UTILITY OF CHANDRA NAMASKARA IN DAILY LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Yoga practices are an ideal antidote to stress and are proving to be the basis of a powerful therapy for mental and physical diseases. Chandra namaskara is an integral part of the yogic approach and can be easily integrated into our daily life. It is a prayer and should be treated as such. Reciting any prayer on a regular basis will promote feelings of peace and tranquility. The sequence of asanas is the same as Surya namaskara except that ardha chandrasana is performed after ashwa sanchalanasana. For that reason, it is advisable to learn Surya namaskara before attempting Chandra namaskara. This dynamic group of asanas is not regarded as being a traditional part of hatha yoga practices as it was added to the original asana group at a later time.

However, it is an effective way of loosening up, stretching, massaging, and toning all the joints, muscles, and internal organs and especially ardha chandrasana develops balance and concentration which adds another dimension to the practice.

KEYWORDS: Asanas, Ida nadi, Mantras, Salutations etc.

INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an ancient Indian science and way of life which induces a balanced mental state and brings harmony in life. It is first and foremost a spiritual science for the integrated, holistic development of the physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of our being. Chandra namaskara is an integral part of the yogic approach and it can be easily integrated into our daily life. The word chandra means "moon". Just as the moon, having no light of its own reflects the light of sun, so the practice of Chandra namaskara reflects that of Surya namaskara. The sequence of asanas is the same as Surya namaskara except that ardha chandrasana, the half moon pose, is performed after ashwa sanchalanasana. This is a significant change. The posture develops balance and concentration, which adds another
dimension to the practice. It also makes the breathing pattern more demanding, prolonging inhalation and exhalation or retention.[ii]

Whereas the twelve positions of Surya namaskara relate to the twelve zodiac or solar phases of the year, the fourteen positions of Chandra namaskara relate to the fourteen lunar phases. The lunar energy flows within ida nadi. It has cool, relaxing, and creative qualities. Ida is the negative, introverted, feminine, or mental force which is responsible for consciousness. Similarly, the lunar mantras ascribed to this practice are those which glorify Devi, the female or lunar aspect of divinity.[iii]

Yogis did specific practices, such as inversions or mudras to both preserve and produce amrita. The act turning upside down was believed to draw vital fluids from the lower chakras up to the crown, where they would be transformed into amrita (soma).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
The idea of looking to the moon for rejuvenation is certainly not new. In fact, Shiva samhita, a 500-year-old tantric text, regarded the moon as the source of immortality. Perhaps Chandra namaskara is not well known Surya namaskara because it has not been around as long. In all like hood, it is an invention of the late 20th century. The Bihar school, which is a yoga school in India founded in the 1960s, first published the sequence in “Asana Mudra Pranayama Bandha” in 1969.

PREPARATION AND TIME OF PRACTICE
It is advisable to learn Surya namaskara before attempting Chandra namaskara as the postures are the same for both, except for one extra pose. In Chandra namaskara the added pose, ardha chandrasana, is inserted in the sequence at positions 5 and 11, in the first half the round, and positions 19 and 25 in the second. This asana emphasizes the link with the lunar energies set up by the preparatory visualization. Also, in Chandra namaskara the force of the each asana is changed subtly by the repetition of mantras related to the lunar energies.

Chandra namaskara is the best practiced in the evening or at night (with empty stomach), especially when the moon is visible, or at the dawn at the time of the full moon.[iv]

DURATION
For spiritual benefits, slowly practise 3 to 7 rounds. For physical benefits, practise 3 to 7 rounds more quickly.[v]
PRECAUTIONS

1. Before beginning Chandra namaskara, a few moments should be given to prepare the body and mind.
2. Elderly people are advised to avoid over exertion.
3. Women should avoid Chandra namaskara practice during menstruation and pregnancy.
4. It is not recommended that patients with high-blood pressure, cardio-vascular disease, and those who have experienced a stroke or hernia etc.
5. People with spinal problems should consult a medical expert before attempting the sequence.
6. Each movement should be performed with ease, awareness, and breath consciousness.
7. Avoid strain.
8. Practice should be slow and mindful.
9. The movements should flow like a wave from one to the next.
10. It is done only 3 to 7 times and not more than that.
11. Beginners may practice with 2 to 3 rounds.
12. Children may practice Chandra namaskara at the age of eight years.
13. Relax in shavasana after doing Chandra namaskar.

