



A lay person's introduction to

Yoga Nidra

As redesigned by **Swami Satyananda Saraswati**

Krishna Prakash
Founder, Shrimath Yoga

Yoga is not a religion, but an aid to the practice of the basic spiritual truths in all religions.

Swami Sivananda

श्रीः

आत्म-समर्पणम्

स्वरूपनिरुपेणहतवे श्रीगुरवे नमः

प्रदीप-ज्वालाभि-दिवसकर-नीराजनविधि ।
सुधासूते-धन्द्रोपल-जललवै-रघ्यरचना ।
स्वकीयैरम्भोभिः सलिल निधि-सौहित्यकरणं
त्वदीयाभि-वाञ्म-स्तव जननि वाचां सुतिरिचम् ॥

from Soundarya Lahari of Adi Sankara, in Sri's handwriting

Due to Her infinite Grace, She, the Divine Mother, appears in the form of the one whom we can relate to, and ensures the knowledge of the Self is shared.

To that form which i relate to... Master Sri

कृपासागरमज्ज्ञानमूर्ति सदाऽनन्दमयमातृस्वरूपं ।

सदगुरुश्रीसैलश्रीपूणानन्द प्रियनन्दनम् ॐ श्रीं प्रणमाम्यहम् ॥

Relaxation does not mean sleep. Relaxation means to be blissfully happy; it has no end. I call bliss absolute relaxation; sleep is a different matter. Sleep gives only mind and sense relaxation.

Bliss relaxes the ātma, the inner self;
that is why, in tantra,
Yoga Nidra is the doorway to Samādhi.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati,

INTRODUCTION

Namaste!

Dr Otto Stricker, the founder of yoga.in initiative, was on a tour of India to unearth and interact with Yoga Schools connected with the living spiritual traditions. During our interactions, the undersigned mentioned that not everyone who studies at the feet of the Masters / living traditions, become a teacher but only those who get a mandate to do so.

Thus, as per the living traditions, a certificate in Yoga is not an automatic passport to start teaching Yoga. It is just an acknowledgement that a course has been completed.

This booklet is originally a blog post that can be accessed at [An Introduction to the Roots of Yoga Nidra – Yoga in India](#) and it is part of a 3 post series based on the needs expressed by Dr Otto Stricker & Flavia Mameli as well as the scores of students from various countries who throng Shrimath to study Yoga as a system.

Thanks for your investing your precious time.

Jai ma!

Warm regards
Krishna

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ROOTS OF YOGA NIDRA

Understanding the terminology

Nidra means sleep and Yoga Nidra is its antonym!

Although appearing to be a practice of deep stillness, Yoga Nidra is a practice that allows one to rest, relax, rejuvenate, manage stress, understand oneself, realize desires consciously. With the word Yoga most of us predominantly associate postures, neglecting the true origin and complexity of the term. Especially in the context of Yoga Nidra, Yoga means awareness - a state that precedes concentration.



Chin Mudra. Photo: Coni Hörl

Traditions and reformation

In India, the term Yoga Nidra is as old as the civilization itself. It is mentioned that the Lord of sustenance Bhagawan Sri Vishnu is in Yoga Nidra.

Yoga Nidra is derived from the tantric concept called Nyasa that means to withdraw. The nyasa (a set of energetic Yogic techniques for inner cultivation and purification) for the practice of Yoga Nidra is different from that of meditation. Thus, it is important to understand that there are umpteen numbers of practices that are rooted in the concept of nyasa other than Yoga Nidra and meditation. Each of these practices have their own prescribed ways to withdraw.

One of safest ways to understand the term Tantra is to see it as a set of process manuals available to experience the ultimate reality. There are a lot of terms and words in Tantra that are kept under lock, and the keys to these are not available in public. These process manuals are recordings of ancient teachers and are to be learnt only from authentic traditions.

Yoga Nidra as a practice was not known in public till Swami Satyananda Saraswati (Swamiji) of Bihar School of Yoga introduced it in 1964 primarily to train His four years old successor Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati.



Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati. Photo: Coni Hörl

Swamiji was initiated into this practice by a practitioner of Tantra whom he met long time before meeting His eventual Guru Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Divine Life Society. He intuited that Yoga Nidra in its original form would not appeal to the current generation that is often tuned to look for 'what is in it for me?', be it spiritual or otherwise. Being an acclaimed Master, He was wise enough to understand

that the attention span of many practitioners was decreasing as well. Seeing all this, He restructured the ancient practice to suit the level and needs of our contemporary society.

