validation in qualitative research. Verification interviews were set up with the participant who felt the need to provide more input or clarifications to the original interview. Two of the eight participants ended up having a follow up interview because they wanted to provide further information. The additional data were incorporated into the study.

Bracketing Process

Bracketing is essential for phenomenological studies. It is a philosophy as well as a process engaged throughout the research study (Husserl, 1977). It enables the researcher to become aware of their preconceived notions, ideas, and the influences of past experiences and set aside them in order to inquire, understand, and draw out the essence of a phenomenon described by participants as they are (Nieswiadomy, as cited in Creswell, p. 13). This section briefly describes the process of bracketing followed by the researcher in this study, while the “Reflection on Bracketing Process” section at the end of chapter 5 discussed more about the reflection on the outcome of the process.

Bracketing is an iterative process and it occurred throughout the study. It could be broadly divided into the three phases: 1) research design phase; 2) interview or data collection phase; 3) data analysis phase. During the initial research design phase where research questions and the semi-structured interview questions were being developed, bracketing helped researcher put aside

assumptions about the content of answers (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 61), which is necessary in IPA.

During the participant interview phase, the bracketing process involved researcher's reflection on her possible pre-conceived notions and expectations of outcomes of interviews and making herself aware of them by writing them down on the journal. Revisiting these notes on and off, usually before and after each interview helped refine the process of bracketing. During the interview, a neutral stance was to be maintained in receiving the participants' input. The ways of achieving these were to maintain an inner poise, refrain from interpreting participants' descriptions too soon or prompting questions or using words that could be leading and based on researcher's past experiences, and focus on the participant's description, rather than thinking about the interpretation during the interview process.

During the data analysis phase, the bracketing process involved several themes: (a) seeing the experiences as they are, and avoid higher level extrapolation and drawing conclusions in the earlier phase; (b) While moving from one participant to another, bracket off the "ideas emerging from the analysis of the first case while working on the second" (Smith, et al., 2009, p. 100) so that each case is treated on its own terms. This is important for maintaining IPA's idiographic commitment (p. 100); (c) During the theme analysis phase, avoid classifying experiences incorrectly, connecting experiences of lower realm to the higher realm of consciousness for example, or vice versa. Avoid projecting certain experiences during write up.

Data Analysis

Six Steps of IPA

The data analysis procedure followed the six step or stage process using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) method detailed by Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2009). This procedure also crossing references the description of the IPA method by Willig (2008).

Step 1: Reading and re-reading (initial encounter with the text).

As suggested by Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2009), the first stage involved reading and rereading the text closely (p. 82) and making notes of initial observations and thoughts on one margin of the transcript while listening to the audio recording at least once. Here the researcher entered into each participant's world and got immersed in the material. She noted down the initial and most striking observations about it (p. 82) and also recollections from the interviews that were particularly important. At this stage, the researcher became familiar with the text and looked for the clusters of meaning units, which might be relevant themes for the research topic.

Step 2: Initial noting (identification of initial themes).

Step 2 is similar to a free textual analysis. The researcher returned to the beginning of the transcript, and divided the text into meaning units and put exploratory notes on the unit. These notes could be descriptive, linguistic, or conceptual comments, to name a few. They are concise phrases and labels that capture the essential quality of the text and at the same time they "tread back to

what the participant actually said” (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 68). They are however not themes yet. Step 1 and 2 could often merge.

Step 3: Developing emergent themes.

Step 3 is to come up with emergent themes. The researcher mainly worked with the exploratory notes from step 2, clustering units that shared similar meanings, and coming up with concise and pithy labels to capture the essence of the unit. There was an analytic shift in coming up with these emergent themes. These labels were “not only participant’s original words and thoughts but also the analyst’s interpretation” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 92). In this step, there was more interpretive from the researcher angle, while step 1 and 2 are more participant centered (p. 91). It represents “one manifestation of the hermeneutic circle” (p. 91). The researcher went through at least two rounds to come up with suitable expressive labels for the text, and received enormous help from the committee members’ feedback.

Step 4: Developing superordinate themes by searching for connection across emergent themes.

Step 4 involved looking at the pattern and connection between emergent themes from step 3 and grouping them together. Duplicates were eliminated, and only those that captured the quality of the participant’s experience of the phenomenon under investigation, were included. What came out of this process were the “superordinate theme” labels which reveal a clearer structure and pattern of the experiences.

Step 5: Moving to the next case.

This whole process of step one to four was repeated for the next participant. Keeping with the IPA's ideographic commitment, the researcher dealt with each participant's data separately, allowing their themes to emerge, while bracketing the experiences from the previous analysis.

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases.

This final step involved "looking for patterns across cases" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 96). It was a particularly creative step in the process and naturally led to "reconfiguring and relabeling of some of the themes" (p. 101). According to Willig (2008)

Irrespective of the approach used, integration should generate a list of master themes that captures the quality of the participants' shared experience of the phenomenon under investigation, and which, therefore, also tells us something about the essence of the phenomenon itself. The list of master themes should include the labels of the superordinate themes and their constituent themes, together with identifiers that indicate which of the participants invoked them. (p. 62)

This was one of the most challenging steps in the entire process, as the researcher found that a deeper understanding of the whole subject and its interrelated aspects was required. The researcher used the qualities and attributes table in Appendix A and the *Pind Desh Tool User Guide* by Narayana (2010c) as the key reference for this analysis. The researcher received critical help from external reviewer of the committee in order to understand the nature behind some of these experiences, to which superordinate themes they belonged, and their applicability in referencing and connecting with the experiences in the available PAM literature for bringing out the meaning. This step was gone through three times with the

final result of the “Master Table of Themes” (Table 3) presented in Chapter 4 for the entire group of eight participants. The table produced a coherent structure of master themes which brought together the superordinate and emergent themes that best revealed the significance of participants’ accounts, as recommended by Smith, Flowers, & Larkin (2009, p. 96). This master table guides the presentation and discussion of the finding in the rest of the thesis.

Standards of Quality and Validity Verification

The researcher adopted the recommended reliability and validity measures and strategies in Creswell (2009) to ensure the quality of research. For ensuring consistency and reliability, transcripts were checked against recordings to make sure they are mostly error free during the transcription process. The researcher ensured no shift of code definition or meaning occurs (Gibbs, 2007 as cited in Creswell, 2009).

Validity verification was used to ensure the findings were accurate from the standpoint of the researcher and the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000, as cited in Creswell, 2009). This process is intended to bring out trustworthiness, authenticity, and credibility of the research and is one of the strengths of qualitative research (Creswell, 2009). The following strategies were implemented for this study: First, during the interview process, the researcher followed the general phenomenological interview guidelines, prompting only when necessary to bring out a richer description of the experiences, and ensure that she was not influencing the participants’ answers to the questions. Second, the interview transcripts were sent to participants with follow-up interviews to ensure the

validity and completion data from the point of view of participants. Third, after the completion of data analysis and the write-up, the final report was sent to each participant to obtain their feedback. Their feedback was re-incorporated back to the write-up. This step was taken up and implemented after consulting with the methodology expert of the committee. Although it added more time to the process, it was done to ensure the participants would find the portrayal and analysis in the final report to be accurate (Creswell, 2009). Fourth, the researcher spent prolonged time in studying the subject and performing the analysis. Fifth, the write-up used rich description to convey the findings, and due diligence was particularly emphasized in coming up with emergent, superordinate, and master themes. This was embedded in steps three to six of data analysis described above. Sixth, during this long process, the researcher engaged the committee members as well as outside experts on the subject for briefing and validation of the theme analysis work and the write-up. Seventh, the researcher clarified her own PAM practice background, engaged in a bracketing process throughout the process, and described her reflections on the process of the entire work.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

This study is delimited by the following four criteria. The first is that the study takes place within the framework of PAM. The data collection, analysis, and discussion occurred within this framework. The second is that it involved only active practitioners of the PAM practice, whose significant experiences of the practice and transformational aspects of it were the subject of study. The third is that only practitioners with one to 10 years of practice were selected for the

study. The fourth is that whenever transformation and its associated qualities is discussed (as will be seen further in Chapter 5), there could be multiple aspects associated with each quality, and a large spectrum or scale with respect to the maturity of the development of these qualities. It is out of scope of this research to engage in the investigation concerning the maturity of these experiences.

The limitations on the study are as follows. First of all, the one to 10 years of practice criterion might limit the data for spiritual experiences and transformations. Even though the transformation of consciousness need not necessarily depend on the number of years of practice, still it was known to be a long and arduous process, and the maturity of the practice certainly plays an important role. This criterion was deliberate, however, in order to have a homogenous group of participants with relatively fewer years of experience. It is also a relatively more objective measurement than others. The second limitation of the study is that an important aspect of PAM is the regular work of Pranahuti performed for the practitioner by the trainer. The study did not include the perspective of trainer(s) in the process of transformation. It would be very interesting to gain insight into the work performed by the corresponding trainer by interviewing them and then correlating it with the experiences of the participants. However, this was outside the scope of this study and is left to future study as highlighted in the recommendations for future research at the end of the thesis.

Originally, the researcher reckoned that the face-to-face open-ended interview approach might post challenges to participants as they might be too direct. However, it turned out it was not at all an issue. The researcher was in

fact touched by the degree of openness and sharing as described in the “Researcher’s reflection” section above. It did appear to the researcher that several participants experienced difficulties in using words to provide detailed description of non-ordinary states.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS (RESULTS)

Overview

This chapter presents a rich body of findings from the study using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to explore the following two research questions:

1. What are the qualities of significant experiences in Pranahuti Aided Meditation?
2. What are the experiences of transformation associated with the practice?

The subsequent data coding, theme extraction, and presentation of findings in this chapter were aligned with these two research questions.

The interviews resulted in about 18.5 hours of recording which translated into about 300 of transcript (single space). The data analysis which culminated in the tapestry of organized themes presented was an iterative process. At one juncture, the researcher faced the question of whether to organize and present the data as per individual participant (therefore themes under each participant) or to present overarching significant themes (as in Table 3). The rationale for presenting the data by individual participant is that transformation occurs within each individual. Each participant experienced the meditative states and transformation. However, having done the organization and presentation of data this way in the first round of write ups, the researcher found that there was a lot of repetition of themes since many themes were similar and shared experiences. This also made it difficult to analyze at a higher level of abstraction and draw out

the significant PAM experiences and transformations as per the two research questions. Therefore, staying true to the purpose of the research aim, which focused on the qualities of the experiences themselves, the study settled on presenting the findings by theme content as opposed to by individual. By doing so, the analysis later in Chapter 5 could capture a holistic picture of the entire journey of transformation of group of participants.

This chapter presents the table of themes (Table 2 and 3) which summarizes the findings of the entire study. This is followed by the write up on each theme. The write ups adhered closely to the participants' original descriptions of experiences from the interviews, using almost entirely their words by either quoting or paraphrasing, thus reflecting more of the "P" (phenomenology) aspect of the IPA method. The "I" (interpretive) and the "A" (analysis) aspects were chiefly reflected in a) the labeling of the emergent and superordinate themes; and b) the overall grouping and categorization of the themes to bring out the essence and significance of the experiences as well as a larger and holistic picture as to be seen more clearly in the analysis and discussion in chapter 5.

The experiences of PAM practice include experiences occurring during a) sittings or *satsangs* (group meditation) where Pranahuti was offered by a trainer; or b) participants' daily practices at home without Pranahuti, for example, during morning meditation, evening purification, point A and B practices, and bedtime prayer. The data analysis of the interview transcripts found that the majority of the significant experiences for PAM practice occurred during Pranahuti. Some

participants made explicit observation of this point during the interview. Therefore, for significant experiences of PAM practices, whenever it is not specifically mentioned, the experience was from during Pranahuti sessions. If the experience occurred during any of the daily practices, the setting was made explicit. Furthermore, the term “during Pranahuti” indicates the experience occurred either during individual sittings, or *satsangs* (group meditation), or both. The words “individual sitting(s)”, “sitting(s)”, or “*satsang(s)*” indicate that the experience occurred specifically during sitting(s) or *satsang(s)* wherein Pranahuti was offered.

Master Table of Themes

The data analysis on the large amount of data resulted in a total of 11 superordinate themes corresponding to the two research questions. These superordinate themes were grouped into four master themes. This essentially corresponds to step six of the data analysis presented in Chapter 3.

Table 2 presents the summary view of these 4 master themes and 11 superordinate themes. The four master themes draw out the essence, overall pattern, and progression of the phenomenon of transformation of consciousness in participants’ journeys. The meaning and significance of these grouping, theme labels, and connections are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Table 2:

Summary View of Master and Superordinate Themes

Master Theme A. Frequent Non-Ordinary States and Exquisite Experiences in PAM Practice

- 1: Sensory Experiences of Prana - Activities, Energy, and Colors
- 2: Exquisite Experiences
- 3: Non-concentration Concentration (Absorption)

Master Theme B: Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence) and Vairagya (Due Attachment)

- 4: Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence)
- 5: Activation of Vairagya (Due attachment)

Master Theme C: Activation of Interdependency

- 6: Experiencing Freedom
- 7: Happiness and Contentment
- 8: Interdependency Activation

Master Theme D: Activation of Divine Consciousness

- 9: Activation of Devotion
- 10: Activation of Self-Surrender
- 11: Exquisite Experiences in the Realm of Balance

Note. The four master themes are numbered using alphabet between “A” and “D”. The 11 superordinate themes are numbered using Roman numeral number from “1” to “11”.

Table 3 provides the detail view of the various layers of themes, including emergent themes and sub-themes. This table can be used throughout the chapter as a general map for classification. As the data was divided into two groups pertaining to (a) PAM experiences and (b) transformation, a prefix of “P-” or “T-” was given before the superordinate theme, which is numbered from 1 to 11, to clearly indicate to which group it belongs. The first column of Table 3 holds the themes for significant experiences PAM practice with the label “P-” before the

themes labels. The second column holds the themes for significant experiences of transformation with the label “T-” before the themes labels.

For example, the superordinate theme 4 is “Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence)”. The PAM Experience part of this theme is labeled as “P-4”, while the transformation experience part is labeled as “T-4.” They were placed side by side in the table. Similar emergent themes under the superordinate themes were also placed parallel to each other. The participant code in parenthesis after the theme labels (e.g., A, B, C, etc.) indicate the participants who had that particular experience, told in their own way of course. For example, theme “P-1a: Flow of energy, charge, and force (C, D, E, G)” shows participants C, D, E, and G had experienced flow of energy, charge, and force, as presented in the findings.

The write up in the subsequent sections follows the same order presented in the table. All numbering of themes at various levels in this table matched with the numbering in the write up for ease of cross-referencing.

Table 3:

Master Table of Themes

<i>Experiences of PAM Practice (P)</i>	<i>Experiences of Transformation (T)</i>
<u>Master Theme A: Frequent Non-Ordinary States and Exquisite Experiences in PAM Practice</u>	
P-1: Sensory Experiences of Prana - Activities, Energy, and Colors	
P-1a: Colors (C, E, F, G, H)	
P-1b: Light and brightness (C, E, G)	
P-1c: Coolness (C, G, H)	
P-1d: Heat (C)	
P-1e: Flow of energy, charge, and force (C, D, E, G)	
P-1f: Jerks (A, B, C, D, E, F, G)	
P-2: Exquisite Experiences	
P-2a: Ajapa (Vibration) (B, D, E, H)	
P-2b: Waves of bliss, gentleness, and soft gentle glow (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H)	
P-2c: Grace (C, E)	
P-2d: Tunnel experience (C, D, G)	
P-2e: Presence (A, C, D, E, F, G, H)	
P-3: Non-concentration Concentration (Absorption)	
P-3a: Absorption – with and without awareness.	
P-3b: Transcending time and physical limitations.	
P-3c: Higher states of being during absorption.	
<u>Master Theme B: Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence) and Vairagya (Due Attachment)</u>	
P-4: Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence)	T-4: Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence)
P-4a: Experiencing love.	
<i>i) Love of Master (A, C, E, F, H)</i>	
<i>ii) Deep gratitude (C, E)</i>	
<i>iii) Trust in Him (B, G, H)</i>	

P-4b: Deep calm and settled-ness (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H)

T-4a: Deep calm within, disciplined mind, waiting, patience, and self-control.

- i) Calmness and the permanent deep calm within (B, C, E, F, H)*
- ii) Disciplined mind and quietude (loss of circular thought patterns, mind wandering, brooding, worries, and speculations) (E)*
- iii) Patience, waiting, and let go (C, D, F, G)*
- iv) Self-control and etiquette (D)*

T-4b: Rid of negative thought and emotions and binds of the sensory and material desires.

- i) Rid of anger, irritation, brooding, and worries (A, B, C, D, E, F)*
- ii) Out of binds of external and sensory enjoyments, material desires, and social ambitions (A, C, E, F, G)*

P-4c: Willingness for transformation and emergence of goal clarity.

- i) Goal clarity (C, E, G)*
- ii) Determination (F)*

T-4c: Awakened to higher purpose and goal of life.

- i) Gaining purpose of life (E, F, G, H)*
- ii) Interests in spirituality (G, F)*
- iii) Determination, discipline, and proper priority (E, F)*

P-4d: Awakened to principled living.

- i) Resolve to abjure lower qualities (D, F)*
- ii) Following principles (H)*
- iii) Truthfulness and honesty (C, G)*
- iv) Remorse, repentance, and resolution for higher life (F)*

T-4d: Acquiring principles and values of truthfulness and honesty (A, C, E, F, H)

P-4e: Activation of various positive qualities pertaining to Viveka.

- i) Willingness to change (G)*
- ii) Clarity leading to acceptance (F)*
- iii) Positivity (A, C, G)*

T-4e: Developing various qualities pertaining to Viveka.

- i) Reduction in stubbornness and willingness to change (F)*
- ii) Introspection and acceptance of lapses (D, E, F)*
- iii) High spirit and energy (A, E)*

iv) Fearlessness (C)

iv) Positive outlook (A, C, D, E, G)

v) Gratitude towards the practice (H)

vi) Focusing on the current task (A)

vii) Increasing subtleness leading to be out of traditional worship (G)

viii) Developing intuitive capacity and clarity in thinking (C, D, G)

ix) Reduction of ego and loss of superiority (D)

x) Admitting wrong and seek forgiveness (B, D, E, F, G)

P-5: Activation of Vairagya (Due attachment)

P-5a: Orientation towards Master (E, F, G)

P-5b: Acceptance, resignation, and submission (A, C, E)

P-5c: Letting go (H)

P-5d: Courage (G)

T-5: Activation of Vairagya (Due attachment)

T-5a: Acceptance and letting go. (A, C, D, E, F)

T-5b: Leaving possessiveness (D)

T-5c: Sense of duty leading to increased efficiency and objectivity (A, E)

T-5d: Resilience in life – returning to balance quickly (C, E)

T-5e: Stoic attitude - confidence, patience, and calmness in trying circumstances (E, G)

T-5f: Rid of undue attachment (F)

Master Theme C: Activation of Interdependency

P-6: Experiencing Freedom

P-6a: Sense of relief, freedom, ease, and de-tensioning (A, B, C, E, F, G, H)

P-6b: Lightness and freshness (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H)

i) Experiences of lightness in evening purification.

P-6c: Floating, free, and flying high (E, F, H)

P-7: Happiness and Contentment

P-7a: Santusti (contentment) and fulfillment (B, E, G)

T-6: Experiencing Freedom

T-6a: Clarity of mind and lightness of being (C, E)

T-6b: Greater ease and loss of insecurity (E)

T-7: Happiness and Contentment

T-7a: Happiness and contentment (A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

P-7b: Happiness, bliss, and joy (B, C, D, E, F, G)
P-7c: Feeling energized (G)

P-8: Interdependency Activation

P-8a: Part and whole relationship between self and the universe (D)
P-8b: Dependency (A, C)

P-8c: Faith in oneself and Master (B, E)
P-8d: Confidence (F, G)

P-8e: Plainness and simplicity (A, H)
P-8f: Expanded boundary, sense of community, all as one family (A, B, C, H)
P-8g: Empathy and compassion (C, H)

P-8h: Outpour of love towards others (G)

P-8i: Helping others and service related thoughts. (A, B, E, G)
P-8j: Experiencing himself in everyone (H)

T-7b: Harmony within oneself, free from conflict and stress. (A)

T-8: Interdependency Activation

T-8a: Confidence and the loss of fear and timidity (C, D, E, G)
T-8b: Being straightforward and plain (B, G, H)

T-8c: Moderation of anger (H)
T-8d: Sympathy, empathy, and compassion. (B, C, H)
T-8e: No boundary—one family (A)
T-8f: Cherishing others' success (A)

T-8g: Giving equal opportunities for others to grow (D)
T-8h: Helping others with new thinking and perspectives. (B, D, E, F, G)
T-8i: Yielding to and cooperation with others (C, D)
T-8j: Developing principles.

i) *Ahimsa (Non-injury) (F, H)*
ii) *Asteya (Non-covetousness) (H)*

Master Theme D: Activation of Divine Consciousness

P-9: Activation of Devotion

P-9a: Longing and deep love (A, C, E, F, G)
P-9b: Single pointed orientation (F, C)

P-9c: Earnestness and dedication for service (A, B, C, E, F)

P-10: Activation of Self-Surrender

P-10a: Submission (D)

P-10b: Yours as a body and the soul.

P-10c: Self-offering in devotion - All this is Yours.

P-10d: Feeling of helplessness (H)
P-10e: Closeness and intimacy (E)

T-9: Activation of Devotion

T-9a: Aspiration and determination for higher life (C, F)
T-9b: Frequent remembrance and being in His Company in daily life (D, E, F)
T-9c: Dedicated to service (A, B, C, D, E, F, G)

T-10: Activation of Self-Surrender

T-10a: Submissiveness and prayerful attitude (F)
T-10b: Developing forbearance and fortitude in the spirit of surrender (C, D, E)

P-10f: Silence (C, D, E, F)
P-10g: Vacuum experience (E)
P-10h: Coolness

P-11: Exquisite Experiences in the Realm of Balance

P-11a: Vastness, no boundary, and openness (C, H, F)
P-11b: Openness and shift of perspective (B, G, H)
P-11c: Uniformity and evenness (C)
P-11d: Steadiness (D)
P-11e: Loss of prejudice (D)
P-11f: Awe and reverence (C, E, F, H)
P-11g: Purity (D, G)
P-11h: Hope (E)

T-11: Exquisite Experiences in the Realm of Balance

T-11a: Openness (F)
T-11b: Loss of prejudice, judgmental attitude, and becoming softer and kinder (C, D, E, H)
T-11c: Balanced and unperturbed in life. (D)
T-11d: Hope (G)

Note. "P-" label indicates super-ordinate themes for the experiences of PAM Practice ; "T-" indicates super-ordinate themes for the experiences of transformation.

Master Theme A - Frequent Non-Ordinary States and Exquisite Experiences in PAM Practice

This master theme presents various profound non-ordinary states frequently experienced by participants mostly during Pranahuti. It also presents certain exquisite experiences that were had by participants.

Sensory Experiences of Prana – Activities, Energy, and Colors (P-1)

All participants experienced non-ordinary states that are sensory in nature primarily during Pranahuti. These experiences include flow of energy, charge, force, colors, bright light, coolness, heat, and jerks.

Flow of energy, charge, and force (P-1a)

It was common for participants to experience Pranahuti as a sort of energy, charge, force, or flow that was poured into them. For participant E, when

intense, it was as if someone poured a sudden rush of energy right into her, filling up her whole body. Sometimes it was a strong burst of force (F). The whole physical frame was charged with strong “magnetic energy force”, and participant C was full of energy. Participant G said sometimes the powerful energy suddenly came and removed all the mundane thoughts in her.

Sometimes the experience was less intense. It was felt as a constant flow of energy through the body at all times during Pranahuti. Sometimes this flow was felt as flowing from the top of the brain into the hearts, bringing a certain soothing sensation, like a fine vibration (C and D). The meditator would get absorbed into it. Tingling sensations were felt on the forehead, the higher portion of the head, and behind the head. Many times, participant D felt that he was being pulled up by some kind of energy. He said this was a common experience that all others went through as well.

Colors (P-1b)

Five out of eight participants (C, E, F, G, H) described seeing vivid colors during Pranahuti and at other times. The colors ranged from orange, creamish, white, green, blue, light blue, purple neon glow, violet, subtle violet to grey. For participant E, they occurred usually whenever the meditation became deep, and it was predominantly a violet or purple color. The “whole region or whatever you are seeing, it’s completely violet.” She also saw orange, white, and grey color in the initial 6-7 months of practice. Participant G experienced a lot of colors such as saw blue, light blue, green, goldenish, orangish, yellow, creamish, white, greyish during sittings. Once she thought to herself: “How come so many

colors?” They often appeared in a concentrated spot before her. One time a subtle violet color permeated the entire screen of vision before her.

What was most striking was that colors often came with certain feelings or thoughts. For example, participant F observed when certain squared color patterns appeared before him, he suddenly felt lifted up to higher planes, a different zone where it was suddenly switched to silence and a different orientation. “You suddenly switch and become devoted,” he said, and his state of mind became calmer.

Light and brightness (P-1c)

Participant C, E, and G experienced brightness or bright white light during Pranahuti as well as morning meditation, and point B practice. For several months, participant G felt such strong brightness, as if the sun was coming in during Pranahuti. Once after such experience during morning meditation, she felt “the whole time it was bright” and she was so positive that day. Another time she felt light coming from the top, and saw the image of the Master.

Coolness (P-1d)

Participants G and H experienced coolness during Pranahuti. Participant G once felt the coolness was such that it was as if she literally had a head bath, and “when the wind blows and it gets cool.” It was a very nice feeling. Other times, she felt got cooled up and calm during Pranahuti.

Heat (P-1e)

Participant C spoke of experiencing enormous heat during Pranahuti. It felt like “heat leaving out of the system. . . . as if something is going out.”

Jerks (P-1f)

Jerks were common experiences for all. They occurred during Pranahuti and evening purification, and sometimes during morning meditation also. They described jerks as sudden, sharp, and quick physical movement, push, or rapid pulsation in the body which could be intense or subdued during Pranahuti.

Participant D experienced one particularly vivid episode that was unlike other experiences of jerks:

[It is] like you have a guitar and there is a string which is tightened. At one point it suddenly breaks off, and goes as a whirl. . . . into the air. Until that time I used to feel restlessness and uneasiness of the weight of the thoughts; but once that jerk happens, there will be lot of calmness, stability, silence.

What was particularly revealing about this phenomenon is once the jerks occurred, the participants felt sudden quietening and shift to calmness, coolness, and lightness inside. They were relieved from the uneasiness due to a particular thought pattern they were lost into till then.

Exquisite Experiences (P-2)

Participants had a number of profound and exquisite experiences during Pranahuti. Some of them are non-sensory in nature, and do not correspond to any physical sensations, as seen in the previous theme. They were internal feelings felt in the heart by the participants.

Ajapa (Vibration) (P-2a)

Participant B, D, E, and H described a unique experience called Ajapa—vibration in the heart during Pranahuti and morning meditation. It was felt as a

subtle pulsation in the heart area. It felt like a very fine thread moving in heart for participant H. As the feeling persisted, he felt extremely thankful.

Participant D had a particular vivid episode of experience of *ajapa* two years after he joined the practice. He said the experience was hard to describe, but perhaps could be described roughly, as the following: Imagine a strip of metal fixed at one end while the other end was in the air. “[If] you press it down and release it, there will be vibration: up-and-down, up-and-down.” The actual experiences was very subtle however, and there was extreme peace felt when it occurred.

Waves of bliss, gentleness, and soft gentle glow (P-2b)

The Pranahuti sometimes was felt as smooth and subtle, and other times intense. Participant A sometimes felt it as “waves of bliss, just wave after wave. . . . like energy of some sort.” Sometimes the transmission was like “waves of gentleness and calmness coming down.” Participant F described a soft gentle glow from beneath the body and he experienced a light and subtle state with thoughts of prayer. Participant A said it was very difficult to describe such experiences: “You just have to experience to know what it is.” But he observed that the physical body was not much felt in those moments.

Grace (P-2c)

Participant E had been experiencing what she called as grace—a constant flow of energy throughout the whole body during most of the days, especially during moments of remembrance or prayer. She said this is similar to the experience of “first time you are introduced and there is Pranahuti flowing

through you.” It is very subtle. “But you feel a charged throughout your body most of the time.” Similarly, participant C said whenever he was in the remembrance of the Master, he felt the flow even during the day, sometimes with sensations present on the “forehead, top of the head, behind the head.”

Tunnel experience (P-2d)

Several participants narrated vivid experiences of passing through tunnels during Pranahuti. This occurred during the very first sitting for participant G. She felt like going through a tunnel where she was “very aware of things around.” With this experience, she became thoroughly convinced of the path: “[I] just knew that this is the right direction, that’s it; I didn’t need anything [else]. It was what we are looking for that time.”

Often the tunnel was dark and enclosed. And when they had passed through it they were aware of the fact that they had done so. Participant D in fact experienced passing through a tunnel several times, but one passage was particularly significant:

I felt like I was passing through a dark tunnel. It’s like the other side of the world. . . . [here] it is all greyish. Did not see this any time in the past. It is with lots of vastness and few unknown objects, last but not least, it is unending, or rather no boundaries.

Participant C described as the tunnel as “a dark area you are passing through. . . . like an enclosure through which you are passing” during one sitting. And it was followed by the feeling reverence towards Master when he came through the tunnel.

Presence (P-2e)

Seven out of eight participants described a distinct and unique experience of a Presence, predominantly during Pranahuti, and sometimes in bedtime prayer and morning meditation. It was a very significant experience for participant E which she described as “Master’s Presence” during one of the celebration *satsangs*:

The feeling was very intense and it almost felt like there was Light filling the entire room. It was a very intense presence of Master. You know Master is there. It was in the entire room—the entire room had that [Presence].

She said this was entirely different from the feeling of flow of energy experienced during Pranahuti:

What I was trying to distinguish is that sometimes it’s just energy. You know there is energy flowing or it’s Pranahuti. Sometimes there is an extra awareness of presence of Master.

