

Vinyasa cycles of rhythm and flow theology religion essay



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There are rhythms within rhythms within rhythms. And these drumbeats echo all around us and within us. We are not outsiders to the process; we are part of it, throbbing to the pulse of the universe.—Deepak Chopra, too dance this world in rhythm - Kabir You are with the Friend now. Learn what actions of yours delight Him, What actions of yours bring freedom And Love. - Hafiz

Vinyasa in essence is every cycle of life from the micro-pulse of the quantum and cellular pulse which emerge and dissolve in seconds to the vinyasa of our inhale of receiving new life and our exhale of letting go, to the awakening of every morning to when we retire and all of the mini-cycles that pervade the "vinyasa of the day, week, lunar and solar cycles. Ultimately our life from our conception to when our body dissolves is one vinyasa. Paying attention to the beginning of a cycle, the way it is sustained and builds and the completion of a vinyasa is the open secret to living flow. Flow is equal to vinyasa just as an incomplete cycle is the absence of flow. Tending our fire is the intelligent awareness and connection to all of the cycles of our life - how we live in both our inner as well as cosmic rhythms and flow. This chapter begins with the core to ayurvedic "firekeeping" of tending one's vital energy through the practices which guide the flow of the day (dina) and night (ratri) and ends with the ancestral connection to the solar and lunar rhythms which have affected life on earth for at least 5 billion years. How will you tend the rhythm of your life?

Ayurvedic Dinacharya and Ratricharya Practices for Harmonizing the Sun and the Moon

Dinacharya and ratricharya practices offer ways to support your well-being and

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**cultivate the rhythms of your daily life.
Together they can be translated as " daily
conduct" or " daily movement."**

Begin the Day—Dinacharya Within the Tantras and Ayurveda, the first waking breath of the day is a very sacred sandhya, a practice in itself for waking from the dream state in life. It is also a reflection of where your consciousness resides. You can engage in a series of practices below to help align you and your Heart Fire with the fresh energy of morning and carry those rhythms into the rest of your day. The light has shone in the sky. Waking up in the morning, I see before my very eyes compassion flooding down.- Baul song

Sahaja Yoga in Bed Allow your body to enjoy a spontaneous, fluid, catlike motion that connects you to your instinctual body. Move in any way that feels natural to you—in ways your body yearns to move—at the very beginning of your day. Curl your spine, stretch, and invite the energy of your heart and emotions to express themselves through your body.

Generate Love While you are still in that soft, dreamlike state upon first opening your eyes, invite feelings of love, kindness, and openness into your heart. It may be easier to do this if you select a "target" for your love. Embrace and generate love for whomever is there with you—your beloved, your baby, your dog or cat. Invite love into your state while the day is fresh and new.

Awakening with the Light Learn when the sun rises in your location, whether you are at home or traveling. When you are not under stress or needing extra rest, try to rise before sunrise and complete the morning cleansing process so you can begin your meditation with the sunrise. If that is not possible, try to honor the sunrise by repeating a simple mantra and gazing at the sun as it rises, or toward lightening sky in the east if the day is cloudy. Enjoy the stillness of this moment.

First Step of the Day You have set the tone for your day in those first powerful moments when you emerge from sleep. Now it is time to set your day in motion. Step out of your bed and touch your feet to the earth, giving thanks for another day to walk upon it.

Morning Cleansing and Purification Practices Now you can begin your daily cleansing and purification practices, preparing your body for the activity of the day. Bring the energy of love and kindness that you generated while you were still in bed into these practices.

Hydration First, replenish yourself by drinking fresh, purified water (in Ayurveda this is put into a copper cup the night before in order to receive the benefits of this trace metal). You can infuse your water with lemon for a hydrating and cleansing effect if you wish.

Abhyanga—Oiling with Love Massaging warm, herb-infused oil into the body is one of the most nourishing, life-enhancing gifts of health you can give yourself for the rest of your life. Regular abhyanga is particularly welcome during the dry and cold months of the year and for people who travel often or exercise a lot. For yoga practitioners—or really anyone interested in the vitality of their body—abhyanga is an essential method for both solar (purification) and lunar (regeneration) purposes. Daily oil massage, a lunar sadhana, is a great tonic against the drying and stiffening effects of stress and aging. Circular movement over the heart region and joints has a warming, soothing quality that releases stress and grounds the nervous system. The power of touch can help heal negative body attitudes by generating connection, loving touch, and awareness. Abhyanga also has the solar quality of circulating and purifying. When combined with dry brushing, it wakes up the body and establishes healthy rhythms for the day. When you share this practice with someone you love, abhyanga is a method of bonding and caring for each other's well-being. An oil massage on the limbs, spine, and tummy of a young child stimulates neurological and tissue functioning while creating a comforting cellular memory of the important bond between parent and child. For couples, giving and receiving abhyanga can be a beautiful ritual of care and love and a great way to tend the fire of your relationship bond. It's also a highly practical way to receive daily attention to sore areas of the body, to tonify, and to strengthen areas of weakness.

