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**Dissertation For The K.H.Y.F
Yoga Therapy Course**

A Journey Into Meditation

A JOURNEY INTO MEDITATION

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INTRODUCTION

- a) A reflection on meditation in the Yoga tradition.
- b) Introducing these ideas to students.

In this dissertation the author will examine meditation and in doing so will explain why this practice was advised by Patanjali who recognised that the mind is the source of suffering (duhkha). Patanjali also recognised and commented on the various personalities of people and I will explain these in chapter 2.

My journey into meditation started properly about ten years ago. Before that I had practised asana and pranayama regularly but had never sat for any more than five minutes at the end of my practice. As the Buddhists say “ You Yogis do a lot of preparation for meditation but don’t actually sit”. Very true.

I think my attraction to meditation started when I attended a few Buddhist meditation evenings when we sat for an hour and some Yoga summer schools where our evening practice involved a lot of sitting.

Over a number of years my teacher, at the time Paul Harvey, with some suggestions from Desikachar developed a meditation practice for me. This became a very solid part of my practice particularly when my partner and I separated and was in fact a real support during that difficult time.

Paul suggested I focus on Laksmi, a Hindu goddess who personifies material and spiritual wealth, in fact is said to provide everything we need!

My practice involved some simple movements, pranayama, and a cakra nyasa – placing the hands on each cakra point, circling the mantra all around me and repeating it silently 108 times. (It is included in the individual practices later on).

Over the years the effects deepened to include feelings of security and safety, less desire for things to the point where I have stopped buying anything – except food and drink. My needs are very little, I need and want less choice and am more content on my own. Powerful effects and I am completely sold on meditation as you can imagine.

Recently my teacher, now Gill Lloyd, has suggested a change and Gayatri is now my focus as a meditation practice using the Gayatri mantra for clarity. It is still very new and who knows what she will bring.....

INTRODUCTION

Section 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

References for Meditation:

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra

Translations by:- T.K.V.Desikachar, Bernard Bouanchaud and notes from Paul Harvey's courses.

Bhagavad Gita - *Winthrop Sargeant*.

The Principle Upanisad. - *S.Radhakrishnan*.

Chandogya Upanisad - *Chapter: 3 section 13 verse 1*

Katha Upanisad - *Chapter: 2 section 3 verse 10 and 11*

Madukya Upanisad - *Chapter: 3 verse 1*

Maitri Upanisad - *Chapter: 4 verse 22, 23 and 25*

Taittiriya Upanisad - *Chapter: 1 section 5, chapter 3 section 1*

Yoga, Healing and Beyond - *T.K.V. Desikachar*

Dhyanamalika - *Krsnamacarya and Desikachar*

Yogajalisaram. Sloka 2. - *Krisnamacarya*

Yoga Rahasya. - *Nathamuni*.

The Magic of Mantra - *A retreat run by Kausthub Desikachar*

Yoga and Meditation - *Fiona Ashdown*

Section 2

What is the mind, distracted, disturbed, focussed? A personal study of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra chapters I, 2 and 3.

Introduction and some general thoughts on meditation.

When I look at my journey with these tools of yoga I realise how much the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali have been such a support along the way in clarifying the changes that have happened and putting into words the experiences –here are some ideas before I take this in a more logical order.

Patanjali was a scribe who collated this wonderful knowledge between 300 and 500 B.C. He never claims that the knowledge was his but that it is far more ancient and was passed down by word of mouth from teacher to student and in fact was considered too sacred to write down so we do not know it's age. This was typical of many of these texts such as the Upanisads and the Vedas.

One translation of the word Patanjali is to "Fall into the hands of prayer" with a sense of trust and acceptance Anjali mudra is where the hands are in a prayer position with a gap between them to allow space for God.

- Aparigraha one of the yama or restraints from the eight limbs in chapter 2. Meditation seems to have reduced the need for things – nothing "glitters" – new clothes, fashion jewellery, possessions.
- I need less change, am content with simple routines, doing more of less, staying in one place more. I need less stimulation, less choices, no Internet surfing, less information!
- Wanting to reduce things – size of house, equipment, possessions – beach hut, wearing simple clothes – Chinese idea of wearing the same clothes every day (blue pyjama type suits!)
- Simple foods that suit me – less stimulating – more fruit, vegetables, grains, less exotica.

- Less talking, content with quietness and own company, feeling safe on my own, held by something greater than me.
- A sense of belonging, being blessed.
- Less disturbed by extremes – heat, cold, hunger, changes, cancellations, delays.

So, what do I like?

These changes have made me want to choose peaceful, quiet people to be with and I avoid loud, talkative people. I prefer countryside to cities. So does that mean my mind would be unsteady with the things I don't like??

I know I am very drawn to peaceful pursuits – reading, walking, sitting, and gazing at beautiful scenery- mountains, lakes, and oceans. I do love being with my friends and am blessed with very special friends and family, but time on my own is very important to reflect and somehow make sense of all these experiences.

Meditation and it's link to the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali.

Yama and Niyama- if you look at the eight limbs hierarchically these are listed at the beginning but from experience of meditation over a long period of time they are more readily taken on board and easier to follow because of the effect of meditation leading to the behaviour required. The eight limbs are seen as limbs growing simultaneously but my feelings more recently is that because of my meditation practice I am able to more readily “live” the yama and niyama .The biggest change seems to be aparigraha in that I shop no more and only buy food, drink and necessities. This has had mixed results - no more shopping with friends just me observing them buy. What do friends buy me for Christmas? Sometimes a feeling of being from another planet when I do go down town for a coffee and to the bank. Yet there is a real feeling of freedom when I am not pulled by things, choices, stimuli.

Santosa – Contentment with what I have - in fact view of the future is living much more simply with few possessions, machines and hopefully no car! When we have less we have less to worry about, no fear of losing things or having things

go wrong - such as computers!

There is more space in my head to listen to people and be present, as I am not pulled away by texting, mobile phone calls, emails and other intrusions. When my head is more focussed it can reflect more on deeper issues and ideas and give me a clearer view on problem solving be it for me or the people I meet and work with.

After a pranayama and meditation practice the mind is more settled and not needing so much in the way of stimuli – something has fed it.

Our neuroses become less and we feel safer and less compulsive in our habits – Sauca- washing and cleanliness, tapas – excessive discipline, become more balanced.

Svadyaya – We become more self-reflective and more able to trust in something greater – Isvara Pranidhana, not needing to control situations, more able to surrender and feel safe.

Chapter 2,verse 48 – the effect of the opposites in my life has definitely been reduced, I am much more tolerant of different temperatures, physical discomfort, hunger etc, also more resistant to change and not so swayed by cancellations, time changes, people changing plans, there is a lack of need to control situations. I have become more observant, less needing to be in charge more wanting to be part of – is this laziness?? I do sometimes question this feeling of being content and not wanting to take over and lead. When does contentment become complacency?

Yoga Sutra – chapter 1.

Verse 1

Atha - the word now is also translated as a vow. The practice of yoga is very much like taking a vow – you have made a decision to take on board a new way of thinking, being, doing. It goes much further than starting a hobby, a vow is much more far reaching and implies forever. Even if I may not be able to practice asana as much when I am older there will always be my mind and breath in some way and this is why a meditation and pranayama practice established like a vow earlier on can be such a support in later years.

**Bernard Bouanchaud says, “ Now is set forth authoritative teaching on Yoga”*

Verse 2

Nirodha - This is truly the steady mind – Patanjali states this very early on, rather like a jewel to tempt us to start this journey. So many people only practice asana when the real jewels are discovered through pranayama and dhyana. Yes, asana helps us to sit and prepares the body and breath but maybe to learn to sit we also need practice at sitting! The Buddhists often say we do lots of preparation for the “goal”. To achieve this steadiness of mind we need to be comfortable with a still mind for a long period of time. Many yoga practitioners who may be very proficient with lots of different asana often find it very difficult to sit still. Sitting requires practice and I don't think you get there through asana alone. “Be still and know that I am God” – Bible.

Verse 3

Then – after a period of meditation it is as if the mind is in a very fresh uncomplicated state. There is a state of awareness very different from our normal way of thinking – no judgement, no analysis, no need to judge or analyse. “Tat tvam asi” that's the way it is, a kind of surrender. You don't need it to be anything else, there is a greater power I understand and accept. This is so much less exhausting when we can stop fighting the way things are and embrace life and trust in it's process. The more we can meditate the deeper this belief can be, not that it is always so accessible but it is there inside us. What a relief to have this amazing tool!

The Vrtti – movements of the mind.

Verse 5 – 11

Pramana – Right perception. The mind works in a mysterious way! Again pranayama and meditation bring more clarity to the mind, perception seems to go beyond what we know from the past or from books it seems more direct and almost transcendent, going beyond our normal belief system.

Viparyaya – misconception. With the mind in the calm clear state of meditation there is only the present. So our “agenda” or conditioning from the past cannot colour our understanding of something – it will appear as it is – reflected accurately without any distortions like a new baby seeing something for the first time.

Vikalpa – imagination. A very common state of mind is worrying about the

future. When the mind is calmed through meditation it is less likely to be pulled into erroneous ideas about the future, it is more content to be in the present, it is full in the moment.

Nidra – Sleep. The mind in meditation is light and clear, not heavy or dull. There is no room for *tamas*. When a room is full of light there is no darkness, the light fills every corner. If the room is clear there is nothing to create shadows, the light can penetrate every part of it. It is only when the mind is cluttered that darkness can take hold.

Smrti – Memory. Memories come from the past and can be both pleasurable and painful and are another very common state of mind. Often the mind needs to have something to do, its very nature is to be active and memory or imagination are very easy things for the mind to latch onto. When the mind is in the meditation state it has no needs, just awareness, so the *vr̥tti* have no power as the mind is so full – not empty – there is no room for anything and nothing for the *vr̥tti* to hold onto.

Verse 12-17

Abhyasa and Vairagya – Practice and non-attachment. Practice to achieve this state takes a long time, energy, perseverance and faith that it does work. However once this state is known it feeds you more than anything else in life. Cravings diminish, in fact the only craving the mind has is to continue in this clear state and avoid situations and people that take it away. The pull of the senses quietens, the need for choices and stimulation dissolve, even the craving for information and new experiences loses its pull. The mind is totally filled with this state of fullness – bliss!

Verse 18

The mind is now free to observe the past more clearly without being disturbed by or attached to it. Meditation allows reflection time on how I reacted in the past to situations and what works better for me now. There seems to be more intelligence in my decisions, less pulling by the *Klesa*.

Verse 19

I feel there is a need to keep working at this process – effort and practice on a regular basis keep me close to this.

Verse 20

Faith- a quality that can carry me through changes and problems, knowing that my practice has helped in the past through powerful changes it will help in the future.

Verse 21

We have to trust this and keep practising with a sense of knowing that there is something greater holding us and that whatever we are going through cannot disturb that inner core.

Verse 22

Obviously at times this faith will not be so intense but having the knowledge that this is normal and it will return again- everything varies.

Verse 23 - 26

The knowledge of a higher force - that we can offer up what is happening to us to something greater than ourselves, we are not the only architects of our lives. Sometimes we need to do this when problems seem too much for us to deal with or even understand why they are happening, so let them go.

I often say “take this from me you have a greater knowledge than I”

- A personal experience of this: Travelling on a coach back home after a lovely holiday with a friend and feeling depressed because I was going back to an empty house having recently separated from my long term partner. It is dark and I have my eyes closed, feeling that I cannot cope so say “take this from me”. On opening my eyes I see a huge golden angel on the hill next to the road, it is the angel on the top of Guildford cathedral – synchronicity or God’s way of saying it is holding me?

Verse 27 and 28

Regular chanting has really made a very powerful link for me with this divine

force. More than anything else I have practised in Yoga using a mantra 108 times every day has created big changes in my life. With mantra the mind feels full and connected to such a support – a real feeling of being held.

Verse 29

This, over time has reduced the need for me to grasp things. I need less in the way of things, choices; I have almost stopped consuming and am content with what I have. This has given me such a sense of freedom, as there are no pulls from the consumer world! It has given me a lot more time to concentrate on deeper issues because my mind is not worrying so much about what it wants next. My ideal would be to live in a beach hut with few possessions, little choice of clothes and simple foods. The more we own the more we have to worry about. I want space in my head to concentrate on my journey in life and what is really important.

Verse 30 and 31

With meditation because the mind is quiet it is much more able to observe subtle changes in the body and emotions which may warn of problems that can be avoided in the future. With the “sensitivity of an eyeball” we can watch for changes occurring in our physical and mental make up before they become too great and take steps to reduce any future suffering – chapter 2, Verse 16.