FOURTEENS POSES OF CHANDRA NAMASKARA

Position 1. PRANAMASANA (PRAYER POSE)

Mantra: Om Kameshvaryai Namaha, salutations to one who fulfills desires.

• Breathing: Kumbhak
• The vital point: The Anahat Chakra
• Colour of the Chakra: Yellow
• **Location:** In the centre of the chest
• **Ruling element:** Vayu
• **Relation to body:** Skin
• **Benefits:** It helps to induce a state of introversion, relaxation, and calmness and gives our physiology a state of balance as it eases the nervous system.

**Position 2. HASTA UTTANASANA (RAISED ARMS POSE)**

![Image of Hasta Uttanasana]

**Mantra:** Om Bhagamalinyai Namaha, salutations to one who wears the garland of prosperity

• **Breathing:** Purak
• **The vital point:** The Vishudha Chakra
• **Colour of the Chakra:** Colour of smoke
• **Location:** On the stretch of the abdomen and expansion of the lungs
• **Ruling element:** Aakash
• **Relation to body:** Ears and speech organs
• **Benefits:** It gives stretch to all the muscles from ankles to neck. The chemical and physical process of respiration becomes strong and healthy. Result is increase in the body height and health.
Position 3. PADAHASTASANA (HAND TO FOOT POSE)

Mantra: Om Nityaklinnayai Namaha, salutations to one who is ever compassionate.

- **Breathing:** Rachak
- **The vital point:** The Swadhisthan Chakra
- **The colour of the Chakra:** Sindur
- **Location:** On the back and pelvic region
- **Ruling element:** Jala
- **Relation to body:** Tongue
- **Benefits:** It helps free passage of apana vayu downwards. The sushumna nadi is purified and strengthened through it. This asana improves the metabolic process of the body.
- **Contra-indication:** People with back conditions should bend forward fully.

Position 4. ASHWA SANCHALANASANA (EQUESTRIAN POSE)
Mantra: Om Bherundayai Namaha, salutations to one who is ferocious.

• **Breathing**: Purak
• **The vital point**: The Ajna Chakra
• **The colour of the Chakra**: Lotus white
• **Location**: Between the two eyebrows
• **Ruling element**: Aakash
• **Relation to body**: Mind

• **Benefits**: Intellectual work can do with confidence. Muscle pains in thighs, neck, back, knees, calves, ankles are relieved.
• **Contra-indication**: The full stretch is not advised for people with knee or ankle problem.

Position 5. ARDHA CHANDRASANA (HALF MOON POSE)

Mantra: Om Vahnavasinyai Namaha, salutations to one who resides in fire.

• **Breathing**: Purak
• **The vital point**: The Vishudha Chakra
• **Colour of the Chakra**: Colour of smoke
• **Location**: On the smooth controlled movement and balance
• **Ruling element:** Aakash

• **Relation to body:** Ears and speech organs

• **Benefits:** It strengthens abdomen, buttocks and spine, expands chest and shoulders. It improves digestion, reduces anxiety, depression, improves balance, coordination, and relieves stress.

• **Contra-indication:** The full stretch is not advised for people with knee or ankle problem.

Position 6. PARVATASANA (MOUNTAIN POSE)

• **Mantra:** Om Vajreshvaryai Namaha, salutations to one who posses vajra, the thunderbolt, and is adorned with diamond ornaments.

• **Breathing:** Rachak

• **The vital point:** The Vishudha Chakra

• **The Colour of the Chakra:** Smokey

• **Location:** On the stretch through the Achilles tendons, back of the legs, shoulders, throat & on the relaxing the hips

• **Ruling element:** Aakash

• **Relation to body:** Ears and speech organs

• **Benefits:** It relieves the pain of the neck shoulders, arms, ankles, wrists. It gives stretch to all the muscles from ankles to neck. The chemical and physical process of respiration becomes strong and healthy. Result is increase in the body height and health.