< H3 Nourishing and Cleansing the Senses— eyes, ears , nose, mouth and toungue
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Enjoy Essential Oils Applying a small amount of natural essential oils gives beautiful energetic support for your day. Vata benefits from the grounding scent of amber. Pitta benefits from sandalwood for men or jasmine for women, and for kapha amber is a great warming scent, or you can use a stimulating scent such as eucalyptus or peppermint if it's not too cooling for the season.

Solar Sandhya Practices Honoring the sacred juncture when the day begins again at sunrise is a ritual period that is part of many spiritual cultures life particularly in yoga where the core meditative practice is synched exactly to the sunrise and sunset. Enjoying your yoga with these sandhyas whether meditation, flowing yoga, walking, prayer will be heightened by practicing within 45 minutes before or after sunrise.

Fire Offering: Agnihotra Screen Shot 2012-05-26 at 7. 13. 54 AM. png Agnihotra or fire (agni) offering (hotra) can be a simple fire-keeping practice encouraged from the Vedic-Tantric traditions in simple form as a universal way to align and elevate the energy of the day.

Simple Agnihotra Sadhana

10 minutes or early before your meditation, set-up your supplies which includes meditation seat, altar or power place to see the sunrise, sunset fire altar in the form of a small candle or copper kund (womb place of the fire) placed on a ceramic plate, rock or heat resistant support fuel in the form of a soy or beeswax candle, oil such as coconut oil or ghee fire twigs or dried cow dung (more common to get than you think) ghee (plus a wooden spoon for offering) or rice plain or mixed with tumeric to be the color gold (use your hand) For your morning agnihotra practice, find a place where you can face east and gaze at the sunrise. Create a fire kund (womb) with a small copper pot. Smear a few drops of ghee over two pinches of clean, unbroken rice grains and place them in your left palm or in a small dish. Divide the rice into two parts. As sunrise approaches, chant om and the mantra below three times or offer your own prayer. Text Box: Agnihotra Prayer At the point of sunrise begin by chanting " Om sūryāya svāhā " or " I realize the Sun" . While you say svāhā, offer one part of the rice grains to the fire. Then chant, " Sūryāya idam, na mama" meaning " this substance belongs to the sun, not to me" as a humble phrase honoring the life-giving power of the sun in all. Then chant, " prajāpataye svāhā" meaning " this offering is given to Prajapati, the Source of all Created" being while offering the rest of the rice. Then finish the mantra: " prajāpataye idam, na mama" (" this belongs to the Source, not me"). Finally, meditate on your inner Heart Fire and its connection to the energy of the rising sun. End of text box Meditate and generate energy within your heart and if possible until the flame goes out on its own . If you need to leave or continue your yoga practice in other forms, leave the fire burning and try not to ever blow the fire out. For tapas or vigil with firekeeping, you can keep the fire burning all day and night in a safe place and reactivate the fire with noon and evening sunset time.

Ratricharya—Evening Lunar Sadhana

Honor the SunsetThe time of day when the sun begins to fade in extraordinary glory upon the horizon is also a heightened Sandya for yoga practice and meditation. You can again come into any form of yoga practice or any of the Heart or Energetic Vinyasa practices and feel the magical energy that is particularly transformative during meditative practice. If at possible, try not to schedule mundane activities within one and a half hours around the actual sunset time or at least in the twenty minutes around the sunset sandhya period. If you find yourself in line at the bank as the sun is going down then go into spontaneous meditation. If in traffic, chant and get in touch with your inner heart fire in whichever way you can. Be a keeper of your inner fire by inhaling the natural magic of the day and not missing one opportunity to feel the extraordinary power of the sunrise and sunset – the place of great awe, epic scale and potency of realization freely emanating from nature.

Evening AgnihotraFor your evening agnihotra practice, follow the sunrise agnihotra offering but with the following prayer. The offering practice on svaha –the great fire offering mantra is still the same whether morning or evening. The only difference is the invocation of Agni which sustains the light of the sun in the evening by the fire." prājapataye svāhā" (I honor the Source being)prajāpataye idam, na mama (this Source, not the individual ego me) . Meditate or leave the fire safely going till the light of the fire goes out naturally or keep burning all night in vigil.

Enjoy Loved Ones, Family, and Creative TimeIn the last part of your evening, take time to be with your loved ones or enjoy reading, reflecting or being creative. Be sure to keep your environment relaxed and be mindful of connecting too much or at all to technology so that you do not become overstimulated before bedtime.