Chapter 1, verse 32

With regular practice and the heightened sensitivity this can achieve problems to come can often be “nipped in the bud”.

Verse 33

When we are calmer ourselves we are able to observe others around us without reacting so much to how they behave. Because we are more complete and content we don't need things from other people or need them to behave in a particular way to make us feel better – we can just observe without reacting.

Verse 34

However this is not always going to work - particularly if we are stressed and get disturbed we have to be vigilant with our practice of pranayama and meditation in helping us maintain our feelings of calmness.

Verse 35

As we become more sensitive our senses become sharper so we are able to notice subtle changes much more quickly before they become too great to deal with.

Verse 36

In fact with a regular contact with this higher being we are lifted above any of this “stuff”.

* *Bernard Bouanchaud “ Mental stability also stems from serenity linked to luminous lucidity”*

Solving Problems

Verse 37

We can sometimes feel overwhelmed by problems however strong our practice is and during these times turning to someone who has had similar experiences and come through them can be helpful.

Verse 38

Sleep is very important and with a regular practice of pranayama and meditation you become more sensitive to what is right for you in terms of a good night’s sleep and regular routine of practice. This often takes years to realise – when we are young we often stay up too late but as we mature and when we know ourselves well through practice going to bed earlier becomes important, particularly the hours before midnight.

Verse 39

The mind is calmed when it is deeply involved with something, which interests it. The choice of focus is an individual one as it must be right for the person – or the mind will not be held by it. The ancients knew the power of a repeated mantra in holding the mind steady and it is often the choice of many yogis. Choosing the right mantra is important, as it will be with you for many years.

The Meditative Process

Verse 40

The far-reaching effects of a regular meditation practice have no bounds; the mind is capable of anything.

Verse 41

Totally reflective like a flawless gem the mind is not coloured by any past conditioning or distractions - the klesa and vrtti are absent or greatly diminished and have little power. The mind moves only in one direction and is completely full and held steady with no room in it for anything but the focus of meditation.

Verse 42

However this process does not happen all at once and in fact seems to come and go. At times pulled by the past or future and at other times completely absorbed and clear of any distraction.

Verse 47

In this state of clarity the mind is able to understand many situations, which in the past would have been difficult. The more we meditate the more we are able to understand the world, and ourselves there is a feeling of divine within us.

Verse 48

Through this knowledge we are more able to live our lives with less mistakes in a way that is harmonious for ourselves and others – we can only do what is right.

The Final Journey

Verse 49 –51

The mind is now completely free and totally clear, not pulled or impressed by anything. Totally content and held steady.

The state of Yoga/Samadhi cannot be forced, it is within us and the practice of pranayama and meditation enable us to draw closer to that knowledge, that state, until we are immersed in it. Our mind is full; nothing can stop us, the journey to the self is complete.

Chapter Two

Chapter one explained what the mind is capable of on the journey to Samadhi and the problems along the way with ideas for help and support. The end of the chapter described the mind in the state of yoga – so how do we get there? What tools are available for us? Chapter two gives us this knowledge in practical terms. The beginning of the chapter describes yoga as being an action – Kriya – in that we have to do something to achieve this steady mind. We cannot be passive and expect this state to arrive just through reading books. One of the greatest lessons I had from my teacher was this – I arrived for my first lesson having already taught for over ten years with lots of questions. “Which books should I read, what should I be studying?” etc.

He answered “Fiona, just get on your mat every day and practice” I may have been teaching yoga but I was not necessarily practising every day.

Verse 1 – 2

We have the expression an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory, how true. Patanjali in these first few verses talks about Tapas – a far-reaching word involving our physical discipline as well as our diet and lifestyle. Then through this we learn more about ourselves - Svadhyaya- through studying texts and reflecting on them. Our relationship with a higher force – Isvara Pranidhana – in whatever we do and know does not just come from ourselves but something greater.

Without the practice the theory just remains as theory and will not change the way we live and feel. It will not, on its own make our minds steady. Yes, it is lovely reading about meditation and what can be achieved from it but unless we practice it regularly for a long period of time it cannot change the way our minds work and how we live our lives. It will just remain words on a page.

Verse 3 - 9

So can meditation reduce suffering? We still have to live our lives where we may lose things, get things we don't want, have a false sense of who we are, confused or frightened. All these are part of life but what meditation can do is change your relationship with these. So our sense of “I” is not about how we look, what we can do or know, what others think of us – it goes much deeper. There comes a sense of

contentment with ourselves as we are without the support of all the above.

We are less attached to wanting things, experiences and supports and are less repulsed by the same and as our sense of self grows and our comfort zone becomes much bigger we are able to embrace life and have less fear of it and what it may bring.

As our meditation practice deepens we become more aware and sensitive to subtle changes in the mind and because we have a long experience of the feeling of a steady mind we are able to move away from those thought patterns that can cause suffering. Pranayama is a very useful tool to settle the mind and also chanting can really change the way we feel.

Verse 11 – 15

*Krisnamacarya “The activities of the Klesa are overcome by meditation”

The calmer we are and the clearer our minds the less likely we are to act in ways which produce suffering. Often we do things quickly without thinking because our minds are full of “stuff “. In fact the emptier the mind the more we will act skilfully because the mind will be focussed on what we are doing. I observe people doing too many things at once - talking on mobiles, using computer games, listening to ipods, talking ceaselessly rather than just being quiet and observing where they are. What’s wrong with having an empty mind? To me it’s an absolute joy because you are so in the moment, completely involved with what is around you and what is happening right now.

So by keeping the mind quiet we will be ready for changes and things that occur in our lives. By being clear and empty in the present we won’t take too much “garbage” into the future. When the mind is empty it is able to observe change and movement knowing that everything will pass and does not get hooked into any of these experiences. The mind becomes very much an observer without getting attached to any of these activities. Yes, of course we have to participate in life, the Buddhists say we all have to “chop wood and carry water”.

Verse 18

The steady mind is able to link into being the seer – Drastr – and not be pulled by what it sees – Drsyā.

I often wonder if we would suffer less if we didn't think so much - but would we experience pleasure? Why are we always searching for happiness? Is it possible to live life without this constant searching for happiness or avoiding suffering?

Verse 27

The more we are linked in to our own opinions, how we think and feel, the more likely we are to suffer when we come up against things that don't support our views or are different. The skill is to use the mind to enjoy the world and all it has to offer without needing it to be anything but itself.

Verse 28 - 32

Now Patanjali moves on to another tool to bring the mind to steadiness – the famous eight limbs – astanga.

In many ways these seem more manageable than the above because you can look at them individually and take them in smaller parts rather than trying to change your whole lifestyle and then surrender it all as suggested by Kriya Yoga!

Even though the eight limbs are listed in a certain order they are more often depicted by a wheel with eight spokes all leading to a central hub. As we all have different personalities we will be attracted by different things but with practice each of the spokes will create change in us, and how we relate to the world.

I will “stick my neck out here” and start with the final three known as the inner limbs of meditation, as I feel that because of meditation it does affect the way we treat the world and it's people – Yama – and also how we look after ourselves – Niyama.

Meditation for me has made me demand less of others and treat people more kindly because I don't need to manipulate or control them, being content with who I am and what I have. Also I strongly want to care for the planet by taking as little as possible from it and leaving as little on it that would harm it. “Leave nothing but footprints, take nothing but photographs”. My needs have become less and less from either people or the planet.

So rather than trying to follow the rules of Yama and Niyama it is because of using meditation every day and over a long period of time these concepts have become a natural way of living as if we could not behave in any other way verse 31 says “ they become a vow”.

Meditation can feed us to such an extent that we have no need to behave in ways, which are violent, non-truthful, demanding, grasping or needy – Yama. We have such respect for our body we look after it, keeping it well clean and healthy and feeding it food, which will not harm it. Our interest in our spiritual journey makes us want to read the sacred texts and there seems to be for me and I am sure other meditators a deep link with some higher force – God.

Verse 33 - 48

The way the mind works is very powerful and creates a positive or negative environment for us to live in. the mind is the biggest creator - the mind thinks and the body follows.

So by cultivating a positive, peaceful mental attitude we can reduce our suffering. By taking care of the body we again reduce physical suffering by not being affected so much by extremes of heat, cold, pain, pleasure etc.

**Bernard Bouanchaud “One who perseveres on the path of non-covetousness gains deep understanding of the meaning of life”*

Verse 49 –53

By taking care of the breath we prepare the mind for meditation, by reducing the pull of the Klesa, promoting clarity and allowing thoughts to settle and sink. The image of a still lake comes to mind, thoughts rest at the bottom of the lake, there are no wishes or desires to provoke them so the water stays still and clear. This clear water is totally reflective and light shines easily into it.

**Bernard Bouanchaud “ then, all that veils clarity of perception is swept away”*

Verse 54 and 55

At this stage the mind is so empty (or is it full?) and focussed the senses, which follow the mind, have nothing to pull them away and stay like the mind - all

flowing in one direction. As this state deepens there is only one way for the mind to go, into a complete state of meditation, which comes in the next chapter.....

Chapter 3

When I first studied this chapter I thought it was the strangest of them of them all with its talk of different powers, knowledge of the sun, moon and stars, strength of an elephant and invisibility! The siddhis – powers seemed way out of my realm of understanding but as I get to understand and experience the effects of meditation I realise they are not meant to be taken literally but as a guide to how meditation may make you feel and how your sensitivity and awareness increases as you practice over a long period of time.

Vibhuti – the title of the chapter translates as fruits, capabilities, success, powers, as a result of meditation practice. However Patanjali warns us that these too can also get in the way of our search for enlightenment and freedom, as they are a very powerful temptation in their own way. Yes, meditation can help us achieve great things but if we are not careful these fruits can become the focus rather than freedom – kaivalya.

Verse 1-3

The first few verses deal with the final three of the eight limbs discussed in chapter two. These are often known as the inner limbs as they discuss the process of meditation as a deepening experience.

The first one – dharana - concentration – comes from the root dhr – to hold or support and describes how the mind is held in one place. The beginning of the meditative process is a gradual “drawing in” of the mind away from its normal movements and distractions so that it is held steady by the focus of meditation. This could be a mantra, image or concept such as peace, inner strength or whatever is appropriate. The practice may involve different techniques (which I will discuss later in the section on practice) to help bring the mind away from its worldly distractions and prepare it for meditation.

The second verse focuses on - dhyanam - meditation – which seems to be a continuation of dharana but prolonged and more intense in that the mind is not pulled away and the focus is more complete.

With verse three – samadhi - complete absorption – the focus is complete and uninterrupted when the mind, object and the process of meditation are all one, not separate, as if the mind has lost its own shape and is completely taken up with the meditation focus.

Verse 4

Samyama seems to be a conjoining of the previous three and denotes complete mastery but without any attachment to the results. There are many different samyama mentioned in the succeeding verses describing mastery over different things, so the word appears a lot and why this chapter is often known as the chapter on siddhi – powers. There is a note here that we need to know something well and master it before we can let it go.

Many people these days seem to “dabble” in many different disciplines and become “Jack of all trades” but master of none. The idea of samyama is total mastery of the object without any other distractions. We can only know an object well when we focus on it alone, with no distractions and this is where the strength lies.

Verse 6

However this journey is a gradual process and the steps become known in stages –viniyoga - intelligent progression in steps- and it is important to know each step fully before going on to the next step. We are often tempted in life to just gain a little knowledge and feel this enough but unless we are well grounded in something moving on too soon can cause problems. The journey of Yoga really is a lifetime experience and one of the reasonings behind the eight limbs is this gradual mastery so the journey is smooth and safe as you go deeper and deeper in.

These last three limbs are probably the most difficult as the whole nature of the mind seems to be fickle and fluid to say the least! Meditation requires the focus of a laser beam to be successful but it is an incredible tool in that it overlaps into

many other areas of life. When we are concentrating on anything the practice of meditation enables the mind to be still and focussed so the job in hand is more quickly and skilfully done without the usual distractions which make us forget things or take too long.

Verse 16

The next group of sutras describes mastery of different concepts, some seem more fantastical than others, I will try to explain them in a more digestible way.

The more we get to know ourselves through practice the more our past makes sense of how we've come to be who we are and also where we are likely to go in the future with our present behaviour. We get the feeling that we do have a greater choice in life by the way we behave - the laws of karma start to make sense. Meditation really does help you to reflect on the way you behave and the results of your behaviour, so we have more choice for our future.