Sometimes she felt this Presence as an all-enveloping soft white glow in her morning meditations during deep prayerful mood. She was

sucked into a different plane which is light, subtle and brighter. . . . in this different zone, everything around you is soft white glow; felt like I am being enveloped [in] soft white glow, just like very gentle white.

And there was remembrance of and deep orientation to Master. She said often it was the remembrance of Master that led her to his company.

It’s like you just remember Master and you are in His Company. . . . You are suddenly aware of his Presence and you are just there in the Presence. You are with Master.

Similarly, participant F described an overwhelming Presence that occurred to him several times. It was like a force coming from the top moving towards him and enveloping him completely, about one to two times of his body. There was a

feeling of warmth and comfort in that Presence. It invoked love and remembrance of Master. There was “reverence towards Master and some deep feeling.” It was extremely pleasant also, and gave him a sense of relief.

Participant A described the arrival of the Presence during bedtime prayer when he sat and waited in the most submissive way. When it arrived, it was “as if somebody is the room now. . . . you are in company of Him.” It was a subtle feeling in the heart. But it gave him such certainty indeed he was in His Company. And he felt He was there listening to him: “somebody is listening. . . . somebody is there so you can submit.”

Similarly, participant H spoke of vivid experiences of the Presence of Master in several occasions during bedtime prayer: “I couldn’t describe what it is. But I feel that He was there. Master was there, right in front of me.” He could only describe that Presence as love; it prompted such feelings inside that his eyes began to well up with tears.

Suddenly, without my noticing of it, there comes some kind of relieving vibration. Something of a sensation from top of head. And there comes sudden alertness and a feeling that Master is present. Then the emotion comes out. And feeling of lowliness or feeling of love. . . . [It is] like somebody visiting you after long time, the loved one. Then submission of self was more easy, feeling more open. Putting before [the Presence] whatever I have: my problems, my fault, my frailties or any difficulties I have. It was very easy for me to put [forth] during those times where I felt Master’s Presence. . . . It was happy feeling afterwards.

Before the Presence, profound and sublime feelings of abiding calm, deep reverence, humility, lowliness, and deep love issued forth in the hearts of participants. Participant D described the Presence of Master he experienced as a

superior or higher power, without any form. Participant A said he had often felt small and “insignificant in front of this Presence of Divinity,” that boundless love.

During Pranahuti, participant C felt it was His Presence “as though He is there.” Sometimes in that Presence, he felt deep silence all around. Sometimes he felt the Presence of Master was “showering blessings and grace on us.” He “felt a lot of reverence” and very lowly in front of Him. It was a “kind of helplessness feeling. . . . humbling feeling. You feel lowly and humble.” Sometimes he felt warmth in that Presence, very positive and confident. Sometimes the feeling was totally refreshed and purified.

Non-Concentration Concentration (Absorption) (P-3)

All eight participants described experiencing a peculiar yet very common state of “absorption”, predominantly during Pranahuti, and also during morning meditation and universal prayer. In this state of absorption, they felt that they seemed to have been disconnected from the outer conscious activity of the mind and awareness, and merged into a different and higher state of being.

Participant H said, during meditation, he felt “totally disengaged with the external” while meditating on the Divine Light. He observed complete silence from outside, not listening to any noise or paying attention to anything. Towards the end of the meditation, he felt happy and light.

Participant A described this phenomenon as the following: Often after *satsang* had started, even though overwhelming thoughts came, yet the thoughts had no impact on him. Meanwhile the absorption into that presence of Divine Light became deeper and deeper, and the impact of thoughts diminished as the

satsang progressed. Often participants reported having many thoughts, but they did not remember them after the absorption. “There are a lot of thoughts coming and going. . . . but never they bothered me,” said participant D.

Absorption—with and without awareness (P-3a)

Among the participants’ experiences of absorption, there appeared to be two types based on the varied degree of awareness. In one type, they became completely unaware of themselves and the surroundings. Participant F was deeply absorbed in a thought; he seemed to have “disappeared.” When he came back to awareness, for some moments he was not sure where he was, and what he was doing. Then he realized he was in meditation. “You don’t know typically how long that [disappearance] was. Similarly, when participant G was in the state of absorption: “time goes very fast and I don’t know what is happening. . . . When you open your eyes and it is like time is gone. . . . where are you?” Often this loss of awareness was associated with the loss of time.

The second type of absorption is when the participant was aware while feeling absorbed. Participant D said even though he was aware, at the same time he was lost and did not know what happened. For participant G, very often while she went into very deep absorption during *Pranahuti*, she was aware of the fact that she was in absorption. In that state, there was no thought coming, and she was just waiting. Participant H spoke of subtle awareness while being absorbed.

Participant E described having complete awareness and observing her own mind while she was absorbed:

It’s a sort of feeling of disconnect where you mind is in free fall. You are no longer controlling direction your mind is going in. I think you are

disengaging in conscious activity [of the mind] and just letting whatever is happening happen. You are completely aware. There is feeling that you are in slightly different plane than you were when you open your eyes and you are conscious and normal.

Sometimes absorption appeared as a dreamy state with bare awareness. In this state, it was as though the participants were going through dreams as participant E vividly described:

You are not completely aware that you are meditating. . . . you are in dream. . . . thoughts come and go. . . . just flowing. . . . and you have no control over what's happening. But once meditation is over, you don't really know what thoughts you were involved in, or what your dream was. But you feel light and fresh.

Participant F said often these dreams were not directly connected to what he had consciously nurtured: "So they appear weird because you are unable to place them and hence recalling their details is also difficult."

Transcending time and physical limitations (P-3b)

One important aspect of the absorption experience was the feeling of transiency of time. Participants expressed this in different ways. Some said they felt time was shortened: one hour of sitting felt like 20 minutes, or 30 minutes of sitting felt like two minutes. Sometimes one hour of Pranahuti went by without notice: "Time is passing but it doesn't have impact on you" as participant C described. When the trainer said "that's all," it appeared as though the sitting had just started, said participant F. Participant A expressed it as "collapse of time," while G described a feeling of "timelessness" during absorption, as if time was absent.

Most of the participants also spoke of the non-awareness of the physical body and environment during deep absorption. In that state, even physical pain of the body was not felt.

Higher states of being during absorption (P-3c)

What was most striking were the higher nature of thoughts and feelings had by participants during and after absorption. Participant B said though she was completely “lost” and became unaware of her surroundings, at the same time, she felt she had gone to some other place where she felt a lot of silence, lightness, weightlessness, and “you feel that connection.” As she came out of absorption and became aware of her own thoughts, she found them to be generally “divine related” —thoughts related to her guide, faith, and helping others.

Usually, lightness, calmness, silence, freshness, happiness, and a mellow and peaceful state were the usual feelings when participants came out of absorption. Sometimes during the absorbed state, certain thoughts came to them, giving them the wisdom, perspective, and guidance to resolve certain practical problems they were facing in life at that time. The feeling of gratitude towards Master for the experience issued forth from these experiences.

Participant C sometimes felt intoxicated along with clarity during transmission. These were very happy and enjoyable experiences, he said.

Master Theme B – Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence) and Vairagya (Due Attachment)

The second master theme is about the activation of discriminative intelligence (*viveka*) and Due Attachment (*vairagya*). *Viveka* is also known as spiritual wisdom.

PAM Experience – Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence) (P-4)

The experiences related to the activation of *viveka* or discriminative intelligence include the following aspects: experiencing love, deep calm, emergence of goal clarity and proper priority, developing positivity, awakened to principled living, and developing humility.

Experiencing love (P-4a).

Participants experienced profound love of Master during Pranahuti. Love brought the feeling of deep trust and closeness like that of deep friendship. It also brought soothing and deep relaxation found in some participants' experiences. Consequently, there arose the feeling of deep gratitude towards such experiences.

Love of Master (P-4a-i).

The experiences of intense love of Master during Pranahuti were some of the most significant experiences for participants A, C, E, F, and H. The feeling was hard to describe, and was overwhelming and surprising too:

It's just overwhelming to feel the intensity of love that Master has for you. . . . This feeling was also surprising for me because I did not expect to feel something like that; because you always know that God or Divinity loves you but you don't really know how it feels like. It feels overwhelming. (Participant E)

The experience was pure love in all its intensity said participant A:

The way He loves us. . . . There is intense purity in it. There is no agenda of any sort. It is not based on any relationships. No expectations. Just intense pure love. And I think that probably is what it means by unalloyed love.

In those moments of love, there was a lot intimacy in the heart. His revered guide, the very thought of him always followed by the same feeling of love he said.

Similarly, participant H described the love he felt as “feeling of nearness to someone who loves me without any condition.” It was the most profound love that was relentlessly trying to pull him up all the time:

What I feel is boundless love. . . . ignor[ing] the imperfections in me and still trying to pull me up no matter what I do. [This] is what I feel as Master’ grace. Love is more appropriate word. I wouldn’t call that tenacity. Tenacity is more for humans. It is more unending or relentless love, or relentless attachment from the Divine; always trying to help [us] improve. No matter what mistakes we do—motherly love is there to forgive. That’s what I feel the reason for any of transformation than any of my self-effort. When I observe myself reacting to any of work situations or life situations, it is helping me to recognize what life is, how fresh every day is.

He realized “this is the real thing. This is it.” He felt this to be the real nature that he should always be with. Sometimes the experience was not emotional, and sometimes it was. And tears would roll down as he felt that intense love.

Participant C described the love he experienced during individual sittings as “enormous”, “unconditional”, and “no boundary.” It brought refreshing energy and warmth to the heart. He felt elated to be in His company and there was a feeling of exuberance. Sometime it was as though this higher force within was like a “mother is calling her children.” Reverence and gratitude issued forth from being embraced by such love. The experience used to be very intense and emotional for him. Now the intensity lessened. Once he was given a sitting by his guide. As he stole a glance at him, it was as though a small baby of three months old was before him—there was such incredible love and warmth issued forth from that being.

Deep gratitude (P-4a-ii).

The various profound non-ordinary experiences had by participants led to a deep sense of gratitude towards Master. Participant H noted that there was immense gratitude for the love that was poured into the core of his heart during Pranahuti. Similarly, participant C noted such feelings came particularly during Pranahuti—it was “for giving us all that He has given.”

Trust in Him (P-4a-iii).

Participants B, G, and H experienced deep trust in Master during Pranahuti. It often coincided with difficult times they faced in life. These experiences enable them to trust, let go, and have patience.

“How do we proceed further? What needs to be done?” These questions rose inside participant G at a time when she felt a lot of distress and uncertainty in life. One day the answers came within her during Pranahuti: “He knows what to do. . . . You don’t know, He knows best.” As these thoughts rose in her, the feeling of waiting came. She just let go of it and became very relaxed. The feeling of patience and waiting came profoundly for her in a sitting during celebration time: “Master shows the way and have patience” was the feeling.

Deep calm and settled-ness (P-4b).

It was common for all participants to experience long periods of deep calm and settled-ness during Pranahuti and daily PAM meditation practices. These were the predominant experiences in meditation. For participant E, very often the process occurred like this. She was having a lot of thoughts and was “actually involved with the thoughts. . . . then in an instant, suddenly all of [them] clears

away. Just gone, all gone and there is nothing. Just awareness. . . . It's just calm." When such clearing happened, it felt "very good" she said. She differentiated the experience of calmness from settled-ness:

With calmness, you no longer have the same amount or intensity of thoughts that you are having. . . . There is no more rush of thoughts, which is what I am describing as calmness. And with settled-ness, because of this [calmness] your thoughts are settled on the thought of suggestion [of Divine Light] given at the beginning of meditation. Your mind syncs to that. . . . You are centered on thought of meditation.

For participant C, sometimes during sittings, he felt "everything is slowed down. . . . time is slowed down." It was as if the consciousness or thoughts had taken a pause and one had a lot of time to react. During point A practice, he felt "settled in thought."

Participant F related the experience of being elevated to a different level of consciousness where calmness and quiet prevailed:

Sometimes in *satsang*, there is a feeling of going higher and higher all the time. Then as it went progressively the mind became quiet and then there were very little thoughts. And then after that whatever thoughts there were, were mainly Divine related. . . . Like giving up your all to Master. Those were the kind of thoughts in the similar terms.

He noticed the thoughts in meditation were pertained to higher nature rather than the mundane. Such deep calm and peace occurred during sitting and *satsangs* particularly in the days when he spent more time listening to related talks and being with fellow practitioners. Sometimes this calmness and peace came without effort during universal prayer and prayer at bedtime. "There is a feeling of settled-ness as if things have all calmed down" during point B meditation, and then the meditation transitioned onto Divine Light naturally.

Participant A often experienced a worry-free state of mind, settled, and balanced after *satsang*. The mind stopped going outward and no longer chased after thoughts, whether work related or otherwise. He became much more composed at that time and free from involvement and worries. “Just be” was the feeling. He found himself capable of making better decisions in that state.

Willingness for transformation and emergence of goal clarity (P-4c).

Participants narrated the experience of the emergence of goal clarity and determination to reach the goal. This also led to the impulse for setting proper priority in life, aligning themselves to the goal of transformation.

Goal clarity (P-4c-i).

Aspiration and clarity of a spiritual goal was a major recurrent theme emerged during the Pranahuti for practitioners. In multiple *satsangs*, participant E experienced a “great determination to reach the goal—Master or Absolute or Consciousness of highest level.” The thoughts were to “continue on the path no matter what obstacles or difficulties come. Not to become complacent.” It was in those moments that she would realize this goal as more important than anything else in life. During morning meditations, similar aspiration related thoughts with determination to reach the goal re-occurred.

Participant C felt the need to set proper priorities in life to improve himself, such that he could “set everything right or orderly in life,” and do things that are conducive for the practice. For example, “speak only when it is required” in order to “be with our Beloved” in silence, or keeping conscience clear of any conflicts that invariably drained energy and diverted attention from the goal.

Similarly, the thoughts: “to be focused and goal oriented. . . . not to have undue attachments” came in participant G during Pranahuti.

Determination (P-4c-ii).

A number of times participant F experienced a feeling of determination during Pranahuti. The accompanying thoughts were often related to being more oriented towards Master or doing better in *sadhana* (practice).

Awakened to principled living (P-4d).

Often during Pranahuti, participants get certain awakenings and openings of perspectives with respect to principle living. These had various dimensions, ranging from understanding the need for abjuring lower qualities, adhering to truth, repentance for the past follies, and aspiration for higher life.

Resolve to abjure lower qualities (P-4d-i).

In one individual sitting, participant F felt a strong force moving towards him, enveloping him all around. There was the feeling of love and Master. He felt clarifications on do’s and don’ts inside, for example taking credit for another’s work. He experienced a resolve not to do these anymore. After that there was calmness and lightness.

Following principles (P-4d-ii).

Thoughts of goal-setting and leading a principled life came together for participant H. Often towards the end of the sittings, thoughts related to devotion towards the goal of life—the Master (Divine)—arose. The awareness and thoughts of setting the practice as top priority with proper focus, following the principles for a holistic way of life predominated.

Truthfulness and honesty (P-4d-iii).

Participant C and G got the thoughts related to truthfulness and honesty during Pranahuti. Participant C described the thoughts as “staying on the path of truth” and cultivating the quality of truthfulness. He often felt “uplifted and blissful.”

Remorse, repentance, and resolution for higher life (P-4d-iv).

Early on in the practice, during one individual sitting, participant F felt deep expansion (of the pranic body) and he had a lot of thoughts on Master throughout. He became tearful. There was a feeling of remorse for not having a higher purpose in and living in tune with a higher level of consciousness. For the first time, he realized he had made mistakes. Till then, he did not think it was bad. It was a “feeling of sadness for not having done all your previous actions [properly].” The feeling was like going to one’s mother and asking for forgiveness for the mistake one has done. After the sitting, there was a resolve to live a better life, “based on values and principles and not just what is dictated by society or what is just happening or letting things go as is.”

Activation of various positive qualities pertaining to Viveka (P-4e).

Participants experienced various positive qualities of *viveka*, such as willingness to change, acceptance, letting go, and positivity getting activated during Pranahuti. The following is a detailed description of the phenomena.

Willingness to change (P-4e-i).

Participant G experienced willingness for transformation during sittings. She felt whatever might be the extraordinary meditative experiences she got, but

more importantly she had to change as a person: “We are very fortunate to have all the experiences but are you changing yourself for that? That is the most important.” She said even she was surprised at this kind of thinking.

Clarity leading to acceptance (P-4e-ii).

During individual sittings, it often occurred that there was a sudden emergence of clarity for participants. An “Aha! That makes sense” feeling occurred on different topics for participant F. They pertained to his personal life, character, thoughts patterns, and beliefs that he was holding on to. There was denial often before the start of the sitting. But “after sitting, it is clear to you that you are at fault”:

The first shift or change happened while in the deep meditative state, but the effect of it is seen after couple of hours when you reflect back on the same [subject]. These are numerous; [e.g.,] you have hurt other people. . . . You feel that you were not fully at fault or you were provoked. . . . [But] you know [realize now] that mistake was only yours and you were responsible for that issue.

Positivity (P-4e-iii).

Several times, participant A, C, and G experienced a lot of positivity and energy during Pranahuti and morning meditation. The positivity would percolate throughout the day.

Fearlessness (P-4e-iv).

Participants C had a unique experience of fearless during Pranahuti. He described it as a “feeling of fearlessness to face all situations” because “you are in His care.” The feeling was similar to a baby being on the lap of the mother, feeling totally cared for and secure. The feeling was “due to the fact that He is always with us. . . . You feel assured of His grace. Then felt fearless.”

Transformation – Activation of Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence) (T-4)

Deep calm within, disciplined mind, waiting, patience, and self-control (T-4a).

Participants experienced profound transformations in becoming calm within, having regulation of mind, and quietude. They gained much patience and self-control, and developed a waiting attitude and proper etiquette.

Calmness and the permanent deep calm within (T-4a-i).

Participants B, C, E, F, and H particularly noticed that they have become much calmer person than they used to be. For participant E, she had come to become aware of the deep permanent calm within her irrespective of transiency in life:

In spite of thoughts, in spite of emotions, in spite of anything, there is a feeling underneath of all that there is silence and deep peace. And you know that whatever you are going through, whatever emotions are there, it is very superficial. There is an awareness of that. . . . [It] is very reassuring and comforting. It's usually more intensely felt every time Master or God is remembered. Every time you turn the attention to Master, there is feeling of very deep calm and peace. It is just a feeling that underneath everything that is going on there is absolute silence.

Because of this awareness, she understood whatever is happening is only temporary or transient; and this helped her deal with situations in life easily.

Participant C found that the mind was “steadier and does not get disturbed easily. . . . Oscillations of mind are less” in day to day life. Participant B noticed that she used to lose her temper very quickly. Though this had not gone away completely, she was now a lot calmer than before overall.

For participant F, the meditation practice brought settled-ness and calmness inside; he felt happiness in the slower pace of life. Sometimes after

morning meditation, there was calmness throughout the day. This calmness generally brings in remembrance of Master.

Disciplined mind and quietude (loss of circular thought patterns, mind wandering, brooding, worries, and speculations) (T-4a-ii).

Participant E found the habits of her mind changed dramatically over the course of 2.5 years of practice. The result was a much more disciplined mind with a lot of silence. There used to be a lot of circular thought patterns, brooding, worries, wandering, and crowding of thoughts she said. Previously, she would have 10 or 15 parallel thoughts running simultaneously that was “completely chaotic.” With brooding, she was constantly thinking over “either the events that have already happened or a particular situation or circumstance,” trying to relive those moments. There were many worries of the future and unresolved conflicts of the past—“pet thoughts” from which her mind could not break free. But now all such “thought patterns have completely gone away.” There was just a general feeling of peace. It had become easier and more natural for her to be in the present, and just perform the task at hand.

This quietening of mind was a significant and incredible change for her within the first three months of practice. “By the end of third or fourth month, I could say 75–80% of my mind was quiet. . . . I mean breaking circular pattern happened within 3–4 months. After that it has been progressively getting quieter.” She now found herself to be able to just sit and maintain silence:

When I am sitting I am just sitting. I don’t have 10 parallel thoughts now; which for me is amazing and a significant change. I didn’t think it was actually possible to quieten my mind. I could feel the undisciplined mind and I could feel its effect on me and I really wanted to quiet my mind. But I had no way or I didn’t even think it was possible because I had that many

number of thoughts. Now I am just sitting and I can just maintain silence. You just sit and you are just sitting. It feels amazing! For me that is like an amazing thing.

When asked how one feels when one does not have thoughts, she said: “[One] just feels calm, peaceful, and content.”

Patience, waiting, and let go (T-4a-iii).

Participant C, D, F, and G found that there was significant improvement in the attitude of waiting and patience in their lives. Through the PAM meditation practice, participant D learned that meditation is about waiting: “waiting for the Lord, waiting for the Ultimate, to hear and understand what He is trying to say” in silence. Consequently, he learned to apply the same attitude in life. And his patience was growing day by day. When he did not understand something, he would keep waiting for the answer. As this “waiting is increasing,” so was his ability to get into the essence of things. For example, whenever a discussion was going on he would first listen rather than jumping into the topic with others. In the case of an opportunity for offering help in a group activity setting, rather than jumping impulsively he would first look into the situation, ponder on who might be the best fit for the work, and only then would he act on it. “So that way patience can be applied in multiple aspects and dimensions,” he said.

Similarly, participant C had developed a waiting attitude: waiting for the right time to arrive, waiting for things to happen at the time they are supposed to happen, instead of rushing or trying to do things against the forces. He realized patience was with himself, while tolerance was with others and situations.

For participant G, she had become more patient with her spouse and kid at home: “Irritation in me is coming down,” she said. It was “because of meditation, only it comes. After *satsangs* when you come back, you are in a different phase. You don’t mind things which irritate you.” Things get resolved automatically.

Self-control and etiquette (T-4a-iv).

Participant D recalled that when he was young, he made blunders by trying to help elders without following the proper etiquette due to over enthusiasm and lack of self-control. After the practice, he had seen a lot of improvement in this respect. With better control over himself he had also learned “how to approach the person, how to project, what is the right time to talk, what is not a right time to talk, what are surroundings.” All such etiquette and propriety were very important for one’s growth in spirituality, he said.

Rid of negative thought and emotions and binds of the sensory and material desires (T-4b).

Most participants found drastic reduction in negative emotions such anger and worries, the desires for material and sensory satisfactions, and social ambitions.

Rid of anger, irritation, brooding, and worries (T-4b-i).

Participants A, B, C, D, E, F, and H found themselves getting rid of or drastically reducing various negative emotions and thought patterns, such as anger, irritation, brooding, and worries over the course of practice.

Participant E found that the intensity of negative emotions such as anger and frustration, which drove her to actions in the past, had decreased so much (90% she said) that it could no longer overpower or hold sway over her. Due to

the drastic toning down of negative emotions, she could now handle situations in a more objective manner:

I am able look at the situation in more balanced way and able to react according to the need of the situation. . . . You are just more balanced so you are able to take the whole perspective of the thing.

For participant F there was decrease in anger and irritation in both frequency and intensity. He said he was not a very angry person before, but the anger was of a silent type. He would avoid or ignore the person and not talk to them. But now he would no longer avoid someone out of anger.

Similarly, there was the case of participant B. She used to internalize a lot, including anger: “I am not one of those who just blast people and say whatever,” she said. She would hold it in. “It was more like silent treatment.” It tended to last longer—for hours it did not come out. “It’s hard for you to get over whatever it is that bothered you.” And because of that, she realized she was the one who actually suffered the most. Now she became more open, and would speak up and tell what was bothering her. Furthermore, she now tended to “try to calm myself down and not get into that,” and to make peace with things.

Participant A found that though anger was still somewhat present because ego was still there, its intensity had reduced a lot over the course of practice. Sometimes he got irritated when things did not happen the way he wanted. But the affect dissipated quickly, and he bounced back to normalcy fast. Anger had become “very superficial” at this point for him: “You feel why, why this, [laugh] Forget it. That’s a blessing.”

Participant H used to keep a few things in his heart, such as career success, financial stability, or family dynamics, and worried about them without expressing it to anybody. But these things slowly vanished from his heart, and now none remained to trouble him. He would ignore the unpleasant or negative comments of others, and not brood on things. This was a major change for him.

Out of binds of external and sensory enjoyments, material desires, and social ambitions (T-4b-ii).

One significant change for participant A, C, E, F and G was the tremendous reduction in materialistic desires, overall attraction to external things and activities reduced dramatically, and they found general satisfaction in day-to-day life. There was little need for external and social relations and activities, or job promotion, to be satisfied. Participant E said she simply no longer felt the need for external and sensory engagements:

There was always the need to do something to feel pleasure or feel good. Now you don't need to do anything, because you already have it. . . . you don't need to go out and watch a movie or eat an ice cream to feel better; because you already are. . . . I would not say that I stopped doing them as a ritual or only because it was affecting my meditation, or in some negative way. But also because I no longer see a need for these things. This applies to listening to music and probably reading. I used to read a lot—fiction, non-fiction, mostly fiction. Because it gave you something; it made you better, diverted your attention, there was an intellectual thrill to it. The need for it is no longer felt.

Participant G said earlier she used to travel a lot, see places, photos etc. But now she did not feel like doing any of that. The attachments to materialistic things have reduced significantly: “I am being so grateful that I don't have these feelings.” Now whenever she acquired anything or did any job, she thought from

the angle of how it would help her towards the goal. “Profession-wise, [I was] very much interested before. Now it is like my God where is it!”

Awakened to higher purpose and goal of life (T-4c).

Gaining purpose of life (T-4c-i).

One very significant change for participants was having the purpose for life—a new direction and hope—dawn upon them. The purpose is “to be one with Master. . . . We improve ourselves. We get the good things [qualities] in us and spread it out. There is something you are looking forward to”, said participant G.

For Participant F, with the emergence of clarity, he felt repentance for his past actions and the way he led his life before, which was purposeless. “There was no guiding principle. . . . It was just random based on whatever happened that day, life is going. But now it has become apparent it is all waste of time and effort. One thing which was missing was the goal of life.” Now he found something to strive for. For him, Master had emerged as central theme and principle in his life. He said it was not so much about a personality, but rather “there is a sense of central principle of life, the way he led his life, the principles he lived on in the form of commandments, being the central force” in thoughts and actions:

The goal is not something related to individual good but towards greater good. . . . One part of the purpose is common good like peace for all, happiness for all. On that front, spreading the word of the Master will help. On the other front, it is to remove all your lower qualities and all thoughts and prejudices which you have carried for long time.

The coming into awareness of higher purpose for life and the importance of improving herself to be more in harmony with the universe was a very significant shift for participant E. Previously, there was always a nagging feeling that she was not finding any real purpose to life and thus “it always felt incomplete” as though something was lacking. But now, she felt an awareness of presence of Divinity in her heart constantly guiding her. She had found a path to it. Now she knew what she wanted and where she was going: “There is a direction”, she said:

Self-transformation and improving your own character or improving your consciousness, I should say is to be more in harmony what the universal order is. . . . I can feel that and I think that drives most of what I do. I think that is very significant change that was happened over last two and half years.

Participant H expressed a similar feeling. Before, “it was directionless.” While he did not want to follow his friends who were wandering through life imitating each other for material possession and progression, he did not know what to do at the same time. Now having a real aim in life and the practical path to achieve it made him confident in life.

Interests in spirituality (T-4c-ii).

Participant G and F found themselves grown interested in learning spirituality. It is about “knowing yourself more” and understanding the system for participant G. Participant F noticed that he developed an interest in reading or engaging in discussion on spiritual topics. Previously, things that were not making much sense to him “now all make sense and are logical.” PAM literature

and talks gave him a sense of excitement and happiness in particular. The talks appeared to be always refreshing.

Determination, discipline, and proper priority (T-4c-iii).

As the goal of life had emerged for participants, they began to develop determination, discipline, and proper priorities. Participant E observed that there was an increased feeling of determination to reach the goal and follow the path. And it led her to re-arrange various priorities in her life and to adopt a life-style that was “more conducive to reach the goal.” It had “led to change of thought patterns or notions or previously strongly held beliefs.” She observed that sloth decreased significantly, leading to greater discipline. To her, discipline meant “doing what you are supposed to do, and getting things that are important done; not being distracted,” and practicing meditation regularly.

There has also been significant decrease in desires, like food, clothes, movies, music. This has led to stopping all unnecessary superfluous activities which previously occupied most of your time which again leads to more discipline.

Similarly, participant F experienced a shift in thinking after a celebration: A “kind of determination sets in that you want to do things which are more conducive. . . . be more oriented towards Master, and be more assiduous in *sadhana* (practice).” These experiences were very strong and carried forward into his daily regular practice, and enabled him continue. He would prioritize life in such a way that the practice remained as the highest priority. He also developed good habits and dropping those that may interfere with the practice.

Acquiring principle of truthfulness and honesty (T-4d).

One of the first significant transformations for most participants was the development of truthfulness and honesty. This change manifested in their thoughts, words, and deeds when they dealt with others and life situations. For participant C, the “cunning and manipulative tendency has reduced” and he felt at ease. There used to be hiding by telling partial truth. But by practicing truth, this negative quality was gone. “You don’t have to create a story to do anything. . . . simply tell things as it is [*sic*],” he said.

For participant E, F, and H, an increased awareness and sensitivity to of truthfulness led them to being more truthful in various aspects of life. Participant E said she used to lie casually as routine to avoid unpleasant conversations with people. It was because the importance of truthfulness was not felt back then. “That is completely gone” now.

For participant H, in his consulting work, he became extra watchful in reporting honestly for the consulting hours spent for clients. While it was a common practice in India to lend money personally with interest, he persuaded his family to give up the practice and return all interest money collected so far.

One interest aspect to this transformation was participants found themselves cannot help but being truthful. For participant F, even in small matters or trivial things, it had become very difficult not to be truthful: “If I am untruthful, there is a nagging voice which bothers. Till I rectify that, it keeps bothering me.”

