

# Spiritual Prescription: Yoga Nidra

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Many people in the East and the West are attracted to yogic practices, for they think they can find a solution to every problem therein, be it physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. Hence, much importance is attached to relaxation techniques that one thinks might help a person in easing the tension caused due to chronic stressful lifestyle. Yoga Nidra is one such wonderful technique, not only for physical or mental relaxation but also to prepare the mind for spiritual discipline. It concerns mainly with pratyahara (withdrawing senses from sense-objects) and dharana (concentration).

It is to be understood that ordinary sleep is not complete relaxation, for tension and stress cannot always be resolved completely in ordinary sleep. Yoga Nidra is qualitatively different relaxation. It is a 'sleep' where all the burdens are thrown off to attain a more blissful state of awareness, and hence it is a relaxation much more intense than ordinary sleep.

As Swami Satyananda Saraswati (Preface to "Yoga Nidra", 1982, Bihar School of Yoga, Monghyr, Bihar, India) says: "When awareness is separate and distinct from vrittis - mental modifications, when waking, dreaming and deep sleep pass like clouds, yet awareness of Atman remains, that is the experience of total relaxation. That is why, in Tantra, Yoga Nidra is said to be the doorway to samadhi!"

## UTILITY

Yoga Nidra helps in restoring mental, emotional and physical health by way of relaxation, and makes the mind more conducive to pratyahara - (withdrawing senses from their objects), dharana - (concentration), and meditation. Such a practice helps to harmonize two hemispheres of the brain and the two aspects of autonomous nervous system viz. sympathetic and parasympathetic.

The impressions in the subconscious are brought to the surface, experienced and removed. Thus, the fixation of awareness to the body is replaced with the awareness linked to subtler aspects of Prana and spiritual dimensions.

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CHAT WITH DR KK

