

**Yoga Nidra:** is a state of conscious deep sleep. During the practice of yoga nidra, one appears to be sleep, but the consciousness is functioning at the deeper level of awareness. It is sleep with a trace of deep awareness. It is state of mind in between wakefulness and dream. Normally when we sleep, we loose track of our self and cannot utilize this capacity of mind. Yoga nidra enables the person to be conscious in this state and nurture the seed of great will power, inspire the higher self, and enjoy the vitality of life.

Yoga nidra restructures and transforms our whole personality form within. With every session of yoga nidra we are actually burning our old samskaras, habits and tendencies in order to be born anew. This process is quicker than other systems that work on an external basis. In yoga nidra, sowing of seeds of change is found in sankalpa, which you make for yourself during each practice. Sankalpa is a Sanskrit word, which can be translated as resolve or resolution. It is the most powerful method for reshaping your personality.

Benefits of Yoga Nidra:

- Yoga nidra gives you profound experience of muscular, mental and emotional relaxation.
- Yoga nidra transforms a victim of stress into a victor in life.
- Yoga nidra improves the lives of people with chronic degenerative diseases.
- Yoga nidra revives the dispersion of human energies at all levels.
- Yoga nidra burns the old samskaaras, habits and tendencies in order to be born new.
- Yoga nidra melts your mind so that you can cast good creative impressions on it thereby increasing receptivity.
- Yoga nidra plays a vital role in ensuring psychological health and well being of children.
- Yoga nidra augments the capacity of receptivity and attention and awakens the joy of learning in young students.
- Yoga nidra helps in regaining the point of balance and harmony in every sphere of existence.
- Yoga nidra provides the perfect conditions for intra-uterine growth of the fetus.
- Yoga nidra acts as an ideal antidote to preserve child's natural abilities and creative faculties in the most effortless and spontaneous way.
- Yoga nidra helps in combating diseases that have sprung up with new dimensions and reached a peak in the last few decades.
- Yoga nidra decreases the requirements for analgesic, hypnotic and sedative drugs.
- Yoga nidra as a Process of Releasing Yoga nidra restructures and transforms our whole personality form within. With every session of yoga nidra we are actually burning our old samskaras, habits and tendencies in order to be born anew. This process is quicker than other systems that work on an external basis. In yoga nidra, sowing of seeds of change is found in sankalpa, which you make for yourself during each practice. Sankalpa is a Sanskrit word, which can be translated as resolve or resolution. It is the most powerful method for reshaping your personality.

**Yoga nidra** is a practice which can be widely applied in the modern world to improve the quality and happiness of human life. It is a simple yet profound technique and has been used in the following fields:

- *Relaxation:* yoga nidra is the best and most permanent method of inducing deep relaxation of the entire human structure and personality.
- *Meditation:* it is a meditative technique.
- *Psychological problems:* yoga nidra acts directly in eradicating deep-rooted psychological complexes, neuroses, inhibitions, etc. It is an advanced psychiatric tool.

- *Psychosomatic ailments*: yoga nidra helps to remove a vast number of ailments that are predominantly mental in cause, such as high blood pressure.
- *Sleep*: yoga nidra induces and improves deep sleep. It is a non-chemical tranquillizer that quickly removes insomnia.
- *Physio-psychological rejuvenation* of the entire human organism can be brought about by yoga nidra. The physical, pranic and mental levels of man are directly recharged.
- *Mind exploration and awakening*: yoga nidra opens up the potential of the human mind and also awakens the faculty of intuition.
- *Learning, education and intelligence*: yoga nidra is a profound educational tool. Through investigations and tests, it has been found to bring extraordinary improvements in both the absorption and retention of information from external sources as well as tapping of knowledge within one's own mind. It heightens intelligence in all meanings of the word. The rotation of awareness harmonizes the nervous system, balances pranic flows and renders the mind-one pointed. Yoga nidra has a vast number of other applications and can be practised by everyone, young and old, male or female. It is thoroughly scientific and tested. It requires no belief or blind acceptance of a dogma, it only requires practice.

### **Definition**

The word yoga means inner communion; the process that leads to this state. Nidra means sleep. Thus yoga nidra can be defined as 'yogic sleep'. It is both the name of a specific practice and a state of being. The mechanics of the practice are easy to understand and define, but the state of yoga nidra will be understood differently by different people as follows:

- *Sleep*: to a person who is tired, exhausted and constantly worried, the state of yoga nidra will mean only one thing... a deep, refreshing sleep. Nothing more, nothing less. Many are the people who practice yoga nidra alone or attend yoga nidra classes only for one purpose: to sink into the oblivion of sleep. And there is absolutely nothing wrong with this, since your deep sleep will bring many benefits. In yoga nidra lessons one is generally asked to remain wakeful, but if you cannot do this, do not worry... enjoy the sleep. Sometime in the future you can try to remain awake.
- *Psychic sleep*: to other people, possibly those who have been practicing yoga nidra for an extended period of time, yoga nidra will mean a state of conscious dreaming, where one will see visions of the subconscious mind. One will seem to hover in a state midway between sleep and wakefulness. In this state one will confront subconscious problems, suppressions, fears, etc. Regular practice will slowly clean and polish the mind.
- *Sleepless sleep*: this is the highest state of yoga nidra where one balances on the razor's edge between introversion and extroversion. This is the path of Sushumna and corresponds to the awakening of the kundalini. This is the blissful and mystical state of 'yoga' that corresponds to superconsciousness. It has been described by innumerable yogis, saints, bhaktas and sages throughout history. In the great yogic scripture called Yogataravali, Shankaracharya has written: 'When sankalpa (desires) and vikalpa (fancies and imaginations) are rooted out then one is influenced no more by karma. When sankalpa and vikalpa are removed by constant yogic practice the ever blissful state of yoga nidra dawns.'

We have defined three specific states of yoga nidra. As a practice we can describe it as a method of inducing physical and nervous tranquility, as a method of ridding the mind of chronic tension, and of inducing inner knowledge and meditation. It nulls the rational thought processes and brings inner peace.

### The layers of the mind

Yoga nidra is a method of exploring the different layers of the mind. According to certain schools of modern psychology there are three dimensions of mind: the conscious, subconscious and unconscious. The Mandukya Upanishad also classifies the mind into three layers: jagrat, swapna and sushupti. The yogic and psychology terminology can be directly related as follows:

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| Jagrat:   | conscious mind, waking state<br>Surface thoughts and perception of outside world<br>Sthula (gross dimension) |
| Swapna:   | subconscious mind, dream state<br>Individual memory and mind<br>Sukshma (subtle dimension)                   |
| Sushupti: | unconscious mind, deep conscious sleep state<br>Collective memory<br>Karana (causal dimension)               |

Yoga nidra starts from the swapna state that is, exploration of the subconscious mind. If one masters yoga nidra then the depth of perception may become deeper so that one contacts and explores the sushupti or cosmic mind. Great yogis go even further: they transcend the mind, they enter the state of superconsciousness, called turiya (the fourth dimension of being). This is the highest state of yoga nidra, which few attain. It is a state that is spontaneously experienced by yogis. It is real yoga nidra in the form of pure, illuminated consciousness. This yoga nidra is not part of prakriti (nature) but it is the manifested form of purusha (consciousness).