Interestingly enough, a similar practice is still being carried out in many traditional Indian households in the context of motherhood: While the lady of the home is pregnant, during labour and, also in the upbringing of the child. The mother is the only source through which the child not only receives nutrition for its physical body but also the nourishment for its mind. Thus, what a mother eats, listens to, experiences, shares etc., impacts the child both while it stays in the womb and after it is delivered. Till the child develops a strong individuality of its own, which generally happens after the age of 7. Actually, it absorbs the external world like a sponge - without differentiating right or wrong - whatever happens around it during its sleep as well as waking state. It is only after this age, that judgement develops. Being practiced well, Yoga Nidra can help adolescent individuals to stay in touch with being open to new vistas of learning and becoming aware human beings.

Thus, Swamiji used His own learning from the Tantra practitioner and the traditional Indian way of bringing up a child, to restructure, finetune and release the version of Yoga Nidra that is being practiced today. In the following, He has shared the eight steps involved in the practice of Yoga Nidra. Fortunately today, there is a lot of information available for us to read, learn, practice and experience about Yoga Nidra.



Chin Mudra. Photo: Coni Hörlér

How Yoga Nidra works

In 1971, the US based Menninger Foundation offered scientific proof of the efficacy of Yoga Nidra. But, to limit this practice to a mere relaxation tool is a gross injustice

that one can commit to this nugget of ancient wisdom. So, how is Yoga Nidra actually practiced?

Sound is the subtlest of the sensory inputs among the other inputs such as touch, taste and smell. Thus, Yoga Nidra teachers use verbal instruction as the method to lead the students into the practice as well as the depths of experience that Yoga Nidra offers. From the instructions that help to relax the body, the practice then leads the students to the various energy centers of the body and by using breath as a tool these energy centers are worked upon to get deeper access into ourselves, more particularly the physiological aspects, our tendencies and more.

Finally, visually shown instructions invoke various emotions, thoughts etc. and help us to understand and sort out many issues that are hidden in the deeper recesses of our being.

The key to the success of Yoga Nidra practice is the timely introduction of a Sankalpa, meaning a resolve at two strategic places during the flow of the practice. A resolve is a desire that is your deeper need, something that you wish

to see coming true in this life. In tradition, thus, Yoga Nidra is not taught as a simple weekend module but as an elaborate life changing process. This is done by introducing various concepts from the Veda, Tantra and Yoga traditions that help practitioners to understand, refine, finetune and finalize the set of resolves which can be used in the practice of Yoga Nidra.



Yoga Nidra & Meditation, Shrimath Yoga

Benefits of Yoga Nidra

Apart from the immediate benefits of relaxation, stress relief and desire manifestation through resolve(s), Yoga Nidra prepares us to enter the higher limbs of Yoga such as

Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation) and Samadhi (transcendence).

Yoga Nidra trains us to use judgement at appropriate times in life rather than everyday goggles, which might make us blind. It helps us to develop trust, confidence, clarity of mind, emotional stability, perseverance and above all: Yoga Nidra saves us from falling into the gallows of complexes, be it inferior or superior.

By consistent practice under a teacher, gradually one would learn to instruct oneself and get on to practice on their own. Also Yoga Nidra teachers highly benefit from sharing the practice. For them, Yoga Nidra is like an acid test. It is the practice that greatly transforms a mere Yoga instructor into a Yoga teacher. And this being said, it underlines the importance to learn Yoga Nidra from authentic (!) living traditions.

But careful: Teachers of Yoga Nidra should clearly educate themselves that they are just delivering the session! They are in no way the author or guarantor of results as the

results are an outcome of various factors including the Karma balance of each student.

Yoga Nidra one of the most well known practices to experience Pratyahara (withdrawal, the 5th limb of Yoga). It is not only a practice for students, but also a training ground for teachers to withdraw from the sense of ownership and develop the attitude of a witness, observing a seamless progress in and to the higher limbs of Yoga.

What Yoga Nidra is not

Yoga Nidra is not hypnotism, mesmerism, counselling or psychological intervention as understood in a contemporary context.

In Yoga Nidra, the practitioner is the decision maker, not even the teacher, because the fulcrum of Yoga Nidra revolves around the resolve decided by each practitioner. The teacher provides only the knowledge and principles from the ancient traditions of Veda, Tantra and Yoga to help the student with framing a personal resolve.



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RECOGNISING 5 CONSECUTIVE YEARS OF CONSISTENTLY HIGH RATINGS FROM TRAVELLERS

Shrimath Yoga receives students from more than 40 countries since inception in 2011. They work towards their 200 hrs, 500 hrs, Yoga Nidra, Foundation, Certificate and Advance Certificate courses in Yoga.

Shrimath Yoga is the only YOGA SCHOOL in TripAdvisor to be consistently ranked in the top #3 since 2013.

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These awards are a result of implementing the principles of Yoga at Shrimath Yoga.

