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The Origins and Benefit of Yoganidra

WHAT IS YOGANIDRA

Yoganidra, “yogic sleep” is an immensely powerful, full-body, systematic meditation, and a form of mind-body therapy. The concept first appeared in the 4th century ancient classical text *Mahabharata* specifically in regard to the yogic story of creation – specifically paying homage to the space between creation and time. There are several styles and techniques of Yoganidra being practiced today with different philosophies (such as Dr. Richard Miller’s iRest), but with generally the same overarching purpose and result. The practice is typically performed lying down in a savasana position so that the body is completely relaxed. Props can be added for comfort. As long as you’re awake, there’s no way to do it wrong. Although the practice has many side benefits, the purpose of Yoganidra is to deepen what you heart desires so that you can live with purpose and share your gifts with others so that we make the world a better place. Practitioners create a sankalpa to create the reality they uniquely strive to achieve. Each person has a gift to share, a purpose. Through yoga we cut through the clutter, remove blockages, and see what emerges for ourselves. The practice of Yoganidra empowers us to stay the course and provides a seeping, a deepening of one’s resolve.

PURPOSE

- Empowers you to create the reality you want through a sankalpa (a resolution)
- Removes blockages so prana can flow (blockages interrupts ability to rest)
- Restores a feeling of wholeness, oneness
- Profound transformation and liberation

BENEFITS

- One hour practice is worth 4 hours deep R.E.M. sleep
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Improves sleep
- Total rest of the subconscious mind, cultivates tranquility and mindfulness
- Heals psychological wounds.
- Helps those suffering from PTSD, addiction, and medical conditions to rebuild, restore, and reconnect

DIFFERENT FROM MEDITATION?

Meditation can be described in many ways. It is a practice, a state of mind, as well as a devotional tool. Yoganidra is a form of meditation that empowers you to create the reality you want by taking you through the pancha maya kosha (five layers of self), leaving you with a sense of wholeness and purpose. It acknowledges the physical body more, and helps bring the mind and body into the same place at the same time like all meditation. In my opinion, it’s a beautiful bridge that helps those who find sitting in meditation (literally and figuratively), challenging. With all forms of meditation, when we focus our attention on the fullness of our physical, mental and energetic experience, whether through breath-work, a guided practice, or open awareness, we immediately drop into the present moment. We realize that the present moment is all we have.

The First Battle and the Beginning of Time

“Vishnu lost in primal sleep on the serpent of time”

Yoganidra first appeared in the Mahabharata, an ancient Indian epic where the main story revolves around two battle for the throne of Hastinapura. At 100,000 verses, it is the longest epic poem ever written, generally thought to have been composed in the 4th century BCE or earlier. The events in the epic play out in the Indian subcontinent and surrounding areas. Including within it the Bhagavad Gita, the Mahabharata is one of the most important texts of ancient Indian, indeed world, literature.



A kalpa (a cycle of creations, destructions and re-creations) had ended, dissolved into nothingness and nothing existed anymore, no universes not even time nor space.

Narayana is known as one who is in yogic slumber on the celestial waters, referring to Lord Vishnu. He is also known as the "Purusha" and is considered Supreme being in Vaishnavism. According to the Bhagavat Gita, he is also the "Guru of the Universe".

Vishnu, lay in deep slumber on Adi Sesa, the primal serpent of Time which stretched without end upon the silent cosmic waters. Shakti, the Goddess Mahamaya with her powers of delusion had induced this mystic sleep (yoganidra) upon the Great God. And so he lay there, the Great Vishnu lost in Time, oblivious to everything. He knew nothing of Brahma, the Creator who had sprung forth from his navel. The demons sought to vanquish Brahma who was preparing

to create the next cycle of the universe. Seeing the demons, Brahma who was seated on a lotus at Vishnu's navel sang to Devi Mahamaya. He pleaded her to withdraw from Vishnu so he may awaken and slay the two demons. Hearing the Brhamastuti*, the Goddess withdrew from every part of Vishnu's body and mind and appeared before Brahma. *“Brahmastuti – The song sung by Brahma praising the Goddess is the first of the fours hymns in this Hindu text.*