



## Yoga Nidra & Sankalpa

The system of Yoga Nidra was developed by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, based on the tantric practice of 'nyasa', which translates as the placing of the mind or consciousness at a certain point. It is a powerful technique that follows a structured approach to withdrawing sense awareness and allowing the mind to enter a deep state of relaxation.

The difference between Yoga Nidra and relaxation in sleep is that the student remains consciously aware in Yoga Nidra. During the practice, complete physical, mental and emotional relaxation is induced allowing a student to achieve a threshold between sleep and wakefulness.

This state of relaxation is achieved by turning the awareness inwards whilst maintaining sufficient awareness that sleep doesn't come. In this state the consciousness becomes very powerful, and can be applied in many ways. This is possible because the receptivity is greater than when the consciousness is connected to the senses. As a result, whatever impressions enter the mind at that time become more powerful and more likely to remain there.

An important stage of the Yoga Nidra practice is the mental repetition of a sankalpa, which translates as resolve or resolution. This resolve is a short mental statement impressed on the subconscious mind during Yoga Nidra. It is a method of changing one's lifestyle, achieving ambitions and of removing negative blocks or mental conflicts.

In the deep state of relaxation induced through Yoga Nidra, it is possible to plant the seed of sankalpa deep in the subconscious mind. Once planted the sankalpa gathers the vast forces of the mind to bring about its fruition. Repeating the sankalpa over time with the same words and intention will bring about changes in your personality and your life.

A sankalpa should be chosen with care. It should be something that is very important to you. The intention should be sincere, something that will bring happiness, joy and fulfilment. Trying to stop bad habits and suppress natural drives should be avoided, as this will lead to other bad habits or negative outcomes.

To successfully utilise the power of sankalpa you should follow the guidelines below:

- Choose your own sankalpa. Ideally it should reflect your deepest aspirations. To do this you must first consider what is truly important for you in life, and then choose according to your own needs and inclinations.
- The sankalpa should be stated in a short, simple, clear sentence using as few words as possible. It should be positive in nature. Avoid words that suggest the possibility of failure, such as 'try'.

- Your sankalpa should be phrased in the present. You may wish to start your resolve using 'I am....'. Change happens in the here and now. Your sankalpa should reflect this.
- It is usual to keep the same sankalpa until it yields results. This may take some time, in some instances a number of years.

It can take time for the right sankalpa to become clear. You may wish to....

- Write out a list of things in your life which you would like to change.
- See if any of those things stem from the same underlying cause or problem.
- Prioritise the list and decide which changes are most important to you.
- Then ask yourself, 'If I make this change what will I gain?' For example, health, happiness, peace of mind.
- Review what you've written and see if you can find a sankalpa which is right for you.
- Remember there is no pressure to have a resolve. Take your time to explore and consider before choosing one. If nothing comes to mind, then use the mantra OM until you find a sankalpa that has meaning to you. Your chosen sankalpa may be the one you use for the rest of your life!

Some examples are:

- I am healthy and well.
- I am becoming more positive / energetic / strong / confident.
- I make time for myself every day.
- I am at peace with myself.

In practising:

- The sankalpa is repeated over and over in the mind at the start and the end of the practice of Yoga Nidra. It can also be repeated on waking and just before sleep when the mind is at still and at its most receptive.
- The same words and sentence structure must be used each time it is repeated.
- The sankalpa should be stated with sincerity and feeling from the heart. A strong emotional connection is required to ensure the sankalpa is planted deep in the subconscious mind.
- Have patience. It will take time for the mind to gather its forces and for your 'self' to be changed.

Yoga Nidra and repetition of sankalpa are wonderfully powerful practices, please enjoy them.