• **Contra-indication:** Cautions for inverted postures apply.
Position 7. Ashtanga Namaskara Asana (SALUTE WITH EIGHT PARTS)

• **Mantra:** Om Dutyai Namaha, salutations to one whose messenger is Shiva.

• **Breathing:** Kumbhak

• **The vital point:** The Manipur Chakra

• **The Colour of the Chakra:** Blue

• **Location:** On the arch of the lower back and on the abdominal region

• **Ruling element:** Agni

• **Relation to body:** The eyes and the brain

• **Benefits:** It increases stability of the legs and mobility of the hips. It encourages correct posture. The involvement of brain and mind in all activities become keen and sharp.

• **Contra-indication:** People with serious back problems, high blood pressure or heart condition should not do this practice.

Position 8. BHUJANGASANA (COBRA POSE)

• **Mantra:** Om Tvaritayai Namaha, salutations to one who is swift.
• **Breathing:** Purak

• **The vital point:** The Swadhisthan Chakra

• **Colour of the Chakra:** Sindur

• **Location:** On the relaxation of the spine

• **Ruling element:** Jala

• **Relation to body:** Tongue and Mind

• **Benefits:** It soothes anger and violent temper, also beneficial for kidney and liver function. It is especially recommended for anyone who has a profession where they are sitting-prevents back problems.

• **Contra-indication:** Not advised for people suffering from peptic ulcer, hernia, intestinal tuberculosis, or hyperthyroidism.

**Position 9. PARVATASANA (MOUNTAIN POSE)**

• **Mantra:** Om Kulasundaryai Namaha, salutations to one who is virtuous, respectable, and charming.

**Position 10. ASHWA SANCHALANASANA (EQUESTRIAN POSE)**

• **Mantra:** Om Nityayai Namaha, salutations to one who is eternal.

**Position 11. ARDHA CHANDRASANA (HALF MOON POSE)**

• **Mantra:** Om Nilapatakinyai Namaha, salutations to one who is adorned with a blue flag.

**Position 12. PADAHASTASANA (HAND TO FOOT POSE)**

• **Mantra:** Om Vijayayai Namaha, salutations to one who is ever victorious.

**Position 13. HASTA UTTHANASANA (RAISED ARMS POSE)**

• **Mantra:** Om Sarvamangalayai Namaha, salutations to one who is the source of all good fortunes.

**Position 14. PRANAMASANA (PRAYER POSE)**

• **Mantra:** Om Jvalamalinyai Namaha, salutations to one who is fenced with instant flame.
DEFERENCES BETWEEN SURYA NAMASKAR AND CHANDRA NAMASKAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SURYA NAMASKARA</th>
<th>CHANDRA NAMASKARA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surya namaskara is traditionally practiced at sunrise</td>
<td>Chandra namaskara can practice in the night</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is a combination of twelve asanas</td>
<td>It is a combination of fourteen asanas</td>
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<td>Begins on the right side, as the right side represents the ‘pingala nadi’ or the sun</td>
<td>Begins on the left side, as the left side represents the ‘ida nadi’ or the moon</td>
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<tr>
<td>It can be performed several times in a day</td>
<td>It is done only 3 to 7 times and not more than that</td>
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<tr>
<td>On days when we feel depleted, overheated or over-stimulated, Surya namaskara has a soothing sequence</td>
<td>The Chandra Namaskara, as the name suggests, invites to bow to and cultivate the moon’s soothing lunar energy</td>
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<td>It triggers the yogic process by heating our bodies and giving us the internal fire</td>
<td>It gives us a method for cooling the body and helps to replenish our vital energy</td>
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CONCLUSION

• The Chandra Namaskara, as the name suggests, invites to bow to and cultivate the moon’s soothing lunar energy.

• It helps to replenish our vital energy.

• It promotes balance, tones the spine, expands lungs, and stimulates the Vishuddhi Chakra.

• This asana improves good blood circulation, keeps abdominal tract well regulated and healthy, stimulates spinal nerves, stretches leg muscles and back.

• Chandra namaskara also relaxes sciatic nerves, tones pelvic muscles, regulates functioning of adrenal glands, relieves constipation, anger, improves confidence, helps in maintaining balance on both sides of the body.

• It helps to develop a healthy sense of poise and respect for mind and body.

REFERENCES