

Yoga for Magicians



*Heather Keith Freeman,
Crucible 2010*

Who I am

- **Magickal practitioner for 15 yrs**
- **Yoga practitioner for 9 yrs**
- **Willing to talk about what I know and what I've done.**

Who I'm not

- **Your guru**





Why do we do Magick?

- *To change the world*
- *To change ourselves*
- *To see what can be done*
- *Spiritual attainment*



Why do we do Magick?

*All types of magical practice
have this in common:*

***To harness the power of the mind
as a tool to create change
as willed by the magician.***

So how do we make the mind a better tool?

What is yoga?

Sit down. Stop thinking. Shut up. Get out.



- Sanskrit meaning “union”
- Based on observation that all suffering derives from awareness of separation.
- A system of practices designed to unite the Self with the Divine.
- Divided into eight limbs, or layers of progress

A note on “the Divine”

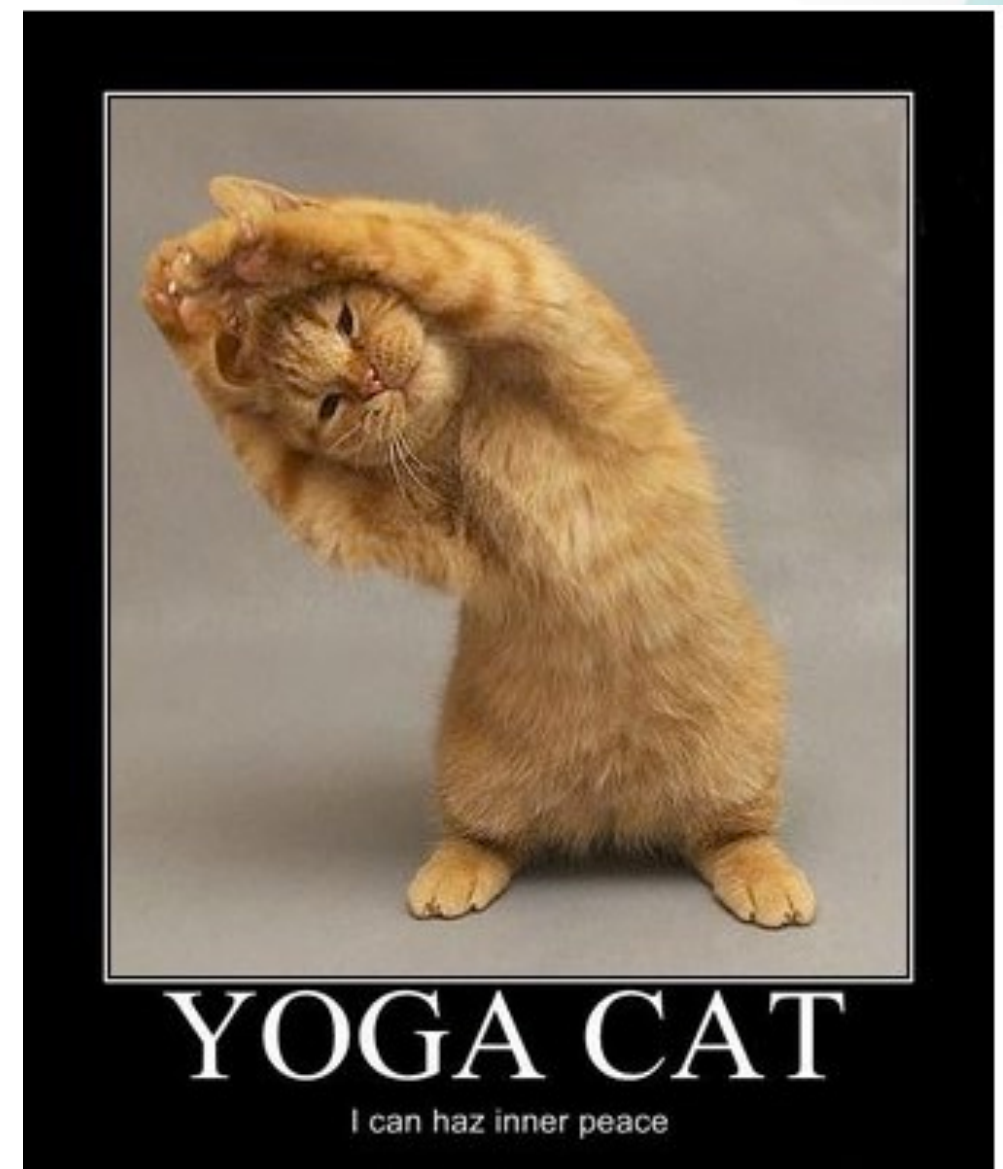


*The Divine: a.k.a. God, the Universe, your Perfected Self
or that quality, energy, or being whose influence you will to increase.*

*Yoga, being a product of a polytheistic culture, is full of theistic language;
substitute what works for you.*

Typical Western Yoga teachings have a few problems.

- Not friendly to those whose bodies fall outside socially-constructed norms.
- Most systems available in this country teach only one limb and ignore the rest.
- Often constructed as way easier than it is:
 - *“Just meditate for ten minutes a day and you’ll be walking on water in no time!”*
- Often constructed as way harder than it is:
 - *“The true yogi must renounce everything and sit in samadhi for 12 hours a day!”*
- Frequently subject to overcommercialization and scams
- Little room given for individual journeys



The Eight Limbs of Yoga

*“There are seven keys to the great gate,
Being eight in one and one in eight.”*



The first two: morals and ethics. Preparing your karma.
The second two: preparing the body.
