



***Yoga, Pregnancy & Mothering: Giving Birth to Conscious Beings
Serving Pregnant Students & New Mothers in Yoga
Part II: Using the Koshic Model - The Wisdom 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. Vijnanamayakosha: The Wisdom Body
 - a. Relates to discriminating wisdom, discernment, intuition and insight to detect patterns of living which are emotionally painful and physically harmful. Through the Wisdom Body we can become the observer of these patterns and eventually transform them. Yoga postures, breathing and meditation techniques can help develop the calm concentration in which insight can arise.
3. Vijnanamayakosha
 - a. What is happening in a woman's wisdom body?
 - i. A woman's intuition is greatly enhanced during pregnancy. Carrying a new life awakens intuitive and visionary power enhancing a woman's ability to sense her inner truth: what is right and what is wrong for her and her baby
 - ii. A woman's inward focus can foster a deeper connection to her inner truth – a primordial knowing. Connecting with this inner knowing fosters confidence and a trust in the power of her body to go through the natural processes of birthing.
 - iii. A woman's inner knowing enables her to communicate inwardly with her baby and to be aware of his or her presence and responses
 - iv. This wisdom comes from the heart of life itself; it transcends conscious and unconscious conditioning. Guidance comes from reflection, intuition, creative expression and faith. Helpful tools in identifying and releasing samskaras – the conditioning which results in separation.
 - b. Practices to support her through this period
 - i. Practices which can enhance self-awareness, an ability to focus & calm the mind in preparation for labor.
 - (1) Dharana (concentration)

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- (a) Focus on movement of the breath, bringing the mind gently back to the breath each time it wanders
 - (b) Focus on the background of consciousness, which remains constant while thoughts, emotions and sensations fluctuate over the surface
 - (c) Focus on the grounding of the body in meditation, sensing the body becoming progressively calmer, more still
- (2) Chidakash Dharana
- (a) Again, plant seeds of encouragement. Invite students to reflect more deeply to on the meaning of feeling and sensory experience as it relates to her well being and prospect of birthing and parenting.
 - (i) Focus on the stability and consistency of the screen of consciousness allowing thoughts and images displayed to become slower, more rhythmic
 - (ii) Follow thoughts and simply note content as they arise: judgment, anger, fear, anxiety, impatience, joy, sadness
 - (iii) Watching feelings, sensations, images colors arising spontaneously as if watching an interesting movie
- ii. Practices to avoid
- (1) Long periods of resting in postures in which pelvis is rotated posteriorly (concern over baby's position – heaviest part of baby's head can shift to front of sacrum which could result in painful back labor)
 - (2) Excessive internal focus if woman is extremely agitated