The implication of change was profound. Participant A said it was a truly liberating change for him because by following truth the fear was gone:

It has a feeling of freedom with it. . . . You're not adding a lot of bondages. . . . It's that future karma you don't need to worry about. . . . You just don't feel any weight when you're being truthful.

Developing various positive qualities pertaining to Viveka (T-4e).

Reduction in stubbornness and willingness to change (T-4e-i).

Participant F observed that there had been a reduction in stubbornness and argumentative tendencies in him. It used to be “just for the sake of argumentation I would argue, and be stubborn for things because I just would do it that way.” Now his argumentative nature had reduced, and he was more flexible. He became much more willing to change to accommodate others' comfort.

Introspection and acceptance of lapses (T-4e-ii).

Participants found themselves becoming increasingly introspective, capable of facing and accepting who they were, their own strengths and defects, rights and wrongs. Participant D noted that the practice had helped him introspect and internalize more and more. He said introspection is a process of looking into oneself. Only when one introspects oneself can they discover their own lapses: “Having accepted that you have a lapse itself is 50% growth.” Only then, the next question of coming out of the problem would come into the picture.

Participant E put it this way:

You are able to look at yourself more truthfully now. Your defects or your shortcomings. You are more aware of them now because you are not trying to defend yourself. When you do something [wrong] it's easier to accept what you did was wrong or what you thought was wrong.

As participant E started accepting her own problems, she also began to accept criticism of others. And this was a big transformation for her:

Previously, I would get very angry if somebody would point out my mistakes. Especially if it was related to morality. . . . This was very difficult obstacle for me. . . . But now that feeling is completely gone and you actually try to work on the advice given and take it in an objective way. . . . You are more open to advice.

Similarly, participant H described how he now could readily accept his own mistakes:

If I have done something wrong or I have spoken something bad, I readily accept it and move on. I apologize and move on. Previously I was not accepting that I should accept my mistake. I was too arrogant to accept my mistakes.

For participant F, due to increasing self-awareness, he began to notice his own selfish motives and arrogance. For example, at work, he realized he made certain technical arguments not based on the merit of the subject, but out of staking a claim due to his own arrogance. With respect to food, he realized giving and sharing was difficult for him because of selfishness. He said such awareness had also posed challenge for him, because he now realized he had to change.

High spirit and energy (T-4e-iii).

Participants often felt higher level of energy or high spirit after morning's meditation. Participant E observed thus:

On the days when you do meditate, the whole day there is more energy and you feel more charged up. You have higher spirit to do things. As contrasted to days when you miss morning meditation you don't feel the same. You are more tired. I meant physically and mentally the amount of energy and spirit that your being has is—you feel charged up on the days you do meditate.

Participant A echoed similar feeling. Often after morning meditation, he felt much fresh and “tremendous energy for rest of the day.”

Positive outlook (T-4e-iv).

Most participants developed enormous positive attitude towards life and all its challenges. For some, this transformation came after getting rid of negative spellbound thinking as in the case of participant C. He noticed his negative and spellbound thinking was 90% reduced compared to before. Rarely, if ever, did he entertain negative thoughts about others now. There was a lot of positivity in life and a shift of perspective. For example, certain assigned work was previously perceived as undesirable or an additional burden, now participant C and G saw things from a positive light as an opportunity.

Similarly, the case of participant E. She observed a significant decrease in negative thought patterns—pessimistic thoughts and negative suggestions that she used to carry: “I was also involved in lot of self-pity or [self] victimization. . . . All those kind of negative thoughts have completely gone now.” In the last two months, she experienced that whenever she had any negative thought it was countered immediately by a more positive and uplifting thought. It was significant because it occurred automatically without any effort by her to trigger the positive thought.

For participant D, life was a testing ground for learning and application of wisdom gleaned from the practice.

This life is a testing ground for me to evaluate how my sadhana [practice] is helping me to handle or moderate the actions in my life. . . . Until and unless you get real time situation, you may not know whether you are

really balanced or whether you are really calm or [whether] your impulsive tendencies have come down or not.

When he derived certain wisdom from meditation, he would wait for the opportunity in real life to test himself. When someone criticized him, he would try to take it as a message from Master, ponder upon it as to why, and learn something from that and fix the problem.

Similarly, participant A found difficult situations as learning opportunities for spiritual life and they helped him remember Master more and develop dependency on Him:

Master always puts me in situations where I know I have to learn a lot. . . . that's the transformation. Earlier I would be very upset if things don't work out. . . . [now when things happened] you feel more pulled towards the other [spiritual] direction automatically. . . . And I think that's a blessing by itself. . . . I feel incredibly grateful for this."

Gratitude towards the practice (T-4e-v).

Participant H expressed the profound gratitude he felt towards the practice in helping him to transform. He said he had read much about the saints of the past—their attaining liberation or reaching God. But God as a real goal of life, having a practical and scientific method to reach there himself, and someone guiding him on the path, and knowing others achieved the qualities of sharing and love around him? "I felt it is too good to be true."

Participant H also pointed out it was Pranahuti and Grace of Master that enabled him to get rid of his self-centric approach to spirituality. He used to carry a sort of privileged feeling by doing this practice; it gave quite a bit of self-importance. But finally, he realized whatever he did was indeed very little. It was really because of the help of Pranahuti that transformation happened:

I wouldn't have progressed myself without the help of Pranahuti. . . . Master's grace is the reason for my transformation. . . . It is basically Master who moulds me rather than anything I put forth as my self-effort. Previously I used to think I have done so much, should I not be progressing.

Focusing on the current task (T-4e-iv).

For participant A, one big transformation was during day-to-day life, he became more balanced and was able to live in the present, without worrying about the past or future. "It's not even today. It's now" he said. When issues cropped up he seldom got disturbed by them and was able to deal with them in a balanced manner. He used to get wrapped up with what was happening with his future, and why his past was like this. But now "it's more about just living in present, just being. You just don't worry about that anymore, just enjoy the moment." He found this to be a wonderful blessing.

Increasing subtleness leading to be out of traditional worship (T-4e-iv).

By adopting the subtle practice of meditation, participant G left traditional worship. She said she used to go to temple with family on some occasions, and there was a lot of *Hawan* (consecrated fire ritual offering) and recitation of the *Gayatri mantra* every morning at home. But now she did not find the need to do them at all:

These mantras are pretty good. . . . They would give me a lot of strength and calmness. . . . Sanskrit mantras. . . . to be calm and leave it to God that kind of thing in Sanskrit. But I don't feel like doing it [now].

Developing intuitive capacity and clarity in thinking (T-4e-viii).

Participant C, D, and G found that their intuition or intuitive capacity had grown a lot—the ability to sense the right choice or decision in different

circumstances. Participant D said often he got hunch feelings which anticipated things to come and enabled him to pick the right choice or act in a suitable way for various situations. It was like a “super sensory thing. . . . you know right away what it is. . . . you get a signal basically,” said participant C. There was also much clarity in thinking.

Participant G described this as the ability to read subtle indications in her heart and the environment around her. For example, at work, before the start of a project, her own heart’s feeling would give a correct indication of whether it would proceed or not. “This is awareness and intuition” that was not in her before.

Reduction of ego and loss of superiority (T-4e-ix).

Participant D noted that the practice had helped him reduce his ego. Because his ego got reduced, he started seeing the good in others rather than feeling proud of himself. He used to feel himself as great, not accepting the good in others, and often finding the negative in them.

Now after this practice I started accepting that there are many more great people than me and I am much smaller. . . . So the positive way of looking at life has increased and I only see the positive in others.

He now would consciously refuse judging others and only try to learn positives from them: “I am not perfect. I am not great. So how can I judge whether they are right or wrong,” he said. The practice had helped him a lot in this regard.

Admitting wrong and seek forgiveness (T-4e-x).

Participant B, D, E, F, and G had seen profound transformation in terms of being able to admit faults and to seek forgiveness. Generally, the process

involved first realizing mistakes done, then admitting wrong and repenting for it, and finally seeking forgiveness from Master and the persons to whom they did wrong, resolving not to repeat the mistake.

Participant B described how it happened for her. During her self-reflection in bedtime prayer, she felt open, and came to realize many mistakes she had made in the past. Through practice, she was “better at admitting [her] faults now” and seeking forgiveness:

I do have that feeling of asking forgiveness. I was more like a blame shifter kind of person. But I am getting better. I think bed-time prayer helped me, it made me see things differently, from other people’s perspective, which wasn’t happening before.

Afterwards, “I actually feel relieved. So now it’s going to be ok. Because you got that perspective.”

Participant D would humbly submit his lapses during bedtime prayer, and seek help from Master to overcome the problem. He said the key was “introspection, and also admit that [wrong] and wanting to grow, developing dependency and yielding towards Master.” He no longer felt ashamed to admit wrongs before others because he felt dependency on Master and saw Divinity in everyone:

Earlier when my ego was so high, I never used to go back and say I am wrong, please forgive me. Now quite often [I] immediately go back and ask forgiveness from that person, and I submit it in my bed time prayer. I don’t feel ashamed asking or submitting saying that I am at wrong to any other person. I am thankful to the Master first and primarily for giving the way to come out of it [problem].

The feeling of repentance was a sharp change in attitude and a significant transformation for Participant E. She realized the grave nature of the

consequences of certain mistakes made in the past, which she did not admit as mistakes. There was a feeling of intense repentance with a firm resolve not to allow them to repeat.

PAM Experience – Activation of Vairagya (Due attachment) (P-5)

Orientation towards Master (P-5a).

Participants A, C, E, F, G, and H experienced deep orientation towards Master during Pranahuti. And in the midst of this deep orientation, the thoughts are often related to the goal or being goal oriented. Participant E described that initially there may be flurry of thoughts, then “you suddenly shift into a period where you are completely oriented and there is quiet and there is remembrance of Master.” Participant C noted that he felt totally “oriented to that force. . . . having reverence towards that force or towards Master”, and he was centered. For participant G, it was at those moments, the thoughts of “to be focused and goal oriented. . . . not to have undue attachments” came within.

Acceptance, resignation, and submission (P-5b).

Several participants experienced deep feelings of acceptance, resignation, and submission during Pranahuti. Participant C described the feeling as “accepting everything and all as His will. . . . Go through everything in life without revolting. . . . Accept everything coming from Him and follow the path of least resistance.”

For participant A, love and dependency feelings, it got translated into submission. He felt he would accept whatever comes, yielding to the situation. These were the feelings experienced during sittings:

It's more of feeling of resignation to Him. Whatever happens let it happen according to His will, I don't want my own feelings and thoughts get in the way of whatever is happening. I may not like certain things happening to me. But that is His Will, so be it. It's kind of unquestioning attitude that comes in. Let it be—he has better wisdom than I can ever have. He knows what is best for us. . . . Submission, it's submitting to him with no string attached. There is no opposite feeling, just natural. There is no questioning attitude here.

Participant E expressed a similar feeling of submissiveness, where she wanted to “yield more to Master, not resist, and decrease my self-identity.”

Letting go (P-5c).

For participant H, often after sittings, there came a feeling of forgiving and letting go: it was about “not keeping any hard feelings about anybody. . . . more easy going, more forgiving. . . . don't keep anything to self.”

Courage (P-5d).

Participant G described feeling courage in Pranahuti. It was because “you are being poured that [energy]. . . . that [which] is lacking and that particular part is being filled”, said participant G.

Transformation – Activation of Vairagya (Due Attachment) (T-5)

Acceptance of all that is in life as the Will of the Divine and letting go (T-5a).

Participant E felt that there was a feeling of submissiveness to Master and to life in general. To let life events come and go and to be concerned with the goal and remembering the Master rather than trying to control or fight against various situations in life. Previously, she generally wanted things to be in a certain way, trying to control situations and things. It could be ambition-related, for example. But now she accepted things in life, feeling that everything is

Master's Will or coming from Master. She understood things happened for a specific reason even though she may not know the reason at present. So there was a feeling of being carefree, with more dependency on Master. This has also led to an increase in tolerance with respect to people, situations, and her own self.

Similarly, participant C had come to realize that there were situations in life which were not in his control, and he had to learn to tolerate: "Earlier when I used to see something happening which is not in conformity with what I think is right, then you have some agitation. That has reduced a lot." His patience and tolerance level had gone up.

In the case of participant A, he had developed a lot more acceptance, which led to a lot more harmony with others in day-to-day life. Earlier, "at work or at home, there were more conflicts. The attitude was 'no, this is [the] right way to do it'." Now he has become open to the ideas of others, realized there was more than one way to do things, and no longer needed to insist on his own way. While in a situation, he would now try to understand other side. "Automatically things work out a lot easier. Much more mutual agreements." With more acceptance of life's situations, he was able to return to balance easily.

Participant F noted that previously there was a hurry to finish things. But as there had been quietening down internally, many things outside also slowed down. Now he would often wait, let go, and allow things to happen.

Leaving possessiveness (T-5b).

Being able to let go and leaving possessiveness that used to govern him quite a bit were big transformations for participant D. "But I myself am surprised

how I came out of the possessiveness. All I can say it is [due to] Pranahuti. In Pranahuti sessions when the due attachment [i.e. attachment towards Divine] is developing.” He felt the possessive grip on people and relationships got loosened and he had learned the art of letting go. He said point A and B had helped him enormously. He was also able to overcome what he called as “fatal attraction towards [the] opposite sex.”

With respect to material acquisition and possession, participant D said he had given very little importance to these due to the practice. For him it became simply a matter of getting what was required for living and continuing to develop spiritually. He did not have any feelings or attachment towards material acquisitions.

Sense of duty leading to increased efficiency and objectivity (T-5c).

The developing of greater sense of duty was a significant change for participants A and E. Participant E said she felt a sense of duty towards all activities. She was not over-involved emotionally, but only trying to do her best. This made her more objective and efficient.

Participants A found his attitude towards work had completely changed. No longer did he go to work because he had to, or out of career ambitions, or even enjoyment. Rather it was duty for him:

I don’t have to enjoy. Actually I take stuff that nobody else wants to do. I think that’s [a] phenomenal transformation for me over the period of time. [Consequently], a lot less stress. . . . Just that is a blessings for me by itself.

He took work a lot more seriously compared to before because now there was more thoughtfulness behind it. And the quality of his work had gone up also.

Resilience in life—returning to balance quickly (T-5d).

Participant C and E experienced greater resilience in life and the ability to return to balance quickly. For participant E, in the case of an overwhelmingly bad situation, she found that there was an overall reduction in the intensity of negative emotions. And she was able to come back to normal much faster:

Now you are not completely swept away by that emotion for long period of time, and it's easier to come back to your balance and to look at situation more objectively. That process happens more quickly.

Participant C observed similar changes in him. There were situations in life that troubled him as it was bound to be —whether related to work, family, or others. But he found that he was able to bounce back to a steady state of mind very quickly: “I won’t be suffering from a negative thing for a long time. I come back quickly. It’s steady on that track of being calmer.”

Stoic attitude—confidence, patience, and calmness in trying circumstances (T-5e).

One major transformation for participants E and G was the stoic attitude with unperturbed feelings while facing difficulties in life. For participant G, at one point, her family was going through very trying circumstances. But she faced the situation with a lot of patience and calmness, and felt very confident and without any worries all along. She felt the situation had helped them to orient more towards spirituality.

I was like so calm. I don’t know what happened. I was surprised for that part. . . . Master gave us confidence during that time, I was not at all worried. . . . Whatever has to be done, has to be done. . . . Maybe after that I started thinking. [But] during that time, so much confidence and everything is fine, that feeling you get.

Participant E found that she was not swayed by her own thoughts, emotions, unpleasant or undesirable situations or events. She was able to maintain balance throughout. And this was seen in all her activities.

Being rid of undue attachment (T-5f).

Participant F found another change within him was the feeling of neutrality being prominent. There was no undue attachment with family and friends. He felt no major differentiation when he interacted with someone for the first time. However, if the topic was related to the Divine, he would have more of a sense of warmth and ease with them.

Master Theme C – Activation of Interdependency

The next Superordinate theme is about the movement towards *parahita*, that is, thinking good and doing good to others. This is the activation of interdependency, where one understands the relationship between self and others and the universe, developing fraternity, altruism, deriving happiness and contentment in life. This is the realm where the individual starts going beyond personal concerns.

PAM Experience – Experiencing Freedom (P-6)

This Superordinate theme presents many faces of freedom experienced by participants during PAM practice, particularly in Pranahuti.

Sense of relief, freedom, ease, and de-tensioning (P-6a).

Almost all participants experienced a sense of relief and de-tensioning that led to a sense of freedom and ease during Pranahuti. The relief they experienced appeared to be from the burden of certain emotions, thoughts, and pressure. On

multiple occasions, participant E felt some emotional burden she was carrying so far but unaware of was lifted off her. They were intense experiences: “You didn’t know that you were being bound by [it]. [But] suddenly it’s gone and you feel relieved. . . . [A] big weight was just lifted off your heart and you felt light in your heart region and there was huge sense of relief.” Accompanying this sense of relief was a feeling of freedom.

Participant B narrated similar feelings. Sometimes during Pranahuti, she felt a flow on the forehead, and a lot of pressure was releasing. She became more relaxed and lighter. She pointed out that she would not feel this kind of de-tensioning effect when she was walking around or doing other things.

For some participants, it appeared that they broke free from the bindings of certain thoughts thereby experiencing relief. Participant F described how initially he often had thoughts churning in *satsangs*, and he felt a lot of pressure due to it. “Then suddenly you break free” as if the thoughts just left him. There was a sense of ease and “you are in [a] free easy zone. . . . Clearly there is difference. . . . It was very easy to think about Master during those times.” It was freedom in some sense he said, and a sense of quiet followed.

Lightness and freshness (P-6b).

One of the most common experience for all eight participants was the experience of lightness during and at the end of Pranahuti sessions, evening purification, and morning meditation. Participant C said sometimes the energy during transmission made him feel totally purified. The freshness experienced was such that there was as if nothing in the mind when getting up. There were

some particularly significant experiences of freshness participant H had after individual sittings. While coming out of the trainer's house, he felt like "a spring day. . . . Everything is bright, shiny, and pleasant." The fresh feeling was such that "when I open my eyes or when I look at anything, it feels like new. . . . There is no pre-association of thoughts. . . . It comes fresh. If am looking at a light, it is like I am looking at it for the first time."

Sometimes a slight inconvenient feeling preceded the lightness. In one sitting, participant H felt a slight inconvenient pounding in the heart and head, like something rotating. "After that happened, it was extreme lightness for a few seconds." Sometimes there was a feeling of being twisted inside, and the feeling of lightness arose afterwards. Sometimes it was not until the lightness dawned, then he realized certain heaviness got removed from him.

I am not even aware that those are weights. But once they are taken out, some of these jerks, and shaking of the things, the lightness suddenly comes. What I noticed is I feel lighter as if something got taken away from me. . . . then I was freed up, [thoughts] moving freely.

Participant E described one particular instance of extreme lightness and freshness during a *satsang*. She was in a deep zone or sphere with colors of purple and black swirling around her.

I was going very deep, like you are passing through different layers and going deep within yourself. . . . [It was] as though layers have been peeled off from within; When the feeling gets very intense it's almost unpleasant and uncomfortable. . . . As you emerged out of it, it felt very very light and fresh. It felt like you broke out of layers. I am relating it because it was significant experience.

Participant F described it as "lightness in thought and mind." There was a sense of ease without pressure or weight present in the thoughts. It was like a

happy and joyous kind of light. Sometimes it was just lightness without any other attributes to it. Similarly, for participant E, she often passed through a sort of dreamy state where thoughts came and went, and usually the Pranahuti session ended with a feeling of “joy or relief or [a] feeling of freshness.”

Experiences of lightness in evening purification (P-6b-i).

The feeling of lightness present after evening cleaning is a common yet significant experience for participants. Participant E gave a vivid account of the process during the Ocean of Bliss evening purification:

Initially it was just mechanical repetition of thoughts. There were too many thoughts, and the mind was constantly wandering. Over a period of time this cleaning experience has changed. At one point of time in between it became very significant and intense experience where there would be no wandering of mind and you are completely centered on the cleaning thought and you are actually able to maintain the thought for the whole duration of cleaning and you would feel lightness about 1–15 minutes after you start the process; and lightness only increases till the end of it. By the end of it you feel very light and fresh.

Participant A also spoke of the progressive decrease of the weighty effect of thought during the purification process. He came home in the evening from work with all the associated thoughts. After a half hour of evening purification, he generally experienced lightness and freshness free from the influence of thoughts. “You feel freshness because tiredness is gone. . . . heaviness is gone—heaviness of the thoughts.” During *satsang*, he often felt himself “getting lighter and lighter.” The “weighty effect of thoughts” that were present at the start of *satsang* was no longer there. It was “as if you forgot what happened at work. . . . After cleaning it’s reduced, but after *satsang* it’s much more [reduced].” He generally felt light, settled, balanced, peaceful, and content after Pranahuti.

For participant H, typically the mind ran very fast before start of the evening cleaning. Coolness increased as the purification progressed. After cleaning was completed, he felt light, fresh, and settled. Lightness was the feeling of not carrying weight. Freshness was like “something of a new start.” And settled-ness was not having too much flow of thoughts. One time the experience of coolness was particularly vivid: “It was a feeling of complete wave of cool water spreading from head to toe slowly,” like hitting a cool breeze and the whole body felt fresh. It was a very nice feeling, and he felt much lighter and really thankful afterward.

Sometimes during morning meditation, participant C found himself feeling very light and fresh; the body was felt as almost transparent.

Floating, free, and flying high (P-6c).

Associated with the feeling of lightness was the experience of floating. For participant E, sometimes during Pranahuti, the lightness occurred in her entire being was “so intense that it feels like you are going to float at any point of time because you are that light.”

Participant F had a brief but intense experience early on in his practice during a celebrations *satsang*. He felt like flying. It was as if it were 100 times more free than he ever thought he was. It was a powerful and overwhelming feeling. After this experience, he became more regular in his practice.

Participant H had this experience one time during individual sitting. “It is like there are no bounds. It is like stretching your hands in open air. In general after the completion [of sitting], it is happiness and freshness.”

Transformation – Experiencing Freedom (T-6)

This theme presents various significant transformations pertaining to freedom. Participants found themselves having greater clarity of mind, lightness of being, and greater ease along with the loss of insecurity.

Clarity of mind and lightness of being (T-6a).

Participant C experienced increased clarity in all aspects of life. The clarity might pertain to work, home, people, attitude, and practice. Earlier things that were perceived as complex or not easy for him became clear. With that clarity, difficult things now raised in him an “ok, it was nothing” kind of feeling.

Participant E noticed that over a period time, there was an increase of lightness. “You just keep getting lighter and lighter; [with a] sense of lightness to the whole being. The mind feels more restful and more happy.” It was a significant feeling that changed her as a whole. When she was no longer burdened by the old habits of thoughts or overpowered by emotions, she was able to think much more clearly in general.

Greater ease and loss of insecurity (T-6b).

Participant E observed greater ease with people in general. This was because of the loss of superficialities and insecurity inside. For participant E, it was also because she had become more truthful to her own self:

You are no longer trying to pretend to be somebody you are not; or trying to mask any defect that you have or trying to show yourself better than actually you are. You are not proving anything to anybody. You are more comfortable with who you are—yourself. So it’s easier to present that to other people rather than feeling insecure about a defect.

There were no longer any insecurities about what others may think of her, nor her having any expectations or hidden agendas on others. “Those kind[s] of thoughts and feelings have completely gone. . . . You are not masking anything. . . . You are more natural when you are with other people.”

PAM Experience – Happiness and Contentment (P-7)

This theme presents different experiences of happiness. It takes the form of contentment, sense of fulfillment, joy, happiness, bliss, and feeling energized.

Santusti (contentment) and fulfillment (P-7a).

The feeling of happiness and contentment during Pranahuti was a common and yet significant experience for participants. Participant G found herself sliding into absorption during Pranahuti and experienced *santushti* (i.e. contentment).

“You don’t need anything else, whatever you have, you are contented with it,” was the feeling. Many times, there was a quiet satisfaction that persisted throughout the day after the meditation.

Participant B said she often got absorbed during Pranahuti. The moment it was over, she felt blissful and happy. It was a kind of happiness that she did not know how to explain. “You are content at that moment. . . . You feel that contentment. That’s happiness” she said.

Sometimes, the feeling will become so strong that a sense of fulfillment came upon participant E; it was distinct and different from the feeling of joy she experienced:

You are sitting there and you are just content. . . . Not bothered by anything. [There is] completeness or fulfilment, there is no lack. . . . It’s just settled and you are happy.

Happiness, bliss, and joy (P-7b).

Participant C, B, E, F, and G related various significant experiences of happiness and bliss during Pranahuti. The feeling came often for participant B when she was in a state of absorption during Pranahuti. She felt bliss and tranquility. To her, these feelings were similar in nature.

Participant G narrated an experience of happiness she had during morning meditation. She was absorbed and felt no thoughts. It was subtle. Then suddenly she saw a spring of water burst out from the earth. “It is very clear. . . . I felt something which is good. I was feeling happy.”

Participant C had experienced a lot of happiness in His Presence during Pranahuti. Once he saw white flowers blooming, and felt happy and contented in that atmosphere. There was also the feeling that negativity had been taken out.

Participant E had a significant experience of happiness during one individual sitting:

This state continued for two days after the sitting. I was just happy for two days, a very strong feeling. There was no cause for the happiness. . . . You just felt happy no matter what during that whole period. You are continuously happy.

Participant F felt an incredible sense of happiness and joy for a sustained period one time when a *satsang* was getting over. “There was happiness about the whole thing” so much so that he did not mind being put to any inconvenient tasks. In another individual sitting, he was deeply absorbed and centered. And suddenly, there was a sense of joy, so strong that in between the sitting he burst out giggling in happiness spontaneously. Still during one very intense individual sitting:

It was very deep at start, and there was intense determination with the feeling of strong flow. Later there was expansion with a feeling of depth to it with calmness. Towards the end, there were thoughts of Master and joy. It was just plain joy with gratitude towards Master.

Participant D had an exquisite experience during one *satsang*. He felt initially a sort of sphere or bubble in the heart, very soft and mellow. As time went on, it started shrinking and shrinking, and it became the tiniest thing. At last it totally got evaporated. “Then there was enormous silence and lightness, as if there is nothing. My heart itself is nothing. I felt extreme happiness and lightness after that.”

Feeling energized (P-7c).

Participants often felt Pranahuti energized them. Participant C described it as love in heart. “You also feel the care you are receiving. . . . There are times where you actually feel as warmth also. There is that energy has that [warmth]. . . . Here more of it was refreshing energy.”

Many times participant G felt like she was being cleansed by the energy. “Sometimes you are down. You are suddenly boosted or somebody has put [energy] in you.” This allowed her to do her bedtime prayer with more devotion later in the night. She often felt tired in the evening coming home from the office. But after the evening *satsang*, she felt fresh and energetic again. “Ok, let’s start the work. You are ready to work” was the feeling.

Transformation – Happiness and Contentment (T-7)

This theme presents various significant transformations pertaining to happiness and contentment. It takes the form of being happy and content in day to day life, having harmony within and free from stress and conflicts.

Happiness and contentment (T-7a).

All eight participants experienced enormous contentment and happiness as a significant transformation over the course of practice. Participant D said this happiness and contentment continued to increase day-by-day for him. He was aware of the fact that he no longer held any expectations on anything or anyone. Participant A described the happiness he enjoyed now as something internal, and that more of a balanced condition prevailed inside.

For participant E, it was really the feeling of Presence in the heart that was accompanying her all through and supporting her that rid her of the feeling of lack that troubled her for a long time (see the “Presence” theme earlier). Having a sense of satisfaction in life due to the feeling contentment was a “very significant” transformation for her:

You can just be where you are and just feel contented. Again it kind of goes back to feeling of lack [I used to feel]. It is not there [anymore]. So you just feel content. This has been very significant feeling that I could notice from the beginning, within seven months [of practice]. Suddenly it dawned upon me that whatever I was feeling was contentment.

Participant G described this contentment as a satisfaction with whatever she presently had: “Whatever is being given presently, I am very happy for that. Happiness, satisfaction is there.” There may be issues, as there are bound to be in life, “but that happiness is there” was her general feeling.

Participant H said his family found him to be a much happier person, not carrying any background anger or negativity as he previously had. “Most of the time, they find me happy.”

Harmony within oneself, free from conflict and stress (T-7b).

At home, things had improved much with the family for participant A. “Earlier work feelings would come to home and now that stress is gone. A lot more peacefulness at home which helps [the] family. . . . Overall it’s lot more harmonious life.” Though some ups and downs remained, “I think [it is] a lot better.” All this is due to “much less conflicts, much less stress, much less desires actually.”

PAM Experience – Interdependency Activation (P-8)

Part and whole relationship between self and the universe (P-8a).

Participants D and G had the experience of part and whole relationship with the universe during Pranahuti. There were two significant and exquisite experience participant D had. One time during Pranahuti he felt himself as “a small dot in big universe, emptiness below. . . . I was floating and below there is nothing. All is empty. I was all by myself.” In another sitting, he felt his body became the tiniest ball:

It was as if I’m sitting in a big sphere of a very big universe. . . . But I was one of the tiniest particle in that universe. . . . Initially I got scared. . . . But once I’m done with the sitting. . . . I felt the insignificance of myself.

He also related this as a feeling of nothingness. He did not feel his physical body or his own presence

For participant G, during one of the celebration *satsang*, she experienced a keen feeling of togetherness as part of the universe with her fellow travelers. “All are a family and we are a part of the whole universe. . . . Everybody is together

and you are just a part of this big universe. . . . That feeling which came was happiness.”

Dependency (P-8b).

Participant A and C experienced the exquisite feeling of dependency during Pranahuti. One time, the experience was that participant C felt as though he was a small baby lying in the lap [of Master] and being taken care of. Sometimes during Pranahuti, participant A felt totally dependent on the force present inside and all around him. The feeling was like the “way a child feels for her mother; without her I would be nowhere. You feel that dependency. You actually feel like part of the family.”

Faith in oneself and Master (P-8c).

