



Dr. K's Guide to Mental Health

Practice | Yantra | Notes

A Yantra is a Tantric symbol of power. The Tantrics believed that meditating on these symbols would cultivate particular kinds of spiritual energy. When we close our eyes, we can notice the screen of our mind, or Akash meaning “space or sky” in our citta which means “mind”. It is almost like a monitor in our brain, where we can visualize things, imagine things, or see after images. From a biological perspective, our eyes have pigments called rhodopsins that become exhausted when we stare at something too long. As a result of rhodopsin exhaustion, we see “after images” that include the negative or opposite color of what we were gazing at.

Internal trataka leverages these principles to create a visual object for us to focus on in the mind. This practice also teaches us “Vairagya” or detachment.

Phase 2: Internal Trataka

- Do external trataka as usual but at the end close your eyes
- Keep your internal attention or gaze on the after image of what you were looking at
- It will look like a negative of the image, such as a blue flame if you were using a candle or an interesting pattern if using a yantra
- You may want to “relax” your eyes, even with them closed, if you begin to feel any strain
 - Take a deep breath and let your eyes relax
- Let your attention unfocus for a few moments, before going into focusing again
- Now you get to two more things –
 - The first is a very easy access to a trippy experience in meditation
 - The second is learning to wrangle your mind in a weird way
 - As you hold onto the image of the candle flame as long as you can, you’ll discover that causing the image to retain may involve relaxing the mind while retaining focus
 - If you try too hard the image will slip away, almost like holding water, so you have to learn to be gentle and persistent with your mind
 - Practice what we call “letting go” or “detaching”
 - Bring it into focus but if you relax too much or become too disengaged, it will disappear quickly
 - So we learn how to be engaged with the mind but also detached
- Concentrate on the image until it slips away
 - This can last for 5-20 minutes, depending on practice and aptitude

Post practice, let yourself relax, and you can move into other practices like silent mantra chanting or simply sitting in the space post-meditation.