Verse 19

The ability to know what another is thinking - is this really possible? Patanjali suggests that by knowing our own minds so well we become very familiar with our own responses, behaviour patterns and expressions. When the mind is very clear and calm we are able to observe these patterns of behaviour in another person. Often we translate wrongly what another is thinking by overlaying our own patterns on that person. Only when our mind is completely still can we observe what the other is truly thinking without any transference. This would be very useful for a psychotherapist!

Verse 21

This is an interesting one – The concept of invisibility. Often we draw attention to ourselves because of wanting to be noticed. The way we dress, speak and behave can often be attention seeking. The more self-contained we are and less demanding of other people the more “invisible” we become.

Verse 24-34

The next few sutras talk about complete focus on a specific model to bring about the qualities generated by it. For instance by deeply concentrating on an elephant and observing how it moves and behaves we can take on similar qualities of

strength. The same is said for the sun, moon and stars.

Similarly the navel centre – knowledge of the body.

The throat – freedom from hunger and thirst.

The area of the thorax known as the “tortoise channel”, this area is often affected by fear and stress, so by using yoga postures and breathing techniques we can generate a feeling of both strength and calmness in that area.

By concentrating on the light at the top of the head and becoming interested in this phenomena we are more drawn to others who have this ability and so are able to develop it within ourselves.

The next area mentioned in “samyama sutras” is that of the heart, not the physical heart but in yoga terms where the mind rests. Ideally the heart should rule the mind and our thoughts should come from the heart.

Verse 36

From all these deep states of meditation and almost laser-like focus come heightened states of awareness. With prolonged practice our daily life is affected by this, we become much more sensitive on all levels. Hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch are more honed. By no longer being pulled away from our focus, whatever we do whatever sense we are using is able to function at its full capacity. In another way of thinking this could be likened to clairvoyance, clairaudience etc. But maybe it is our natural state, who knows what we are truly capable of?

Verse 37

However be warned, these powers may become addictive and lead to feelings of pride and attachment, all obstacles on our journey to freedom.

Verse 38

All these skills when refined will surely affect the people around us. This is a much more effective lesson than talking about it, just walk your talk.

Verse 40

Patanjali comes back to the physical by focussing on the energy of assimilation

– samana. With the use of pranayama techniques, in particular the pauses after exhale. This causes an inner heat which can help burn up all the negative dross we accumulate. The result of this cleansing is that we shine more brightly. We are not clogged up, there is radiance. People who practice a lot of pranayama do seem to shine more, particularly when using the pause after the exhale.

Verse 41

Another area of intense concentration is our hearing. We often do not listen properly because our minds are too busy, by having the mind still and calm we are much more able to hear and listen to people, we have two ears and one mouth! May also represent not being too fixed –tamasic- good to help us move on in life or make changes.

Verse 43

Our actions are carried out without the need for approval from others or restrictions by memory or imagination. We act clearly from a very focussed mind, not affected by past or future conditioning.

Verse 44

The more we meditate the more sensitive we become about the effect of the elements and what is right for our bodies. So we use food wisely, know what temperature is right for us, how much activity we need, etc. the elements are our friends not our enemies.

Verse 46

A great advert for yoga and meditation! With practice beauty, charm and strength are ours, what more could you need? These are very powerful attractions; remember your journey should be taking you somewhere deeper.

Verse 47

Taking the idea from verse 36 much further in looking at all the subtle sense organs and their mastery.

Verse 48

The ability to deal with any situation instantly and skilfully rather than having to

think about it. Because the practised meditating mind is so clear it does not have to think things through, it is able to grasp the situation and all that is needed to deal with it instantly. Often we analyse things too much, this infers an intuitive grasp of the situation and its solution.

Verse 49

A state of incredible serenity and complete peace with oneself. A stable mind in any situation, this is the real role of meditation.

Verse 50

However again the ego can get in the way. Attachment, pride etc. are all waiting round the corner to enslave us if we are not mindful, remember liberation is the goal.

Verse 51

Do not be seduced by what these qualities may bring. You will be sought after and others will want to emulate you, very attractive but again could be an obstacle.

Verse 52-55

**Bernard Bouachaud – “When the purity of the peaceful mind is identical with that of the spiritual entity, that is liberation. Verse 55*

The final journey to completely living in the present, no pull of the past or concern for the future. Time changes but our moods remain constant, our mind is not coloured in any way so we perceive everything as it is. The mind in fact is very free, light and at complete peace – kaivalya – freedom is ours.

We have come through chapter three with all its fantastic claims for the fruits of meditation. I hope some of them seem clearer. It really is only through practice that we can come nearer to understanding some of them. Without practice they seem far-fetched claims, but somehow through regular practice I can accept that they may be possible, not all of them for me I hasten to add!

In this project I decided to deal mainly with chapters one to three as concentrating mainly on what is possible from meditation and the tools needed. Chapter four expands the ideas already discussed on the refined mind from chapter three and

goes beyond this to the final realm of freedom and enlightenment. Before I leave Patanjali here are some key verses which I feel encapsulate his ideas.

Chapter 1

Verse 1: Yoga is something you have to start, it's like making a vow, an intention, to take it into your life.

Verse 2: Here Patanjali condenses the chapter into one verse. Yoga is about steadying the mind.

Verse 12: We need to practice and we need to be less affected by the mind and it's changes.

Verse: 20: We need faith to keep practicing.

Verse 33: Developing positive attributes brings peace.

Verse 47: The clear mind is much more able to deal with many situations and there is a feeling of something greater guiding our lives.

Chapter 2

Verse 1: Again the first verse lays down what is to follow. We have to practice, study ourselves and also make a link to our higher self or God, if appropriate.

Verse 16: What can be more important than the reduction of suffering through practice?

Verse 27: Through lengthy practice we are able to rid ourselves of the causes of suffering and move towards clarity.

Verse 34: By developing an opposite way of thinking to what is negative and causes us to suffer can bring us peace.

Chapter 3

Verses 1-3: Again the précis, this chapter is on meditation.

Verse 6: Meditation should be learnt step by step using techniques which are appropriate to the individual.

Verse 49: The goal of meditation – a mind at peace with complete understanding of everything!

I intend to now discuss some of the tools of meditation which I feel confident with rather than delve into areas which I am not, but who knows what the future will bring, practice brings knowledge!

Section 3

Support Texts

The Principle Upanisads

S.Radhakrisnan

Bhagavad Gita

Winthrop Sargeant

Yoganjalisaram

Krishnamacharya

The Magic of Mantra

Kausthub Desikachar

The Principal Upanisads

Translation by S.Radhakrishnan.

This Upanishad describes the five prana-vital airs as doorkeepers to heaven, I have used this model as one of the meditations for groups.

Chandogya Upanisad: Chapter 3, section 13.

Meditation on the five vital airs – prana.

The five doorkeepers of the world of heaven.

1. Verily, indeed this heart has five openings for the gods. It's eastern is the prana (up breath). That is the eye; that is the sun. One should meditate on this as glow and as health. He who knows this becomes glowing and healthy.
2. Now it's southern opening is vyana (diffused breath). That is the ear: that is the moon. One should meditate on this as prosperity and fame. He who knows becomes prosperous and famous.
3. Now it's western opening is apana (downward breath). That is speech that is fire. One should meditate on this as the lustre of sacred wisdom and health. He who knows this becomes possessed of the lustre of sacred wisdom and health.
4. Now, this northern is samana(equalised breath). That is mind that is rain; one should meditate this as fame and beauty. He who knows this becomes famous and beautiful.
5. Now the upper opening is udana (out – breath) that is air that is space. One should meditate on it as strength and greatness. He who knows this becomes strong and great.
6. By controlling the eye, ear, speech, mind and breath through meditation, by checking their outward activities, we are able to reach the Brahman in the heart.

Katha Upanishad: chapter 1, section 2, v.12

Study of the supreme through meditation: This verse describes the dwelling place of the supreme as being in the heart space, another suggested meditation.

Also a reference to Yoga

Sutra Chapter 2 verse 48: tato dvandva anabhigatah

The practice of yoga reducing the effect of opposites such as pain and pleasure, heat and cold, hunger and thirst etc.

Realising through self-contemplation that primal God, difficult to be seen, deeply hidden, set in the cave of the heart, dwelling in the deep, the wise man leaves behind both joy and sorrow.

Chapter 1 section 3 verse 3: The model of the chariot

Describes the self as the lord of the chariot which is the body, the intellect as the driver, the mind as the reins and the horses as the senses often pulling us in different directions, meditation being the tool to bring all under control.

Katha Upanisad: chapter 2, section 3. verse 10 and 11

Pratyahara A lovely reference of Yoga.

10. When the five senses together with the mind cease from their normal activities and the intellect itself does not stir, that, they say is the highest state.
11. This, they consider to be Yoga, the steady control of the senses. Then one becomes undistracted for Yoga comes and goes.

Mandukya Upanisad: Chapter 3, section 3, verse 1.

A description of the mantra aum often used in meditation.

The significance of AUM.

1. Aum, this syllable is all this. All that is past, present and future, all this is only the syllable aum. Whatever else there is beyond the threefold time, that too is only the syllable aum.

Maitri Upanisad: chapter 6, verse 23 and 25

More analysis of aum and the importance of reducing the pull of the senses to prepare the mind for meditation-pratyahara

Meditation on AUM.

23. Thus it has been said elsewhere: What is the sound is the syllable aum. That which is its end is: tranquil, soundless, fearless, sorrowless, blissfull, satisfied, steadfast, unmoving, immortal, unshaking, enduring.

Pratyahara

25. He who has senses indrawn as in sleep, who has his thoughts perfectly pure as in dream, who, while in the cavern of the senses is not under their control, perceives him who is called Pranava, the leader. The form of light, sleepless, free from old age, deathless and sorrowless. Thus it is said: "Because in his manner he joins the breath the syllable aum and all this world and in it's manifoldness or perhaps they joined, therefore this process of meditation is called Yoga. The oneness of the breath, the mind and likewise of the senses and the abandonment of all conditions of existence, this is designated as Yoga.

Taittiriya Upaniasad: chapter 1, section 5, v.1-5

A lovely meditation known as the creation mantra – the forming of the world and beyond. The fourfold mystic utterances.

1. Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah, Mahah. Bhuh is this world; Bhuvah, the atmosphere, Suvah is the yonder world, mahah is the sun; by the sun indeed do all worlds become great.
2. Bhuh is fire; Bhuvah is the air; Suvah is the sun; mahah is the moon; by the moon indeed do all the luminaries become great.
3. Bhuh is the Rg verses; Bhuvah is the saman chants; Suvah is the Yajus formulas; Mahah is Brahman. By Brahman indeed do all the Vedas become great?
4. Bhuh is the inbreath; Bhuvah is the outbreath; Suvah is the diffused

breath; Mahah is the food. By food indeed do all the vital breaths become great?

5. Verily these four are fourfold. The utterances are four and four. He who knows these knows Brahman. To him all gods offer tribute.

Chapter 3, section 1.

Bhrguvalli and the Pancamaya-the five aspects of a human.

I have used this a lot for teaching meditation to groups and as a five-day retreat, it works really well in explaining the deepening process of meditation working from gross to subtle or "*from outer body to inner bliss*"

Bhrgu the son of Varuna approached his father Varuna and said, "Venerable Sir, teach me about Brahman"

He explained to him thus: matter, life, mind, intelligence and bliss are all part of Brahman, go and meditate on this.

Annam – matter, the body.

Prana – life, the breath.

Mano – the mind.

Vijnana – the intellect.

Ananda – bliss – the emotions.

The Upanishads have supplied me with a very rich source of meditation material including some lovely stories.

BHAGAVAD GITA

Translation by Winthrop Sargeant.

Chapter 6 is titled "the Yoga of Meditation"

A description of meditation – where to practice, the position of the body and attitude of mind. Also some suggestions of lifestyle and diet, with a lovely conclusion.

Chapter 6. verses 10 –20.

10. The Yogin should concentrate constantly on the Self, remaining in solitude. Alone, with controlled mind and body, having no desires and destitute of possessions.
11. Establishing a firm seat for himself in a clean place, not too high, not too low, covered with a cloth, an antelope skin and kusha grass.
12. There having directed his mind to a single object, with his thought and activity of the senses controlled. Seating himself on the seat he should practice Yoga for the purpose of self – purification.
13. Holding the body, head and neck erect, motionless and steady. Gazing at the tip of his own nose and not looking in any direction.
14. With quieted mind, banishing fear, established in the brahmacharin vow of celibacy. Controlling the mind with thoughts fixed on me, he should sit, concentrated, devoted to me.
15. Thus, continually disciplining himself, the yogin whose mind is subdued goes to Nirvana, to supreme peace, to union with Me.
16. Yoga is not eating too much, nor is it not eating at all, and not the habit of sleeping too much, and not keeping awake either, Arjuna.
17. For him who is moderate in food and diversion, whose actions are disciplined, who is moderate in sleep and waking, Yoga destroys all sorrow.
18. When he is absorbed in the Self alone, with controlled mind, free from

longing, from all desires, then he is said to be a saint.

