

## Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra (yogis sleep) is a relaxing experience of conscious deep sleep. The process of attaining the state of being known as yoga nidra (which is a state of being, and not a specific practice) proceeds through a series of ever-increasingly stilling practices. The waves (vrittis) of the mind as well as the torrents of energy that pass through the nadis, chakras, and vayus depending on activity, emotion, investment, will, and belief systems in play at any moment are also, to some degree, stilled and brought into a state of equanimity. By quelling the energetic winds or currents that reflect our modus operandi responses to the stimulating challenges, problems, and pleasures of life, yoga nidra assists us in untangling from these reactive loops of impressions, desires and actions. These reactions can be completely unbeknownst to us, rarely occurring under special circumstances, or well-known but still hard to control. Along with meditation, yoga nidra can help free us from our latent drives and unexamined impulses so we may chart our own course of self-evolution aligning out authentic actions (spanda) with our own inner guidance system (kundalini shakti); this is the purpose of yoga sadhana.

### **Guided Yoga Nidra Practice from the Tradition of Himalayan Masters:**

- Complete Body Relaxation or Body Survey
- (Subtler) 61 Points Exercise
- Ascending Breath Practice
- Arrive in State of Yoga Nidra

The first three together lead to the Yoga Nidra experience (a state of consciousness). The three practices above can be done individually and are extremely relaxing beneficial yogic practice.

In meditation, one remains in the waking state and focuses the mind while allowing thought patterns, sensations, emotions, and images to arise without becoming engrossed in them. In Yoga Nidra, the practitioner leaves the waking state of consciousness and goes into the deep sleep state while remaining alert. This seems paradoxical in that one is very relaxed at all levels while remaining fully awake and alert. Senses, body, breath, conscious and unconscious mind are all relaxed in Yoga Nidra. The mind is said to be more relaxed in Yoga Nidra than in typical deep sleep. There is a state of reverie between the waking and dreaming sleep state. This is at the alpha brain wave state. Yoga Nidra's unusual state of reverie is at the subtle brain wave state of delta frequency, which is slower, and that of deep sleep.

As Swami Jnashewara Bharati states,

In the waking state one's mind is active, even if in a relaxed way. In the dreaming state of sleep, one's mind is still very active. However, in the deep sleep state the activity of the mind recedes back into the silent place from which the thought patterns arose, where memories are stored.

In deep sleep, the senses and the lower mind, the sensory-motor mind also recede back into that silent place.... The yogis use this state to examine their thought patterns in their latent non-active form. This level of consciousness is the place where thoughts, emotions, images and sensations go when they recede from their actions in the waking and dreaming states. These formless forms or deep habit patterns are called samskaras, which are the driving force of actions or karma. Thus, yoga nidra

is a tool for examining, attenuating and eventually eliminating those habit patterns or samskaras which are not useful. Habitual negative actions normally arising from these deep impressions can thus be reduced and eliminated through the practice of yoga nidra. In yoga nidra one touches the doorway to that awareness that is beyond all the activities of the mind.

The practices themselves are of great benefit due to their relaxing effect on every level of being. Beyond this, with practice, the state of yoga nidra can eventually be achieved. Better ability to fall asleep is often a tangible result of this practice. Also, lucid dreaming can become possible. There are many methods that result in the state of consciousness of yoga nidra. In this practice, the three body centers of ajna, vishuddha and anahata are used as they are a loci of consciousness in waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states (Mandukya Upanishad). The attention rests, in this practice at anahata ( the cave of heart/the sacred heart).

Meditation and yoga nidra are separate companion practices with the difference being that in meditation the practitioner remains in the waking state, allowing thoughts to come forward while remaining unaffected and undisturbed by them. In yoga nidra, the practitioner achieves a state of conscious deep sleep, in which thoughts, sensations, images and the like do not arise. Both practices are useful in their own ways.

This Yoga Nidra Script is based on Swami Jnaneshvara's *Yoga Nidra Meditation Practice*

### **Complete Body Relaxation: Body Survey**

Lie comfortably on your back in Shavasana, the Corpse Posture. Lie in such a way that your head, neck and trunk are aligned with left and right sides in symmetry. Check the position of your head; that it's comfortable and in alignment. Use a thin cushion under your head for support. Allow your feet to be a comfortable distance apart; adjust them as needed. Allow your arms to be a comfortable distance from your sides, palms up if comfortable, or allow the palms to be down. Be comfortable and let go.

Be aware of your body. Be aware of your whole body from head to toe and toe to head. However you experience your body is okay; you cannot do this wrong. Be aware of your body. Be aware of the ability to move your body but that you're not using that ability. Be aware of the stillness. I can move my body, but I am choosing to not move my body. Be aware of stillness throughout your whole body. Be aware of the stillness of the ability to move but that you are not moving.

Survey the body from head to toe and toe to head. However you experience your body is okay. You cannot do this wrong. If you see with your inner eye, that's okay. If you don't see with your inner, that's okay. Survey the body as if you are really curious, as if you are an explorer, an interior researcher. You may experience the gross body such as skin, muscles, or bone or a feeling awareness, or as sensation or energy. However you experience your body is okay. Survey your body with attention, from the top of your head through the forehead, your eyebrows and eyes, check bones and cheeks. Be aware of your nostrils and the feel of the flow of the air, the muscles of your mouth, your chin and jaw. Be aware of your neck, and throat. Allow your attention to move. Be aware of the shoulders, and the upper arms, the elbows and lower arms, Be

aware of the wrists and of the hands, the fingers, the finger tips. Be aware of the finger tips and the fingers, and of the hands, and the wrists, lower arms, and the elbows, upper arms, and the shoulders.