Lunar Energetic Vinyasa: Slowing down for Regenerative Energy or Making Love You can light your lamp and offer Chandra Namaskar, the moon salutations, shanti rasa vinyasa or meditation in candlelit darkness. You can also massage the soles of your feet or knead them by rolling on a tennis ball. If it's wintertime, wear socks over the oil. Enjoy a relaxing cup of tea, hot milk or almond milk infused with cardamom, black pepper, or ginger or rasayana herbs recommended by an herbalist or special supplier such as brahmi, ashwagandha or shatavari mixed in with a natural sweetener. If you make love, you might want to drink your evening rasayana after love adding a sprinkle of raw cashews and organic sweetener to nourish ojas. This does not make you in some fairytale lifestyle. It is a natural pleasure that can be woven into your life in less than ten minutes to two hours a day.

Closing Meditation, Practice, Prayer of the Day If you read in bed, consider that it is the last it is your last vibrations of the day to take into the dreamtime. Offer a prayer of gratitude before going to sleep. Enjoy some sahaja yoga in your bed and settle into blissful sleep. Hug and generate love with your partner or kids. Be aware of your dreams and sleep deeply in peace (even under the moonlight during the summer months). You have embodied the cosmic cycle with a day and are linking your body to the natural source.

Ida and Pingala Rhythms: Honoring the Dance of Shiva and Shakti When the yogin or yogini gives herself over to Shiva/Shakti the sun and moon come up in the central channel.-Yoga Spandakarika *** Daniel odier The microcosm of the sun and the moon are experienced in the body through the alternating rhythms of ida (the lunar current) and pingala (solar current) and the shushuma nadi (the central channel around which they wind), representing the integration of the two. These have multiple correspondences in the bio-pulses of the body

through the nadis. Nadis are the subtle channels (there are more than 72, 000 of these) of energy flow through the subtle body. The ida current relates to inner experience, the parasympathetic nervous system, and the right hemisphere of the brain, while the pingali current is the activating, outward-moving energy of the sympathetic nervous system and the left hemisphere of the brain. The yoga system that tunes you to these rhythms, known as swara yoga, focuses on synchronizing your inner and outer rhythms. Our energetic focus alternates brain hemispheres every hour and a half—a shift we can be experience by acknowledging the natural ebb and flow of our energy throughout the day. Whenever you feel yourself naturally moving inward—to relax, reflect, or meditate—you are naturally moving into ida nadi. When you feel raring to go and are drawn to stimulating activites, you are experiencing pingala nadi.

Disrupting the Natural FlowIn the modern world, we constantly override these fundamental natural rhythms. When we wake up tired, we get some caffeine. When we feel wired, we use something external to calm us down. The key to living vinyasa is to instead synchronize our natural internal rhythms as we move through the day. We need to honor both if we are to be in balance and functioning in our highest state. This is the union of the sun and the moon in the fire of the heart, the rhythmic balance of inhalation and exhalation, of the oscillating universe that pulses through our body. You can tell which nadi is dominant at any given moment by which of your nostrils is dominant. Close one nostril at a time to see which one carries a stronger flow of breath, or hold your hand underneath your nostrils to feel the breath flow. Now that you know which nadi you are experiencing, as much as possible, match your activity to that nadi. This could mean resting when you're tired, getting engaged when you're feeling sluggish, or doing a calming practice if you are feeling agitated. Respect your authentic energy. Screen Shot 2012-05-25 at 2. 22. 36 PM. pngScreen Shot 2012-05-25 at 2. 23. 01 PM. pngYou can bring natural flow to your day by learning to honor your oscillations instead of going against them—or, if circumstances do not allow this, by at least being compassionate with yourself when you have to go against the grain. This is a very important part of living vinyasa. Designer Note: Please work with this chart which includes info from the chart below.

Ida Nadi Associated with sympathetic nervous system
The left channel of the nadi system
Associated with the moon and feminine
Correlated functions: conserving energy, increasing serenity, calming the mind, nurturing
Stimulates creative, artistic, and musical abilities and intuition
Alpha wave state, 9 to 14 waves per second: a heightened state of well-being; non-focused body awareness; a creative state; body self-healing occurs in this state

Pingala Nadi Associated with the parasympathetic nervous system
The right channel of the nadi system
Associated with the sun and masculine
Correlated functions: the energy for physical movement and activities, vitality and power, mental quickness, constructive actions
Stimulates rational, analytical, and logical thinking, Beta wave state, 15 to 40 waves per second: high mental activity; strong concentration

Rhythmic Cycles of the Day
Quote: The secret to living flow is to see and feel your life as waves of vinyasas – rhythmic cycles – that connect throughout the flow of the day.