19. As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, to such is compared the yogin of controlled mind , performing the yoga of the Self.
20. When the mind comes to rest, restrained by the practice of yoga, and when beholding the Self, by the self, he is content in the Self.

YOGANJALISARAM. - Krishnamacharya

I have chosen a few slokas from Krishnamacharya's beautiful poem to encapsulate some of the benefits and results of meditation.

Sloka 2

Reflect constantly on the message of Yoganjalisaram.
Dwell on the eternal while doing your asana
Regulating your breath through pranayama
Meditate on the ever compassionate dwelling in the Heart.

Sloka 5

Knowing all objects to be impermanent
Let not their contact blind you
Resolve again and again to be aware
Of the Self that is permanent.

Sloka 6

Surrender to yoga, for
Where is the conflict when the truth is known
Where is the disease when the mind is clear
Where is death when the breath is controlled.

Sloka 21

Yoga steadies the mind
Chanting Lord's prayer gives energy and intelligence
Meditation results in marvels
Through mantra japa comes Self realisation.

Sloka 25

Practice pranayama with attention
Then when the breath becomes long and smooth

The mind is ready for meditation.

Sloka 27

Asana will make the body light
Pranayama strengthens prana
Dharana purifies the intellect
Meditation purifies the mind.

Sloka 32

Regulate the breath, be happy
Link the mind with the Lord in your heart
This is the message
Of Yogi Tirumala Krishna.

THE MAGIC OF MANTRA

A course taught by Kausthub Desikachar in Austria 2006

The steps of a meditation practice using mantra: Mantra Japam Krama.

These steps help to prepare the mind for meditation and were taught as a special ritual from teacher to student, probably in a gradual way over a period of time.

Prathana – an auspicious beginning, maybe a prayer, a positive attitude because what you are going to do is special.

1. Acamanam – Pre – religious Indian culture – take sips of water reciting some special mantras to moisten the throat and purify the water.
2. Pranayama – to prepare the mind and make it alert - Nadi Sodhana linked to the silent recitation of the mantra, using a 1.2.1.0 ratio, brmhana to keep you awake.
3. Samkalpa – Intention/commitment – left hand on right knee, right hand on top, gesture of commitment to set the intention.
4. Avahanam – Open hands out and bring into the heart chanting the mantra.
5. Anganyasam – Place hands on different parts of the body to purify the body with the mantra.
6. Karanyasam – Slide thumb up each finger and then open hands out.
7. Hridayanyasam – Touch different parts of the body .
8. Vyapakanyasam – Circle hands round whole body.
9. Dhyanam – Visualise what the mantra represents for you.
10. Mantra Japam – Repeated mantra – the core of the practice, eg 24, 36,108 times. On auspicious days 1008.
11. Arcanam – Offering gratitude to the deity, sit for a while in reflection.
12. Visarjanam – Pranayama, coming out and returning to the world. Nadi Sodhana 1.0.2.0. ratio.

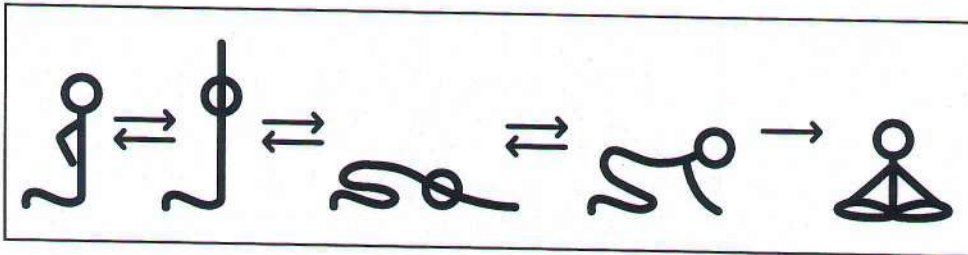
13. Sattvika Tyagam – Sharing the benefits, reciting a small chant about letting it be for everyone else.

Mantras can be used for specific needs – healing, physical or psychological, or asking for support.

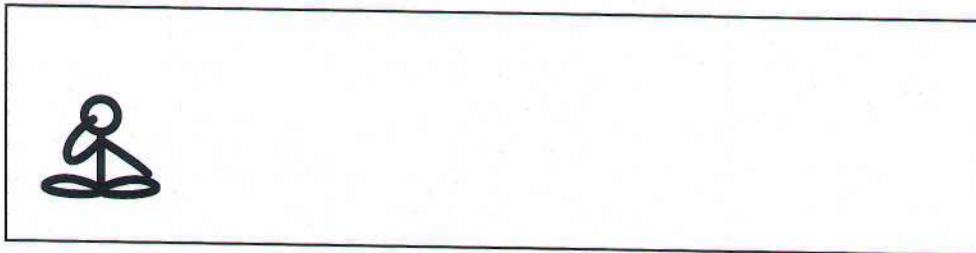
DHIRAYA NAMAH

For strength, power strong clarity.

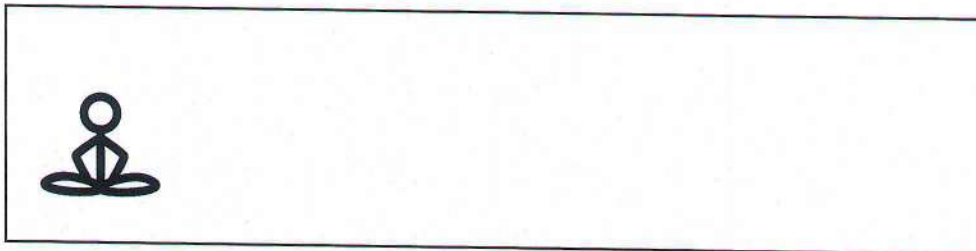
1. Some simple movements to prepare the body to sit.



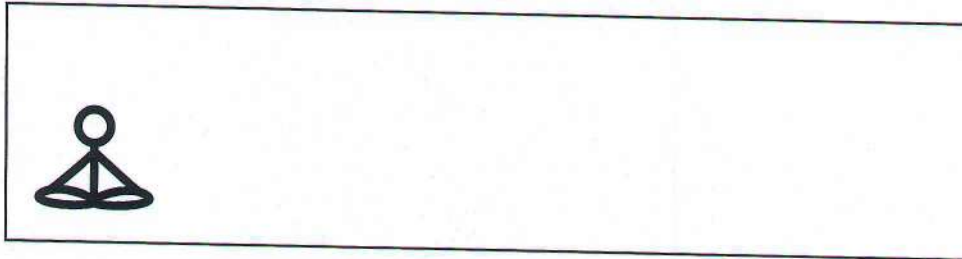
2. **Nadi Sodhana** 1.1.1.0. 10 breaths. To steady the mind, the use of the hold after the inhale will help keep you awake and bring energy into the practice.



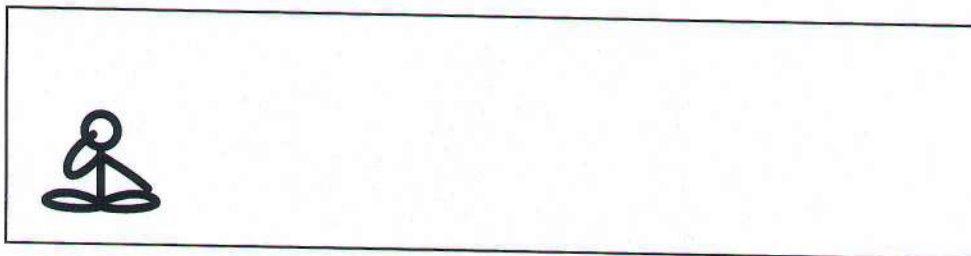
3. **Nyasa** – placing the hands on parts of the body, maybe cakra points or belly, heart, throat and brow.



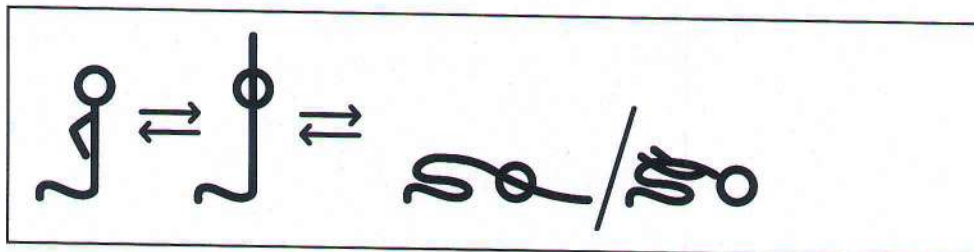
4. **Silent chant of the mantra** – build up to 108 times.



5. **Nadi Sodhana** 1.0.2.0. 10 breaths



6. Some forward bends to end the practice with the chant.



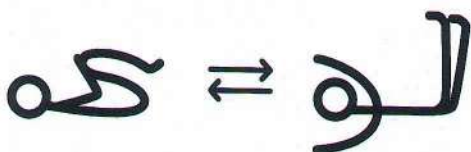
OM APAYA SVAHA

Water I bow to you. Apo – water. Svaha – offering. This mantra is often used in pregnancy, life comes from water and is supported by it.

Chant 12 times



Listen to chanting from teacher and breath with a 1.0.2.0 ratio.



Repeat 12 times

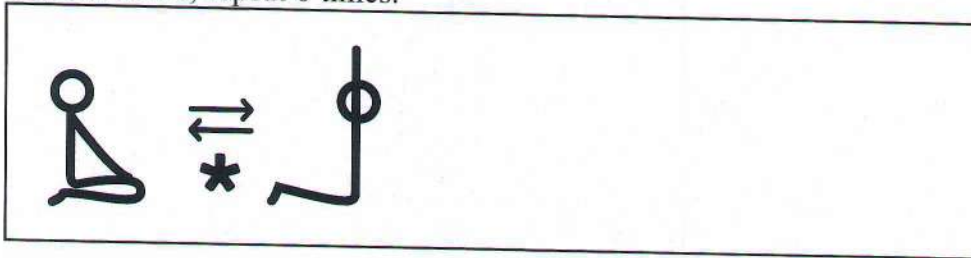
Repeat mantra up to 108 times.



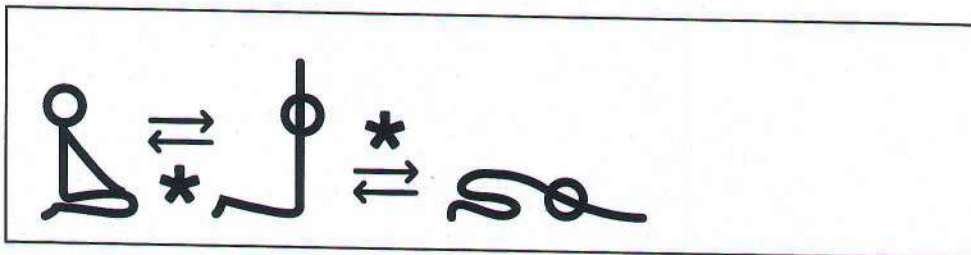
OM RAM RAMAYA NAMA

A mantra to help let go of guilt, remove impurities, bring a feeling of release and being forgiven.

1. Chant mantra, repeat 6 times.



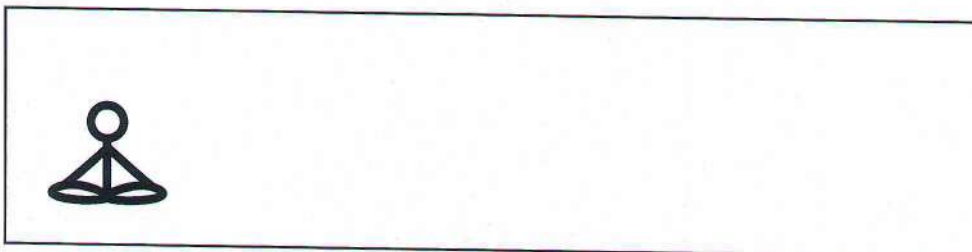
2. Chant, repeat 6 times



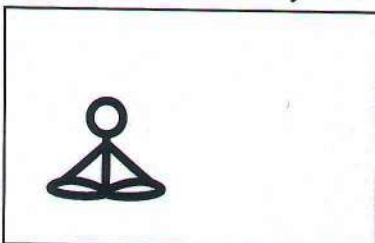
3. Focus on a source of strength and bring into your heart.