Jai Ma!

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KINDLY NOTE

In case if you felt the document helped you then PRAY for Shrimath Yoga and if it feels right then DONATE whatever you deem fit directly to Bihar School of Yoga through [State Bank Collect \(onlinesbi.sbi\)](http://onlinesbi.sbi)

Krishna was fortunate to learn Yoga Nidra & Antar Mouna directly from the living traditions, transmitted through Swami Yogakanti, Swami Muktidharma, Swami Karma Karuna & Swami Satyasangananda who in turn are direct disciples of Paramahamsa Satyananda Saraswati.

Namo Narayan.
Jai Ma!

About the author

Krishna Prakash is the founder of Shrimath Yoga, an ashram that is located in Bangalore. Since its inception in 2011, students from 40+ countries have studied Yoga as a system and given excellent reviews for Shrimath Yoga.

Shrimath Yoga is the first Yoga School in India to be approved by Yoga Alliance International to provide teacher training in Yoga Nidra.

Retreats and Teacher Training Courses are available in very small groups with a strong focus on each participant.

Krishna continues to learn from the living traditions of Bhagawan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri, Sri Ramakrishna Mutt, Bihar School of Yoga & other Siddha traditions.

Keen to experience ***Yoga Nidra***?

Visit www.shrimathyoga.com

Email: email@shrimathyoga.com



Krishna Prakash

Founder, Shrimath Yoga & Foundation for Indic Wisdom
ICF (ACC) | E-RYT 500 | MSc (Yoga) | Yoga Adhyapak (BSY)

Traditional Teacher of Indic Wisdom
(in Coaching, Leadership & Living)

Krishna Prakash is a student of Master Sri (an alumnus of IIT Chennai 1975 - 80) who has dedicated his life to the transmission of Indic Wisdom as per the direction of Sri Swami Poornananda Natha (Sri Sailam).

Through Master Sri, Krishna is directly connected to the traditions of Bhagawan Nityananda of Ganeshpuri & Sri Ramakrishna Mutt. Through family, Krishna is also connected with Sringeri Mutt, Kanchi Mutt, Bihar School of Yoga & a few other Siddha traditions.

He has a PG in Business Management (with a special emphasis on Indian Sastras) from Sri Sringeri Sharada Institute of Management, under the Chairmanship of Dr MB Athreya PhD.

Early in his career, he was involved in 2 IT startups, served as a Management Faculty, and subsequently started Spatikam (a life skills training company) & FirstResource. Net (Placements & IT Projects). Since 2003 he was with Shreyas Retreat and left as Vice President (Content Research & Marketing).

In 2011, along with his wife Smrithi he started Shrimath (India), a traditional gurukul model Yoga School. His Corporate clients and students are spread across 45 Countries.

Shrimath Yoga has bagged all possible awards from international travel portal TripAdvisor like Travellers Choice 2020, Hall of Fame 2019 and since 2014 continues to bag the Certificate of Excellence. It is a matter of pride that Shrimath is the only Yoga School in the World to achieve these recognitions.

In 2013, Shrimath was the first Yoga School in the World to be approved by Yoga Alliance International to offer teacher training in Yoga Nidra.

In 2019, Krishna was inducted as a "Life Time Member" at Government of India supported Indian Yoga Association (IYA) conceived by BKS Iyengar, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Sri Jaggi Vasudev, Swami Ramdev, Hansaji, Sri Ishwar Basavaraddi and other living Yogis.

Krishna has been a Keynote Speaker at all platforms managed by Indian Yoga Association on Yoga Nidra & Antar Mouna for many years now. In 2023. He was invited to present on Yoga Nidra at the first International Conference organised by Indian Yoga Association at Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar.

Krishna started Foundation for Indic Wisdom in 2023, a not-for-profit to promote, educate and certify programs / workshops that are rooted in Indic Wisdom.



A Cultural Heritage Organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the ancient yet ever relevant Indic Knowledge Systems and its applications in daily life.

[Foundation for Indic Wisdom](#) is a formal name & initiative to efforts that are being done in this field of since 2011.

The primary objective is to facilitate the move from mere living to enlightened living.



[Shrimath Yoga](#) is the only YOGA SCHOOL listed in international travel portal TripAdvisor to be consistently ranked in the top #3 since 2013. Since 2015 we started to receive CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE.

In 2019, Shrimath Yoga entered the HALL OF FAME in TripAdvisor for securing CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE for 5 consecutive years since 2015.

In 2020 we were awarded the TRAVELLER'S CHOICE that's offered only to the top 10% hospitality properties of the World.

Do feel free to write directly to our students reviewers and get to know about their experience on studying at Shrimath Yoga.

Jai Ma!