During Pranahuti, participant E experienced a lot of faith and strength. It was a faith

in both yourself and Master and the path that you can reach the goal and that Master will help you reach the goal and this is the path to reach the goal. Initially you are not really sure if you can reach, or cut out for this kind of thing. But this came as feeling in one meditation that it is possible for you to reach the goal. It’s kind of confidence that you will get there.

Similar thoughts and feeling of faith then re-occurred during her morning meditation and bedtime prayer.

Participant B often got absorbed in thoughts related to faith in Master during sittings. There was the feeling of faith in Master to reach the goal. She knew He was there to guide her.

Confidence (P-8d).

During Pranahuti, participant F experienced confidence in himself. The feeling had a sense of rightness to it: “There was confidence that you are not doing any mistakes, not harming anyone.” He had confidence in all that he was doing. It was a new feeling that came totally unexpected and lasted for half a day after the sitting. For participant G, sometimes the confidence about the system and herself was so strong that she wanted to tell everybody about it.

Plainness and simplicity (P-8e).

Participant A and H experienced feelings of plainness and simplicity during Pranahuti. The plainness had different shades. Sometimes participant A felt it as complete dryness. There were “no thoughts or feelings, no emotions. . . . no wetness. It was a negative way to express. It’s not boredom. But you feel like nothing is happening. . . . It’s the absence of something.” For participant H, in one sitting, he felt a sudden blinding flash of bright light. It was as though he was passing through the light that was enveloping him. He was awestruck. Then afterwards, he had the feeling of plainness. “Plainness in the sense, there is no oscillation.” It was a settled and blank feeling.

Expanded boundary, sense of community, all as one family (P-8f).

Participants A, B, C, and H experienced a profound sense of universal brotherhood during Pranahuti, point A practice, and Universal Prayer.

The feeling of fraternity has grown over a period of time for participant A due to the 9 P.M. universal prayer and point A practice. During Pranahuti, it seemed for him the boundary has expanded, he felt

wide horizons are there, you feel no boundaries. . . . It feels like blocks being removed. . . . walls have been destroyed. . . . difference between others and you has diminished quite a lot. . . . It's really all one family. You don't distinguish between your biological family, your friends vs. somebody you may not know.

It brought relief, lightness, and a settled feeling. During the 9 P.M. universal prayer, participant B experienced a "sense of community," and felt like praying for the betterment of the world.

Empathy and compassion (P-8g).

Participant C experienced strong feeling of being deeply connected, "compassion and care for fellow brethren," and good will for all during Pranahuti. The whole world was one family. In bedtime prayer, he felt "universal brotherhood and that we are moving towards the goal, towards the Master."

Outpouring of love towards others (P-8h).

A few times, right after coming out of *satsang*, participant G felt an incredible outpouring of love towards whoever came into her view: "[You] just want to love everyone you see. Everybody! Just see love everywhere!" Once, upon seeing kids around, she just hugged them, wanting to "care for them. . . . I was very grateful for that [feeling]." She felt that such feelings of love should be poured into the hearts of everyone.

Helping others and service related thoughts (P-8i).

Often during Pranahuti service related thoughts and a strong impulse to give and help others, or do something for the system (of PAM practice), rose in the participants: "That feeling came so strong . . . But you don't know what to do," said participant G. The feeling was "do whatever you can to be useful to

Him or to the society in general. But mainly how best we can serve. . . . how we can help others,” said participant A. These experiences had during Pranahuti led them to frequent prayer for the betterment of others.

Experiencing oneself in everyone (P-8j).

Participant H related an incredible experience that had occurred one Sunday after *satsang*. He was at home and the TV happened to be on, showing women from the villages in India.

For a sudden moment, I feel like everybody is [the] same. I feel myself in there, in every one of them. It was a strange feeling. . . . When I looked at their faces, I see it's myself in them.

This extra-ordinary episode lasted for about two to three minutes during which he felt himself completely identified with others.

Transformation – Interdependency Activation (T-8)

Confidence and the loss of fear and timidity (T-8a).

Participant C, D, E, and G found themselves gaining of enormous confidence in themselves. For participant C and D, it was accompanied by the loss of fear. Participant D said he used to be a timid person having a lot of fear of his father. But now he was completely devoid of timidity and developed a lot of confidence in himself. Similarly, participant C felt no apprehension or fear. For example, in a social setting as opposed to before. Participant G found herself speaking confidently with colleagues at work, “I was surprised in my own speaking out so confidently. . . . words are also coming out right.”

Participant E noticed that after having accepted herself, her previous low self-esteem and lack of confidence was now replaced by the feeling of confidence

and courage with respect to Master, the path, and herself reaching the goal. She felt courage in facing whatever difficult situations or obstacles that might come in the way. She would not stray from the path, and would continue moving on no matter what. Once, for about a month, the feeling of confidence was so strong inside that she found it difficult to entertain any negative thoughts: “You just had positive confident thoughts.”

Being straightforward and plain (T-8b).

Participants B and G found themselves become a lot more straightforward and plain in expressing their thoughts, feelings, and interactions with others. Participant B used to always keep anger inside. Now she would speak up about whatever troubled her, which alleviated a lot of internal pressure. Participant G found herself becoming more straight forward and plain in speech, and started speaking out about what she actually felt. She was able to speak her mind.

Participant H also became more truthful and plain about his own feelings in the interaction and dealings with colleagues, friends, and close relations. He used to keep a few things in the heart, such as career success, financial stability, family dynamics, and worried about them without expressing it to anybody. But these things slowly vanished from his heart, and now none remained to trouble him. Now when he was asked to join a gathering, if he did not feel proper, he would now say sorry, he would not be able to go, whereas previously he used to go unwillingly. He would ignore the unpleasant or negative comments of others, and not brood on things. This was a major change for him.

Moderation of anger (T-8c).

Participant H used to keep angry or ill feelings for some quite some days, which would “come out in the next instance of triggering.” But now this was no longer the case. In case he happened to be angry, he would write it down or express why he was angry.

Sympathy, empathy, and compassion (T-8d).

One significant change for participants B, C, and H was having the deep feeling of sympathy, empathy, and compassion towards others, praying for them, and exercising their positive will to help.

Participant C noticed that he became increasingly sympathetic towards others’ problems and miseries and could relate to them more, and with greater understanding. Earlier he was more indifferent. Now when someone was going through troubles in life, he would pray for others’ wellbeing, and helped them through positive will and suggestions. He became aware that in order to help someone, the attitude has to be positive. This is because everything is thought: “You will the positivity, and it will work; not having doubts.”

For participant B, empathy towards others increased a lot and it had become a sort of compassion. She experienced empathy much more intensely than before: “If someone is hurting, I feel it myself.” She felt like going through anything for them, even when she was not related to them in a direct way. For participant H, there was more understanding of families’ feelings and difficulties, sharing, and caring their feelings.

No boundary—one family (T-8e).

Participant A felt others as his own—a part of the family—even though biologically he was not related to them. When difficult things happened to others, he also felt pain, and would pray for them. Sometimes when others committed wrongs, he felt as though the wrongs were committed by himself, and he was repentant:

It's just a feeling that I can't blame others. . . . That fraternal feeling extends to [those] not biologically related to you, others also. This reflects also in bed time prayer, you repent for your mistakes, then you somehow start repenting for others' mistakes as if they are your mistakes. You totally feel they are your own mistakes for whatever reason, you can't disown them. You can't say it's not me. I don't know, that is a strange feeling.

Cherishing others' success (T-8f).

Participant A noticed a discernable difference in his attitude towards others' success. Before, he had felt OK with other people's success. Now he actually felt happier when others were happy or succeeding.

Giving equal opportunities for others to grow (T-8g).

Participant D matured in the way he approached opportunities to help others. Earlier, whenever there was volunteering opportunity to do certain work, he used to simply jump in and do it by himself. The feeling then was: "If not me, there is no one to do it," he said. He now realized "there is self in that, an ego in that, anxiety in that." All this had mellowed. He now felt: "Everyone has to be given equal opportunity to grow. So I plug off [sic] myself from some of the situations." This way he would leave room for others to perform.

Doing good to others with new thinking and perspectives (T-8h).

Participants experienced a lot of transformation in helping others in different ways. Both participant E and participant G realized that their perspective was much wider when the attention towards one's own self was decreased. And the love and concern towards others became more natural as well. Participant G described a new perspective on how to help her colleagues and team members accomplish their work. And "how you can make them feel comfortable. [What is] their point of view."

Participant F observed one important change for him was having the urge to help others, even if they were only for small things. He noticed such thoughts were never there for him before, and now he would be alert for such opportunities. Sometimes when the opportunity was missed, there was even a kind of sadness, as though he had lost a chance, and he became alert for the next opportunity. Participant B started volunteering in her daughter's school several times a week.

Yielding to and cooperation with others (T-8i).

Participants C and D exhibited qualities of yielding and cooperation with others. Participant D said this transformation was due to the fact that now he saw Divinity in all human beings through his own personal experiences in PAM practice. He began to yield to everyone, to that Divine within them.

For participant C, it had become easy and natural to work with others. He said earlier the thought pattern was, whether he would gain or lose by working with this person. But now he accepted whatever came and worked with it. He

was able to cooperate with others. There was also an implicit confidence that “things will take of themselves,” meaning problems in life have a nag of solving themselves.

Developing principles (T-8j).

Ahimsa (Non-injury) (T-8j-i).

Participant F and H found improvement in following the principle of *ahimsa* or non-injury, particularly pertaining to thoughts and feelings. Participant F said there was a tendency not to entertain violent thoughts by reducing watching movies with violent themes. For participant H, when there were problems with relatives, for example, when he could not fulfill their expectations and they reacted with less than kindness, he did not take it to heart and would only laugh at the matter. He would now deliberately choose to not entertain any negative feelings about them.

Asteya (Non-covetousness) (T-8j-ii).

The improvement in the practice of *asteya*, or non-covetousness, was subtler for Participant H. He used to project more of his own contributions at work before. But now, not only was he very cautious about not “stealing the glory or any contributions from others and then try to attach it to myself,” but he would go to the background and try to project his team members’ success instead.

Master Theme D – Activation of Divine Consciousness

The activation of devotion and surrender enables one grow into divine consciousness. Exquisite experiences were had during Pranahuti. They acquired attributes that brought about a higher balance.

PAM Experience – Activation of Devotion (P-9)

This Superordinate theme presents the activation of devotion experienced by participants. They experienced longing and deep and single pointed orientation for Master during Pranahuti. This led to a high-pitched devotional feeling where they wished to dedicate their entire being to the service of Master.

Longing and deep love (P-9a).

Participants C, E, F, and G narrated vividly the recurrent intense feelings of love, longing, and craving towards Master during Pranahuti. In one sitting, the emotions were so strong and spontaneous for participant F that tears started pouring down. It was “like meeting somebody after long time. You wanted to be dedicated.” In deep love, he was not aware of surroundings. This powerful and intense experience lasted almost the whole sitting. In another sitting, the feeling was patient waiting for Master. Tears rolled down as these feelings rose inside him.

Participant E described the intense feeling of wanting to “go there or you want to be there or be that.” This “longing to be with Him” was felt so acutely that it was as though “you cannot live without it.”

During one sitting, participant C found himself in a “mountainous terrain going up the incline, and saw flames there. There was remembrance of Master.” The transmission was smooth. For six months, pangs of love were felt such that “You long for Him all the time. . . . You want to be with Him. . . . You want to be with your beloved.” And there was sweetness in that feeling.

Single pointed orientation (P-9b).

Participants experienced single pointed orientation towards Master during Pranahuti. At times, participant F felt all his thoughts and feelings were centered on Master. He felt that Master was everything, and He was the only friend. Often tears, deep quiet, expansion, and soothing feeling accompanied such experiences.

Once, participant C felt His love and care for them and very refreshing energy. He thought of improving *sadhana* [practice] and to one-pointedly orient to the goal. Another time, he felt inspired to dedicate himself towards the goal by doing the “practice dedicatedly and following the principles,” staying away from all unwanted things, keeping attention on Him and Him alone, and being dependent on Him.

Earnestness and dedication for service (P-9c).

Participants A, B, C, E, and F experienced intense earnestness for service during Pranahuti. Participant A described that “when there is feeling of intense love, you feel like you will do anything for that person. . . . devote to that cause. . . . devote yourself to that unconditionally.” That was the feeling of intense devotion he felt toward Master.

Participant B said, in sittings, she felt close to Master during absorption; she felt devotion towards Him. There was the feeling of “gratitude for everything Master is doing for us”, and “you want to do anything and everything you can to serve the Master, in any way. I mean no matter how small it is, you just want to do it.”

It is the offering of all and everything to Him, said participant C. Whatever he had, it was for Him. There was a lot of energy felt in devotion, and he saw a shadow of blue color and a brilliant column of light with rings—grace flowing in.

Participant E experienced intense dedication during Pranahuti. She said it was a similar feeling to the state of devotion felt during Pranahuti. “By devotion, I mean a feeling of strong dedication and earnestness towards Master, where I want to dedicate all my time, energy, ability for Master’s cause.”

Transformation – Activation of Devotion (T-9)

One of the significant transformations many participants experienced was the development of various qualities related to devotion in day to day life. The changes were reflected in their aspiration and determination for higher life, their constant remembrance of the goal, and their becoming dedicated to service.

Aspiration and determination for higher life (T-9a).

Participant C and F spoke of a restlessness to transform and grow spiritually moving towards higher life. “There is a “restlessness to come out of the limited thinking and think creatively. . . . [an] aspiration to grow in life spiritually, to become more balanced,” said participant C.

Participant F noted a lot of aspiration and determination for a higher life has taken root inside him:

So there is a kind of determination that in spite of difficulties which come, have to pursue the path. I have seen changes over a period of time. So you know that if you are persistent, you will get all these. . . . There is also a feeling that there are greater values to be looked upon. . . . These values starting from let’s say truth, ahimsa [non-injury], and all those things have

to be imbibed and then you have to move further on. Try to do sacrifice. There is willingness to work towards gaining those things.

Frequent remembrance and being in His Company in daily life (T-9b).

For participant D, E, and F, coming to be in the company of the Divine during daily life was a significant transformation. And this frequent remembrance of Master kept increasing for participant D.

During the day, participant E had a “feeling of Presence of Divinity in heart. . . . I never felt [this] before and now I feel [it] more frequently. It’s a very significant thing that I have.” It was not something sensory, rather it was awareness: “It’s in your heart and in your whole being; you just feel. You are aware of an additional Presence. . . . Having this feeling gives me comfort and confidence” because it there is a feeling of “constant guidance being offered” and it is “helping you deal with life.” She further elaborated on the significance of this transformation:

Because you always know that there is God or you pray but you never feel. But now you know that you have support and guidance all the time. You are not alone that kind of feeling.

Dedicated to service (T-9c).

One of the key transformations for almost all participants was the growing urge inside to serve and become much more service oriented. There was a natural urge to serve Master and others in whatever capacity they could. How one could be useful to Master. Such thoughts had become recurrent themes for them. “You just want to do it. It’s a natural feeling. It’s kind of like an urge. You want to do something.” This change in participant B had led her commit herself to volunteer

regularly at her daughter's school several times a week. Participant G felt a keen desire to learn the true values herself and pass them onto younger generations.

PAM Experience – Activation of Self-Surrender (P-10)

This theme presence several profound experiences related to the condition of surrender that participants had. These exquisite experiences include submission, self-offering, helpless, intimacy, silence, and vacuum.

Submission (P-10a).

Participant D had a significant experience during Pranahuti which was the feeling of “*pahimaam, pahimaam.*” How to describe it? It was a shade of surrender he said:

Whatever it is all is His. . . . Give me some small place where I can sit at Your feet. That place should be beside the feet of Master. Give your kind permission to sit at Your feet [was] what I feel. I keep praying to grant me a place, so I can be at His feet all the time.

Yours as a body and the soul (P-10b).

One very significant experience participant D had during Pranahuti was the feeling of “yours as a body and I am the soul; Yours as body and the soul. . . . Not me, it is You only.” He experienced this a few times.

Self-offering in devotion—All this is Yours (P-10c).

A few times during Pranahuti, participant D experienced the condition: “All this is Yours.” It was a profound experience. He felt none of it was his own achievement and was grateful for the opportunity to be in His Company. Twice, he felt he was like a shell and there was nothing in it. The experience was: “We are the Divine expressions. All this body and soul is Yours.”

Feeling of helplessness (P-10d).

Once, participant H experienced a vivid feeling of helplessness and empathy. He felt like praying for others to be in close touch with their own Divinity as he had experienced himself.

Closeness and intimacy (P-10e).

Along with that feeling of profound love of Master, there was the feeling of intimacy that was hard to describe: “There is sort of sweetness to it or sort of feeling being wanted, and feeling of closeness to Master,” said participant E. It was almost constant during the celebration *satsangs*. They were intense experiences. Sometimes these feelings of closeness repeated in the morning meditation and bedtime prayer.

Silence (P-10f).

All participants experienced profound silence during Pranahuti and meditation frequently, and they offered different description of their experiences. The silence experienced by participant D was the driving force or the pull for him to attend *satsang* he said. Sometimes during Pranahuti, he felt “everything came to a standstill” and that silence was something “undefinable.” “There is no activity going on” and there was nothing kind of feeling was present.

The similar aspect of silence was shared by participant E. Many times, it was felt as a “deep sense of quiet and silence which is different from the calmness that [was] described before.” It was “absolute silent and there is nothing. There are no thoughts.” Eventually she became aware of the very silence she was in and started observing the silence itself.

In a similar vein, participant A described the experience of not feeling any thoughts at all. But he added that it may not be that the thoughts were not present, “but attention is not [on thoughts], there so you feel thoughtless.” Then as it went deeper, “you just feel silence. Nothing there absolutely. Nothing there. All you have is just this presence of Divinity.”

This profound feeling of Presence during silence was shared by participant C. In those experiences, there was the feeling of being really connected and “there was silence all around.” There was “simplicity and silence in His Presence.” The thoughts arose at that time were: “our life should be for Him alone.”

For many participants, this deep silence was accompanied by deep calm, peace, and lightness. Thoughts which accompanied such states were all divine related thoughts while mundane thoughts were completely absent.

Participant F narrated the first time he experienced silence at the very first individual sitting after being introduced into the practice. It was an abrupt silence in the midst of calm unlike any other experience he had before:

It was right at the beginning of individual sitting: we just said the prayer and trainer just went ahead [started sitting]. And there was silence. . . . It came as a surprise at that time. . . . This is a new kind of experience. . . . This silence lasted for a long period. Even though there was noise outside but silence was very predominant. . . . You are unaware of surrounding but you are aware of everything. . . . You are also aware that there is no [internal] noise and it’s abruptly gone.

Vacuum experience (P-10g).

For Participant E, the most significant experience was that of vacuum state she had during one individual sitting:

There was experience of almost thoughtless condition and being in very very subtle plane. It felt like nothing. Empty. Vacuum. You couldn't feel anything. Generally you feel energy or you feel something or you feel yourself or you feel you are meditating. There was nothing. No thoughts, no energy. You were in a zone of nothing.

It lasted almost the whole of the session. The impact of this experience was very significant: "This was followed by being in a different state for the next two days. There was higher level of balance. It felt like you were in higher plane of consciousness."

Coolness (P-10h).

Once participant C had the vision of water sprouting like a fountain and there was a serene waterfall—very smooth, tranquil, and fresh. He felt refreshed and coolness in His Presence.

Transformation – Activation of Self-Surrender (T-10)

The condition of surrender was experienced as significant transformations in life. They took the form of submissiveness and prayerful attitude, forbearance and fortitude that got developed in life.

Submissiveness and prayerful attitude (T-10a).

For participant F, a feeling of submissiveness and prayerful attitude persisted for all tasks in daily life. There would be prayer before and after he performed each task. There was the thought that Master forgave all of us.

Developing forbearance and fortitude in the spirit of surrender (T-10b).

One significant transformation for participant C was the development of forbearance. He found his ability "to bear with difficult circumstances" improved

a lot. He was able to be with the situation, however difficult it might be, rather than running away from it and saying: “that’s not my problem.”

The development of fortitude in the face of difficulties and miseries were signification transformation for participant D. He now could not only patiently bear with what was unpleasant and unjust for him, but also began to see “whatever is coming as a Divine gift and [I am] developing the courage to face the situation.” He said he was looking for the means of lowering his ego, and finally got it through this practice. He came to a stage where he felt grateful for all the difficulties or miseries in life:

It is point A and B which has helped me enormously. I can confidently say that is the greatest medicine that I got in my life. If there are no ups and downs life, it doesn’t make any difference; doesn’t make any sense for me. I have seen lot of ups and downs in my own life. Whenever I was in downstage, earlier I used to feel bad. Why am I going through all these things? But now I feel I am thankful to all of those situations that I have gone through.

This development was a particularly significant transformation for participant D. He explained that multiple aspects contributed to this growth. First, the Pranahuti sessions helped him develop a lot of dependency on Master, and make him understand that “it’s not just me or my practice.” Many others also helped him on the path. And he developed a lot of gratitude over the course of practice. At the same time, he also understood that it rests upon the individual practitioner’s strong will to overcome his or her limited self and its problems. Since he really wanted to change and grow, and learn to have dependency on Master, he was able to take every situation as an opportunity and come out of the many problems he once had.

After the Pranahuti experience where he experienced himself as the tiniest particle in the Cosmos (P-8a) and after some contemplation on that experience, participant D felt the “insignificance of myself. . . . All these days I was thinking that I was great. . . . and as my ego started coming down and I started feeling the insignificance of myself in front of the whole universe. And I’m only a tiny part.” This feeling was increased day by day for him:

I'm feeling that I'm totally dependent upon the Master. . . . Whatever the acts or the results that come, it is all the gift of Him and I'm totally feeling that.

He felt thankful for everything in life and took them as coming from the Lord as opportunities for him to learn new lessons. He felt enormous gratitude towards Master as it enabled him get rid of some many defects inside and lower his ego.

In a similar vein, participant E noted that that practicing the fifth principle in the Way of Living—being truthful and taking all miseries as divine blessing for one’s own good and be thankful—had become a bit easier for her. She now experienced misery as more of a liberating experience. When a (perceived) misery or undesirable situation occurred, initially she felt upset. But immediately it was countered by more positive feeling, and she actually felt grateful, thinking that it was all for the best. She felt good about it. This was happening more naturally, she observed.

PAM Experience – Exquisite Experiences in the Realm of Balance (P-11)

The theme reveals several exquisite experiences that belong to the realm of balance. They include the experiences of vastness, openness, expanded

boundary, sense of community, uniformity, evenness, steadiness, awe, reverence, purity, and hope.

Vastness, no boundary, and openness (P-11a).

Five-out-of-eight participants experienced a sense of vastness during Pranahuti. Often this was accompanied by feeling of expansion, freedom, openness. Participant C described it as “just vastness, and [I] felt free in that vastness.” He felt gratitude towards Master for this experience.

For participant H, it was a “no bounds” feeling that gave him an incredible sense of freedom, as if he was “stretching . . . [his] hands in open air.” It gave such feeling of “happiness and freshness.” For participant F, the vastness experienced came with openness. He felt “vast openness and lot of depth.” The associated thought was to be more open towards Master and trainer. Later as he reflected on these feelings and thoughts, he had tried to become more open in life.

Openness and shift of perspective (P-11b).

Participants B, G, and H shared profound experiences of openness and a shift in perspective during Pranahuti and prayer. Participant H described how in bedtime prayer he experienced that loving Presence of Him and felt a lot of openness. He would then pour out his own self before Him. The feeling was similar to emptying a vessel. Never had he cried before anyone in adulthood, but as tears rolled down in prayer, it gave him enormous relief—a relief from that which he did not even know he was burdened with. Extreme thankfulness and extreme reverence followed such experiences.

Participant B said sometimes she got a sense of openness during sittings, where she experienced a shift in perspective. When it occurred, not only did she understand others' perspectives, but also become willing to accept their ideas: "Oh, I see that now" was the feeling. "These things come to me—[a] revelation of sorts."

One time during *satsang*, participant G experienced a lot of openness in the heart. Afterwards, she started talking to another meditator as if she had known the person for a long time, and felt very happy about it. "You can speak out anything" was the happy feeling.

Uniformity and evenness (P-11c).

There was a time participant C experienced "Him as evenness all along with no ripples." It was "uniformity" and "all even." "There is feeling that He is flowing through all of us, nourishing us, and giving balance. Then there was reverence towards Him."

Steadiness (P-11d).

Participant D related the experience of being elevated to a different level of consciousness. Many times, he felt as if he got elevated from earth to air, where there was a lot of calmness and steadiness: "That elevation I felt it", he said. There was the experience of steadiness as if nothing was happening at all during Pranahuti: "All of the activities are coming to a standstill and it is totally steady, calm, silent. You feel that nothingness. . . . I myself [got] surprised, what am I doing, am I active or not."

Loss of prejudice (P-11e).

Participant D narrated a unique and profound experience during Pranahuti, where he felt treating all as equal. “Knowingly or unknowingly we have some prejudices,” he related. “It should not be like that. All are equal.”

Awe and reverence (P-11f).

Participants C, E, F, and H experienced immense reverence and awe before the force or love of Master. It occurred during Pranahuti every time the Presence was felt: “It is a feeling of deep respect and awe,” said participant E. She realized it was all due to Master’s benevolence, she was allowed to experience His presence. Participant C was in awe because “you feel such a great being is looking [at] me,” showering blessings and grace.

For participant F, due to the experiences in the individual sittings and *satsangs*, he realized in fact there was a way superior power being present and it put him in a humble state. There stemmed in him a sense of reverence towards the higher power—the goal of life:

Till the first introductory sitting, such a direct experience of power of higher nature was not there. We only hear about such things or read of such things from books. . . . But to have experience of that power and force, basically Pranahuti. The different experiences that it takes you through, put you in a humbled state. Because you know that there is almost nothing you can do, or nothing actually you are doing. The force and wisdom is so much more than what [one] could think of. So that brings kind of reverence towards that higher power. The more and more you see it in action, the more that [reverence] develops.

His own daily practices, regular intake of Pranahuti, and the interaction with teachers and others in system enabled him to perceive this superior force in action. He observed the wisdom; the angles from which it came were completely

different and refreshing. Things discussed in traditions suddenly became meaningful and relevant now due to his own personal experiences of Pranahuti.

During one individual sitting, participant F felt an expansion of multiple layers of the pranic body. He felt small. The accompanying thought was “Master is really the doer and all you have to do is be in prayer. Even for that it is Master’s gift for us to be in prayer.”

For participant A, these were humbling experiences: “You feel you are really small, insignificant. We don’t really matter much in the big scheme of things.”

Participant H said that reverence was the feeling of “holding something really high where [he was] committed to do anything.” Once during a celebration, participant H experienced a humble feeling, and felt himself not know anything. It was a feeling of lowly attitude and “treating everybody as expressions of Master.” He also felt that “whatever I did so far was insignificant. . . . All my progress is due to Master.” He said this experience relieved him of the sense of “I”-ness or ego which led him compare himself with others and create a “screen” for himself. He understood it was all because of Master’s grace.

Purity (P-11g).

During Pranahuti, again and again participant D experienced the state of calmness, silence, and purity in its intensity. Once during Pranahuti, participant G experienced *satsang* as “temple of purity.”

Hope (P-11h).

Participant E experienced hope during individual sittings. It was very intense during one particular individual sitting. It felt like “promise of good things. . . . the opposite of being despondent.” For a month or two, “there was predominantly [the] feeling of hope.”

Transformation – Exquisite Experiences in the Realm of Balance (T-11)

Participants found themselves becoming more balanced in life expressing the qualities of openness, loss of prejudice, and having hope. These are significant transformations for them.

Openness (T-11a).

Participant F felt an increasing openness with others. He felt “no need to hide any aspect of one’s life, or things you are doing, or what you are thinking to other people.” There was a freedom to express himself, and share with others.

Loss of prejudice, judgmental attitude, and becoming softer and kinder (T-11b).

Participants D, E and H found that they lost their prejudice and were able to think and treat others in the new and positive light. Participant E noticed one big change was becoming a softer and kinder person. This was due to the loss of strong opinions and prejudices in her that used to make her react very strongly to people and situations. She reflected on the root cause of this:

There was a feeling of, maybe sense of superiority or I know what is right, kind of feeling has gone; that probably makes you mellower. . . . It is what drives your attitude. . . . [now] you don’t think that you are better than them.

Consequently, she became more accepting of others.

Similarly, participant C found that his judgmental attitude towards others was reduced:

We don't always see the complete picture; so why to create a conclusion out of that. . . . Because we always create a story in our head this is what it is. But you never know, nobody knows except that person or thing which is going through [the] process.

Before, participant H used to react to things based on certain pre-meditated perceptions or opinions he carried. It was difficult for him to change his stance based on the truth of the matter. Now he was able to first disconnect himself from a situation to understand the truth, accept it, adjust himself to what was correct or more appropriate, and react in an appropriate manner. This led to more balanced reactions.

Balanced and unperturbed in life (T-11c).

Participant D had become a much more balanced person, unperturbed by various situations in life, without having too much sorrow or happiness. He thanked the practice for that. To describe this, he gave the example of a pendulum swinging back and forth. Unlike a pendulum, he now stayed in the middle.

Hope (T-11d).

Hope had become a deep rooted feeling and outlook in life for participant G. There was a time the difficulties in life she faced were such that she did not know how to go forward. But “that hope is there. . . . Sometimes you would feel low and then after sitting you would be like no, there is hope and positivity.” She felt that she and her husband had a direction towards the goal together. There was the certainty of hope and “things would be better and we can move forward.”

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

As defined in chapter one, the aim and scope of the study was threefold: 1) to explore and provide a comprehensive descriptive phenomenological record of the significant experiences of PAM practice by eight practitioners; 2) to explore their signification experiences of transformations over the period of practice; and 3) to investigate and draw out common themes and linkage between PAM practice and the transformations experienced by them to better understand this new phenomenon. This chapter will provide a detailed analysis of the findings presented in chapter 4, followed by a synthesized summary that weaves a tapestry of meaningful and coherent narrative. It brings out three major findings of this study later in chapter 6, based on which conclusions will be drawn.