4. Think about something you feel guilty about.



5. Chant 36 times. After each chant think about the situation and people involved and ask for forgiveness. Visualise source of power. Listen to teacher chant Taittiriya Samhita 4.1.42.



6. Nadi Sodhana or Sitali breathing 1.0.2.0 10 breaths.



7. Chant Annam Santih – peace for the body
Pranam Santih – peace for the breath
Mano Santih - peace for the mind
Vijnanam Santih - peace for the intellect
Anandam Santih - peace for the emotions



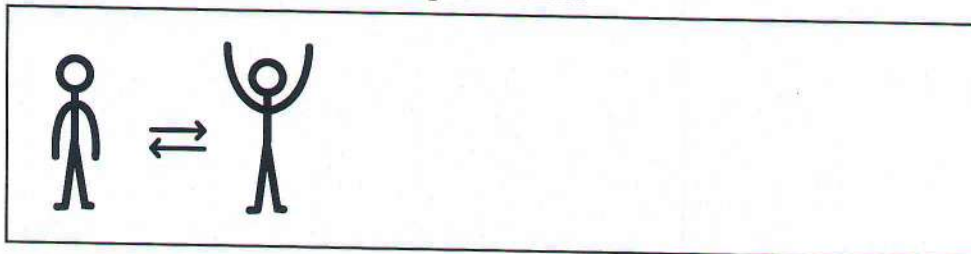
- 8) Chant Santih
Santissantih
Santissantissantih



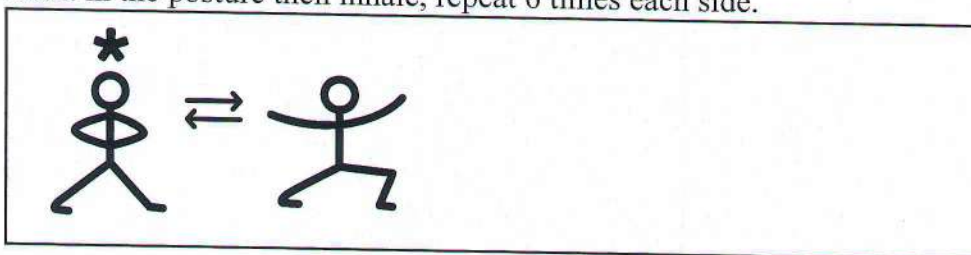
OM DUM DURGAYAI NAMAH

A practice to help with depression, open the chest, bring movement and expansion to the body. For inner strength and destroying negativity focussing on Durga the feminine goddess.

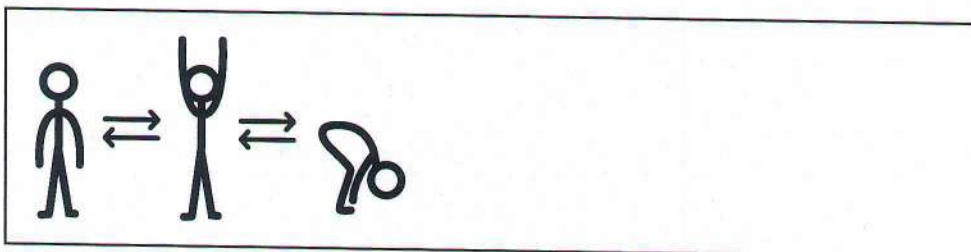
1. Chant as you lower the arms. Repeat 6 times



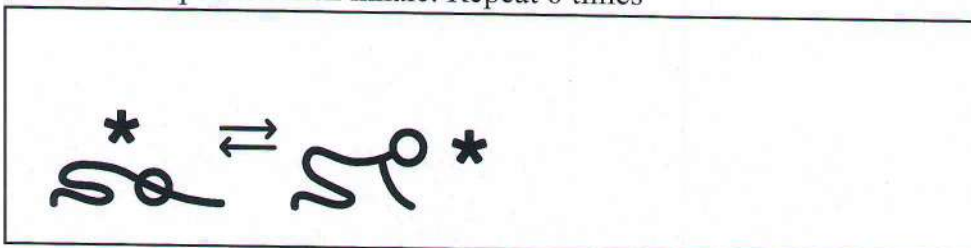
2. Chant in the posture then inhale, repeat 6 times each side.



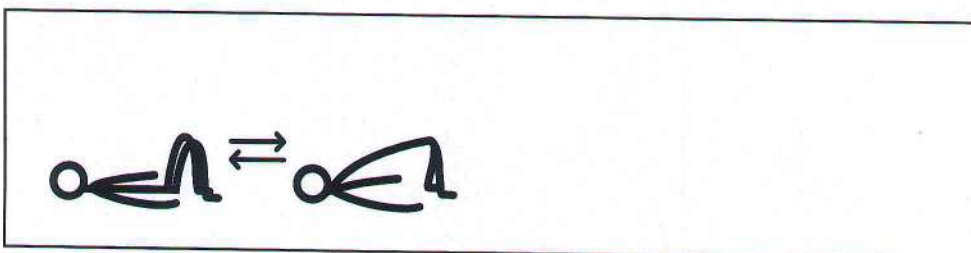
- 3.



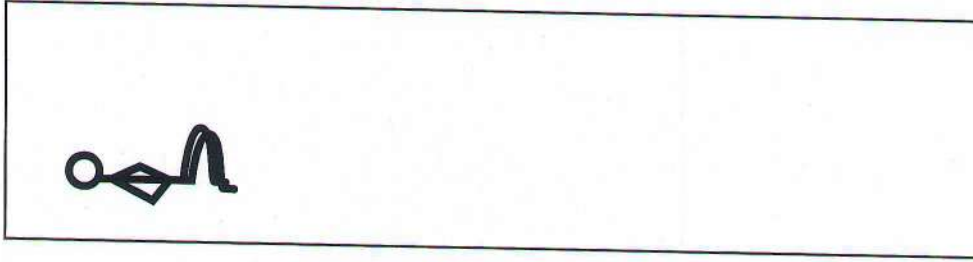
4. Chant in the posture then inhale. Repeat 6 times



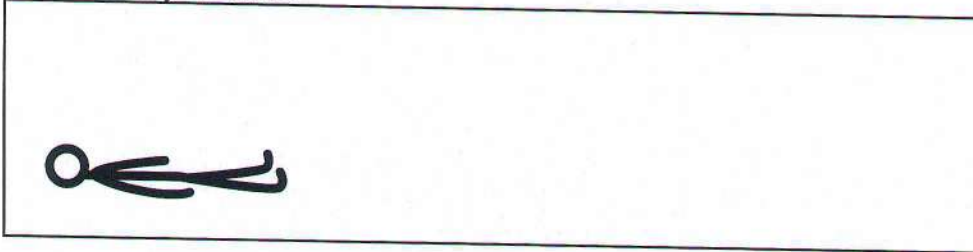
- 5.



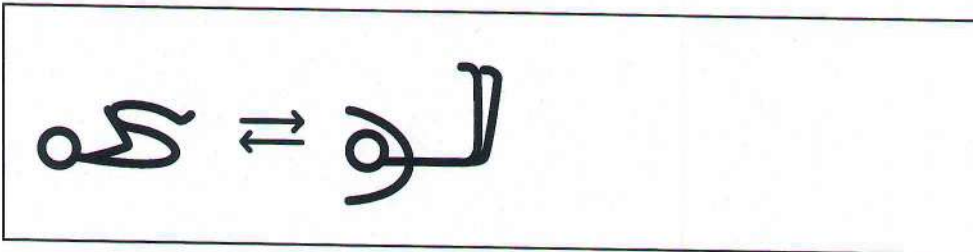
6. Use a 1. ½ .1.1/2 ratio. 6 breaths.



7. Chant softly 24 times



8. Repeat 6 times increase length of exhale.



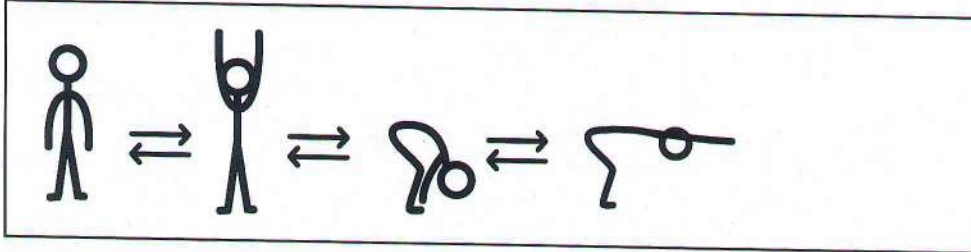
9. Offer the chant out to the world 12 times.



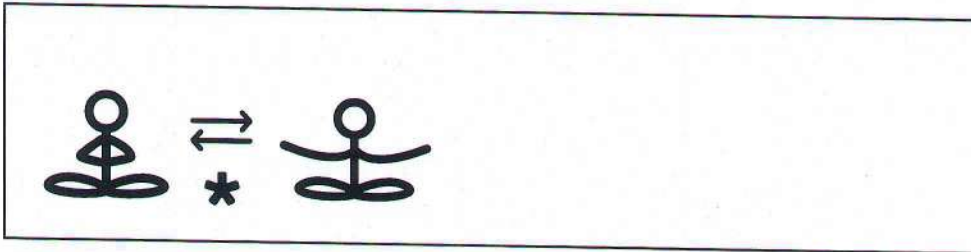
OM GARUDAYA NAMAH

The eagle representing transcendence, uplifting, helping to look at a situation from above.

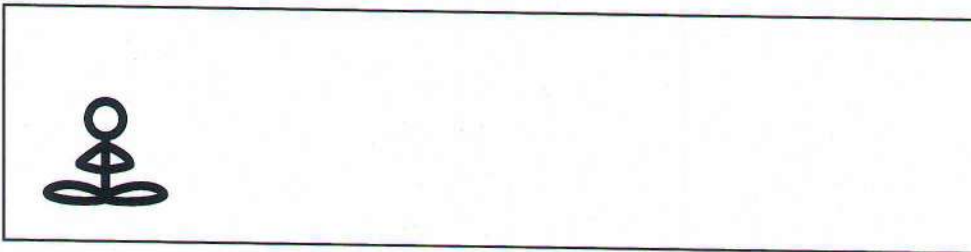
1. Move on the exhale as you chant. Repeat 6 times.



2. Bring chant into the heart.



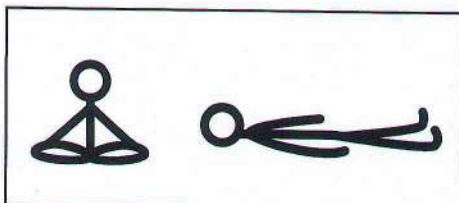
3. Repeat chant 10 times at each place – belly, heart and crown. Visualise a strong, powerful eagle, heighten the pitch .



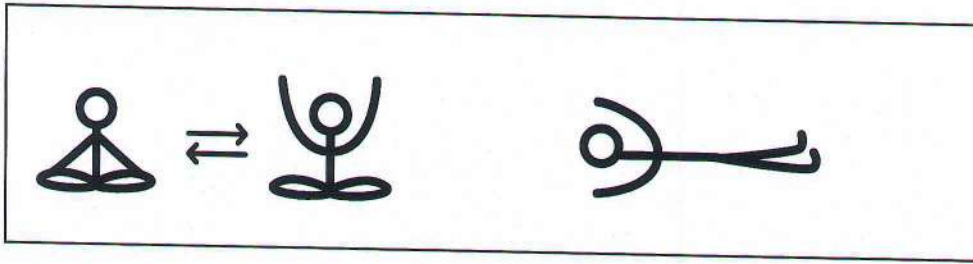
4. Repeat 36 times silently



5. Sit and reflect on the transcendence of the eagle lifting you above the situation.



6. Lie or sit.



Some other mantras for different needs.

OM SAM SARASVATAI NAMA. Sarasvati

The goddess of wisdom, knowledge and music.

OM SRIM SRIYAI NAMA. Laksmi

The goddess representing femininity, compassion, modesty, nurturing and providing money!

OM NAMO BRAHMANE

Brahma the creator, to stimulate energy, good for depression.

OM PARVATAYA NAMA.

The goddess Parvati came from the mountains, good for stability.

OM VISNUM YONIM KALPAYATU.

To create – husband and wife do together for conception. Asking Visnu to make the womb – yonim ready for a child.

OM NAMA SIVAYA.

To Siva who destroys negativity and uplifts.

OM GAM GANAPATAYE NAMA.

To Ganesa the remover of obstacles, good for a new beginning.