Be aware of the chest, explore the area of the chest and of the spine. Be aware of the abdomen and explore. Be aware of the hips, and the upper legs, knees, lower legs, and ankles, the feet, and the toes, and the tips of the toes. Be aware of the tips of the toes, and the toes, the feet. Be aware of the ankles, the lower legs, and the knees, the upper legs, and the hips. Be aware of the abdomen and explore what is there. Be aware of the chest, and the spine and explore. Be aware of the shoulders, and the upper arms, the elbows, the lower arms, the wrists, and the hands, the fingers, and the tips of the fingers. Be aware of the finger tips, and the fingers, the hands, and the wrists, the lower arms, and the elbows, the upper arms, and the shoulders. Be aware of the neck and the throat. Be aware of the jaw, and the chin, the muscles of the mouth. Be aware of your nostrils and the feel of the flow of the air. Be aware of the cheeks, and the cheek bones. Be aware of the eyes, and the eyebrows. Be aware of the forehead, and of the top of the head. Be aware of the body as one whole being.

### **61 Points (with Blue Star Image)**

Allow your attention to come to rest on the forehead. Be aware of the forehead. You may experience it as skin, bone, or some other aspect, or as a feeling sensation. You may or may not see with your inner eye. You may see light, such as a point of light, like a blue star. Be aware of your throat. You may experience it in some physical way. Or you may experience it as a feeling awareness, or sensation, seeing or not seeing, point of light, blue star.

Be aware of your right shoulder. Feeling awareness sensation, point of light, blue star. Be aware of your right elbow. Again, as feeling sensation, point of light, blue star. Be aware of your right wrist. Be aware of the tip of your right thumb. Be aware of the tip of your right index finger. Be aware of the tip of your right middle finger. Be aware of the tip of your right ring finger. Be aware of the tip of your right little finger. Be aware of your right wrist. Be aware of your right elbow. Be aware of your right shoulder. Your throat. Your left shoulder. Your left elbow. Your left wrist. The tip of the left thumb. The tip of the left index finger. The tip of the left middle finger. The tip of the left ring finger. The tip of the left little finger. The left wrist. The left elbow. The left shoulder. The throat.

The space between the breasts. The right breast. The space between the breasts. The left breast. The space between the breasts. The navel. The lower abdomen. The right hip. The right knee. The right ankle. The tip of the right big toe. The tip of the right second toe. The tip of the right third toe. The tip of the right fourth toe. The tip of the right little toe. The right ankle. The right knee. The right hip.

The lower abdomen. The left hip. The left knee. The left ankle. The tip of the left big toe. The tip of the left second toe. The tip of the left third toe. The tip of the left fourth toe. The tip of the left little toe. The left ankle. The left knee. The left hip. The lower abdomen. The navel. The space between the breasts. The throat. The forehead.

## **Ascending Breath**

Breathe as if your whole body is breathing, as if you're exhaling from the top of the head down to the toes. Breathe as though you're inhaling from the toes up to the top of the head. Exhale from the top of the head down to the toes. Inhale from the toes up to the top of head. Continue to exhale from the top of the head down to toes. Inhale from the toes up to the top of head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the ankles. Inhale from the ankles up to the top of the head. Continue to exhale from the top of head down to the ankles. Inhale from the ankles up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the knees. Inhale from the knees up to the top of the head. Continue to exhale from the top of head down to the knees. Inhale from the knees up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the perineum at the base of the spine. Inhale from the perineum at the base of the spine up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the navel. Inhale from the navel up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the space between the breasts. Inhale from the space between the breasts up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the throat. Inhale from the throat up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of head down to the bridge between the nostrils. Inhale from the bridge between the nostrils up to the top of the head.

\*Exhale from the space between the eyebrows down to the bridge between the nostrils. Inhale from the bridge between the nostrils up to the space between the eyebrows. Continue to exhale from the space between the eyebrows down to the bridge between the nostrils. Inhale from the bridge between the nostrils up to the space between the eyebrows.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the bridge between the nostrils. Inhale from the bridge between the nostrils up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the throat. Inhale from the throat up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the space between the breasts. Inhale from the space between the breasts up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the navel. Inhale from the navel up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the perineum at the base of the spine. Inhale from the perineum at the base of the spine up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the knees. Inhale from the knees up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the ankles. Inhale from the ankles up to the top of the head.

Exhale from the top of the head down to the toes. Inhale from the toes up to the top of the head.

### **Entering and Returning from the State of Yoga Nidra**

Be aware of the space between the eyebrows.

Breathe as though you are breathing from the space between the eyebrows.

Be aware of the space at the throat.

Visualize in the throat a moon.

Be aware of the space between the breasts.

Go deep, deep into the space.

Go deep into the silence.

Empty, empty, empty.

Go deep into the stillness and silence in the space between the breasts.

Empty, empty, empty.

This voice will speak again in ten minutes.

(after ten minutes).

Be aware of the stillness of the physical body, while holding awareness of that deep stillness and silence. While you remain aware of that deep stillness and silence that is underneath, behind, inside, and subtler than the quiet mind and still body, gently move the fingers and toes. Move your fingers and toes. Move your arms and legs however you wish. Gently open your eyes. Bring that deep stillness and silence with you. Keep it with you while you resolve to often return to this place of deep stillness and silence.

END.