In addressing the first two aims, this study has catalogued a large number of positive non-ordinary states and experiences of transformations for this group of participants, amounting to a total 68 emergent and sub-themes under the “PAM Experience” category and 49 under the “Transformation” category. The grand total for both categories is 117. Table 5 shows the breakdown of the count of emergent and sub-themes appeared in Table 3 “Master Table of Themes” in chapter 4. It is found that 95% of the significant experiences under the PAM experience category occurred during Pranahuti sessions.

Table 4:

Count of emergent and sub-themes by PAM Experience vs. Transformation

	Count of emergent & sub-themes		
	PAM Experience	Transformation	Sub-total
Master theme A	14		14
Master theme B	18	25	43
Master theme C	17	15	32
Master theme D	19	9	28
Grand Totals:	68	49	117

Note: The count shown here covers all emergent and sub-themes under the 11 superordinate themes in Table 3.

As introduced in Chapter 2, the Natural Path charted out by Sri Ramchandra aims to lead a person to the destination of being in oneness with the condition of Reality. The spiritual journey consists of thirteen major knots encompassing various states and stages of consciousness. One passes through the first five knots in the first phase of the journey. These five knots pertain to the spiritual conditions of *viveka* or discriminative intelligence (knot 1) and *vairagya* or due attachment (knot 1b), interdependency (knot 2), devotion (knot 3), surrender (knot 4), and balance (knot 5). The unfolding of these states and stages of consciousness was clearly seen in the findings of participants' significant experiences in Chapter 4. Based on this map of spiritual journey, the data was organized into emergent, superordinate, and master themes, as seen in Table 3.

This chapter provides a systematic and detailed analysis to bring out the meaning and significance behind these experiences, qualities, and transformations. After a close study of both the experiences and the currently available PAM literature, the analysis draws upon and integrates with the current

literature to bring out a deeper understanding of these phenomena. Essentially, this chapter tries to answer the questions of what the experiences mean, how and why they occurred, and what are their significance and implication by themselves as well as in the larger context of the development of consciousness. The analysis also attempts to synthesize the correlated themes in the two categories (i.e., PAM practice experiences and transformation), by discussing them together whenever applicable. This way, the study sheds light on how the experiences of the practice can lead to effecting transformation, and the connection between the two. Based on this, a holistic picture of these experiences is constructed through final synthesis at the end.

The Master Table of Themes (Table 3) in chapter 4 is used as the key reference map for organizing the discussion. For the ease of referencing Table 3 and the specific theme write up presented in Chapter 4, the superordinate theme numbers such as “P-x” for PAM practice experiences themes and “T-x” for transformation themes were put in the section headings in parentheses. The more detailed level-numbering for emergent themes were put in the body of the discussion whenever suitable.

On Master Theme A – Frequent Non-ordinary States in PAM Practice

This group of participants experienced a large number of profound non-ordinary states including sensory and non-sensory experiences. They reveal states of being and realms of experiences that are different from the normal day-to-day experiences.

This section discusses the first master theme, Frequent Non-Ordinary States and Exquisite Experiences in PAM Practice, as presented in Chapter 4. It also dwells deep into the phenomenon of absorption. This master theme includes the emergent themes P-1, P-2, P-3, and P-4 as shown in Table 3.

On Sensory Experiences of Prana (P-1)

All participants experienced vivid sensory experiences (P-1). They include flow of energy, charge, force, colors, bright light, heat, coolness, jerks, and sensations, which occurred primarily during Pranahuti. These phenomena revealed an interesting aspect of Pranahuti. When the *Prana* or life force was infused into the hearts of the practitioners, it stimulated the activities of light, brightness, energy, flow, charge, and force as felt by the participants. The activities indicated that the life impulse is acting in them.

On flow of energy, charge, and force.

Experiencing an engulfing energy coming into one's being was a typical experience of Pranahuti felt by many participants (P-1a). Narayana (2012a) wrote about these phenomena in his writing: "Many aspirants have reported that after taking a sitting from their trainer or other trainers they feel lot of energy and power poured into their hearts and the Pranahuti was very intense and engulfing" (p. 193). This is because Pranahuti is essentially an offering of the life force or life energy into the heart of the aspirant. As a result of this, practitioners were enabled to improve their meditation practices because then they would be clear, calm, and energized (p. 193).

On colors.

Most participants experienced vivid colors in their internal vision during Pranahuti and other times (P-1b). In the system of PAM, the five knots in the *Pind Desh* are associated with different colors (Narayana, 2006a & 2011a) (see “Formation of Knots” in Chapter 2 and Appendix A). For example, knot 1 is associated with yellow and knot 1b is red or crimson; knot 2 is white or silver; knot 3 is orange or flame; knot 4 is blue; knot 5 is purple or brown. Narayana (2003a) pointed out that Jain literature did mention about the colors as the “colouring of the soul” (p. 37) but did not explain further. It was Sri Ramchandra who for the first time gave the reason behind the colors—that they are due to different types of *avaranas* impressions (p. 38) (see the section on “Samskaras” in Chapter 2).

When a color appeared to internal vision of the participant, it indicates a particular knot got activated or cleansed by Pranahuti. The sudden shift of feelings and thoughts accompanying the colors experienced by some participants is correlated with the actual knots that got activated.

On light and brightness.

Participants C, E, G described experiencing brightness during Pranahuti (P-1c). Sri Ramchandra (2007) explained that this phenomenon is due to matter in the consciousness coming into contact with energy in Pranahuti:

Under our system an *abhyasi* [practitioner], no doubt, sometimes sees light. But the glittering light appears only in the beginning when matter comes in contact with energy. In other words, it is only a clue to show that energy has begun to work.

On coolness.

The experience of coolness (P-1d) described by participant G and H may be due to the work performed on knot 2, the Atman point (i.e. point of True Self), through Pranahuti (Narayana, 2003a, p. 448).

On heat.

Participant C talked of feeling enormous heat during Pranahuti (P-1e). According to Narayana (2006b), “[u]ndue attachment to anything or any effort brings in certain amount of matter generated due to the heat of the subject concerned and the heart feels it” (p. 254). With the “help of this consciousness-force [i.e. Pranahuti]. . . that one removes the material or dark obstructions or dross within the system, either by throwing out or by burning the dross with the ‘heat’ produced by this transmission” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 296). In other words, the heat experienced by the participant indicates the purification had occurred.

On jerks.

Jerks were one of the most common and significant experiences all participants had (P-1f). They were physical quick movements in the body. Their occurrences were frequent and numerous and were felt in different ways by each participant. The most interesting aspect of this phenomenon is once the jerks occurred, the participant felt a sudden relief, or calmness, quiet, lightness inside.

According to Narayana, these jerks are “indicative of some knots or complications in psyche being loosened” (2012b, p. 276) and the “dirt and grossness [in the psyche] being removed” by Pranahuti (2011b, p. 223; 2012b, p.

277). “Every case of jerk is a problem that has been sorted out. . . . there was a problem and it got relieved” (2011b, p. 70). He also wrote that very often beginners feel “refreshed-ness in the brain” (p. 223) after the jerks occurred. The participants’ description of experiences confirmed this.

Narayana (2006b) also revealed that this phenomenon is indicative of the *nadi shuddhi*—the cleaning of the psychonic system, much spoken of in traditional yogic literature (p. 204). It is also called *avarana shuddhi*, the clearing of *avarana*, the deep coverings of impressions (see the section, “Samskaras,” in Chapter 2). This purification of *samskaras* or psychic imprints in consciousness by removing *mala* (grossness), *vikshepa* (fickleness) and *avarana* (Coverings) is one of the most significant aspects of the PAM system in helping the practitioner to evolve in consciousness. When the effect of the past psychic imprints gets cleared to a reasonable extent, participants experience a lightness of spirit.

On Exquisite Experiences (P-2)

Participants experienced various exquisite experiences during Pranahuti (P-2). Here we go into detailed discussion about the quality, meaning, and nature of such experiences.

On Ajapa (Vibration in the heart).

Several participants significantly experienced what is called an *ajapa* condition, a fine vibration in the heart (P-2b). They experienced this as a vibration, subtle pulsation, or very fine thread moving in the heart. *Ajapa* is generally “considered as un-repeated *japa* of mantra. *Japa* means repetition of mantra or the name of God or *pranava* (Om). Constant repetition is said to lead

to the automatic repetition of this sound” (Ajapa, n.d.). According to Sri Ramchandra, however, the practice of *japa* by constant repetition of God’s name is gross and would cease once the practice is stopped. He said real *ajapa* is “the supreme vibration that is felt in the heart when the aspirant practices the system aided by Pranahuti and a person is properly introduced or initiated by the Grace of the Guru” (Ajapa, n.d.). It is a soundless sound that comes naturally when the transmission is made (Varadachari, 2014, p. 326). The sound or vibration can be felt as a tingling in the body (p. 326); sometimes a heat or push (Narayana, 2011a, p. 248).

According to Sri Ramchandra, prior to PAM, the spiritual experience of *ajapa* is believed to be a high spiritual achievement after years of laborious practice (2008, p. 239). However, in PAM, it is only common experienced gained by the practitioners after a short period practice (p. 239). This is due to the initial introduction process through Pranahuti, where the influx of the Divine or *Prana* was offered into the heart of the aspirant (Narayana, 2003a, p. 22). This automatic sound occurs in the upper portion of the heart (i.e., upper heart), and is an index which shows the practitioner has moved to the upper-plane of consciousness (2011a, p. 247). The data of participants confirmed this experience occurred early in their practice. For example, for participant D this profound experience occurred after about two years of practice. When *ajapa* occurred, there was a subsequent feeling of extreme peace in the hearts of participants.

Non-sensory nature of transmission – waves of bliss, gentleness, and soft gentle glow.

Participants described the nature of Pranahuti as smooth and subtle at times, and intense at times (P-2a). The transmission was experienced as waves of calm, or gentleness, or bliss. Sometimes a soft gentle glow was felt, and they were in a subtle state. Often they were exquisite feelings felt in the heart that did not have any physical or sensory correspondence.

Participant A also emphasized that many experiences he had were hard to describe since they did not correspond to any sensory aspect: “You just have to experience to know what it is,” he said. In the remaining sections of this chapter, in fact most of the phenomena were non-sensory in nature. These experiences revealed the nature of the *Prana* or pure consciousness transmitted as something non-sensory. It is a direct infusion of pure consciousness or *Prana* without a physical or sensory medium. The pure consciousness gets reflected as pure feelings or thoughts in the participants.

On Grace.

Participant C and E described a constant flow of energy experienced during the day in waking consciousness when they were not in meditation and they described it as grace (P-2c). Narayana (2012b) noted in his writing that many people reported feeling such a flow, but it is not to be confused with Pranahuti (p. 135) because Pranahuti is “an act of will of another person” who is advanced in spiritual life (p. 137). Pranahuti involves a qualified trainer consciously applying their will to “divert the flow of the Divine Current towards his [seeker’s] heart” (Sri Ramchandra, 2005, 88) to assist them on the spiritual

path. He further clarified the phenomenon of grace in the case of PAM practitioners as the following:

Prana is universal and it pervades the entire universe call it energy or any other name of your choice. . . . Certain times in the cases of persons properly introduced into the system of PAM the aspirants feel vibrations or flow of energy in their systems and this is due to the devotional feeling they have at that time which causes certain amount of void in their hearts which are immediately filled by the universal Prana to fill the void. (Narayana, 2012b, pp. 134 – 135)

This infilling of *Prana* was what was experienced as grace by participants even in the midst of their day to day activities.

On Tunnel experience.

Several participants narrated vivid experiences of passing through tunnels during Pranahuti (P-2d). The tunnels appeared to be dark and enclosed. After participant C having passed through this “enclosure,” the feeling of reverence towards Master welled up in his heart. In the case of participant D, it was a very profound feeling of having reached the other side of the world that was vast and without boundary.

They are fairly common experience for PAM practitioners. These tunnel experiences indicate the passing through of certain constricted or narrow sphere or plane of consciousness and arriving at a broader view or plane of consciousness. They could occur in dreams also. In a letter to Dr. Varadachari, Sri Ramchandra (Sri Ramchandra & Varadachari, 2009) explained about this phenomenon: “The tunnel through which you descended may be narrower views of the individualistic mind. The landscape you entered into may be the broader field of spirituality which has been the final resting place of so many” (p. 32).

Tunnel experiences occur in different knots, and it is particularly prominent when one moves from the fifth knot to the sixth knot, where one transcends the *microcosm* (called Pind Desh or particular consciousness) and arrives at the *macrocosm* (i.e., universal consciousness). Here the practitioner experiences “a feeling of something like shadowy darkness” (Sri Ramchandra, 2007, p. 364) as if they were passing through a tunnel. Participant D experienced a few times passing through a tunnel during Pranahuti. One of these experiences was particularly significant. He felt passing through a tunnel coming to “the other side of the world” where it was all grey, vast, and unending.

On Exquisite Experience of Presence.

Almost all participants spoke about a particularly profound and vivid experience of a Presence during Pranahuti (P-2e). Many put it as “Master’s Presence” they were experiencing. They were exquisite and sublime experiences unlike anything experienced in life before, and were some of the most significant experiences for them. They felt being enveloped in light and grace. The sublime feeling of abiding calm, silence, deep reverence, and love welled up in their hearts before this Presence.

The meaning and depth behind this phenomenon is in fact the basis of Pranahuti. According to Narayana (2011a), the very nature of our consciousness is of the Divine or *Prana*. Each individual could always get the inspiration from the Divine whenever they call for Its help due to being in great distress or great love (p. 95). However, it is a phenomenon of nature that certain personalities became the channel and guiding spirit to “direct the flow of the Divine, the love

or the compassion of the Divine to our heart whenever it is asked for, by whomsoever it be” (p. 94). Narayana asserted that his Master Sri Ramchandra became the most recent channel through which this divine energy flows (p. 94). He works through the process of Pranahuti in transforming human nature. The profound silence and peace and other sublime feelings reflect the intimation of the divine consciousness through this channel.

On Absorption or Non-Concentration Concentration (P-3)

All eight participants experienced a peculiar and yet common state of absorption during Pranahuti sessions as well as morning meditation (P-3). In this state, they felt that they had been disengaged from the outer conscious thoughts and was dwelling on or absorbed into a different and higher plane of consciousness. Though thoughts were very much present, they had no impact on them. Sometimes they were totally lost in this process without any awareness; and sometimes they retained some amount of awareness. They tended not to remember the thoughts that rose during meditation, and experienced profound peace, silence, happiness, lightness, and other feelings during or after the period of meditation.

Sri Ramchandra (2010) termed this state as “non-concentration concentration” or absorption (p. 26). The first term, “non-concentration,” indicates there was no effort of concentration. Here, the meditator gives a one-time suggestion of *Divine Light* to themselves at the beginning of the meditation; and there would be an overflow of thoughts. The second term “concentration” indicates an absorbed or concentrated state arrived at naturally as the meditator

continue in meditation. In that state, the meditator is absorbed internally and is in a balanced state of mind while thoughts continue to come and go on the outer surface of the mind. This state of absorption is the result of Pranahuti as well as the Divine Light meditation method.

Pranahuti and higher states of being during absorption.

Absorption was experienced more profoundly during Pranahuti. In fact, it is really the effect of Pranahuti that put one in a state of absorption (Varadachari, 2014, p. 371). This absorbed state is similar to that of *samadhi* or balanced state as Narayana (2011b) explained:

It is a state of consciousness obtained during meditation where there will be various thoughts but still absorbency is maintained. In spite of the presence of various thoughts which are distortions of the Reality, there will be Samadhi This is made possible by the influx of Divine itself into the abhyasi/practisant at the very first stroke of introduction. (p. 195)

The most important aspect of the absorption phenomenon is the accompanying state of being, that is, the various sublime feelings of peace, silence, lightness, happiness, and others and also higher order thoughts, experienced during and after the absorbed state. This revealed the nature of influx of the Divine transmitted through Pranahuti is that of peace, silence, happiness, lightness, and others. As participants got absorbed during Pranahuti, they experienced these exquisite feelings. The subsequent sections will go into detailed discussion of the varied conditions they experienced.

Divine light meditation method in bringing about the state of absorption.

The Divine Light meditation method plays an important role in bringing about absorption. It can be better studied and appreciated in the context of various types of meditation practices earlier.

The renowned contemporary psychologist Daniel Goleman (b. 1946) was one of the first researchers to try to systematically survey and introduce various types of world's traditional, mainly eastern, spiritual practices to the Western audience through his book *The Meditative Mind: The Varieties of Meditative Experience* (Goleman, 1988). He classified the various methods of practices based on the two fundamental attention strategies in meditation: 1) concentration; and 2) insight (or mindfulness). Concentration “entails sustained attention directed toward a single object or point of focus. . . . The aim is one-pointed attention to a single percept” (Goleman, 1978, p. 203). On the other hand, the path of insight begins with mindfulness, proceeds through insight (*vipassana*), and ends in nirvana. Here in mindfulness, “the meditator methodically faces the bare facts of his experience, seeing each event as though occurring for the first time.” The aim is to have “full awareness or mindfulness of any and all contents of awareness” (p. 203). Thus all meditation techniques were classified into one of the three categories: (a) concentration; (b) mindfulness; or (c) integrated where both operations are present in integrated combination. This classification is often referenced by Western meditation researchers as a preamble or introduction to the meditation subject.

According to Sri Ramchandra (2010), concentration by consciously focusing one's attention on an object while suppressing all other thoughts would

cast heavy effect on the mind (2010, p. 23). It can lead to an internal condition so rigid and gross that the meditator becomes totally “insusceptible to finer and subtler influences” (p. 23). When one tries to concentrate, the idea of “self” or ego is present (p. 23), making it all the more difficult to transcend the self.

Instead, Sri Ramchandra (2010) invented the method that uses neither concentration nor mindfulness attentional strategy—resources of the conscious mind with all its encumbering thoughts. The method is “to take up the thought [of Divine Light] in the form of *sankalpa* (subtle idea) without any imposed resolve or effort, and proceed on with it in a gentle and natural way without enforcing any artificiality or imposition” (p. 26). The subtle suggestion works at the sub-conscious mind. As one waits for Divine Light, a vacuum is created thereby leading to the previous impressions in the consciousness being flushed out. When the meditator does not pay attention to the rising thoughts, essentially they allow these thoughts to leave their consciousness without holding onto them. According to Narayana (2003a), meditation is also known as an act of emptying one’s consciousness (p. 49).

What happens alongside with thoughts being flushed out is that, as the meditator continues to wait for Divine Light, they get themselves “absorbed in the light of the Divine coming to him from the Original source” (Sri Ramchandra, 2010, p. 24), leading to some sort of fine concentration, which is termed as absorption. Sri Ramchandra noted this is the real state to be aspired for because “proceeding along in that way, one would keep on imbibing the power of the Source to light himself up with Divine effulgence” (p. 25).

The narration of participant A was a vivid description of this process. He noted that after *satsang* had started, overwhelming amount of thoughts came, yet they had no impact on him. Meanwhile the absorption into that presence of Divine Light became deeper and deeper, and the impact of thoughts diminished as the *Satsang* progressed.

We may ask how and why this meditation could enable the meditator to arrive at the state of being absorbed. This has something to do with the nature of mind and the origin of thoughts as discovered by Sri Ramchandra and further expounded by Narayana (2007b). Narayana wrote that “*Prana* is always in a state of balance and equanimity whenever it is dwelling on the thoughts of the Origin or Base or Ultimate” (p. 10). In this balanced state where the thoughts are in tune with the Ultimate, they were not noticed by the mind thus appearing to be thoughtless. However, under other circumstances, when the mind gets “attached to anything other than the Origin, it tries to wriggle itself of the clutches of such grosser matter. This is the beginning of awareness of thoughts or consciousness” (p.10). In other words, the “awareness of thoughts is due to their rejection by mind” (p. 10). He noted this is one of the most profound theories of Sri Ramchandra, and a singular contribution to the field of psychology. Based on this, Sri Ramchandra invented the method of Divine Light meditation:

This has enormous influence in the method suggested by Pujya Babuji [Sri Ramchandra] for meditation. Meditation can be done on anything and one can obtain such results as may come. But if one wants the best results, the nature of the thought for meditation should be such that it is in consonance with the nature of mind itself. Based on this logic the Master has suggested that we should meditate on the Divine light in the heart where it beats, not bothering about the nature of light or luminosity. Once this thought is accepted as fit for meditation, getting into a state of absorption

becomes easy. . . . The thought of Divine light gets absorbed in the mind because that is approximately near to the original thought. (p. 10)

It should be noted that in order for this method to work, the practitioner needs to be introduced into the practice through the process of “Introduction” in Pranahuti (see the section on “Introduction through Pranahuti” in Chapter 2). It is during this introduction process, the practitioner’s flow of thought energy which tends to go to the lower heart gets diverted to the upper heart, and that enables the person have reasonable settled state of mind as to be able to meditate on Divine Light.

Types of absorption—with and without awareness

Among participants’ description of absorbed state, there appeared to be two types with varied degree of awareness. In one type, participants were totally lost in meditation and were without awareness. They seemed to have disappeared during that period, not knowing where they were or how long it had been. In the other type, there was awareness even though they were “lost” or absorbed at the same time. Sri Ramchandra (2007) classified three levels of absorption: lower, higher, and the highest, in his writing (p. 82). The experiences of absorption without any awareness that participants had correspond to the lower level, while absorption with awareness is the higher level.

On transcending time and physical limitation during absorption.

Most participants reported time transiency accompanying the state of absorption. They felt that time had been “shortened.” And this is a very common and significant phenomenon in PAM. There appeared to be a kind of the

transcendence over time as time seemed to be no longer imposing limitation or playing a role.

Participants also described the non-awareness of the physical body, bodily pain, and the environment during deep absorption. It appeared as though the physical body alone with its sensory functions no longer imposed limitations on one's consciousness, leading to a sort of transcendence of it during the state of absorption.

On Master Theme B – Activation of Viveka and Vairagya

This section discusses the second master theme—"Activation of Viveka and Vairagya"—as presented in Chapter 4. This master theme contains the superordinate themes 4 and 5, labeled as P-4, T-4, P-5, T-5, in Chapter 4 and Table 3. We start with the introduction of the meaning of *viveka* (discriminative intelligence) and *vairagya* (due attachment) in PAM, and proceed onto the detailed analysis of the data.

Introduction on Viveka (Discriminative Intelligence) and Vairagya (Due Attachment)

Viveka or discriminative intelligence is defined as the spiritual knowledge or wisdom or capacity "to distinguish between what is temporary and what is permanent, what is real and what is unreal" (Narayana, 2006a, p. 128). More specifically,

The real knowledge at this stage would be of two types, i) to know that there is nothing that is permanent in this world and everything is transitory and is in a state of flux or change and ii) behind all this change there is something deep in the core of everything, object and person, that is permanent and changeless. (p. 128)

With respect to the first knowledge (i.e. the transitory nature of things and events), it refers to not only the physical events that come and go, but also all mental and spiritual activities, beliefs, sensations, perceptions, and feelings. They come and go even as the rain and morning sunrise (Narayana, 2005a, p. 1).

Narayana further elaborated:

This does not make events, thoughts, feelings, or any phenomena bad: this simply clarifies what it is and what it is not. It is only through this recognition that these events can become a joy rather than a curse. When we identify with these things we are forced to suffer disillusionment. (pp. 1–2)

With respect to the second knowledge, that there is a permanent and changeless essence behind all the changeable, this is the pure consciousness or *Prana* that pervades all. For PAM practitioners, this becomes an experiential knowledge gained through the repeated direct experience of *Prana* or pure consciousness through the process of Pranahuti.

Sri Ramchandra related his personal experience on the all-pervasive nature of the Divine, *Prana* or pure consciousness in his early days of practice. He described “a ubiquitous force present in every animate and inanimate object and particle I was drowned in a sea of wonder. I felt God pervading over everything, like broad day light” (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, he narrated the following experience:

During my abhyas or practice I felt a strange experience that everything in the world even the bricks and stones, leaves and flowers, were radiating the force of Divinity all over and liking and devotion were so great that I wanted to embrace thistles in love. (as cited in Naranaya, 2006a, p. 129)

At this stage, Narayana (2006a) explained, the spiritual knowledge that there is nothing whatsoever other than pure consciousness dawns on the practitioner to some extent (p.128).

Due to the wisdom and understanding of the transitory nature of things, and everything being pervaded by Divine (or *Prana*), one gains the inner wisdom or understanding that one does not possess anything in reality. This leads to the activation of *vairagya* or due attachment. *Vairagya* is known as renunciation in tradition. However, in PAM, it is defined in a new way. It means attaching oneself to the Divine, resulting in detached functioning without indifference in life (Narayana, 2004a, p. 117). This detached functioning is a natural and automatic result of the attachment to the real essence behind the apparent world. It is not a practice trying to detach oneself from things and relations in this world. As one attaches oneself more and more to the permanent essence or Divine, one becomes moderated, balanced, and capable of viewing things or performing an act objectively (p. 117).

In *Vedanta*, one of the six schools of Indian philosophy, *viveka* and *vairagya* are considered the first two of the *sadhana chatustaya*⁹ or four means of practice to achieve liberation. PAM however starts with the third means called

⁹ *Sadhana* means method or means towards attaining any objective. Usually this word is used for the method and means adopted for spiritual attainment or liberation (*sadhana*, n.d.). *Chatustaya* means fourfold. *Sadhana chatustaya* means four fold means. These four means are: *viveka* (discriminative intelligence), *vairagya* (due attachment), *shat sampatthis* (six spiritual acquisitions), and *mumukshu* (seeker after liberation). They can also be viewed as four progressive stages of spiritual progress.

*shat sampatti*¹⁰ or six spiritual acquisitions (Sri Ramchandra, 2010). Through the practice of meditation and the help of Pranahuti, practitioners attain peaceful condition of the mind (*sama*) and control of senses (*dama*), which are the first two of the six spiritual acquisitions. And *viveka* and *vairagya* are obtained as the automatic result of the meditation practice in the process, rather than being the means of practice (p. 273).

Viveka belongs to knot 1 which has the color of yellow, while *vairagya* is knot 1b, which is closely adjacent to knot 1 and crimson in color (see Figure 7 in Appendix A for the location). Participants had experiences related to the activation of *viveka* and *vairagya* in varied shades and hues as we discuss next.

Awakened to One's Real Nature through Experiencing Love (P-4a)

The first emergent theme under “P-4: Activation of Viveka” is “Experiencing love” (P-4a). Participants described the profound experiences of a boundless and unconditional love with intense purity and warmth during Pranahuti. It was a completely new and overwhelming experience, said participant E of its impact: “This feeling was also surprising for me. . . . because you always know that God or Divinity loves you but you don’t really know how it

¹⁰ There are six forms of spiritual acquisitions in tradition called *shat-sampattis*. “*shat*” means six; “*sampatti*” means treasure/ riches/ abundance (sompatti, 2016). The first of these *sampattis* is *sham* or *shama*. *Sham* means “Proper moulding and regulation of the mind” (sham, 2016) which results in the peaceful condition of mind (Ramchandra, 2008, 272). The other five acquisitions are: *dam* (control of senses), *uparati* (self-withdrawal where one is free from all desires), *titiksha* (fortitude where one is perfectly satisfied with what is allotted to him by God. He has no feeling for injury, insult, condemnation or appreciation), *shraddha* (faith in the Master where one has unconditional confidence in the powers and capacity of the Master—one of the highest spiritual stages) and *samadhan* (a state of self-settledness to the will of God/Master).

feels like. It feels overwhelming.” This love was a constant uplifting force for participants to continue the practice.

Repeatedly experiencing this unalloyed love during Pranahuti raises the awareness and cognition of an underlying essence and reality of life that was unknown to participants before. It struck participant H that “this is the real thing. This is it.” He realized that this is in fact our real nature that we should always be with.

In fact, this pure love is the very nature of the *Prana* (Divine) or pure consciousness, and is the basis of all (Sri Ramchandra, 2005, p.125). The pure consciousness or original life force is the energy or feeling of unalloyed love (see chapter 1). To experience and cognize it as one’s real nature present in the heart in an intimate and substantial way helps the activation of discriminative intelligence or *viveka*. This is the starting point of consciousness transformation in PAM. And it was done through the influx of Pranahuti.

We may explore further how Pranahuti enables the practitioners to experience this love or divine essence in the heart. Narayana (2011b) explained that Divinity or the divine impulse is already present in each person’s heart. The *ajapa* or vibration in the heart experience discussed earlier, is in fact a vivid experience of It. However, often this divine impulse is very feeble or not felt at all by individuals due to shrouds of coverings accumulated over a long period of time (i.e. the psychic imprints or impressions). By bringing the influx of the Divine or *Prana* into the heart of the practitioner through Pranahuti, this *Prana* or life energy strikes a concord with the divine impulse already present in the heart,

thus enabling that love to grow more and more. Pranahuti is basically a “linkage of the Divine grace with Divinity which is there in our heart. Two similar things joined together and our journey to the infinite is smooth” as Narayana (p. 104) explained:

This pure energy initiates a process of change in the person which ultimately leads to destruction of all evil and negative tendencies, and spurt of creative and positive powers which encourage him to strive for the highest and best in life. . . . It is not any ordinary power or energy that is transmitted but the original power at the root of creation which for our understanding may be called supreme consciousness. . . . It is just Love: a love that is not possessive and particular. It is Love Universal Omnipresent and Omnipotent. (2008a, pp. 99-102)

The profound love of Master led to the feeling of deep gratitude by participants (P-4a-ii). Deep trust in Master got developed in the participants (P-4a-iii). Sometimes participants derived wisdoms and new perspective during the absorbed state in Pranahuti. For example, there was period of time participant G experienced a lot of difficulties in life, and she experienced the wisdom “He knows best” and patience and waiting during Pranahuti. This is one of the most interesting and profound aspect of experiences of Pranahuti. The feelings of deep trust, peace, and letting-go accompanied the wisdom she got at that moment. In other words, she was experiencing letting-go and peace, rather than just thinking about letting go. It was this feeling confirmed the very thought of wisdom with certainty and rightness. Trust and gratitude towards the Divine are in fact different aspects of discriminative intelligence (*viveka*). Thus, we see direct insight and wisdom was obtained during deep absorbed states during Pranahuti.

