

Yoga and Meditation Guidelines

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The guidelines are referenced where appropriate. The rest is a result of my outer experience, inner experience, and interpretation. Many thanks to all beings who contributed directly or indirectly to the spiritual understanding. The contents of this document is subject to copy rights policy.

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Prologue

In an age of transformation and transition these guidelines are intended to bring peace and harmony to all beings, and a greater awareness and inquiry into your spiritual development and well being.

The guidelines used here are from renowned saints and sages. Please accept any apologies if the interpretation here is not congruent with your interpretation. You are welcome to email me with your views and comments.

The driver and guidelines in this document are strongly aligned with the works of Saints Patanjali and Thirumular. Works from other sages are referenced as well.

We are in the age of Kali Yuga (Iron Age) which is one of four Yugas ie. Satya Yuga (Truth/Golden Age), Treta Yuga, Dwarpa Yuga, and Kali Yuga. Each age is depicted by a greater attachment to material/body existence.

There are four spiritual paths that one may follow ie. Karma yoga (Action/Kiriyai), Bhathi Yoga (Devotion/Sariyai), Raja Yoga (Yoga/Yogam), and Jnana Yoga (Wisdom/Jnanam).

Swami Chinmayananda mentioned three decades ago (in Durban, S.A.) that Bhakthi Yoga (path of Devotion) is the easiest and recommended path to follow in Kali Yuga.

Decades later in this knowledge age more aspirants question the rationale behind everything we do, including our beliefs and spiritual practices. This may be a reflection of the evolution of the species, transitioning away from Kali Yuga into the next imminent age, Satya Yuga. Enjoy the clarity, revelations, and knowledge that this period offers.

The first two paths of Karma and Bhakthi yoga relate to external worship. The next two paths, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga involves internal worship.

Take all that comes to you, analyse and select, digest and nourish your system to reach your path goals.

Raja Yoga system is a means of purifying the physical, mental and subtle instruments so that the selection is refined, facilitating higher states of awareness and knowledge in a co-ordinated and safe manner.

In the Saiva tradition Shiva is the Yogi of all Yogis. Shiva passed the yoga to Shakti, then down the line to Sadasiva, Mahesvara, Rudra, Vishnu, and Brahma. The four sons of Brahma/Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanatana, Sanandana, and Sanatkumara) bearing the title Nandhi, together with Shivayoga muni, Patanjali, Vyaghrapada and Thirumular were taught the yoga systems, and all eight were leaders of the initial Agamic schools (Natarajan, 1991)

Good Wishes! Use the force with love, care and direction!

Chapter 2

Asanas

Asanas are yoga postures that are designed to optimise sustained meditation experience. There are also numerous asanas and many of them are practiced in Hatha Yoga primarily for the fitness and suppleness of the body.

Benefits of yoga asanas

Keeps the body fit and supple. Maintains harmony and balance with the functions of the body.

Regular practice tones muscles, improves blood circulation, better assimilation of food, elimination of waste, relaxation, increased vitality, and youthfulness

Improved awareness, and serenity. Better control over emotions and sway of the senses. Improved concentration. Facilitates introspective studies.

Full yoga asana practice may be performed after 18 years of age. Children over 8 may perform simple postures.

Preparation for Yoga asanas

People with illnesses need to consult with a medical doctor prior to commencing any asanas.

For intense or extensive yoga practice, select a reputable and traditional teacher who will guide you through the correct use of asanas (not done here).

For purposes of this session and subsequent meditation we would perform Padmasana, Siddhasana and Savasana. These gentle asanas will be discussed on the day.

Keep a calm and positive frame of mind. Have patience and steadfastness as the benefits may take many months to manifest.

Practice is to be done regularly, daily and at a set time of the day, and time limit for each asana starting with a manageable time for you. A good start would be before sunrise, and at dusk if the stomach is empty.

Discuss your dedicated time for spiritual practice with family members and friends so that they may understand and respect your time for inner reflection.

It is recommended not to eat before performing asanas. Ideally yoga asanas should be performed four hours after a large meal. However the asanas for this purposes don't require that length of time, but at least an hour after a light meal would be acceptable for this purposes.

Practice the asanas in preferably the same sacred area that you have created for meditation. The room/sacred space should also be ventilated, and decluttered.

Ideally the room should have pleasant smells. Incense does enhance the ambience. Frankincense (Lobaan, sambrani) has particularly enhanced cleansing effects.

It is preferable to sit on a mat on the floor. Caution that the mat is non slip, and is large enough to lie

down on. For Siddhasana posture (and others) use a small cushion to raise the body/back. You will find that it is easier to perform the asana.

It is not recommended to practice asanas on soft surfaces like the bed or very thick carpets. This may have an effect on the correct posture.

Loose cotton clothes are recommended. Keep a shawl near you especially during colder days.

It is also recommended to remove your shoes, and other jewellery from you for the duration of the asanas (Yogeswar, 1986)

Benefits of specific asanas

Padmasana (Lotus posture)

Flexibility in the lower extremities, toning of the spine and pelvic organs.

Preferred posture from ancient times. Calming effect on the mind. Improve concentration and alertness. Prevents the body from falling during meditation

Siddhasana (siddha means enlightened)

This asana is used for meditation and pranayama.

Savasana (dead body posture)

Calms the body and mind. Builds up and conserves energy. Develops will power. Enhances awareness. Assists with the withdrawal of senses.

References

1. Yogeswar, 1986. Textbook of Yoga. Penguin books India.