OM HANUMATE NAMA.

To Hanuman the symbol of faith for those who need more faith.

OM SRADDHAYA NAMA.

Faith.

Section 4

THE PROCESS OF MEDITATION

Preparation for Meditation.

Meditation in my mind is not just a state, it's more a journey and the more preparation you make for a journey the more successful the journey will be. In Desikachar's book "The Heart of Yoga" he states that the goal of Yoga is not so important as its stages.

The Yoga Sutra discusses in chapter two the various tools that can help along the way- asana, pranayama, chanting, mental attitude. These all help in withdrawing the senses – smell, taste, touch, sight and hearing from their usual distractions, such as desires aversions or fears so that by the time we are ready to sit the mind is ready.

Chapter two, verse fifty three says " through the practice of pranayama the mind is fit or ready for meditation". In the same way we prepare the body for a particular activity we make the mind fit for meditation.

Asana.

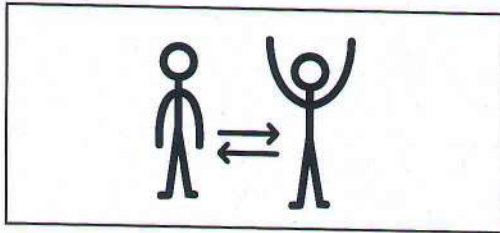
Yoga Sutra chapter two, verse forty six says " that the posture should be both firm and comfortable." We need both to be able to sit in meditation for any length of time, firmness so that we don't fall over and comfort so there is no pain.

The Bhagavad Gita chapter 6 verse 13 says - "With upright body, head and neck, which rest still and move not; with inner gaze which is not restless, but rests still between the eyebrows"

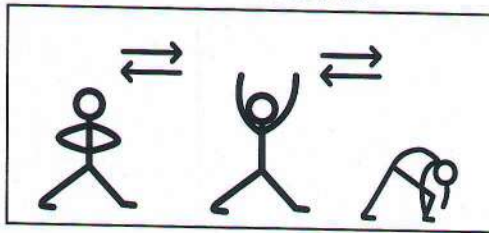
Certain asana can help prepare the body for sitting. Postures to open the hips and strengthen the spine will all be useful.

A sample practice:

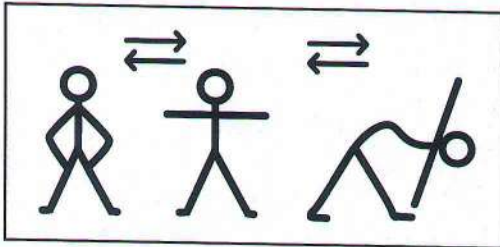
1. Repeat 4 times



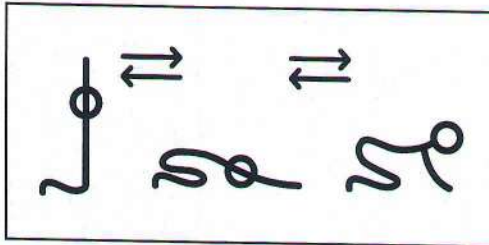
2. Repeat 4 times each side



3. Repeat 4 times each side



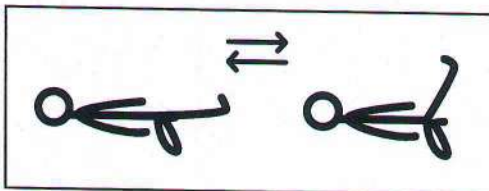
4. Repeat 4 times



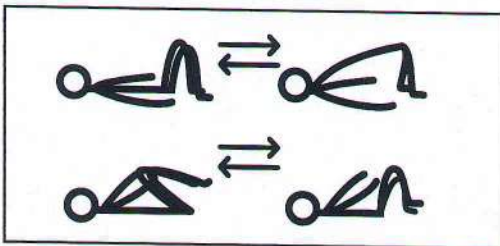
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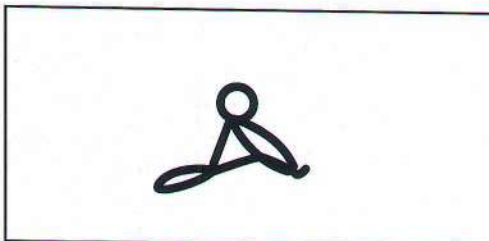
6. Repeat four times each side



7. Repeat four times



8. Stay eight breaths each side.*

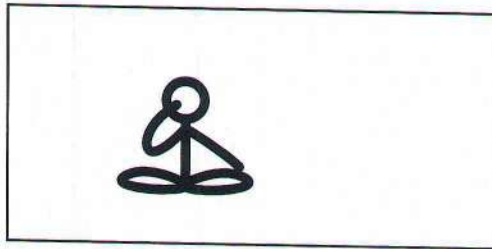
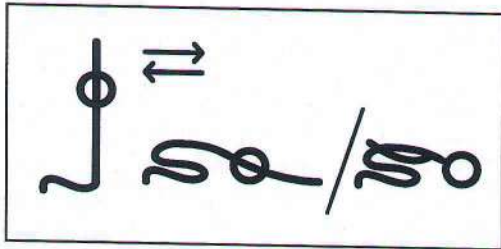


Maha Mudra - the great seal is a very useful posture to link to pranayama and meditation. It is a posture where the back is held erect and as straight as possible. The ancients believed in a special channel aligned with the spine- the susumna. This carries prana from the base cakra muladhara to the crown cakra sahasrara .It is very important for the spine to be straight for the flow of prana to move easily from base to crown without any blockages. When this occurred enlightenment would result.

- Maha Mudra is also a good posture for using pranayama in as the spine is straight
- The legs and hips are prepared for sitting and the spine is held straight and still, also a good posture to use pranayama in.

10. Nadi Sodhana (alternate nostril breathing)
12 breaths - 6 second inhale, hold 3 seconds, 9 second exhale, hold 3 seconds. 6.3.9.3.

9. Make exhale longer than inhale



Pranayama

A very important preparation for meditation is pranayama and chapter two verses 49-53 explain why. Different techniques and breath ratios will have different effects. Generally inhale techniques such as viloma ujjayi – alternate nostril inhale and surya bhedana – in right nostril, out left, will help keep the mind awake. Sitali – breath in through a curled tongue and out with ujjayi even though an inhale technique is also calming. Exhale techniques such as anuloma ujjayi – in both, out alternate nostrils and Chandra bhedana – in left, out right nostril are generally more calming. Nadi sodhana the alternate nostril breath and pratiloma ujjayi a combination of anuloma and viloma ujjayi are more balancing and help focus the mind because of the concentration needed.

However all the above will be affected by the breath ratio used. Focus on and lengthening the inhale tends to stimulate and focussing on and lengthening the exhale tends to calm and quieten the mind.

At the beginning of a meditation practice it is a good idea to focus on the inhale and hold to keep the mind alert using a 1.1.1.0. ratio for example.

Some examples:

Calming – Anuloma Ujjayi – Alternate nostril exhale. In both nostrils using ujjayi throat control, out through the left nostril, in both, out right.

Example ratio:

6. 3. 9. 3. – 6 breaths

6. 3. 12. 3.-6 breaths

6. 0. 9. 0. 6 breaths

Sitali and Anuloma – Sitali- inhale through a curled tongue, exhale through alternate nostrils.

Example ratio:

Sitali – 6. 3. 9.3. 6B

Sitali & anuloma 6. 3. 12.3.6B

Anuloma ujjayi 6. 3. 15 3.6B

Ujjayi 6. 0. 9. 0. 6B

Candra Bhedana – in left nostril, out right.

Example ratio:

Candra Bhedana – 6.3.9.3. 12B

Anuloma Ujjayi- 6. 3.12.3 6B

Ujjayi -6. 0. 9. 0. 6B

Nadi Sodhana – Alternate nostril breath – in left, out right, in right , out left.

Example ratio:

6. 3. 9. 3. 6B

6.3.12. 3. 12B

6. 0. 9.0. 6B

- A special technique for lengthening the exhale is anuloma with brahmari

– inhale through both nostrils using ujjayi and exhale through alternate nostrils humming, try it, it's very powerful!

Energising and awakening techniques for the beginning of the practice.

Viloma Ujjayi – alternate nostril inhale, in left, out both, in right, out both.

6. 3. 9. 3. 6B

6. 6. 9. 3. 6B

6. 0. 9. 0. 6B

Surya Bhedana – in right, out left.

6. 3. 9. 3. 6B

9. 3. 9. 3. 6B

6. 0. 9. 0. 6B

Nadi Sodhana – alternate nostril breath.

6. 3. 9. 3. 6B

9. 3. 9. 3. 6B

6. 0. 9. 0. 6B

Balancing techniques.

Nadi sodhana with an even ratio 1. 0. 1. 0. or 1. ½. 1. ½.

Pratiloma Ujjayi is a special technique – a combination of anuloma and viloma ujjayi, in both, out left, in left, out both, in both, out right, in right, out both. It is used with an even (samana) ratio.

6. 0. 6. 0. 4B

6. 3. 6. 3. 4B

6. 6. 6. 6. 4B

6. 0. 6. 0. 4B

CHANTING

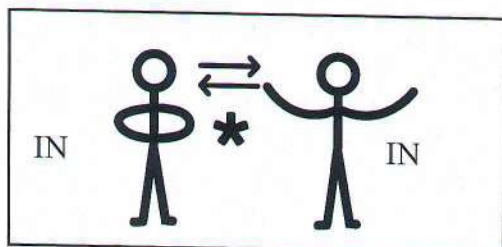
Used in the asana work simple chants can prepare for meditation particularly if the same chant is going to be used in the meditation.

Some examples: A, MA, SOMASO, MABHUMA, RAM,RIM,RUM, NAMAHA, SANTIHA. The sun chant HRAHA,HRIMA,HRUMA,HRAIMA,HRAUMA,HRAHA is very effective particularly if used with a focus on the sun in the heart, examples of these will follow.

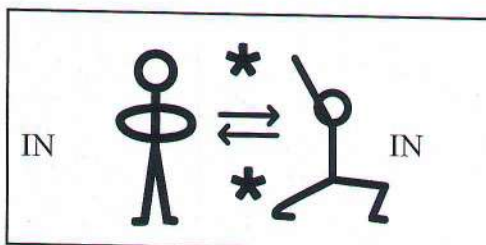
Chants are obviously all done on the exhale and sound always helps lengthen the breath and we know that lengthening the breath calms the mind. It is also a very powerful technique to focus the mind and personally I feel is one of the best tools for meditation, started orally, then softly, then silently.

Some examples:

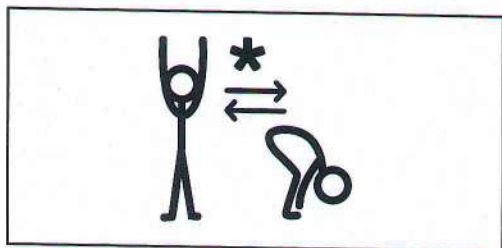
1. SOMASO - Full moon



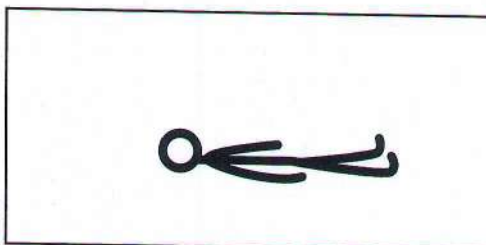
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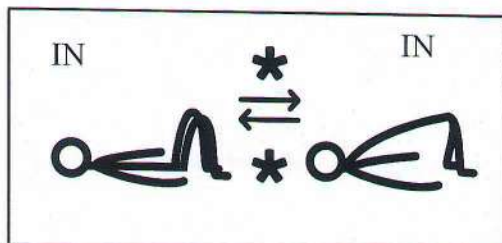
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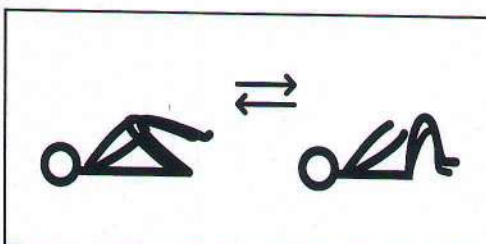
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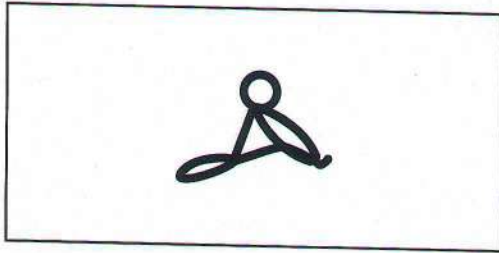
5.