Dynamics between Flow Diversion (Pranahuti) and Individual Practices Leading to Regulation of Mind and Control of Senses in the Activation of Viveka (P-4b, P-4c, T-4a, T-4b)

Feeling deep calm and settled-ness was a predominant and recurring experience in all participants, particularly during Pranahuti (P-4b). In real life, participants found themselves transformed into much calmer persons over the course of practice (T-4a-i). They found that there was drastic loss of circular thoughts, mind wandering, brooding, and worries; the mind became regulated and quiet (T-4a-ii). They developed the qualities of patience and waiting (T-4a-iii), and also gained self-control (T-4a-iv). For almost all participants, these positive changes came along with the drastic reduction of negative emotions such as anger and irritation (T-4b-i) and the desires for sensory enjoyments and materialistic acquisition (T-4b-ii). With the loss of negativity and the acquisition of calm and peaceful state of mind, there emerged the goal clarity pertaining to the higher purpose of life for Realization in the participants (T-4c-i). And they developed an interest in spiritual development (T-4c-ii), cultivated determination, discipline, and proper priorities for this purpose in day to day life (T-4c-iii).

For example, participant E described vividly how emotions like anger and frustration, which drove her to action in the past, now got reduced 90% in intensity and no longer overpowered her and held her under its sway. There was also a drastic decrease in negative and spellbound thinking, self-pity, and self-victimization than previously. Thus, she obtained the freedom from these negative patterns and gained the ability to think with a larger and more balanced perspective, and was able to react more objectively to situations. She became

more balanced overall. At the same time, there arose a keen awareness of the permanent deep calm and the Presence of Divinity within that was constantly guiding her. She felt meaning and direction for life, and saw consciousness transformation in terms of improving her character and coming in tune with the universal order as the goal of life. These were significant changes over the two and half years of practice.

Role of *flow diversion* in Pranahuti in achieving peaceful condition of mind (*sama*) and control over senses (*dama*).

The state of calmness, quietude, and disciplined mind obtained by participants is the first spiritual acquisitions called *sama*. *Sama* means the “peaceful condition of mind leading to a state of calmness and tranquility” due to proper molding and regulation of mind (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 272). Gaining self-control is the second spiritual acquisition of *dama*. *Dama* means control over senses. These two spiritual acquisitions are essential for the development of consciousness. In fact, calmness of mind enables the meditator to engage in meditation practice properly and effectively. In PAM, *sama* and *dama* are achieved through individual meditation practices with “the help of the transmitted power of a worthy Master” (p. 272), that is, Pranahuti. In particular, the *flow diversion* process in Pranahuti plays an essential role in achieving them.

The mind is generally restless and externalized, orbiting around objects, sensory data, various desires, and emotional and physiological needs of the body (Varadachari, 2014, p. 373). When this restless and outward tendency of the mind is turned inward and rests on the changeless essence, peace and calmness is the result. But such reversal of the trend of thoughts towards the inner light is

something difficult, and generally “cannot be done by one’s own efforts except under great crises or shocks” (Varadachari, 2014, p. 372). But it can be achieved much more easily with the help of the transmission (p. 373).

Exactly how can the restlessness and outward movement of the mind be reversed and turned inward and upward towards Reality through Pranahuti? This is done through the process of *flow diversion* in Pranahuti as described in Chapter 2. During the *flow diversion* process, the flow of thought energy is diverted from the lower to upper heart. The effect of this is the outward tendency of the mind towards sensory attractions first gets attenuated. As seen in participants’ transformations (T-4b), they found drastic reduction in materialistic desires and sensory attractions. Due to this, control over senses (*dama*) also became possible and easier.

Furthermore, participant F gave a vivid description of this experience: he felt being elevated to a different level of consciousness where the feeling of calmness and quiet prevailed. This is in fact an experience due to the effect of *flow diversion*. He was lifted to the higher plane of consciousness called the Upper Heart to some extent. Calmness and peace were the automatic result because such are the very nature of upper plane of consciousness. This type of experience of feeling uplift to a higher plane is a common experience in PAM, as participant D noted. This is due to *flow diversion* being repeatedly performed in Pranahuti as to enable the participant to move and settle in the upper plane of consciousness.

Then in the next step of *flow diversion*, the flow of thought energy is diverted towards the Atman (True Self). This enables the mind to turn away from superfluities of the mundane life and start looking towards the inner essence. Our finding reveals that the aspiration to reach Master or Reality emerged as the real goal of life during Pranahuti for participants (P-4c-i). This feeling during meditation got translated into life's primary purpose for them (T-4c-i). Until that point, participants were not aware of the purpose and direction in life. Now as participant E said, due to the constant feeling of the presence of Divinity in the heart guiding her, she knew where she was going. There was a new direction and hope. This goal clarity of having Reality rather than all other transient objects as the primary pursuit in life was the first and foremost important transformation for participants. It leads to all changes to come later in participants' lives.

The fixing of the mind on the inner Reality as the goal of life enabled the participants to acquire control over sense (Dama). Sri Ramchandra (2008) stated that "Control of senses and Indriyas (or Dam) follows automatically when we fix our mind on one thing and one alone which is the Reality, ignoring all others" (p. 273). We observed that when the goal is set by participants, they began rearranging their priorities in life to achieve the same (T-4c-ii). They came out of sloth and indolence and there was increased discipline. Essentially they adopted a new life style which was conducive and in alignment for this endeavor. There was also a signification reduction for the various desires and superfluous activities because they no longer wanted to waste time and energy on that which were

irrelevant for the goal. All these reflect the acquisition of control over senses (*dama*) and the activation of discriminative intelligence by the participants.

Another significant transformation is the development of patience and waiting attitude by the participant in the midst of calm (T-4a-iii). This is the real sign of *viveka* according to Narayana: “What is Viveka? Viveka is to remain calm, quiet seeking Him ultimately, waiting for Him” (2003a, p. 96). It also shows that impulsiveness, which is the nature of lower self, has decreased to a large extent in the person. The peaceful condition and the cognition of the presence of the real essence inside led participants start seeking it through waiting. Thus, we see that the development of *sama* and *dama* brought about the activation of *viveka* or discriminative intelligence in participants.

Role of purification in achieving sama and dama.

Another important aspect which contributes to the regulation of mind and control of sense is the purification of lower self through Pranahuti and self-effort. Anger, negative thinking, negative emotions, and excessive material desires are the states of consciousness pertaining to the lower Heart. They pose formidable hindrance to one’s freedom and are due to the previously formed impressions (*samskaras*) or psychic imprints.

During Pranahuti, trainer attends to the purification of the practitioner’s consciousness by removing the deeper impressions. The practitioner also attends to their own purification during the daily evening purification process by exercising their own will to purge the nascent impressions formed during the day (see Appendix B for the method). The vivid experiences of jerks during Pranahuti

as well as evening purification discussed in earlier indicated the purification of impressions. Persistent purification over a period time resulted in the loss of circular thoughts, brooding, worries, excessive materialistic desires and sensory craving, etc. as reported by the participants (T-4a-ii, T-4b-ii). Also, the negative states of mind and emotions got drastically reduced. Participants began to experience lightness, calmness, and clarity of mind. These changes show significant purification of consciousness had occurred in them.

Being free from the burden of these oppressive thoughts and emotions was what gave the participants a sense of relief in substantial terms after some duration of practice. It was as though the ground was made cleared for the next possible step of forward and upward growth. As Narayana (2003b) explained, cleaning essentially means “purging out what is not Divine in us” (p. 232), and this is “the most effective way to progress” (p. 228).

Role of divine light meditation and point A and B practices in achieving sama and dama.

As mentioned earlier, meditation can also be defined as emptying of content of consciousness (Narayana, 2003a, p. 49). Sri Ramchandra (2010) stated:

When we meditate, the Central Power we have i.e. thought in its pure form remains in force....It disperses the overwhelming clouds which are greatly fried up by its force. The mind is disciplined. It is automatically regulated. Senses begin to come under control, and you gain mastery over them. (p. 56)

The thought in its pure form is the Divine Light. By meditating on which, it loosens the existing impressions and enables them to leave the system of the

practitioner. Thus, by and by, the practitioner is emptied of all impressions, and peace and quietude is the result.

The point A and point B practices also play an important role in achieving *sama* and *dama*. The point A practice can effectively help meditator moderate anger and passion, resulting in peace and calm (*sama*). Point B practice lessens the intensity of desires and control urges bringing them to a level of balance. This aids in achieving the control of senses (*dama*).

Most participants experienced transformation in getting rid of anger and the binds of sensory enjoyments and desires (T-4b). For example, in the case of participant E, she no longer had intense attraction towards sensory pleasure, such as movies watching, eating, music listening, novel reading for pleasure and thrill (T-4b-ii). In other words, these sensory enjoyments no long held her under their sway. This is having control over senses (*dama*).

Nature of thoughts during state of calm.

An interesting aspect of the phenomenon described by participant B, E, F, and others was the nature of thoughts during the state of calm (P-4b). The thoughts were pertaining to Divine or higher nature rather than anything mundane. Furthermore, when they remembered Master during the day, calmness and peace was experienced in the heart (T-4a-i).

We may probe further into this phenomenon as to why the mind feels calm when it thinks of Divine. Narayana (2003a) expounded on this phenomenon. He explained that “the moment the Divinity concept is brought into our head, we almost simultaneously think that we are somebody less than that” (p. 352), and it

was this humility which created a vacuum in the heart (p. 352). So “this particular vacuum that gets created immediately gets filled by the Divine flow” (Narayana, 2003a, 352). And it is this flow of Divine that was experienced as calmness and peace.

Awakening to and Acquiring Principled Living (P-4d, T-4c)

The feeling of wanting to live a higher life according to truth and higher purpose arose in participants during Pranahuti (P-4d). An important aspect of these experiences is that they were often accompanied by the incredible feelings of love of Master. It was like the mother’s love that softened their hearts and made them realize their past mistakes and wasteful wandering. So they resolved to live a higher life to fulfill their real potential. This experience of realizing one’s mistake and feeling remorse for it was narrated by participant F vividly (P-4d-iv). He noted that for the first time, he realized he had done mistakes. Till then he did not think it was bad. This feeling of repentance is in fact the real form of *viveka* or discriminative intelligence according to Sri Ramchandra (2008): “The real form of Viveka is that when a man begins to realize his own defects and shortcomings and at the bottom of his heart feels repentant for them” (p. 273). This experience shows *viveka* was being activated during Pranahuti.

In real life, participants found significant transformations in acquiring the qualities of *satya* (Truthfulness) and honesty (T-4d). They became honest when no one was watching. While interacting with others, they became truthful in thought, words, and deed. These improvements in character may also be due to an increased sensitivity and awareness overall regarding living according to

principles. For example, participant E ceased to make excuses or lie about small or trivial matters as she used to. This was because the importance of truthfulness was now felt. Participant F found that there would be a nagging voice inside when he did not maintain truth.

The acquisition of the principles is part of *yama* (restraints or self-controls), the first limb in the traditional *ashtanga yoga*, eight-limb yoga (please see chapter 2 “In comparison with Patanjali’s Raja Yoga” section). *Yama* and *niyama* (disciplines) are necessary ground work preparation for the development of consciousness. They are not merely ethical or social codes, but embody spiritual nature that are needed for spiritual pursuits (Varadachari, 2014, p. 310). To further explain, by following these principles, the practitioner avoids forming further *samskaras* (impressions or psychic imprints). Thus, one can “obviate avoidable suffering and can be free from fear and all types of moral turpitude. They make one self-reliant and submissive to truth, however, unpalatable it may appear” (p. 310). The peaceful state of mind which is essential to meditation practice and spiritual progress can be obtained when one follows these principles.

The injunctions of *yama* and *niyama* were well-spoken of in various traditions as essential practices to be followed. However, in PAM, rather than being stand-alone dedicated practices, these qualities get naturally embodied by practitioners over a period of meditation practices. In other words, they are automatic results of regular meditation practice and the help of Pranahuti; one does not need to strain oneself to deliberately practice them as moral injunctions.

This can be seen in the findings discussed above—practitioners did not deliberately practice them, but found themselves transformed in these aspects.

Precisely how do Pranahuti and the individual meditation practices help bring about the development of these qualities in the practitioner? In the *flow diversion* process in Pranahuti, the trainer exercises their will to divert the thought energy from the lower heart to upper heart. Thus, the negative qualities lose the power or grip on the practitioner. One becomes rather uninterested in these negative thoughts and habits. As more flow is diverted to the Upper Heart, in the midst of calmness, higher aspirational thoughts of noble qualities also get sowed in the practitioners. Higher purpose gets awakened in the person. These noble qualities in the form of higher thoughts get absorbed by the meditator. Changes start to take place from inside, and finally they embodied these qualities. The purification through Pranahuti as well as the evening purification by the individual practitioner removes psychic imprints or *samskaras* which are the root-cause of many negative qualities. Thus, practitioners found themselves transformed in a natural way without deliberate and effortful practices of these qualities.

Various Positive Qualities Pertaining to Viveka (P-4e, T-4e)

Participants had significant experiences related to the activation and development of various positive qualities in them (P-4e, T-4e). They found themselves having greater willingness for change, clarity and acceptance, positive outlook and high spirit in general. Some had got rid of fear altogether.

Experiencing shift in Pranahuti leading to transformation in life – willingness, clarity, and acceptance.

During Pranahuti, participants often experienced some kind of shift which resulted in clarity and change of thoughts or feelings. For example, participant G experienced keen willingness for transformation during Pranahuti (P-4e-i). She felt very fortunate to have the various kinds of wonderful experiences during Pranahuti and meditation; however, “are you changing yourself?” was the most important thing she thought. And she herself was surprised at this kind of new thinking. In another example, in the midst of Pranahuti and deep meditative states, there occurred the sudden emergence of clarity and understanding for the participant F (P-4e-ii). Due to this clarity, he experienced a sudden shift from a self-denial state before the sitting to the acceptance of his own mistakes.

The reason for such clarity and change in thinking could be largely attributed to the deep purification through Pranahuti. Sri Ramchandra (2010) stated that when the mind (i.e. consciousness), begins to get purified, it produces good thoughts, which helps the practitioner further in their pursuit (p. 130). This was the case in the example of participant G above. In the other example of participant F, the denial, not understanding, and non-acceptance of mistakes were the results of ignorance. And this ignorance is due to the deep coverings or *avarana* impressions (*samskaras*). The darkness of these deep coverings made a person not able to understand or admit their own mistakes. When these deep coverings get removed and cleared up by Pranahuti, then clarity and understanding emerges in the practitioner, as seen in the example of participant F (P-4e-ii). Another aspect of this is as Pranahuti purifies the practitioner’s

consciousness, his or her ego also gets reduced to some extent. Ego is nothing more than thought (Narayana, 2005b, p. 200). When thoughts get purified, the ego also gets reduced. And it became easier for one to accept one's mistakes.

These shifts during Pranahuti seem to have lasting effect in the participants in life. Participants found themselves becoming increasingly sensitive and introspective in general, and capable of facing and accepting their own lapses and shortcomings (T-4e-ii). Previously, they often reacted to others' criticism with anger and non-acceptance. Now they would accept, apologize, and work with the advice given. As participant D noted, this acceptance of one's own lapses counts for 50% of the growth because it is only then that the next step of coming out of the problem becomes possible. In the case of participant F, the overall stubbornness inside reduced, and he became more willing to change himself for the sake of accommodating others (T-4e-i).

Again, these changes are due to the lasting effect of purification. Purification increases one's sensitivity, that is, the ability to feel and respond to finer feelings. Several participants described gaining intuitive capacity and increasing clarity in thinking (T-4e-iv). It is due to the purity and sensitivity they could sense or intuit the heart's response for the things to come.

High spirit, energy, and positive outlook in life.

During Pranahuti, it was a common experience to feel a lot of energy and positivity (P-4e-iii). And this energy and positivity would percolate throughout the day in their daily life (T-4e-iii). One felt charged up after the morning meditation. "You have higher spirit to do thing," said participant E. Narayana

(2012a) noted that this feeling of a lot of energy and power being poured into one's heart during Pranahuti is one of the common experiences and reported by many practitioners (p. 193). This is because Pranahuti is essentially the offering of life energy into the hearts of the practitioners. This life energy is a very positive and uplifting force. These feelings confirmed having received the energy transmitted to them.

The higher level of energy and spirit was also felt during and after the morning meditation as participant A and E narrated (P-4e-iii). This is because the method of meditation on Divine Light essentially tries to draw the subtlest energy or consciousness by waiting for its descent. And it is made possible by the initial connection established through the introduction process in Pranahuti.

All these seem to have contributed to the development of positive outlook in these participants (T-4e-iv). This is a significant transformation for most participants. The positive outlook was exhibited through their changed attitude towards life in general and difficulties in particular. For example, for participant D, life is a testing ground for the lessons of wisdom gained through meditation. Participant A saw every difficulty as an opportunity to remember and move closer the goal. There was a lot of gratitude towards the practice (T-4e-v).

This transformation seems to be closely related to two factors. First, as discussed above, Pranahuti and morning meditation gave them a lot of positive energy, which got percolated throughout the day in their lives. Second, it is also due to fact that the negative thoughts and emotions in them had been drastically reduced or removed through assiduous purification in Pranahuti and self-effort as

discussed earlier. As negativity got removed, space was created for positive growth. This quality of positive outlook is an important aspect of *viveka*. When practitioners maintain positive outlook in life, they can move steadfastly towards the goal.

Fearlessness.

Participant C experienced fearlessness during Pranahuti (T-4e-iv). It was a unique experience. He felt like being in the care of the mother—secured, cared for, and fearless.

If we look into the root cause of fear, it is in fact due to the lack of *viveka* about one's real nature. As Narayana (2008a) explained,

Our original condition has been described by the masters and mystics in many ways, such as a state of enlightenment, luminous, unconditional love, unborn, Godlike etc., Master called our original condition as that of Nothingness. In this natural state, we were free from fear, doubt, insecurity, needs or wants. We lacked nothing. In fact, this nature was complete and all-embracing. (pp. 174-175)

When this wisdom, or *viveka*, of our real nature is clouded due to the accumulation of impressions, and one thinks oneself as different and independent from the whole, fear is the result (Narayana, 2006b, p. 236). However, when one re-establishes their connection with the inner-divine, then “all fear is gone” (p. 236). Sri Ramchandra of Fatehgarh (2008), the master of Sri Ramchandra of Shajahanpur, explained about this in another way: “In reality fear is a sign of being at a distance. Why should there be fear for the One who is responsible for our birth and sustenance?” (p. 143). Being at a distance is similar to being separate or independent. When one experiences their intimate and inherent connection with the Divine, and oneself as a part of the divine energy or *Prana*,

the feeling of distance and remoteness vanished naturally. The result of this is fearlessness. This was the experience of participant C. In PAM, the loss of fear is one of the initial steps in the development in *viveka*.

Being able to admit wrong and reduction of ego.

In real life, participants saw profound transformation in their ability to genuinely admit wrong and seek forgiveness for the wrongs committed (T-4e-x). And as humility developed in the practitioner, there was reduction of ego. They lost the sense of superiority that they used to carry, and started seeing only good in everyone (T-4e-ix). Participant D described these as being large changes. He said he had never used to admit wrongs because the ego was so pronounced. But now he would not hesitate to admit wrong and seek forgiveness from another person. He no longer felt ashamed because he felt dependency on the Divine and saw divinity in everyone. This transformation was due to the activation of *viveka* leading to the awareness and perception of divinity in all. Narayana (2006a) explained thus:

The awareness of the presence of the Master in each and every object and person enables one to be in the Divine thought always. . . . Also this condition enables the Sadhaka [practitioner] develop the twin traits of humility and tolerance to the required extent which is a must for progress in spirituality. The awareness of the Divine presence everywhere and thoroughly inadequate nature of oneself is the beginning of such jnana [spiritual knowledge] as is necessary to get rid of one's bloated concept of ego or self. (pp. 134-135)

The love of Master tempts one ever to move towards Him, relinquishing ego bit by bit. This attachment with the Divine was like that of child to the mother. As the question of shame in admitting one's faults did not seem to arise, it became easy for the participant to seek forgiveness for wrongs.

Activation of Vairagya (P-5, T-5)

As discussed earlier, the activation of *viveka* brings about the awareness of the transitory nature of life as well as the permanent essence being present in all—that is the Divine. This led to the development of love for the permanent essence. Love towards the Divine, along with the activation of *vairagya* or due attachment, leads to strong attachment towards the Divine. The activation of *vairagya* manifests in different hues in meditation experiences as well as in transformations for participants.

Participants experienced orientation towards Master during Pranahuti (P-5a). Here participants felt that after a flurry of irrelevant thoughts, their attention was suddenly shifted towards the goal and became completely oriented. Quietude and the remembrance of Master accompanied the state of focused attention in meditation.

Another significant experience was the exquisite and tender feeling of submission and acceptance to the will of the Divine during Pranahuti (P-5b). Participants wanted to yield and submit more to the Divine and become less and less of themselves due to the development of love. There was an unquestioning attitude of resigning themselves to the will of the Divine in all aspects of life.

In real life, these feelings were translated into significant transformations of acceptance of all that is in life as the will of the Divine for participants (T-5a). They found that they now could let go of things and feelings, allowing life events come and go, rather than trying to control them as they often used to. This was due to their increasing acceptance and goal orientation towards the Divine as a

result of the activation of due attachment or *vairagya*. For example, participant E felt totally carefree in the bosom of the Divine due to acceptance and dependency on Master. All these enabled participants to have more patience with themselves and tolerance with others and situations in life (T-5e).

Participant E and G displayed a stoic confidence in life when facing trying circumstance (T-5e). It seems that the outer changing environment had little impact on the practitioner when their mind and heart were attached to the changeless divine essence inside. They remained confident, calm, and balanced in life.

The sense of duty and increased efficiency and objectivity at work experienced by participant A and E (T-5c) reflects another aspect of *vairagya*. Participant E found herself no longer over-involved emotionally in activities, therefore were able to function more objectively and efficiently. This is the detached functioning due to the attachment with Divine, as described in the earlier introduction section. As one attaches oneself with the inner essence that pervades all and ceases to identify oneself with transitory events, one achieves an inner poise and balance such that they operate with the necessary amount of attention and objectivity in life. They could perform action without being soiled by the impact of results.

Resilience is another quality reported by participant E and C (T-5d). They found that they were able to bounce back to normalcy and balance very fast, even if they dipped into lower states of mind at times. Resilience is an essential quality for success in all dimensions in life. It is the “ability to recover from or adjust

easily to misfortune or change” (Narayana, 2008a, pp. 163–164). The cultivation of this ability can be attributed to the fostering of faith in Master, optimism and positive outlook about the future, perseverance in practice, and humility (pp. 164–165). Furthermore, Pranahuti infuses calmness and positive energy into participants, and enables them to restore balance more quickly. Participant G said she was being poured in that energy, and that which was lacking was filled. This gave her a feeling of courage. In addition, their inner attachment with the Divine also enabled participants to bounce back to normalcy more easily.

Orientation, yielding, resignation to the will of the Divine, and a stoic attitude are the result of the activation of *viveka* and *vairagya* as Narayana (2006a) revealed. They bring about a higher state of balance in the practitioner:

The state of mind at the first knot at the time of laya [mergence] is a quiet mind unperturbed during adversities and miseries as well as during joy and happiness and the aspirant is balanced in viewing everything from the understanding that all that is and happens is just and proper. . . . Knowing everything as an expression of that Consciousness he feels nothing as his own and abides in due attachment to all that is even as a trustee. He understands why he is what he is, and accepts everything and every happening as a will of God. (p. 130)

Due to the increasing attachment to the Divine (i.e. *vairagya* or due attachment), getting rid of possessiveness became a reality for participants (T-5a and T-5b), and this was a significant transformation for participant D. He shared the feeling that he himself was surprised how he could let go and come out of possessiveness with respect to relationships, and came to the conclusion that it was due to Pranahuti and the practices of point A and B.

Possessiveness could be of the physical, vital (relational), mental, and even aspirational planes (Narayana, 2006a, p. 139). It is a feeling of having an

exclusive right to or ownership of something out of clinging, which is the opposite of sharing. In the journey of PAM, the *viveka* of “everything that exists reveals the presence of the Divine” (p. 136) gets awakened in the practitioner. This awareness that everything is of divine nature further develops into the knowledge and feeling that “nothing belongs to us but is only that of the Divine (Vairagya)” (p. 136). Thus, the problem of possessiveness gets tackled (p. 139). Furthermore, knowledge about “the transient nature of things also proves the uselessness of possessiveness” (2005a, p. 21). It should be noted that the point B practice helps one loosen the grip of clinging; and point A practice enables practitioners develop sharing.

Sri Ramchandra (2008) stated in his writing (pp. 270–271) that *viveka* and *vairagya* are not practices or means adopted for inner development, but are automatic results of proper meditation practices and the help of Pranahuti in PAM. The meditative conditions experienced by participants and the qualities they developed consequently confirmed this.

On Master Theme C – Activation of Interdependency

This section discusses the third master theme—*activation of interdependency*—as presented in Chapter 4. The section starts with an introduction on the meaning of interdependency in PAM, then it proceeds onto a detailed analysis and discussion of the data under each theme.

Introduction on Interdependency

We saw that the activation of discriminative intelligence (*viveka*) in the participants led to the knowledge of certain permanent underlying essence being

present in all transitory events of life. This led to the awakening to higher purpose of life, and developing love towards the Divine. With the activation of due attachment towards the Divine, they shed several negative qualities and bondages that used to bind them. This gave them the feeling of relief in substantial terms.

With the development of love and further close relationship with the Divine, one realizes one's inseparable relationship with one's Divine nature and each individual as a manifestation of the same divine energy or pure consciousness. This is activation of interdependency. Knot 2 is the activity point for this condition (see Appendix B for the location of knot 2). The point is also known as the seat of *atman*—the point of the soul or true self (Narayana, 2006a, p. 145). The condition here is a reflection or pure mirror of the original consciousness when it is totally purified (pp. 142–143). Here “we begin to sense the fragrance of the Soul and similar visions appear within and without” (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, p. 312).

In the original research by Sri Ramchandra and Narayana, it is revealed that the condition of calmness, peace, lightness, freedom, blissful happiness, cleanliness, simplicity, and moderation are experienced here (Sri Ramchandra, 2008, pp. 311–312; Narayana, 2006a, pp. 140–147). Narayana described the condition of this knot:

The peace and happiness one feels here may be said to be similar to that of the Satchitananda¹¹ experience. . . . The influx of the divine flow in a sadhaka [practitioner] who has got the knot cleaned thoroughly will be so

¹¹ Sat-chit-ananda consists of *sat* (truth or existence), *chit* (consciousness), and *ananda* (bliss). See footnote 4 on “Sahasrara.”

intense that he may feel that he is drowned in Divinity itself. The grip and engulfing feeling experienced here in such a state cannot be described in words. It is total and all consuming. (p. 144)

The experiences of the practitioners, as to be discussed next, do reflect many of these shades of consciousness.

The feeling and understanding of oneself as an expression and integral part of the Divine (*Prana*) is so strong here that one finds oneself as “organically united with the Divine and separateness is lost” (p. 146). Due to this, one develops the confidence in oneself being capable of reaching the goal as well as the confidence in the Master taking oneself there (p. 146). Realizing the interdependent relationship with the Divine leads to the development of several wonderful qualities in the practitioners as we see in the following discussion.

Experiencing Freedom (P-6, T-6)

The experiences of freedom during Pranahuti was a significant theme for all participants. One dimension of this freedom vividly described by participants B, E, and F was the feeling of relief from certain emotional burdens and oppressions of thought (P-6a). A big weight was lifted off them, and they felt they were breaking free of the bindings of certain thoughts. They experienced de-tensioning and ease. Varadachari (2014) noted this de-tensioning effect could be seen as the first test of Pranahuti:

Now, what is the test of transmission. First thing is, there is a de-tension. I used to say that the tension condition is removed, whatever the tension be. The tension may be physical or sexual or even moral tension. Those tensions are removed or rather laid down, calmed. (p. 259)

The sense of quiet also accompanied the de-tensioning and relief.

In several participants' narrations, it is clear that they became progressively free from the encumbering and heavy effects of thoughts, emotions, desires, and attachments. Participant C described something was taken away from him during Pranahuti, and he was freed up, that is, his thoughts could move up and about more freely. This indicates mind was no longer bound by the heavier effect of thoughts present earlier. The pleasant effects associated with the experiences of lightness included feelings happiness, joy, and rejuvenation by the energy infused into them.

The second dimension of the freedom theme is the profound experiences of lightness and freshness (P-6b). Participant C described the energy during transmission made him feel totally purified, so fresh that it was as if nothing was in the mind while getting up when the Pranahuti session was over. After coming out of the sittings, the freshness participant H experienced was like seeing everything for the first time: "It feels new. . . . There is no pre-association of thoughts. . . . It comes fresh."

These experiences of relief, de-tensioning, lightness, and freshness are the result of purification by Pranahuti. Participant H's experience in particular shows that it is really the network of thoughts and feelings created by impressions which makes one feel something as old, burdensome, or even dark. When these impressions were removed in Pranahuti, fresh feeling and perspective was the result. This is like a pair of colored lenses being removed of their color coating, everything viewed through them then appears unadulterated and clear.

Sometimes the participant felt uncomfortable during Pranahuti. For example, participant E felt as though layers were peeled off from within. It was very intense to the extent that it was almost unpleasant. But as she emerged from her session she felt light and fresh. All this indicates the work done by Pranahuti was deep, and the result that followed was extreme lightness and freshness.

Sometimes when lightness during Pranahuti went deep, participants felt they were almost at the point of floating or flying in air (P-6c). These were powerful and overwhelming experiences. Participant H experienced freedom as the feeling of being without any boundaries, as though he was stretching his hands in open air. There was an accompanying feeling of happiness and freshness.