The third two: preparing the mind.
The final two: visualizing and uniting with the Divine.

The first limb: Yama



*“Let thy life be pure and calm
Swayed softly as a windless palm.”*

- **Lit. “death”**
- **Hindu judge of the dead**
- **Actions toward others**
- **Can be translated as “control”, “restraint”, or “rule for that thing you shouldn’t do”**

Some traditional yamas:

Nonviolence (ahimsa)

Truthfulness (satya)

Living without debt (asteya)

Appropriate sexuality (brahmacharya)

Patience (kshama)

Courage (dhriti)

Compassion (daya)

Honesty (arjava)

Temperance (mitahara)

Purity (shaucha)

The second limb: Niyama



*“Let the will-to-live be bound
To the one love of the Profound.”*

- **“ni”== upside down, backwards, inside out**
- **Actions towards oneself**
- **Can be translated as “virtue”, “observance”, or “rule for that thing you *should* do”**

Some traditional niyamas:

Modesty/shame (hri)
Contentment (santosha)
Generosity (dana)
Faith (astikya)
Devotion (ishvarapujana)

Study (siddhanta shravana)
Thinking (mati)
Duty (vrata)
Recitation (japa)
Endurance (tapas)

The third limb: Asana

*“Let the body of thee be still,
Bound by the cerements of will,
Corpse-rigid; thus thou mayst abort
The fidget-babes that tense the thought.”*

- **Lit. “staying” or “seat”**
- **“that which is firm and pleasant” (Patanjali)**
- **prepares body and mind for union with divine**
- **Ranges from simple (tadasana) to incomprehensible (astavakrasana)**

Some common asanas:

Tadasana (mountain pose)

Adho Mukha Svanasana (downward-facing dog)

Utthita Trikonasana (extended triangle pose)

Virabhadrasana I (warrior I)

Savasana (corpse pose).



The third limb: Asana



- Asana should **not** hurt.
- Different ways of dealing with “breaks” - find what works for you
- To stretch into a pose, get to where it is comfortable and then *breathe* into it.
- Symmetry
- Entry and exit
- Subtle shifts can create large differences in feel.