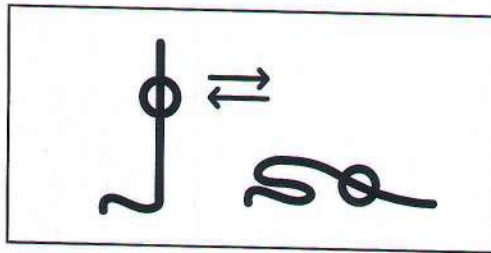
6.



7. Sitali & SOMASO



8.

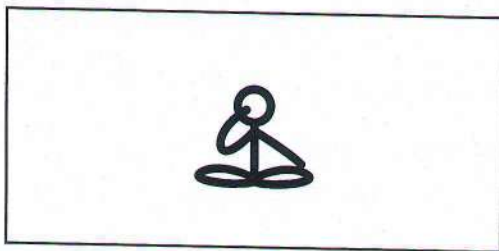


9. Nadi Sodhana 12B

in - SOMASO

ex - SOMASOMASO

Silent



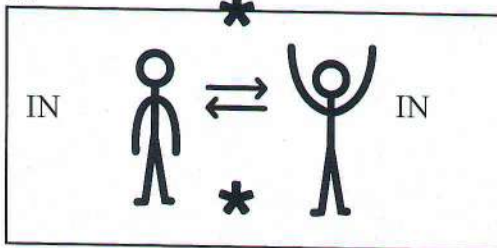
10. Image of full moon.



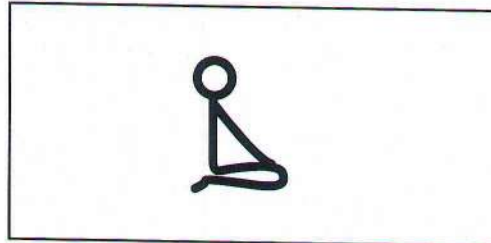
Using the "Creation Mantra". All movements on the exhale, chanting, breathe in in the posture.

1.OM BHUH. 2.OM BHUVAH 3.OM SUVAH. 4.OM MAHAH. 5.OM JANAHA. 6.OM TAPAH 7.OM SATYAM.

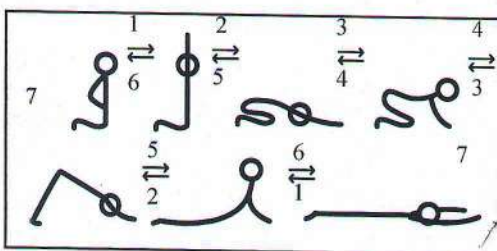
1.



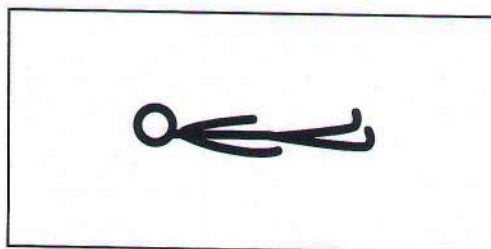
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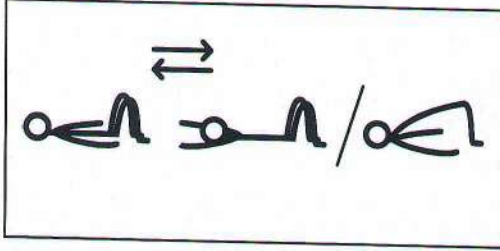


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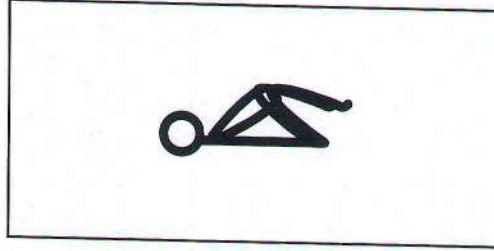


* 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

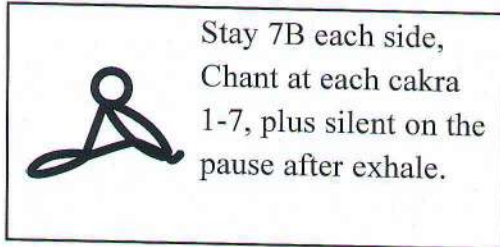
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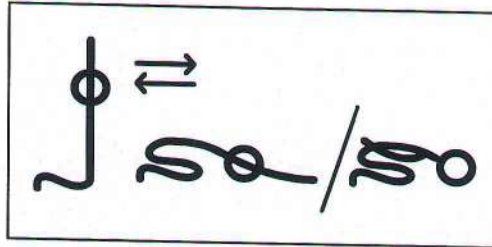
6.



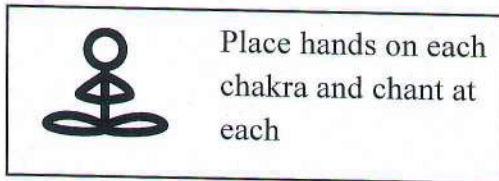
7.



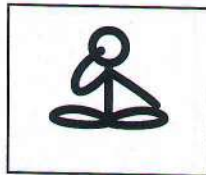
8.



9.



10. Nadi Sodhana 1.0.2.0 11.



Other techniques to hold the mind steady.

Nyasa – to place. Placing the mind or the hands on different parts of the body, e.g. head, heart, belly, cakras, joints.

Two breaths at each pair of joints.



One breath at each cakra.

Placing the hands on different parts of the body.

Belly Heart Palm the eyes



Cakra points Shoulders etc.

RITUALS.

Walking slowly round (classically clockwise) a temple or object of meditation.

Lighting a candle.

Placing a flower in front of an auspicious image, statue or picture.

Sipping water.

There are many rituals which can help focus the mind.

All of the above are tools to prepare the mind for meditation but as the practitioner becomes more experienced over the years I feel these can be reduced so the practice becomes quieter and stiller with less activity as the mind more quickly settles down to meditate. Then the only object of meditation may be a silent mantra, a concept or an image.

As you can see this journey moves from gross to subtle – asana and the body through pranayama and the breath to the mind and beyond.

In chapter three of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra the first four verses talk about the process of meditation – notably verse 1 Dharana, verse 2 Dhyana, verse 3 Samadhi, verse 4 Samyama.

Dharana – when the mind is held in one place, concentrating on one thing.

Dhyana – literally meditation, a much deeper relationship with the object of choice.

Samadhi – a total absorption of the mind, when nothing else exists for the mind, as if it has become the object or the object has replaced the normal workings of the workings of the mind. The mind is full of the object with no room for anything else.

Samyama – complete mastery of the preceding three. A complete understanding and knowledge.

To sum up:

The process of meditation to me is not just the act of sitting and meditating but involves the preceding preparation of asana, pranayama and certain rituals to support this journey.

One translation of asana is to sit and stay, some would say that the main reason for asana is to prepare the body for meditation. Certainly asana will help increase the flexibility and comfort of the hips and knees to sit and stay, also the spine to remain erect and comfortable for a length of time. In particular Maha

Mudra is an important link posture to prepare for pranayama and meditation as it has the opening of the hips, flexion of the knees and the erect spine needed in meditation, also pranayama is often used in Maha Mudra.

Pranayama itself is a very important tool to prepare the mind – Patanjali says it makes the mind fit for meditation – (Y.S 2 v.53).certain pranayama techniques are invaluable - some can keep the mind alert such as the use of holds after the inhale, some can calm – long exhales in anuloma ujjayi and some balance - nadi sodhana with an even length breath.

Classical meditation ideas would use nadi sodhana at the beginning with a hold after the inhale to keep the mind awake and again at the end with a longer exhale to relax.

Other tools: Mantra- specific for the individual or more general for groups- many are suggested in this project.

Section 5

MEDITATION FOR GROUPS.

Over my years of teaching Yoga I have run many retreats, weekends and courses on meditation. I have also attended many of the above with various teachers including T.K.V. Desikachar, Kausthub Desikachar and Paul Harvey. Some themes lend themselves very well to week retreats such as the Panca Vayu – five aspects of Prana, the Panca Maya – five aspects of the human as they can be spread over five days.

Others are more suitable for single practices such as meditations on the sun-surya, the moon-soma, peace- shanti, one's duty or journey in life-dharma or the Gayatri mantra-including the creation mantra.

There are many more focuses and I'm sure you have many of your own ideas – meditation can make us quite creative! I will include the above in this chapter and some ideas from Kausthub Desikachar from an extremely transformative week in Scotland entitled "The reduction of suffering"

Panca Maya.

The five aspects of a human. Maya actually translates as illusion which infers that all the parts of ourself are illusory because they are constantly changing and the true nature of the self is immortal and unchanging.

1. Annam – the body-literally made of food.
2. Pranam – the energy body expressed as the breath.
3. Manas - the mind and our education.
4. Vijnanam –our individual character, nature.
5. Anandam – our emotional level, literally bliss.

To support this study and meditation on the Panca Maya there is a lovely simple chant which Desikachar composed. It is taken from chapter three of the Taittiriya Upanishad entitled Bhrguvalli. Bhrgu is the son of Varuna and he was

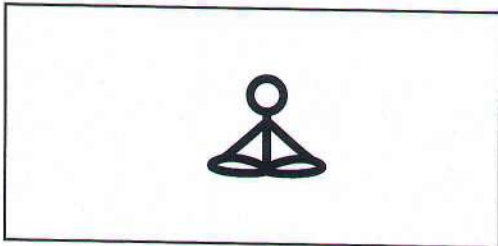
trying to learn about the meaning of life and God and what he was made up of. His father explained the five aspects of the human and Bhrgu meditated on each of the aspects. Desikachar made this into a chant- Ma Aham- me, I am. Here is a short form of it.

- Ma aham aham ma
- Ma aham aham annam – body
- Ma aham aham pranam- breath
- Ma aham aham manah – mind
- Ma aham aham vijnanam- wisdom
- Ma aham aham anandam – bliss
- Ma aham aham sarvam – all of these.

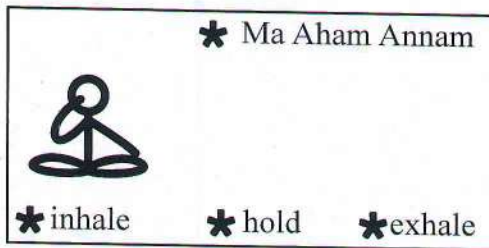
For the meditation practice an idea would be to focus on the aspect of the human and use the appropriate chant. E.g. the body would be annam and the breath pranam etc.