The transformation over the course of practice was increasing clarity of thought and lightness of being as participant C and E had found in themselves (T-6a). For participant E, over her two-and-a-half years of practice, she felt she kept getting “lighter and lighter” and that there was a “sense of lightness to the whole being.” She noted this was one of the most significant transformations for her as a whole.

This development of clarity of thought and lightness of being is an important index of freedom. Freedom really means freedom of thought. And it is a result of purification of the individual consciousness, as seen in participants’ experiences. Narayana (2006a) noted that it is also due to having developed attachment towards the Divine and disinterest in everything other than the goal during the unfolding of the journey in knot 1 and 1b earlier, the feeling of relief from the oppressive bondage of mundane existence and attachments is

experienced (p. 141). Since the bindings of the physical plane and all its associated thoughts are very strong, liberation from it is “really liberation in almost every sense” (p. 141). Lightness is the characteristic here, compared to the earlier heaviness. Thus, “the taste of liberation is had. . . . For the first time we feel lightness of being and feel as if we are birds soaring with both the wings fully stretched” (pp. 140–142).

Happiness and Contentment (P-7, T-7)

Participants experienced a sense of contentment during Pranahuti (P-7a). They felt a distinct feeling of being happy in settled-ness; not having any lack. There was a quiet satisfaction such that they felt like they did not need anything else.

These experiences in Pranahuti were translated into a profound feeling of happiness and contentment in life for all participants (T-7a). This was a significant transformation for them. Participant E correlated the feeling of contentment with the constant feeling of presence of Master in the heart. It was accompanying her all through life, filling in the lack that had troubled her much in life up till then. She had gotten a sense of fulfillment and completeness that she did not experience in life before, which was a very significant transformation for her. Participant D found that he no longer held any expectations on anything, and was happy with whatever was given to him in life. This feeling of being happy with whatever she got was also expressed by participant G. For participant A, he experienced contentment as more of a “balanced condition that prevailed inside”

(T-7b). There was a lot of harmony and moderation inside. He was free of conflict and stress and able to deal with everyday life in a more balanced manner.

Narayana wrote about this stage of consciousness called *santushti* (contentment), which is a key cornerstone in the development of consciousness:

It is a condition of a happy person. The positive aspect of this is the sadhaka [practitioner] finds a state of balance and this should lead to a state of contentment. This is the initial stage of accepting everything as a gift of the Divine... An implicit state of acceptance where he feels whatever he gets is just. (p. 37)

Another dimension of happiness is the incredible sense of joy and bliss most participants experienced during Pranahuti (P-7b). Once during Pranahuti, participant G saw a spring of water bursting out from earth and felt extremely happy. Participant C narrated the experience of seeing a white flower blooming and feeling contentment in that atmosphere. These experiences are associated with the condition of knot 2, which is connected with the element of water and it has the color of white (Narayana, 2006a, p. 144). The white flower blooming along with the feeling of contentment shows that the consciousness of this realm was activated in the participant, and thus he was experiencing these states.

Once during Pranahuti, participant D had a unique and exquisite experience. He felt a bubble in his heart was shrinking and shrinking until it reached its tiniest and finally the bubbled got evaporated. Then he felt himself as nothing. Enormous silence and extreme lightness and happiness came upon him. In this experience, the bubble was in fact the ego self. It reduced dramatically due to the infusion of Pranahuti. When the bubble evaporated, the result was extreme lightness and happiness.

The other dimension of happiness was a feeling of being energized often experienced by participants (P-7c). Participant G said the feeling was as if someone was putting energy into her and suddenly she was boosted when she had been down. Pranahuti is essentially the offering of life energy into the hearts of participants. It is typical and common that the practitioners felt energized. Sometimes the energy was felt as warmth of love in the heart even as participant C narrated.

Interdependency Activation (P-8, T-8)

The activation of the condition of Interdependency resulted in several profound experiences in the participants during Pranahuti. These experiences, acted as catalysts, led to the development of several wonderful qualities in them.

Part and whole relationship and dependency.

Participants D and G experienced these profound non-ordinary states during Pranahuti (P-8a). On one occasion, participant D felt himself as a small dot floating in the vast emptiness of the big universe. On another occasion, he felt himself as the “tiniest” particle in the big universe; and he experienced the insignificance of self. Participant G had the experience of togetherness—all humanity as one family, and a part of this big universe. The feeling that came was happiness.

The dependent and unitive nature of self with the Divine was further revealed in the exquisite and intimate experiences that participant A and C described (P-8b). In that condition, participant C felt like a baby in the lap of the mother, completely cared for. There was force present all around him.

Participant A felt totally dependent on the force present inside and all around him; like a child to the mother, “without her I would be nowhere” was the feeling.

These experiences reveal the true nature of relationship between the individual and the Divine is that of a part to the whole. There is an interdependency in all of life. The experiences of A and C above revealed the further dimension of the dependent nature of self on the Divine. These are the different aspects of knowledge and wisdom that get unfolded in knot 2 as Narayana (2006a) explained:

One of the major intricacies that get untwined here is the understanding that one has no individual existence and all are inter-dependent. The delusion of independent self is got rid of and a full understanding of all existence emerges. It gets realized that the individual is dependent on the Divine and the Divine equally so. We find ourselves as organically united with the Divine and separateness is lost. (p. 146)

This loss of separateness and the unity with the Divine was experienced by the participants in their own ways as seen above.

Confidence.

Participants experienced a lot of confidence during Pranahuti (P-8d). And they developed enormous confidence in themselves and the Divine, completely devoid of the timidity and low self-esteem that used to govern them (T-8c). They felt confidence and courage with respect to the goal, the path, and themselves reaching the goal. It was a strong and positive force. This was a significant transformation for them

This confidence was developed consequent to the knowledge of one's interdependency with the Divine as discussed above. To the extent one feels organically united with the Divine and part of it without separation, to that extent

“confidence in one’s self as capable of reaching the goal develops fully and confidence in the Master gets established” (Narayana, 2006a, p. 146). They were experienced by the participants as being capable of reaching the goal.

Plainness and simplicity.

Practitioners experienced plainness during Pranahuti (P-8e). The feeling is hard to describe and is often expressed in a negative way as the absence of feelings and emotions by participants. There is a blank feeling without oscillation. Plainness and simplicity are key characteristics or states of consciousness of knot 2 as Sri Ramchandra (2008, p. 311) noted. The purity is such that it is said to be the reflection of the original consciousness (Narayana, 2006a, p. 144)

In real life, participants became more straightforward and plain in expressing their thoughts and feelings (T-8b). For example, participant H would not keep things in the heart and brood on unpleasant events or negative comments of others. Participant B and H would now speak up and express their feelings and thoughts as opposed to holding them back as they used to do. Participant H also found moderation of anger (T-8c).

Universal fraternity and Parahita (thinking and doing good to others).

Participants experienced strong feelings of universal brotherhood, compassion, good will for all, and an outpouring of love for others during Pranahuti (P-8f, P-8g, P-8h). The whole world was felt as one family, participant A described his experience during Pranahuti (P-8f). There was a deep sense of community and universal brotherhood where they felt everyone was deeply

connected. The expansion here is an expansion of thought from that of self to the whole of humanity. One does not find distinction between oneself and others, even as participant A expressed. And this made him feel everyone as his own family. In a way, it was a dramatic shift of perspective from a narrower view to a much broader view of universal brotherhood.

Sometimes the outpouring of love coming out of *satsang* was such that participant G said she would “just see love everywhere!” (P-8h). She wanted pour out this love into everyone’s heart. Experiencing such profound love and intimacy with the Divine was not enough for them. The concomitant feeling was that they wished everyone might also experience this love and move towards the Divine. Thus, helping and service-related thoughts became an all-consuming urge in them.

In real life, participants observed significant transformations in the development of love, concern, sympathy, empathy, and care towards others (T-8d). The fraternal feeling was such that participant A felt others were his own family, even though biologically or socially he was not related to them in anyway. He felt no separation. Their hurt and wrongs committed were all part of him, and he would pray for the betterment of others. He felt others’ mistakes as his own mistakes, and would repentant for the same (T-8e).

These feelings were fraternity experienced and developed in the real sense. The fraternal love for others got developed due to the activation of knot 2, which reflects the characteristic of *sat-chit-ananda*. Narayana (2006a) revealed the reason for the feeling of universal brotherhood:

This is also the stage when the compassion to fellow beings grows and seeds of love and concern for others develop. This is because Ananda [bliss] and Sat [Existence] do not know boundaries. One feels that there is no real barrier between him and others and a feeling that boundaries are only conventions starts sprouting at this stage. This [Knot 2 or Atman] is called Spiritual Heart mainly because of this feeling. One feels for all the fellow beings and love and concern for others are predominantly developed. . . . Prayer develops into a new dimension here and changes from personal to the universal in character (pp. 145-147)

Fraternity was expressed in participants' changed behavior. They now cherished other people's successes, feeling happy for them (T-8f) and tried to help others to grow by giving them opportunities (T-8g). They tried to do good to others, not only in the physical plane, but also through their positive will and attitude and suggestions to help them in solving their problems in life. They experienced new thinking and perspective on how to help others (T-8h). Several participants pointed out that these patterns of thought were not there before and were something new for them.

This would also mean the development of certain core principles such as *ahimsa* (Non-injury) and *asteya* (Non-covetousness) that participants F and H found themselves developed (T-8j-ii and T-8j-iii). The transformation for participant H reveals another dimension of *ahimsa*—the quality of non-injury (T-8j-ii). When he was treated with less than kindness by relatives, he did not take it into heart or bear grudges, and would laugh off the matter. The development of *ahimsa* “arises as we progress in spirituality and is consequent to the development of empathy and sympathy” (Narayana, 2011b, p. 20).

These transformations exhibit the quality of *parahita*—thinking good of and doing good for others. They were due to the work of *flow diversion* in

Pranahuti. When the flow of thought energy which goes to the lower heart gets diverted to the upper heart, a new, positive, and expanded thinking pattern gets awakened in the person. When the flow is further diverted to the Atman, that is, knot 2, one develops more love and concern for others. Interest in one's self takes less precedence than that taken in others. This is a major shift from self-concern or self-centeredness to other-centeredness. The transformations observed by the participants indicate this significant shift of consciousness.

On Master Theme D – Activation and Growth into Divine Consciousness

This section discusses the final master theme: the activation and growth into divine consciousness. Here the Divine becomes the center of concern when the participants enter into these realms of consciousness. The chapter starts by introducing the various conditions pertaining to divine consciousness, then proceeds to an analysis of participants' experiences.

Introduction on Devotion, Surrender, and Balance

After the activation of *viveka* and *vairagya*, one starts attaching oneself to the goal and understanding their interdependency with the Divine. In the next phase of the journey, the practitioner becomes devoted to the goal. The practitioner now embarks onto the journey “towards infinity in the real sense of the term” (Narayana, 2006a, p. 147). This is activation of devotion, which belongs to knot 3. The states of consciousness here take the form of constant aspiration and restlessness towards the goal (p. 147). This is activation of devotion, which belongs to knot 3. It was this passion for the real that seeks to burn off one's own lower nature and all that is impure so that one can leap upward

towards a higher state of being (p. 148). Love and pining are experienced, and practitioners become single pointed towards the object of love. Constant remembrance of the goal and total dedication to service in life are the states of mind and qualities that get developed here (p. 150).

When devotion intensifies and crosses the limit, one starts experiencing helplessness, due to which one yields to the will of the Divine. The fire of devotion now turns into a peculiar coolness when the practitioner experiences Divinity yawning towards them and a kind of reassurance is felt in the heart (Narayana, 2006a, p. 152). This is the activation of *surrender*, which belong to knot 4. The color blue is associated with this knot. The states of consciousness here are those of total dependence on the Divine. Calmness, tranquility, and silence are experienced.

In the next stage of development, one comes to knot 5, the center for balance. “It is vast and various experiences are had here”, said Narayana (2006a, p. 154). The color blue of knot 4 turns into violet here. “One goes beyond the mental consciousness of oneself and the expansion of the self is experienced” (p. 158). This was expressed through several exquisite experiences of no-boundary consciousness by participants discussed below. This knot is also connected with insight and visions.

Activation of Devotion (P-9, T-9)

Participants experienced intense love and craving towards Master during Pranahuti (P-9a). The longing and the pang of love was such that they felt they could not live without Him. And there was single pointed orientation towards

Master, where the attention was entirely centered on the objective of meditation during Pranahuti (P-9b). They were not aware of anything else other than the object that they sought for (i.e. the Master). These intense devotional feelings led to a strong and earnest desire to dedicate oneself to the service of the Divine (P-9c).

In real life, participants felt a constant aspiration and determination for higher life and dedicated themselves to practice and service (T-9a, T-9b). They constantly remembered the goal and were in His company as a feeling of Presence in the heart, as participant E narrated vividly (T-9b). Another key transformation was the growing urge to serve others and the Divine in whatever way one could (T-9c). Participant B and G started committing themselves by volunteering in school and children education in addition to their regular work.

The stage of devotion towards the goal marks the beginning of the “march towards the infinity in the real sense of the term” (Narayana, 2006a, p. 147). The deep love and craving show participants’ intense aspiration and pining for the Divine, which is the key characteristic of the consciousness here (p. 147). Intense emotions were present. The reason is because the heat, or inner fire, or aspiration generated by the practitioners sought to burn off all the impurities of the lower nature including all attachments which belong to the earthly and watery realms (p. 148). Therefore, the devotion “intense, emotional, and heavy on the heart” (p. 148).

Participant C described some of the emotional states he passed through during this phase. He narrated seeing flames in a mountainous terrain along with

the remembrance of Master during Pranahuti (P-9a). Narayana (2006a) wrote that knot 3 is associated with the fire element: “Luminosity appears as bursting flames. . . . When thought particles penetrate Agni [fire] point, they are seen as those present over fire rarefied and bright” (p. 149). Therefore, the flames along with the feelings of remembrance of Master indicate that the participant was having the experiences due to the activation of this knot.

The single-pointedness in meditation narrated by participants is similar to the *ekagravritti*,ⁱ or concentrated state, described in the traditional yogic literature, where the mind is concentrated on the object of meditation. In brief summary, there are generally five categories or states or levels of mind or mental life. They are *kshipta* (restless), *mudha* (torpid), *vikshipta* (distracted), *ekagra* (concentrated), and *samadhan* (settled) (Narayana, 2008b, pp. 13–14). In the first three states, the mind is not regulated and orbits around sensory inputs, burdened by lethargy and ignorance (Narayana, 2008b, p. 14). In the system of PAM, these lower states were purged through the help of Pranahuti and the individual daily practices as can be seen in the earlier discussion of the activation of *viveka*, *vairagya*, and interdependency. The state of *ekagravritti* or single-pointedness is arrived at after passing through these three lower states. In the more mature state of devotion, the practitioner becomes single-pointedly oriented to the goal.

This frequent remembrance of the goal or Master experienced by participants is a natural development of the meditational practice, and the key that leads one towards the goal. As Narayana (2006a) explained:

It acquires efficiency when the abhyasi [practicant] has become devoted to the object of meditation. It then ceases to be dry abhyas [practice] and

becomes a luscious all-absorbing engagement. The fire of love and devotion alone burns down trivial trash, and wins the gold from the dross. (p. 150)

The dedication to service experienced by participants was a natural consequence to the activation of devotion. To love someone or some cause means giving up one's interest to serve that cause. Therefore, serving the Divine, which is present in all life, became an earnest desire in participants, as they observed.

Activation of Surrender (P-10, T-10)

The next superordinate theme is related the activation of surrender. The activity point for surrender is knot 4. The state of consciousness here is “connected with the intense feelings of devotion and total surrender to Master” (Narayana, 2006a, p. 152). Participants had several exquisite experiences which belong to this realm.

Experiencing submission, helplessness, self-offering, intimacy, and closeness.

Participant D experienced an exquisite feeling of submission during Pranahuti (P-10a). The experiences in this realm were so tender and sweet that it seems they could only be conveyed through silence. D felt like seeking permission for a place to sit at the feet of the divine Presence; there was such softness in the heart. The understanding came for him during Pranahuti that “All this body and soul is Yours” (P-10b), “All is Yours” and “We are the Divine expressions” (P-10c). That is, all belongs to the Divine. He experienced the condition of the offering of the self totally to the Divine (P-10c). The condition of self-offering he had was a sublime state of consciousness known as

atmanivedana,¹² the giving or total dedication of one's being for the cause of the Divine (Narayana, 2011b, p. 150).

In the spiritual context, to serve the cause of the Divine would mean assisting others on their journey towards higher realms of consciousness. The 9 P.M. universal prayer as a part of the PAM practice is the spiritual service where the practitioner exercises their will through prayer such that all move towards the Divine. While offering this prayer, participant H experienced an exquisite state of helplessness (P-10d). He wished others might also experience their own inner Divine even as he had felt himself. The helpless feeling arose because he felt devoted to the cause and yet was not able to fulfill the task due to his limited capacity. And this is what leads one to submit to the Master in one's humble capacity and allow the will of the Divine to work through them.

With all that longing and craving, there came the response from the Divine as well. Participant E experienced exquisite feeling of closeness and intimacy with Him that could hardly be expressed in words: "There is sort of sweetness to it or sort of feeling [of] being wanted," she said (P-10e). This intimacy and closeness is the reassurance from the Divine. It is what enables the practitioner to feel that "Divinity is yawning towards him" (Narayana, 2006a, p. 152). Thereby the fire of devotion turns into coolness (p. 152).

Silence and vacuum.

When one submits to the Divine, one becomes in tune with it, and there comes the experiences of silence. Silence during Pranahuti was a profound

¹² *Atman* is the Self. *Nivedana* is dedicating. *Atmanivedana* is the dedicating of the self.

experience had by all participants (P-10f). On one hand, there appeared to be no thoughts at all during silence; on the other hand, the Presence of Master was felt very vividly in that state. The conditions of deep calm, peace, tranquility, lightness, and simplicity also accompanied the silence.

Earlier, while discussing the phenomenon of absorption, we learned about the cause for having thoughts. Thoughts are bound to exist, in fact. But when thoughts are in tune with divine consciousness, they are not rejected by the mind and are not being noticed by the mind. So, one experiences the state as silence (Narayana, 2011a, pp. 175-176). It indicates one is in tune with or has become one with the inner Divine in those moments:

When you are meditating you will find that there are moments, some seconds, fractions of seconds or minutes while your mind goes almost blank which we generally tend to call absorbency. Absorbed, the thought got absorbed into the essence [Divine]. . . . So this thought, our thought which was devotion, when it matures, what happens is that God alone or the essence alone becomes most predominant and then you become one with it and when you become one with it that is the state of Saranagati or state of surrender. That is how it is experienced in meditation. (p. 177)

Silence indicates a surrendered state. In fact, the moment participant E became aware of the silence and started observing it, she came out of the very silence. This awareness or thinking about silence conceptualizes it by having an idea about it. Thus, the mind at this point is no longer merged in the essence.

The vacuum experience that participant E had was a significant non-ordinary state (P-10e). She felt “No thoughts, no energy. You were in a zone of nothing.” And for the next two days after the sitting, she was experiencing being in a higher plane of balance throughout. According to Narayana (2005b), vacuum, or silence, is in fact the very character of reality or void, and is the base

canvas of the mind, where all thoughts arise (p. 12). The repeated direct experiences of the silence in Pranahuti helps one understand the ground reality and transforms the person by bringing them closer and closer to that reality or essence.

Fortitude and forbearance.

In real life, participant C exhibited the quality of forbearance by facing and enduring the difficult circumstances, rather than running away from them (T-10b). Participant D was able not only to forbear miseries and injustices in life, but also take them as divine blessings and to feel grateful for them (T-10b). This is fortitude. Fortitude is when one goes beyond enduring the unpalatable circumstances and actually feels grateful for them. Fortitude and forbearance are qualities in the realm of surrender (Narayana, 2011b, pp. 147-148). When one becomes totally dependent on the Divine, one thinks and feels the Divine knows what the best is for them, and is able to submit oneself to the will of the Divine, taking miseries as divine blessings. The psychological state of surrender manifests as the quality of fortitude in real life.

Exquisite Experiences in the Realm of Balance (P-11, T-11)

This superordinate theme is related to the exquisite experiences in the realm of balance. The realm of balance is connected with knot 5. Here the conditions include many feelings such as vastness, openness, hope, reverence, and balance. There is uniformity all through. When knot 5 is activated, practitioners experienced exquisite conditions of such nature.

Vastness, no boundary, all as one family, and openness.

Five of 8 participants experienced a sense of vastness during Pranahuti (P-11a). There was an incredible sense of freedom, expansion, and openness experienced along with the vastness. And it gave them a lot of happiness. “Wide horizons are there, you feel no boundaries.”

Narayana (2003a) wrote about this stage of consciousness: “Once you come to that stage of air, you come to the stage of ether, where everything is balanced. . . . The vastness of being is what is experienced” (p. 408). The experiences of vastness lead to “an experience of expansion as well” (p. 408).

A profound sense of openness was experienced by participants (P-11a). This was an openness of the heart towards the Divine, which results in various significant impacts in life. For example, participant H experienced a profound openness before Master during bedtime prayer, where he unburdened all of himself before Him and experienced tremendous relief. Extreme gratitude and thankfulness followed. The openness that participant B experienced during Pranahuti resulted in shifts of perspective which led her to understand others’ perspective. For participant G and F, the openness of heart led them to become open to share thoughts and feelings with others, and it was a significant transformation (T-11b).

Steadiness, uniformity, and evenness.

Participant C experienced uniformity and evenness during Pranahuti, where he felt a lot of balance, and there was reverence towards Master (P-11c). Participant D experienced being elevated to a higher state of consciousness, where

there was a lot of calmness and steadiness (P-11d). It was as though everything came to a standstill and was totally steady and silent. In real life, participant D found himself to be a much more balanced person, unperturbed by the ups and downs in life (T-11c). He described this as staying in the middle, unlike a pendulum which swings back and forth.

The nature of *Prana* or life force is all pervasive, uniform, and balanced. When one submits to it, one becomes one with it and experiences similar states of uniformity and steadiness. They become balanced in life. The transformations had by participants show that they obtained a higher level of balance.

All are equal and the loss of prejudice.

Participant D had a profound experience of “All are equal” during Pranahuti. This experience made him lose all the prejudice he had till then (P-11e). It led him to accept and see the good in others, and to stop judging others. In real life, the loss of prejudice and a judgmental attitude was a significant transformation for participants (T-11b). When they lost the sense of superiority, strong opinions, and prejudice about others, they became kinder and softer individuals, as in the case of participant E.

The loss of prejudice is due to the development of the feeling and perception of uniformity and equality, which are the characteristics of knot 5. Due to the uniform and equal perception, one does not cling to preconceived, erroneous, or partial views about others.

Reverence, awe, purity, and hope.

Often the feeling of reverence and awe accompanied the experience of vastness and no boundary (P-11a, P-11f). Vastness implies infinitude and therefore leads to veneration and awe. The same feeling was also generated when they experienced the presence of Master with that pure and vast love. This theme is also related to the “Experiencing love” (P-4a) and the “Presence” themes (P-2e). Participant C said awe rose from within because he felt such “a great being is looking [at] me,” showering blessings and grace. The helpless and humble feeling before the Presence which participant C so exquisitely experienced (P-2e) was in fact due to the inadequacy of self in the face of an all-consuming and all-encompassing love. Participant F said the direct coming into contact with such “higher power”, something never experienced before, put him into a humbled state. Others felt very small and insignificant before that Presence.

Intense feeling of purity was experienced by participant D and G (P-11g). The location of knot 5 is located at the base of the throat and also is known as the *visudha chakra*. Visudha means *extra pure*. This is a realm of pure consciousness (Narayana, 2006a, p. 413), where higher consciousness descends from above and, passing through, reaches the lower centers.

One significant experience had by participant E during Pranahuti was the sense of hope. It felt like the “promise of good things” (P-11d). After this experience, for a month or two, there was a predominant feeling of hope in her life. For participant G, experiencing hope as a deep-rooted feeling inside carrying her in life was a signification transformation (T-11d). This was against the

backdrop of difficult situations in her life at a time when she felt she did not know how to go forward. “But hope is there” was the feeling, particularly after a sitting in which she experienced a lot hope and positivity.

The state of hope is experienced here perhaps due to the fact that this is the opening of a passage to the higher realm of universal consciousness. The promise of the higher realm of unity consciousness makes one feel hopeful.

Synthesized Summary

In Chapter 2, we introduced the transformation of consciousness defined in PAM system as a two-step process: a journey from the lower to upper, and then onto divine consciousness. We also proposed a framework, as illustrated by Figure 6, which epitomizes the vertical and horizontal journey of consciousness transformation where Pranahuti acts as the catalyst for change. Viewing this from these frameworks, here we lay out a brief sketch of participants’ journeys of consciousness transformation, which summarizes the essence of the analysis.

The proposed framework presents both the vertical and horizontal journey of consciousness transformation. Viewed from the angle of the vertical inner journey, all aspects of consciousness transformation revolve around the awakening and re-discovering of the real essence inside one’s heart and developing one’s relationship with It. Initially due to the activation of *viveka* or discriminative intelligence (knot 1) through the work of Pranahuti, the practitioner first gained the experiential knowledge of a certain permanent essence underlying all transitory phenomena in life. Love and attachment with the inner essence got developed in them.

The activation of *vairagya* or due attachment (knot 1b) resulted in orientation towards the Divine, and acceptance and resignation to the will of the Divine. As they developed close relationship with the inner Divine with the activation of interdependency (knot 2), they experienced themselves as expressions of the same divine energy, and as part of the whole. This experiential knowledge or wisdom not only gave participants the proper perspective about themselves in relation to the Cosmos, but also allowed them to relate to others in a new and fraternal way.

As the relationship with the Divine matured further, participants experienced intense love and craving towards Master. They felt a constant aspiration and determination for higher life and dedicated themselves to practice and service, becoming single-pointedly devoted to the goal. This is the condition due to the activation of devotion (knot 3), or devotion to the goal of realizing one's real divine nature. When love and devotion crosses a threshold, many of them experienced the condition of surrendering to the will of the Divine. This is due to the activation of surrender (knot 4). The related conditions are expressed in the form of self-offering and total silence. Intimacy and closeness were the exquisite states had by them in this realm. The surrender to the divine consciousness led one to the stage of balance when knot 5 got activated. Many participants had such exquisite experiences of no boundary consciousness, openness, uniformity, awe and reverence, purity, and hope. Balance is the very nature of the all-pervasive uniform Prana. To the extent of one submits oneself to

the divine consciousness, one becomes one with it and consequently obtains higher degree of balance.

Viewing from the framework of the two-step process of PAM, the journey of consciousness transformation is about moving from lower to upper then to the divine realm of consciousness, changing one's perspective, and acquiring many good qualities along the way. In the journey moving from lower to upper consciousness, participants found that the state of mind changed from that of peripheral to calm, from negative to positive, and from circular and stagnancy to clarity. Significantly, they found themselves being awakened to a higher life with a greater purpose. The presence of the Divine in the heart was something real and permanent that gave meaning to their lives. With a new sense of purpose, they became determined and confident in treading the path. They got rid of several negative qualities such as the sense of superiority, possessiveness, etc., and acquired positive qualities and principles, such as positive outlook, gratitude, truthfulness and honesty, ability to admit wrong etc. The development of attachment to the Divine due to the activation of *vairagya* led them to acquire the qualities of letting go, acceptance, a sense of duty, and increased efficiency and objectivity. They were able to face adverse circumstances in life with confidence, patience, and stoic attitude.

In summary, the study found that almost all participants achieved a good degree of regulation of mind resulting in the state of calm (*sama*) and some participants had developed control over senses (*dama*) to a reasonable extent. Many had achieved a general free state of mind that was characterized by clarity,

lightness, ease, loss of fear, courage, and confidence. Happiness and contentment in everyday life were the predominant state of consciousness for all of them.

These transformations showed the gaining of inner strength in the participants.

Many participants found themselves developing love, concern, empathy, sympathy, and compassion towards others. They found the boundary of their individual being was crossed and they saw all of humanity as one family. They tended to think and do good for others with an expanded perspective. It was here that the outer, or horizontal aspect of their journey got expressed. Happiness through giving, sharing, and service became a new paradigm for them. Yielding to and cooperation with others became easy.

The movement from the lower to upper consciousness is a profound shift from being self-centered to other-centered—from being concerned about one's own welfare related to “me” and “mine” to that of others and humanity at large. The study found that the process of transformation was all about changing attitudes, and the quality of thoughts, feelings, and behavior. In other words, the overall state of our being. Getting rid of negative qualities, being established in good qualities and principles, obtaining a state of calmness, peace, happiness, thinking good and doing good to others are the primary characteristics of upper consciousness manifested by participants.

The study found that almost all positive attributes in knot 1 and 2 as shown in “The Associated Positive Development and Probable Pitfalls of the Five Knots of Pind Desh” in Table 5 (see Appendix A) and the “Pind Desh Self-Evaluation Tool” developed by Narayana (2010c, pp. 77–82), which measures the

progress of consciousness transformation, were had by this group of participants. The per participant theme count analysis in Appendix D (Table 6 and Figure 9) confirms that among the fairly large number of transformation experiences had by participants, majority of them fall under master theme B and C, that is, activation of *viveka*, *vairagya*, and interdependency. Thus, the study found all participants had established themselves in the realm of upper consciousness to a significant extent.

As the study moved on further, it found participants marched towards divine consciousness, where there occurred a profound shift of consciousness towards centering various aspects of their lives on the divine essence. They came into contact with some exquisite states of divine consciousness. Constant aspiration, remembrance of the goal, and dedication to service in everyday life became the main mode of being for them. This is devotion to the goal. Some participants acquired the qualities of prayerful attitude, reverence, forbearance, and fortitude. Still some acquired a greater sense of openness and some of them lost prejudice and judgement attitude which separated them from others, and they became softer and kinder individuals. Some were endowed with greater sense of hope, treading life with higher balance. Many of the conditions and qualities of knots 3, 4, 5 in Table 4 (see Appendix A) and the “Pind Desh Self-Evaluation Tool” were present in many of participants. The theme count analysis in Appendix D (Table 6 and Figure 9) shows the number of transformation experiences had by participants. The study thus finds that many have further progressed into the Divine consciousness.

