



***Yoga, Pregnancy & Mothering: Giving Birth to Conscious Beings
Serving Pregnant Students & New Mothers in Yoga
Part II: Using the Koshic Model - The Energy Body***

1. Using the Koshas to Explore Pregnancy Experience
 - a. The Koshas are the dimensions or levels of human being. They offer a map for the journey of self discovery. This map of being comes from an ancient spiritual science called Vedanta. These dimensions can be described as bodies: physical, energetic, psycho-emotional, wisdom and bliss.
2. Pranamayakosha: The Energy Body
 - a. Relates to subtle energy systems of the body, including the chakras (energy centers) and the Prana Vayus (main energy currents). In terms of health, the Pranamayakosha relates to the balance in the energy systems as well as the intake and flow of prana throughout our being. Prana is the source energy that gives life. When prana is blocked or stagnant, dis-ease can occur. Yoga postures and breathing techniques can help remove constrictions and restore energy flow.
2. Pranamayakosha
 - a. What's happening in a woman's energy body?
 - i. The dramatic changes of pregnancy heighten a woman's sensitivity to her body. This heightened awareness together with the breath can facilitate deeper experiences of her energy body, the interconnected network of energy & intelligence.
 - ii. The physical and emotional stresses of pregnancy can effect:
 - (1) Breath – causing irregular breathing patterns
 - (2) Energy – uneven energy levels or periods of depressed energy levels
 - (3) Pranavayus – imbalance of the prana vayu can disturb heart, lungs and overall energy; imbalance of the samana vayu can inhibit digestion and assimilation of food and other forms of nourishment; diminished energy in the apana vayu can imbalance elimination and her ability to work with her body in childbirth; imbalance of the vyana vayu can disrupt the nervous system contributing to anxiety and/or sleep disruption
 - (4) Chakras – imbalance and constriction can occur affecting all levels of being:
 - (a) 1st chakra as deep survival fears, a lack of stability or connection to the earth
 - (b) 2nd chakra as fear of abandonment, emotional expression, blocked sexual energy
 - (c) 3rd chakra as low self esteem; isolation; negative body image; imbalanced work habits

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- (d) 4th chakra as depression, inability to experience love, service at expense of self care
 - (e) 5th chakra as excessive rationality, lack of intuition, creativity, inability to speak truth
 - (f) 6th chakra as disconnection to spirit, inability to focus the mind and hold center
 - (g) 7th chakra as sense of separation from life & universe, lack of joy, inability to let go
- b. Practices to support her through this period
- i. Practices which can balance energy, foster relaxation & build strength in preparation for labor.
 - (1) Pranayamas
 - (a) Diaphragmatic breathing for grounding
 - (b) Ujjayi to focus awareness on breath
 - (c) Nadi Shodana to balance nervous system
 - (d) Sitali/sikari with kaki mudra exhalation to cool
 - (e) Chandra behdana for cooling
 - (f) Aaaaah! or sigh breath to release tension, holding
 - (g) Brahmari to self-soothe
 - (2) Mudras
 - (a) Hasta mudras to enhance flow of breath
 - (3) Pranavidya
 - (a) Pranic healing through experiential practice
 - (i) Focus on flow of energy in abdomen, pelvis & hips sensing flow as rhythmically expanding with the inhalation, opening & softening with exhalation
 - (ii) Focus on flow of energy circulating through heart and radiating out in all directions
 - (b) Guided relaxation practices
 - (i) Hypnobirthing
 - (ii) Yoga Nidra
 - (4) Prana Vayu therapy
 - (a) Experiential healing through awareness & developing sensation of energy currents by focusing on
 - (i) Apana Vayu with long smooth exhalation. Sensing downward movement of energy releasing holding in the body.
 - (ii) Samana Vayu inhaling warmth and light gently kindling digestive fire.
 - (iii) Prana Vayu inhaling energy into the heart activating Vyana Vayu to send energy out to the limbs sensing movement of energy nourishing arms, legs, neck & head.
 - 1. Energy flowing from woman's heart to baby's heart and back again.

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(iv)Udana Vayu in the throat, eyes, ears nose and tongue inhaling nourishing energy to the senses to perceive inner truth and the world more clearly.

(5) Chakra therapy

(a) Encourage awareness of chakras

(i) Focus on light activation of warmth at the 1st chakra. Sensing rhythmic pulsation and follow from pelvic floor, hips, legs & feet – deep sense of grounding, stability & strength

(ii) Focus on fluidity at the 2nd chakra. Sensing nourishing and hydrating fluid circulation through the pelvic bowl – experiencing life & feeling as flow

(iii)Focus on activation of energy, light and warmth at the 3rd chakra. Sensing gentle kindling of digestive fire allowing for digestion and assimilation of experience. Sensing light shining on inner self & truth; sensing energy empowering intention.

(iv)Focus on activation of light and radiance at 4th chakra. Sensing energy circulating and radiating outward, opening and enhancing capacity for connection & love

(v) Focus on activation of light and opening at the 5th chakra. Sensing light healing inner conflicts and opening channels of clear communication. Use sound as appropriate.

(vi)Focus awareness at the 6th chakra simply observing, witnessing, opening to receive insight, intuition, spirit

(vii)Rest awareness at 7th chakra quiet the mind, let go

(6) Sounding

(a) Intuitive sounding can release energetic blocks

ii. Practices to avoid

(1) Any breath retention

(2) Excessive internal focus if woman is extremely agitated