Practice: The Body

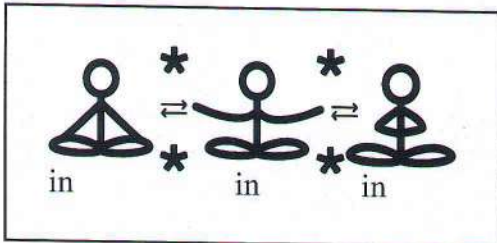
1. Reflect on the body



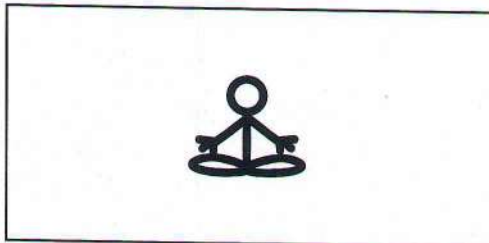
2. Nadi Sodhana



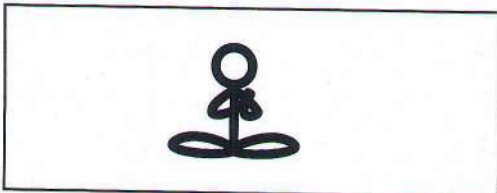
3. Focus on the body



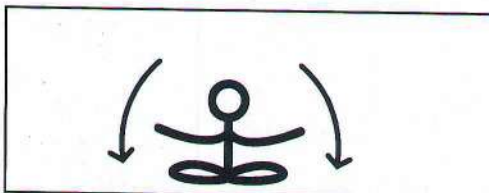
4. Finger nyasa



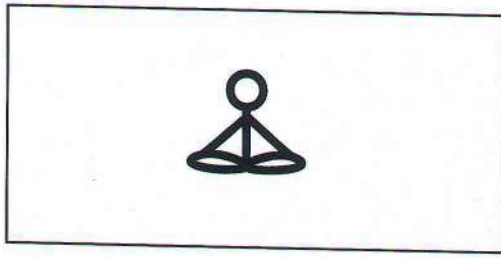
5. Namaste



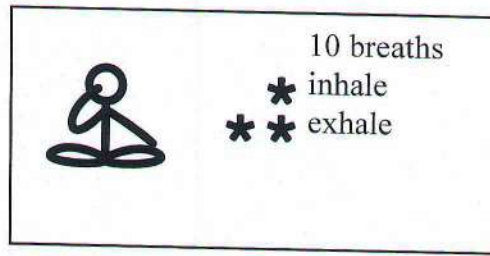
6. Circle



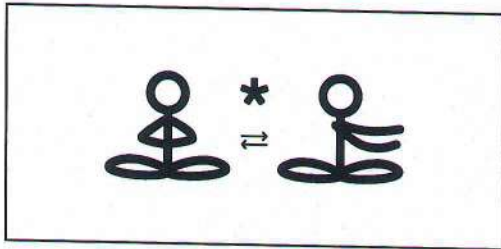
7. Chant mantra silently 36 times



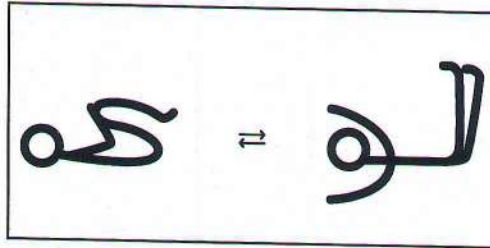
8. Nadi Sodhana



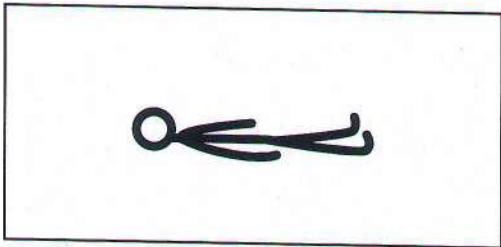
9. Offer it back



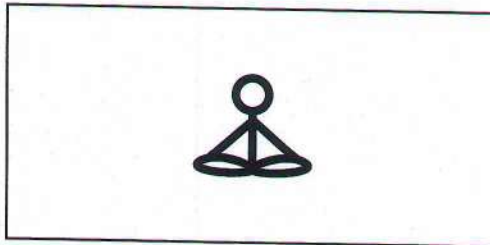
10.



11.



12. Reflect



The five aspects of prana – prana, apana, udana, vyana, samana are referred to in the Prasna Upanishad and Yoga Sutra chapter three verse 40.

Prana – the energy of bringing into the system, linked to the inhalation and chest area.

Apana – the energy of elimination, removing from the system, linked to the exhalation and abdominal area and below.

Udana – the energy of expression and communication linked to the throat and sound.

Vyana – the energy of circulation, moving prana around the system.

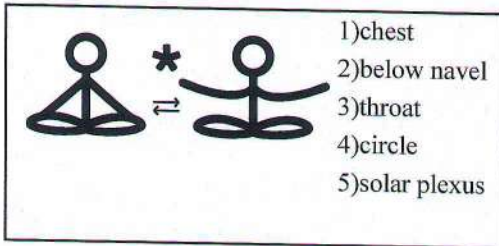
Samana – the energy of assimilation, digestion, understanding of things.

Chant:

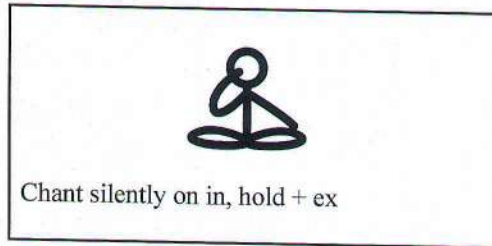
- 1) Om pranaya namah
- 2) Om apanaya namah
- 3) Om udanaya namah
- 4) Om vyanaya namah
- 5) Om samanya namah

Practice :

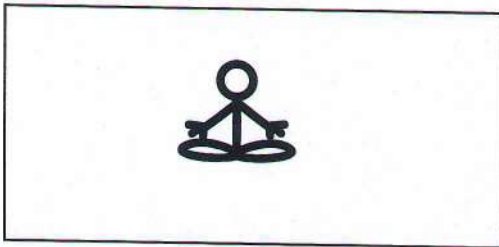
1. Panca Prana (1-5)



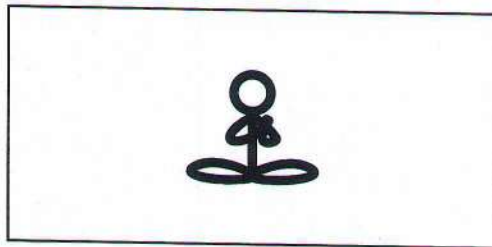
2. Nadi Sodhana



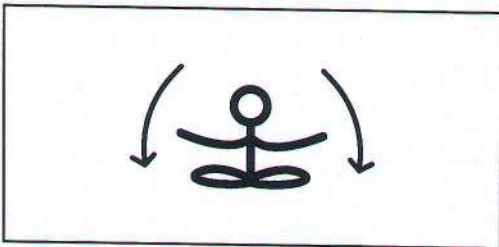
3. Finger nyasa



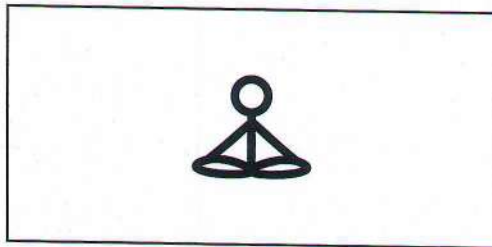
4. Namaste



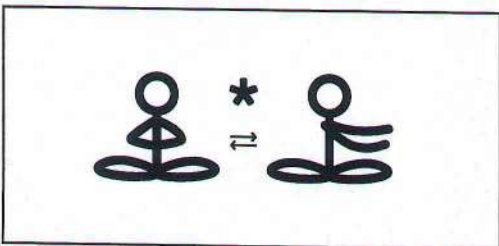
5. Circle



6. Silent mantra



7. Offer back



Other ideas using the meditation practices described previously as a “template”

Focus on light:

Mantra – Tadah ksiyate prakasavaranam. Yoga sutra 2,verse 52.Pranayama removes the covering over the inner light.

Mantra – Visoka va jyotismati. Yoga Sutra 1,verse 36.Illumination, free of sorrow, serenity.

A meditation focussing on light using either of the above as a mantra with visualisation- a candle or other light to remove darkness and increase clarity. Good for negativity and depression.

The Sun.

Mantra – Om Suryaya namah – honour the sun

The Gayatri mantra as the feminine aspect of the sun. Good to bring heat and cleansing, good to uplift and increase clarity.

The Moon.

Mantra - Om Somaya namah – honour the moon.

Somaso –full moon

Good for cooling, calming, stabilising. Useful for regulating menstruation, pregnancy and the menopause.

Peace.

Mantra – Shantih, Om shanti,shanti shantih.

The reduction of suffering

Mantra – Heyam Dhukham Anagatam – Yoga Sutra 1,verse 16.

The Gayatri mantra.

Om tat savitur vareniyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah pracodayat

This mantra focuses on the feminine aspect of the sun as a power to illuminate our intelligence and increase our clarity

vAll the above would work well with the “template” practice described above.

Many other focuses for meditation are discussed in chapter three of the Yoga Sutra and are listed as samyama – perfect mastery or control, some I have mentioned already but others may be interesting to explore with groups:-

verse 23: Mastery of friendship

verse 24: Concentration on an elephant to bring strength.

verse 29: Concentration on the navel centre to bring more knowledge of the body

verse 31: Concentration on the “tortoise channel” an area at the level of the sternum to bring stability.

These are just a few of the samyama , others go on to describe clairaudience, clairvoyance, mind reading, invisibility, lightness, mastery over the elements, obtaining physical beauty, charm and strength.

The end of the chapter looks at the mind totally at peace and spiritual liberation-

Who knows what meditation can bring us?

Section 6

MEDITATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

I would like to include in this project a few ideas I have used for individuals for therapy or learning to meditate. Again these ideas can be used with the “template practice” I have used in the meditation for groups practice with modifications for individual needs.

Some key verses from the Yoga Sutra, to use as a mantra.

Citta Prasadanaṁ ch 1,verse 33.- for developing a peaceful mind.

Yoga citta vṛtti nirodha ch 1,verse 2 – for focussing the mind.

Viśoka va jyotiṣmati ch,verse 36- focussing on the light in the heart.

Some concepts to use as a mantra.

Dharmaya namaḥ – honouring one’s duty. To help focus on what is important in our lives, to help decide what is right for us to do, to make intelligent decisions.

Hṛdayam Mayi – Focus on the heart, to bring the mind into the heart if becoming too analytical.

Somaya Namaḥ – Honouring the full moon. For stability, the menopause, irregular periods, a good mantra for female problems.

Suryaya Namaḥ – Honouring the sun. The sun as a healing force for light, heat, clarity

Tat Tvam Asi – Thou art that. An acceptance of there being something greater than us when we may need to surrender “the running “ of our lives when things get too much.

Sraddhaya Namaḥ. Honouring faith. When we need to trust that the process of life will take care of us and things will work out.

Some powerful Goddesses: Gayatri for clarity and light. Lakṣmi for abundance

in all things – material and spiritual.

Ma Aham Aham Ma: I am me, myself. For strengthening the sense of self, ego, confidence, self esteem.

Santih. For peace.

Obviously there are many more mantras , concepts and images to focus on. Mantra is an extremely powerful tool if used every day it can really bring change. As I said earlier in this project by meditating on Laksmi every day for ten years I found I needed less and less to the point where I stopped buying things altogether – except food of course. She has given me an immense sense of freedom. These days my focus is Gayatri and I can see this journey is more about clarity and understanding how to use all this study and knowledge I have pursued over the years.

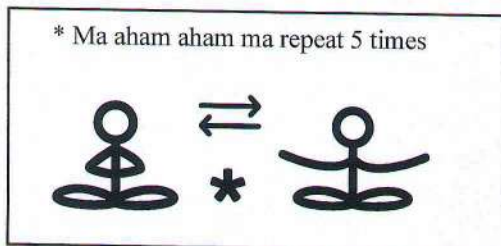
Meditation is a gradual process and takes time – avastha. It takes a long time to make a diamond from carbon – so be patient, the fruits will appear with practice.

A sample practice for healing using a cleansing technique and the mantra:
MA AHAM AHAM MA – I am me, I am myself.

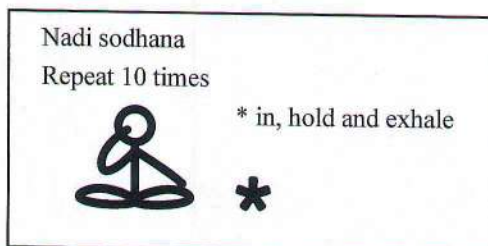
Often when we are ill we feel out of control of our bodies, this mantra connects us to our real self not affected by the illness.

I gave this practice to a woman with cancer who was on chemotherapy and felt out of control because of the affects of the drugs.

1.



2.



3.

* in, hold repeat 10 times




swipe hands over affected area to remove impurities.

open hands and visualise running water to cleanse area


4.

silent mantra
36 - 108 times



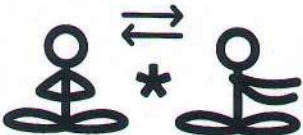
5.

nadi sodhana
10B



* in
* * exhale

6.



offer
it back
repeat 5
times

Section 8

MEDITATION – IT’S ROLE IN THE WORLD TODAY.

As I use the tools of Yoga in my work with groups and individuals I observe there is more stress, mental and emotional instability. This seems to have increased over the years. Is this because we are focussing more on material success and less on the spiritual? We seem to be driven by what we can accumulate in terms of possessions rather than our spiritual wealth.

Less people go to church or have a quiet day, Sundays seem to be spent in shopping malls. Less of us take time to reflect and be still, we fill our time with mobile phone conversations, I.Pods, computer games, facebook etc. There is no space for silence in our days, so essential for mental health.

People often say they are uncomfortable with stillness and silence, there is a powerful need to be stimulated with sound, information and experiences. This must have a detrimental effect on the mind. I am sure the mind, like our body, needs rest and recovery from all this stimulation. Meditation is the perfect antidote to all this activity – “a breathing space” for the mind, a time to reflect on who we are.

Meditation is now being used more and more in schools, workplaces and prisons to bring about a sense of calm and stability and to reduce anger and stress often generated by the way we live. I see it as a very powerful tool to help heal us and move us forward to become the spiritually enlightened beings which is our true potential.

Section 9

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Yogajalisarm – T. Krishnamacharya.

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