Reflection on the Bracketing Process

The researcher engaged in the bracketing process, which is central to phenomenological studies. It was a good learning process, rewarding yet not without difficulties. The original intent of the study was to investigate a totally new phenomenon and bringing it to the notice of the academic and non-academic communities for the benefit of humanity at large. The researcher's background as a practitioner of PAM certainly played an important role in the study, from the study design phase to the interviews and data analysis. At times, the passion for the work and its motive, and the researcher's own personal experiences with the practice (which were beyond words), caused certain overwhelming feelings, which persisted till the final phase of the work. This was the background behind the bracketing process. The bracketing process resulted in the following key observations:

During the design phase, the researcher received much help from the qualitative research expert of the committee to develop and refine the two research questions that guided the design of the list of interview questions. The research and interview questions were designed to be open-ended in accordance with phenomenological research approach, and precluded assumptions about the answers the researcher might receive.

During the data collection phase, interviews were prepared with intent. Preparations for the interviews involved mentally orienting to the task at least a week before the interview date, and offering prayer. The mental orientation of the researcher was to be as humble as possible in order to maintain a receptive mode

to the participants. Knowing that the participants might be sharing some of their innermost feelings, the researcher felt it only proper to hold the participant and the whole event in reverence and gratitude. In this way, it became easy to set aside expectations during interview, thus helping the bracketing process.

During the interviews, the researcher went with the flow set by the participants, allowing consciousness to carry them both to wherever it went. The main bracketing effort was to be careful not to lead the participants by bringing out new descriptive terms to influence them, even when they were struggling for words. In all interviews, both the researcher and the interviewees were comfortable with silence and pauses. Sometimes when the topic branched out into several important areas, the researcher then tried to bring the interviewee back to visit each of the sub-areas. The researcher's own experiences with PAM practice played an important role. She was able to understand the terminologies used by them as well as the way certain feelings and experiences were expressed. The background helped in drawing out and understanding the participants' experiences

Overall, the interviews occurred in their own natural flow and were unique experiences for the researcher. Sometimes the border between the researcher and the interviewee became very thin and it was rather difficult to maintain an awareness of neutral stance while being empathetic to all the outpouring and sharing of hearts. At time, both were engaged in a transcendental mood, resonating in the same consciousness of the sacred experiences they were relating. This process seemed less of a research study than an amazing journey into the

inner terrain of eight good souls. For some interviews it was as though the researcher was being carried through along by a certain energy that was both peaceful and light from start to finish. This gave a satisfaction and solace to the heart that was inexplicable. Looking back, it is still touching and somewhat surprising for the researcher to have experienced such open-hearted sharing from the participants and the ease with which they shared. There was a sense that the participants were happy to share their experiences with the researcher and the larger community through this study.

What the researcher learned from these experiences is, on one hand, absolute neutral and aloof stand in interviews as a bracketing effort is quite difficult to maintain because consciousness resonate with each other. Secondly, bracketing need not mean totally keeping aloof and distance from the feelings of the participants. Rather, making oneself aware of the moments of resonance and empathy of interviewees' embodied feelings can open up broader perspective, than deliberately keeping aloof inside.

Bracketing during the data-analysis stage posed more challenges for the researcher. Several themes emerged. First, from the start there was a zeal to perform the research in the most comprehensive and thorough manner. The eight interviews resulted in 18.5 hours of recording, which translated into more than 300 pages of transcripts (single spaced). As the study progressed, the researcher realized it was indeed a rather large amount of data for detailed processing and analysis and at times found it a bit daunting and even exhausting. After being immersed in the data analysis of one participant, it required significant time pause

to start on the analysis of the next, in order to have a break from the influence of the earlier analysis.

Second, the analysis phase required in-depth understanding of many aspects of the PAM practice, its philosophy, experiences of the forerunners of the path, etc., in order to be able to truly comprehend the nature of the experiences offered by the participants and their correlations with the PAM theory. It enabled the researcher to go deep into the subject to learn the many aspects of PAM and her own experiences in meditation. It took a lot of time for these experiences as well as the researcher's understanding of them to mature. The researcher found at times feeling inadequate and overwhelmed, and yet many more times blissful and exhilarated due to the dawning of new wisdom and clarity. Third, the ego of the researcher during the process, the necessity to adjust herself to the reality of the data, as well as her understanding, or the lack thereof, were all observed. A number of times the researcher incorrectly interpreted and connected the experiences of the participants with some of the more rarified experiences presented in the PAM literature, and they were corrected by the external committee member who is the PAM subject matter expert. These were good lessons in the task of bracketing for the researcher. The zeal and ambition tapered down as a broader and more balanced perspective was gained.

Through all of these challenges, the help rendered by the committee members was the driving force that enabled the researcher to complete the study. The initial guidance from the qualitative research expert of the committee regarding methods of labeling and possible ways of classifying themes in

qualitative research was indispensable in the overall theme map construction (as seen in chapter 4). One of the key learning from the process was that one must take and present experiences as they are, and not project them in any way by over interpretation or over linking. One of the key outcome of the bracketing process was to view one's own experiences and those of others with a more balanced view. This is by trying to constantly and consciously maintain sincerity and truthfulness while dealing with data, making an effort to question oneself internally as well as taking help in validating the interpretation from committee members and subject matter experts. The process also enabled the researcher to learn to let go of many expectations in life in general, aside from those related to the study. But overall, the entire process was indeed difficult to describe. The researcher found herself to have been impacted greatly and most positively, and transformed as well over the course of the study.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the data analysis on the significant experiences of PAM practice in addressing the first research question, the first major finding of this research was that this group of participants experienced a large number of positive non-ordinary states. Of these, more than 95% of the reported experiences occurred during Pranahuti. Reported experiences of altered states of consciousness were in part somatic and psychological in nature, and psychic, noetic, and mystical in part; some were particularly exquisite and profound. The first major conclusion that can be drawn from this is Pranahuti, or the *Yogic Transmission* of pure consciousness or *Prana* (life force), produced positive non-ordinary states experienced by the participants during meditation.

Based on the data analysis on the significant experiences of transformations in addressing the second research question, the second major finding of this study is that this group of participants experienced many significant and positive changes, such as acquisition of positive qualities, values and principles, general wellbeing, psychological balance, and behavioral improvements over the course of practice. They had achieved transformation of consciousness and progressed into the upper consciousness to a significant extent, and most of them had further development in the realm of divine consciousness. The study found a very close correlation between the meditation experiences (i.e. the states of consciousness) during Pranahuti and the transformations obtained in participants' lives. Therefore, the second conclusion to be drawn from this is that the PAM practice had enabled all participants to move from the lower to the upper

plane of consciousness. It also enabled many to move further into the realm of divine consciousness, resulting in various significant transformations in terms of shifting of perspectives, and gaining positive qualities and attitudes in life.

This research study had started with the story of the philosophy fish who was searching for the ocean of reality, desiring to experience it for itself. The fact is human beings have always been confronted with questions of who they are, and what their possibilities might be. From this study, we saw a glimpse of that new possibility. Through a thorough and systematic investigation and presentation, the study showed glimpses of these higher possibilities experienced during meditation, and then actuated, lived, and integrated into the real lives of the eight participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

Given the findings and conclusions above, the researcher suggests a few ideas and recommendations for future research and studies. The first recommendation prompted by the first major finding and conclusion is to explore the higher realms of consciousness and its vast possibilities in PAM by loosening the 10-year practice limit. The experiences presented in this study belong to the first five knots in the realm of Pind Desh—the realm of shell consciousness. In the map of consciousness discovered by Sri Ramchandra, which perhaps should be more appropriately termed as super-consciousness, there are the higher realms of cosmic or universal consciousness, para-cosmic, and beyond (called as “Central Region”). The founder and a few forerunners of the system had described their own personal experiences of these higher realms (Narayana,

2006a; Sri Ramchandra, 2008; Varadachari, 2014). Future studies could explore the experiences of meditation as well as transformations and growth of practitioners who may have had obtained such rarefied states and stages of consciousness, in order to understand the further reach of consciousness and its possibilities, for example, what it is like to live in these higher realms.

The second recommendation is to explore the experiences of trainers—how the trainer fomented higher conditions in practitioners through Pranahuti, and how the transmitted conditions ripen in the individual practitioners. This can be done using case studies.

The third recommendation is to explore the dynamics of between Pranahuti experiences and individual daily practices experiences in effecting transformation using phenomenological research approach.

As mentioned earlier, each quality and stage of consciousness contains a wide spectrum and multiple aspects. The Pind Desh Self-Evaluation Tool was a monumental work for self-evaluation in the development of consciousness, which includes the consideration of gradient or maturity of a quality. It could be used for PAM practitioners or anyone who actively engages in the self-work of developing and improving their consciousness. Future research can utilize this tool actively to perform focused studies related to transformations of consciousness. This is the third recommendation.

Furthermore, the concept of Chi or Qi (which means life force or life energy) in Taoist practices appear to have some resemblance with the concept of

Prana. It would make an interesting theoretical research to investigate the similarity and differences between the two.

The suggestions above are a sampling of a few broad of ideas as a starting point for future work. The list of ideas can go on given that this is the first time we are in hand with a totally new system of spiritual training with Pranahuti, whose possibility may quite well beyond our current grasp. It also brings about the enormous opportunities and hope for future generations to practice and experience Pranahuti for themselves in order first to benefit, then to benefit others by helping them enhance their inner capacity, and finally to conduct research that brings greater understanding of this new phenomenon.

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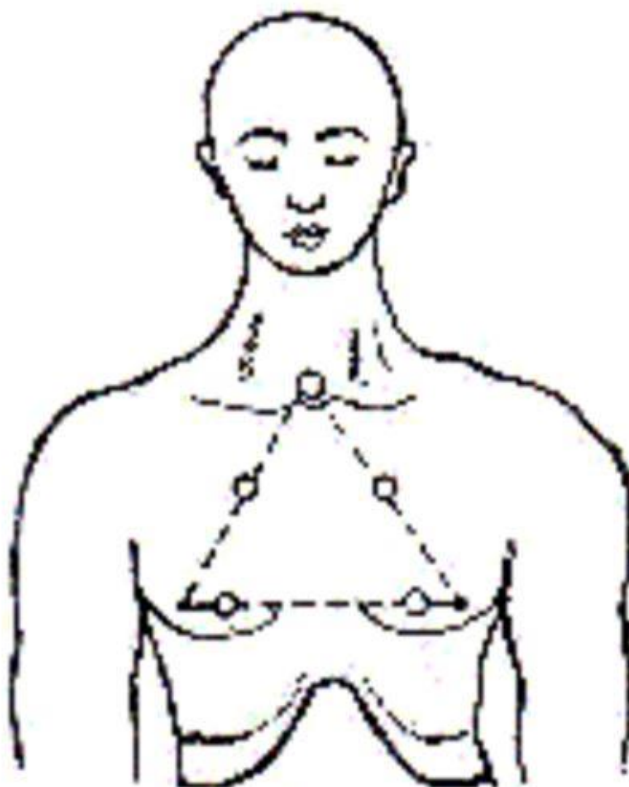
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APPENDIX A: FIVE KNOTS OF PIND DESH AND THEIR ASSOCIATED QUALITIES



*Figure 7: Five knots of Pind Desh. From *Path of Grace* by Narayana, K. C., 2006a, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers, p. 112. Copyright [2006] by the Narayana. Reprinted with permission.*

Table 5:

The Associated Positive Development and Probable Pitfalls of the Five Knots of Pind Desh.

Knot	Possible Positive Developments	Probable Pitfalls
1 (EARTH)	Determination, Control of Senses, Stability, Steadfastness, Austerity, Penance, Non Injury, Seeking, Discriminative Intelligence, Truthfulness, Analytical Capacity, Purity, selflessness, Non attachment to worldly matters	Inertia, Laziness, Sloth, Hoarding, Attachments, Sensuousness, Loss of Discrimination, Lack of Goal Clarity, Greed, Self Adoration, Loss of Memory, Abuse, shame, Discrepancy in perception through touch (un-touchability)
2 (WATER)	Santushti (Happy Person), Contentment, Accepting everything as a gift of Divine, Disinterestedness, Vairagya, Belief, Celibacy (to live in the company of Divine), Trusteeship, Peaceful State of Mind, Tranquility, Capacity to be a link to the divine, Empathy, Contentment, serenity, steady and unshakable faith	Infatuation, Jealousy, Cheating, Stealing, Deceit, Impulsive Desires, Laziness, Sutala-inferior type of super consciousness), Anger, Disproportionate attachment to ones' ideas and ideologies, Gourmet, Lack of control of self– to be in excess, hatred, doubt (scepticism)
3 (FIRE)	Reverence, Dependency on God, Interdependency in Life, Purified Mind, Love (motherly), Willingness to forgive, Compassion, Non Lust, Piety, Devotion, Faith, Abiding by Masters will, Venerable Devotee, Concord, Expansive, austerity, striving (aspiration), simplicity, meekness, Non attachment strengthened	Fickleness, Boastful, Indecisive, Religious Fanaticism, Scandal, Anguish, self torture, Disproportionate Self esteem, Clinging to false doctrines, clinging to rituals, perceptual discrepancy of scent (nose)

4 (AIR)	Adopting a lowly attitude, Utterly Devoted, Intoxicated love towards co-traveler, Constant Remembrance, Fortitude, Forbearance, Steady State of Mind, Self-offering, Frankness and plainness, Single-Pointed orientation to Divine, Helplessness in spite of Competence, Composure, Surrender, utter humility, Endurance, Fit for Divine work, Soaring with both the wings, non-identification with any person or thing other than God, Reverence	Arrogance, Gossip, Idle Talk (Boastful of Erudition), self-righteousness, fickleness, Discrepancy of perception of ears.
5 (ETHER)	Parama Bhakti (Eternal Devotion), A balanced state of mind, A realm of pure consciousness, Transition from beauty to Happiness, Happiness, Unqualified Surrender to Master, Abiding in Masters consciousness, Divine Vision, Nakedness, Liberated while in body, Soul ecstasy, Realm of fraternity, Advaita Anubuti (Non dual experience), Oneness with Universal consciousness, Eternal bliss	Samsayamu (Doubt), Ravana – Arrogance due to spiritual powers, slandering, aversion, desire for form and colour, perceptual errors of the eye

Note: From *Path of Grace* by Narayana, K. C., 2006a, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers. Copyright [2006] by the Narayana. Reprinted with permission.

APPENDIX B: PAM DAILY INDIVIDUAL MEDITATION PRACTICES

Excerpted from *Introduction to Pranahuti Aided Meditation* by Sri Ramchandra, 2010, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers. Copyright [2010] by Sri Ramchandra Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Morning Meditation: Divine Light without Luminosity

Sit in meditation for an hour thinking that Divine light without luminosity is present in your heart. Do it in quite a simple and natural way without forcing your mind. Never mind if you do not see the light there. Start with a mere supposition so to say, and sit meditating in one posture with your attention turned towards the heart in a natural way without any effort to concentrate. Try to be unmindful of the thoughts arising at that time.

Evening Cleaning Practices

The following processes are recommended for the daily practice and should be done by every aspirant regularly in the manner advised to him. The aspirant should follow one of these methods as advised, but not all at a time.

A) Smoke and Vapour method: Sit for half an hour with a suggestion to yourself that all complexities and impurities including grossness, darkness, etc., are going out of the whole system through the backside in the form of smoke or vapour and in its place the sacred current is flowing into your heart from the Master's heart. Do not meditate on those things which we want to get rid of. Simply brush them off.

B) Light method: Imagine Divine light to be present in the top portion of your head having its connection with Eternal Divine Store. Draw some of it downwards, allowing it to pass gently through the left arm taking out all impurities with it and then go out from finger tips. Repeat the same process taking up right arm. Do it again making it pass through left side of your body right up to the toe and then do it for right side of your body.

C) Ocean of Bliss method: Imagine yourself to be merged in the ocean of Bliss, the waves passing through your entire body, washing away all impurities and grossness there from. This process may be advised to those who require drastic cleaning and should be practiced daily in place of the evening meditation. Note: In all the above evening purification processes it is absolutely necessary to apply the force of will to throw out impurities and to finish the practice with a

feeling of confidence that it has been efficiently done and the impurities have been driven out.

9 PM Universal Prayer

Everyone should meditate for about 15 minutes at 9 p.m. sharp every night regularly thinking that all the men and women in this world are one's brethren and true love, devotion and faith for the Master is developing in all.

Meditation on point A

Fix your attention on the point and think that all men and women of the world are your brothers and sisters. Do this before going to bed for not more than 10 minutes

Meditation on point B

Imagine all your impurities and grossness to be going out from the point towards the front side and from behind it, the glow of the Atman is coming to view. Do this for not more than 10 minutes before commencing your daily practice of meditation.

Location Points 'A' and 'B'

From the left nipple measure two finger width straight towards the right. Then proceed straight downwards upto three finger width. This is the position of point A. Further on proceed two finger width more in the same downward direction. This is the point B. (Note: Measurement is to be made with one's own fingers.)

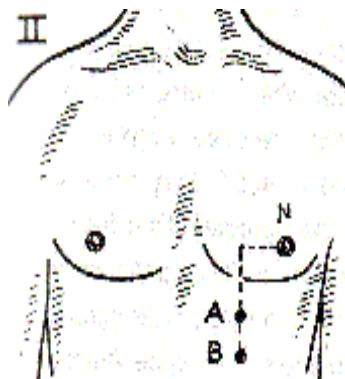


Figure 8: Location of Point A and Point B. From Introduction to Pranahuti Aided Meditation by Sri Ramchandra & Narayana, 2010, Secunderabad: Sri Ramchandra Publishers, p. 61. Copyright [2010] by Sri Ramchandra Publishers. Reprinted with permission.

Prayer (before going to bed)

Just before going to bed at night, offer prayer. The proper and the most effective method of prayer is to sit in a supplicant mood and repeat the same mentally twice or thrice. Then begin to meditate over its true sense and try to get lost into it.

"O, Master!

Thou art the real goal of human life.

We are yet but slaves of wishes

Putting bar to our advancement.

Thou art the only God and power

To bring us up to that stage."

Way of Living

1. Rise before dawn. Offer your prayer and puja (Worship) at a fixed hour preferably before sunrise, sitting in one and the same pose. Have a separate place and 'asan' (seat) for worship. Purity of mind and body be specially adhered to.
2. Begin your puja with a prayer for spiritual elevation with a heart full of love and devotion.
3. Fix up your goal which should be 'Complete Oneness' with God. Rest not till the ideal is achieved.
4. Be plain and simple to be identical with Nature.
5. Be truthful. Take miseries as Divine Blessings for your own good and be thankful.
6. Know all people as thy brethren and treat them as such.
7. Be not revengeful for the wrongs done by the others. Take them with gratitude as heavenly gifts.
8. Be happy to eat in constant divine thought whatever you get, with due regard to honest and pious earnings.
9. Mould your living so as to rouse a feeling of love and piety in others.
10. At bed time, feeling the presence of God, repent for the wrongs committed unknowingly. Beg forgiveness in a supplicant mood, resolving not to allow repetition of the same.

APPENDIX C: LETTERS AND FORMS

Introductory Letter: Research Participant Information

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe the experiences of Pranahuti Aided Meditation and transformation. It is the primary researcher's aim to contribute to our understanding of the significant experiences and transformations due to the practice. This study is being conducted for a Doctoral Dissertation in East West Psychology under the guidelines established by the California Institute of Integral Studies Institutional Review Board. This study is being conducted by Wandan Zeng, a doctoral candidate.

You are a suitable participant for this study, if: 1) You have practiced Pranahuti Aided Meditation regularly for between one and ten years; 2) have significant experiences and transformations over the course of the practice.

Your role as participant in this study is to participate in an in-person dialogue and answer the research questions as honestly as possible. The questions are not meant to invade your privacy and you are free to answer them or not as you see fit. I am seeking a vivid, accurate and comprehensive portrayal of your experiences. You may also wish to share personal diary or journals with me, or other ways in which you have recorded your experiences, such as in letters and poems.

The total time required for the in-person interview will be one to two hours. The follow up validation interview will provide you with an opportunity for feedback to refine the description. The time commitment for the verification interview is fifteen to thirty minutes and may be done by phone or in-person as is convenient or preferred by you.

Confidentiality is guaranteed within the limits of the law. All data and consent forms, written, audio-taped or transcribed materials, will be kept in a locker to which only me, Wandan Zeng, the primary researcher, has access. Your name will not be associated with your answers in any private or public report of the results. All confidential materials will be coded and identified by numbers only. All identifying information will be deleted when direct quotes are used in the dissertation. Access to tapes will be limited to the primary researcher and will be kept in a locked file. Neither your name, nor any other identifying information will be included in the dissertation. Your request to omit from the dissertation particular details that you specify to the researcher will be honored. The notes, tapes, transcriptions and any other written data materials will be destroyed after seven years have elapsed from the completion of this dissertation.

You may choose at any time to withdraw your consent to participate in this study and discontinue your voluntary participation. There is no cost to you for being in this study. There are no guaranteed benefits for being in this study. There is no

penalty for dropping out of this study. You may however, find the process insightful and helpful for your own practice.

If you have any concerns or unresolved questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a participant you may contact me, the primary researcher at (415) 722-5591. Furthermore, you may directly or anonymously write to The Human Research Review Committee Chair, CIIS, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103.

Thank you for your interest in participating in my dissertation research on the experiences of PAM and transformation. Look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
Wandan (Wendy) Zeng

Participant Consent Form

1. Wandan (Wendy) Zeng, a Ph.D. candidate in East-West Psychology at the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, has requested my participation in the research on the various aspects of Pranahuti Aided Meditation.
2. I have been informed that my participation will be in tape-recorded interviews, diary entries or written summaries.
3. I understand that the results of the research study may be published but that my full name or identity will not be revealed. In order to maintain confidentiality of my records, only pseudo-name or letter symbols will be used.
4. I understand that there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts involved in this research. I have been assured that I am free to refuse to discuss any matter that causes me discomfort. I have also been informed that I may terminate my participation in this study at any time.
5. I understand that if I have any concerns about my rights as a participant in this research, I can contact the Chair of the Human Research Review Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, telephone (415) 575-6100.
6. I understand that my participation will contribute to the benefits of psycho-spiritual field as well as further my own understanding and involvement with the Pranahuti Aided Meditation practice.
7. I have been informed that I will not be compensated for my participation.
8. I have been informed that if I have any questions concerning the research, I may contact Wendy Zeng at 415-722-5591.
9. I understand that Wendy Zeng will provided me with the results and findings of the study, if I so request.
10. I have read the above informed consent. The procedure, the nature, the benefits of the project have been explained to me.

Signature of Participant _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

I, the researcher, have answered all the participant's questions and he/she has understood the explanations I have given.

Signature of Researcher_____

Printed Name: Wandan (Wendy) Zeng

Date _____

Participant Information Form

Part I: Basic Background Questionnaire (please return to the researcher)

Instruction: please fill out the following questions and return a copy of it to the researcher on the day of the in-person interview.

Thank you for your participation in this research. All the materials that you share during the interview will remain entirely confidential. Your name will never be associated with published material. Would you please kindly provide the following background information for this research:

Name: _____ Ethnicity: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____ Marital Status: _____

Education: _____ Occupation(s): _____

1. When did you first start the practice (month & year)? How long have you been practicing Pranahuti Aided Meditation (PAM)?
2. Do you follow daily PAM practice?
3. Have you ever taken breaks from the practice? If so, please provide details as to how long these breaks were?
4. Do you take one-to-one individual sittings regularly? If yes, how often?
5. Do you attend Satsang (group meditation) regularly? If yes, how often?
6. Is there any other relevant information you would like to share?

If you have any questions, please call Wandan Zeng at 415-722-5591.

Signature of the participant: _____

Date: _____

Part II: List of In-Person Interview Questions (for participant's information only)

Background and Instruction

The purpose of this study is to explore, document and analyze the experiences of Pranahuti Aided Meditation and its potential for bringing about consciousness transformations. There are two main inquiries that the study will address. First, it will explore the qualities of significant experiences in Pranahuti Aided Meditation. Second, it will explore the experiences of transformation associated with the practice.

The following is a list of open-ended questions that will help guide the in-person interview process. It is provided here for your information and reference. You may review and ponder over them. If possible, please collect and provide diary excerpts or summaries that may address these questions to the researcher before or during the interview.

List of Interview Questions

1. Please share and describe your significant experiences with the practice of Pranahuti Aided Meditation so far?
2. Please share and describe the significant experiences of group meditation or one-to-one individual meditation session with *Pranahuti* (yogic transmission) offered by a trainer? Please describe any bodily sensations, thoughts, perceptions, emotions and feelings experienced during these intervals.
3. Please share and describe the significant experiences of your own daily PAM practices (during which no *Pranahuti* is offered)? Please describe any bodily

sensations, thoughts, perceptions, emotions and feelings experienced during those intervals of practice.

4. Please share and describe any experiences of transformation in your life that you believe are related to the PAM practice. For example, please describe the experiences of transformation in terms of thoughts, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, and behavior.
5. Have you experienced any difficulties with the practice? If so, please describe.
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Research Participant Bill of Rights

As a participant in psychological research, you have the right to:

1. be treated with dignity and respect;
2. be given a clear description of the purpose of the study and what is expected of you as a participant
3. be told of any benefits or risks to you that can be expected from participating in the study;
4. know the researcher's training and experience;
5. ask any questions you may have about the study;
6. decide to participate or not without any pressure from the researcher;
7. have your privacy protected within the limits of the law;
8. refuse to answer any research question, refuse to participate in any part of the study, or withdraw from the study at any time without any negative effects to you;
9. be given a description of the overall results of the study upon request, and
10. discuss any concerns or file a complaint about the study with the Human Research Committee, California Institute of Integral Studies, 1453 Mission St., San Francisco, CA, 94103, telephone 415-575-6100.

APPENDIX D: PER PARTICIPANT THEME COUNT ANALYSIS

Table 6 shows the appearance count per master theme B, C, and D for each participant under the transformation category. Master theme A does not include any transformation experiences. For example, participant A appeared 8 times in brackets for master theme B (Activation of Viveka and Vairagya) under the “Transformation experience” category. The subsequent Figure 9 is a graphical presentation of columns 1 to 3 of the data in Table 6.

Table 6 and Figure 9 show that majority of the transformation experiences fall under Master theme B and C, that is, column 4 showing master theme “(B + C) Total” in Table 6 or yellow and blue bars combined in Figure 9. Each participant has a number of themes under master theme D (purple bars in Figure 9), but much fewer compared to B and C total. The fairly large number of theme count for B and C combined in one way shows the participant had achieved transformation by establishing themselves in the upper consciousness.

Table 6:

Participant appearance count per master theme under “Transformation” category

Participant:	Participant appearance count per master theme under “Transformation” category			B + C Total:	B+C+D Total:
	Master theme B	Master theme C	Master theme D		
A	8	4	1	12	13
B	3	4	1	7	8
C	9	5	4	14	18
D	10	5	5	15	20
E	15	5	4	20	24
F	13	3	5	16	21
G	9	4	2	13	15
H	4	4	1	8	9
Total:	71	34	23	105	128

Note: The numbers are the count of appearance of the participant in the master theme in brackets in Table 3 - “Master Table of Themes”.

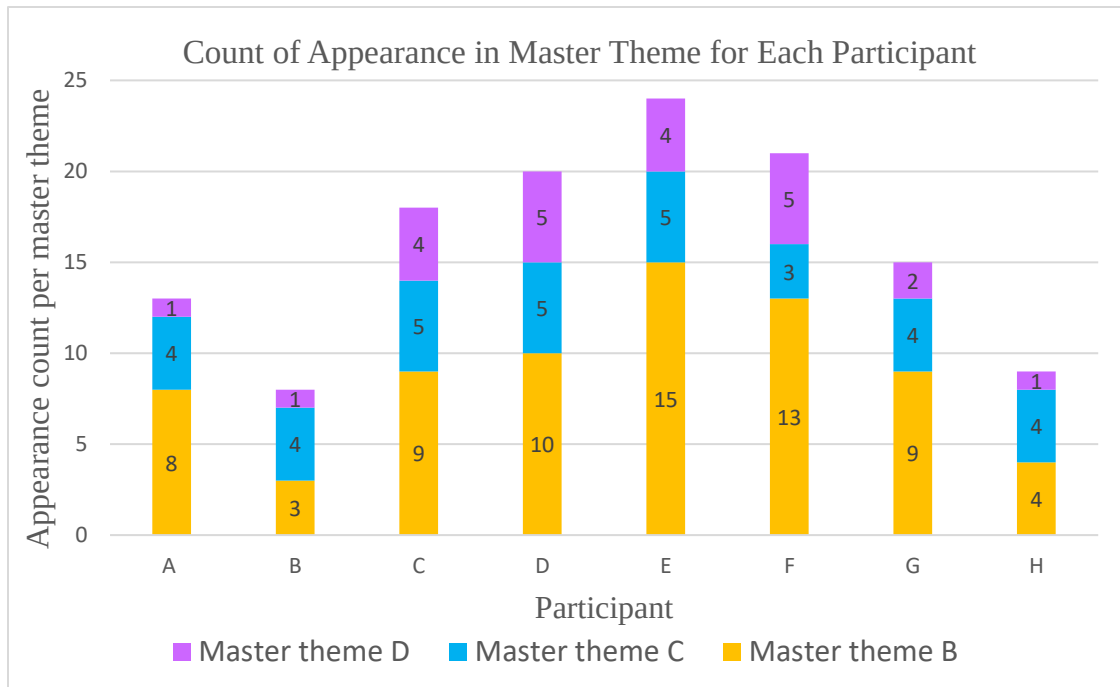


Figure 9: Participant Appearance Count per Master Theme. Copyright 2017 by Wandan Wendy Zeng.