The third limb: Asana



Mudras

- The hands are microcosms of the body, and sensitive gateways to energy from without.
- Specific hand positions can correct energy imbalances and focus the mind
- Great way to dial into your own body to sense what's going on
- Can be done when full asanas are impossible or impractical. (e.g., a doctor's waiting room)

The fourth limb: Pranayama



*“Next, let the breath-rhythm be low
Easy, regular, and slow;
So that thy being be in tune
With the great sea’s Pacific swoon.”*

- **Lit. “life energy” + “control”**
- **breath control**
- **prepares body and mind for union with divine**
- **Clears energy channels and awakens kundalini**

Some practical uses: keeping warm, staying awake or falling asleep, calming emotions, pain control

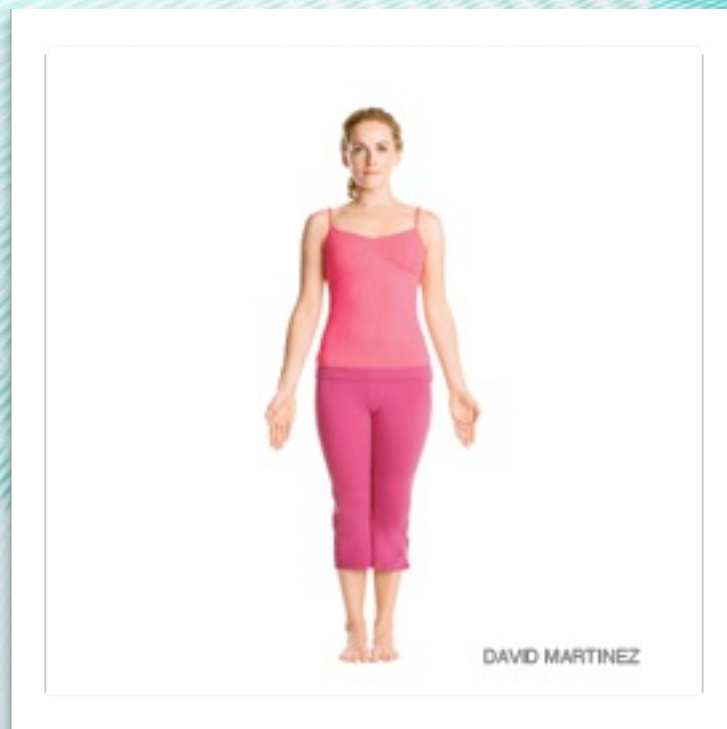
The fourth limb: Pranayama



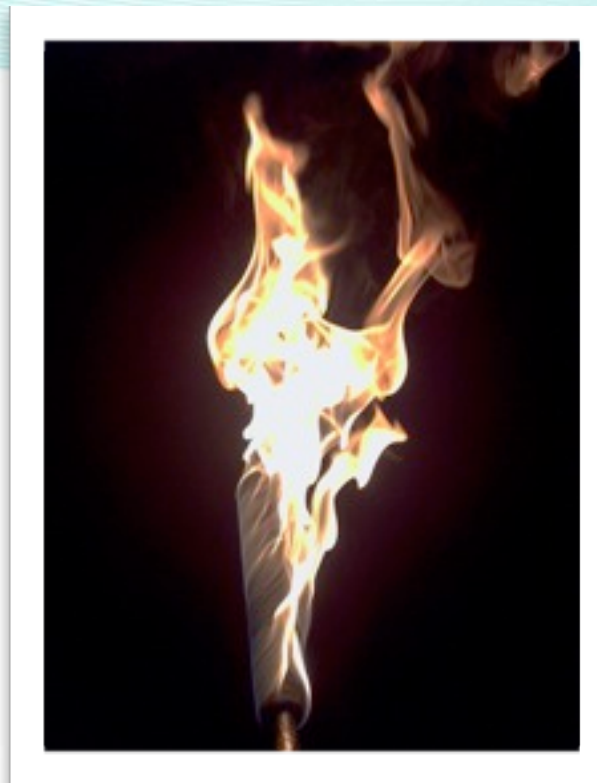
Ujai (“victorious”) breath:

- Inhale and exhale deeply through the mouth. Notice how your throat is open and the breath is audible.
- Now close your mouth and breathe through your nose, keeping your throat open and the breath audible.
- The exhale should make a “ha” sound as if you are fogging up a mirror.
- Great way to build heat in the body and wake yourself up!

Let's put some of this into practice!



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Tadasana: mountain pose

Stand straight, feet parallel, balls of the feet touching each other.

Spread your toes out.

Feel your spine straighten and elongate, each vertebra hovering over the next.

Imagine a string connecting the top of your head to the heavens.

Feel the energy of the earth rushing up through your feet, filling the column of your body with fire.

Now, add ujai breath and linga mudra! That should wake you all up!

The fifth limb: Pratyahara



*“Fifth, let the thought, divinely free
From sense, observe its entity.
Watch every thought that springs; enhance
Hour after hour thy vigilance!
Intense and keen, turned inward, miss
No atom of analysis!”*

- **Lit. “drawing back” + “nourishment”**
- **control or withdrawal of the senses**
- **introspection**
- **Careful! Can lead to invisibility!**

Some practical uses: warding off or attracting attention, intensifying rest, passive problem-solving

The sixth limb: Dharana



Vision Crystal, Alex Grey, 1997, oil on linen, 16 x 16 inches ALEXGREY.COM

*“Sixth, on one thought securely pinned
Still every whisper of the wind!
So like a flame straight and unstirred
Burn up thy being in one word!”*

- **concentration upon a single thing**
- **“...if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?”**
-The Book of the Balance

Progressive visualization:

simple to complex shapes
moving shapes
concentration upon other senses
(taste, sound, touch, smell)

Mantras:

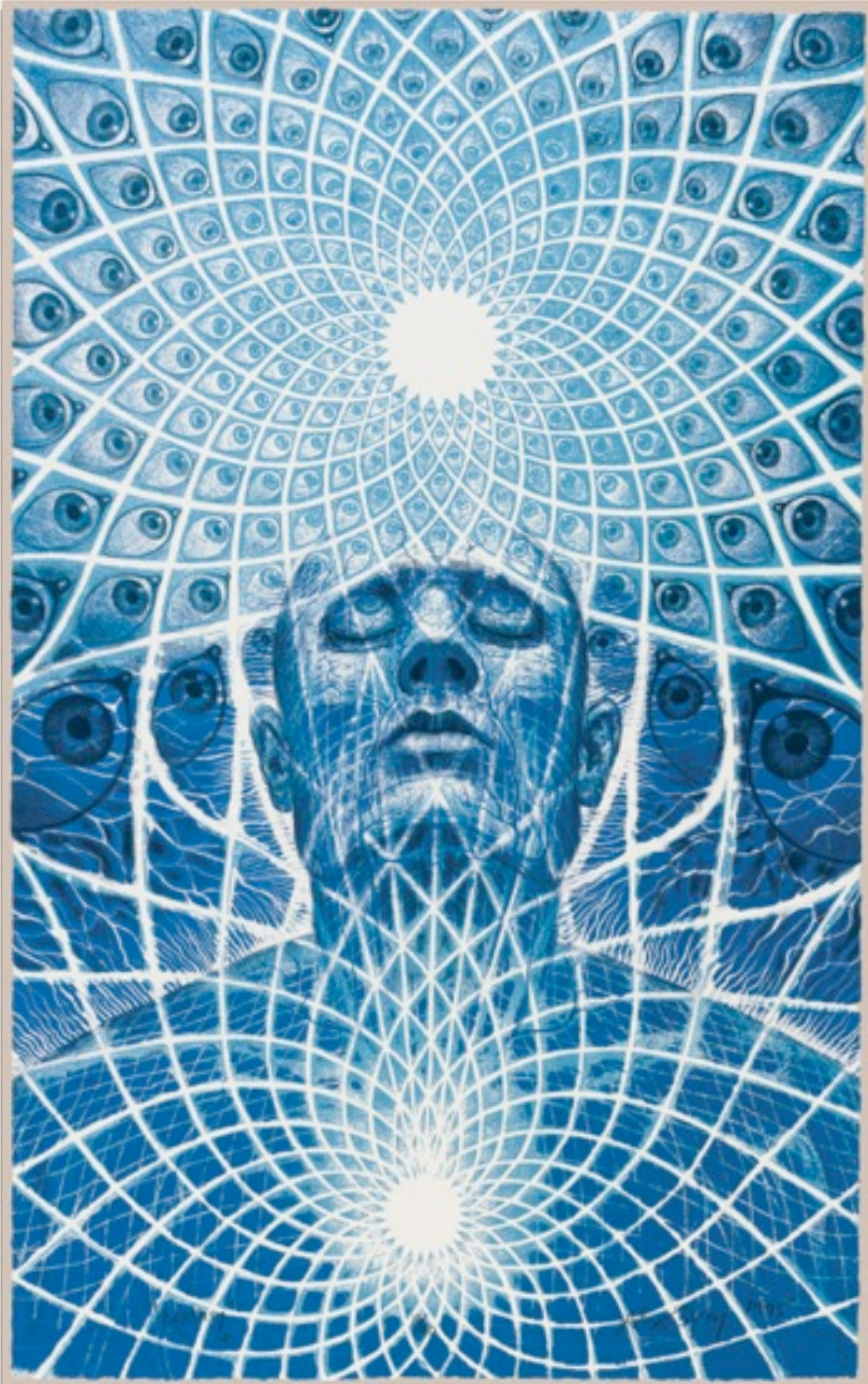
Om

Om namah shivaya

Om tare tuttare ture svaha

γνῶθι σεαυτόν

The seventh limb: Dhyana



*“Next, still that ecstasy, prolong
Thy meditation steep and strong,
Slaying even God, should He distract
Thy attention from the chosen act!”*

- **exalted meditation**
- **devotion**
- **prayer**

Defining the undefinable:

At this point it gets very hard to describe these concepts. I think of dhyana as conceptualizing and concentrating on that which you consider to be divine or perfect. Before you can become God/the Universe/your higher self, you have to know what God is.

The eighth limb: Samadhi



*“Last, all these things in one o’erpowered,
Time that the midnight blossom flowered!
The oneness is.”*

- **Lit. “to merge”**
- **union of self with divine**
- **akin to psychological state of “flow”,
where one’s ego dissolves into the work**

*“So then at last this Samadhi shall become normal to
thy common consciousness, as it were a point of view.
Thus all things shall appear to thee very continually as
to one in his first love, by the vision of beauty, and by
the vision of science thou shalt marvel constantly with
joy unfathomable at the mystery of the laws whereby
the Universe is upheld.”*

-The Book of Wisdom or Folly

Back to Magick...



If you want to invoke a certain energy, you do so by minimizing distractions, bodily and mentally, and by concentrating utterly upon the energy desired, until you become suffused with the energy, one with it, exuding it into every atom of your universe.

Funny. That sounds like yoga.

Want to learn more?

Study is good, but NOTHING replaces a real practice.

Types of Classes

- Hatha yoga: “traditional” asana practice.
- Raja yoga: more meditation, less physical.
- Bikram or “hot” yoga: incredibly effective, but exhausting! All Bikram programs are the same.
- Vinyasa or “flow” yoga: movement-based. Good for fitness, less so for meditation training.

Recommended Reading

- *Open Body: Creating Your Own Yoga*, Todd Walton
- *Bikram’s Beginning Yoga Class*, Bikram Choudhury
- *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, A. Crowley
- *Book 4, Part 1: Mysticism*, A. Crowley
- *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali

*Most systems can range from the “fluffy” to the profound,
depending on the teacher.*

Experiment to find what works for you.

These slides and extras available online (soon) at www.jnanacandra.com