*****this is me**

The Daily Cycle of Raga-Rasa Rhythm There is a beautiful understanding of the rhythm of the day from the **Natya Shastra**: that there is a raga or melodic sound that is matched with a rasa or general energetic quality, and that these occur together at certain times of the day. In this understanding, the day is broken into eight three-hour periods (prahars) with specific ragas for each. The first-cycle raga, for example, corresponds to the sacred twilight hours before dawn or bhramamuhurta. If you study the way musical notes unfold, you realize that they synchronize with the nature of our bodies, beginning with the low bass tones that resonate in the pelvic region and rising into the higher frequency tones of the upper chambers of the brain. The different combinations of notes and the patterns in which they are played have very distinct effects on our emotions.

Ayurvedic Cycles of the DayIn the Ayurvedic system, every four hours there is an oscillation of the doshas: kapha, pitta, and vata. The transition times between the doshas occur at sunrise and sunset, and at midday and midnight. Vata encompasses the hours between 3 and 6. Kapha usually runs between 6 and 10. Pitta is strongest between 10 and 3. This Ayurvedic time clock reflects the natural energetic cycles that our bodies absorb from and reflect back into the natural environment. Vata is the principle of movement and air and is strongest during the transitions between day and night, light and dark, warm and cool. Pitta, the fire principle, is strongest at the warmest time of day, again at the peak of external coolness, and within the body when hormones and enzymes are repairing and rebuilding the body. Corresponding to the earth element, kapha is present during the building, rising transitions of midday and midnight. Thus, within the cycle of a single day the three energetic doshic forces of vata, pitta, and kapha dance to the rhythm of nature, affect our bodies and minds in various ways. Ayurveda offers lifestyle recommendations to enhance and work with these natural rhythms and forces. double page spread ends here

Weekly Rhythm—Planetary Days of the Week Feel into the rhythm of the week and experience the alternating flow between activation and rest. Build energy in balance and find your natural optimal flow as each week slightly or dramatically changes.

Designer Note – this is larger text The flow of the week is a natural rhythm that links us to the cosmos honored through time and across cultures: in ancient Greece and Rome, Norse and Celtic cultures, and the Hindu-yogic culture of India, among many others. The seven days of the week are named for the seven planets of classical astronomy, and thus we have Sunday and Moonday. Generally, Sunday and Tuesday are the main solar days, associated with the Sun and the fiery planet Mars, and with fiery colors. Monday and Friday are natural lunar days associated with the Moon and the planet Venus, associated across cultures to the flow of love and beauty. Monday, for example, has a beautiful restorative, lunar energy and this is perhaps why so many people do not feel in a "solar mode" on Mondays. In India this natural

cycle of planetary energy is used as a guide for sadhana. Devotees dedicate and deepen certain practices, such as retreat, mantra japa, or fasting on Monday, dedicated to Shiva, or on Friday, dedicated to Shakti. Observe the natural flow of your own energy as you move through the week. Another practice is to observe the effects of the colors we wear in conjunction with the days of the week and incorporate the mantra of each planet into your daily awareness: a simple sadhana that Ayurvedic teachers such as Dr. Vasant Lad recommend to help people attune to the macrocosmic effects of the planets (reflected in these colors in the seven yantras of the planets). You can also explore the energetic effects of solar-lunar dynamics by wearing cooling blues, purples, or white to bring a lunar calm energy to your day or using bright warm colors such as orange, red, and green for a warming, activating effect.

Lunar Rhythms—The Creative Power of the Thirteen Moons Moonlight floods the whole sky from horizon to horizon. How much it can fill your room depends on its windows. Grant a great dignity, my friend to the cup of your life. Love has designated it to hold its eternal wine.- Rumi In the West, most people living in urban settings are unaware of the phases of the moon, but for our ancestors, the waxing and waning of the moon offered important guidance. Planting crops, tending the fields, harvesting, organizing communal life, and cultivating healthy energy were all done in accordance with the phases of the moon. Known as tithi in the Vedic calendar, each phase of the moon is associated with certain favorable activities. There are two main phases of lunar light. The first half of the lunar month is the fifteen-day period of waxing moon, beginning with amavasya, the new moon (the last day of the dark half of the lunar month). It ends at purnima, the full moon. These are the tithis of shukla (white)-paksha, which mirror the solar period of increasing light. All auspicious activities such

as initiations and beginning new projects are best done here. This is the "inhale" phase of the lunar month. The second main phase is the waning phase, beginning on purnima and flowing back to amavasya. The tithis of this half of the lunar month are krishna (dark)-paksha. This is the "exhale" of the cycle, a good time for "housecleaning," completing projects, and settling any unfinished business. A naturally inward-moving time of increasing darkness, it is also a time to conserve energy. The following lunar mandala shows the essence of the general effects of the lunar tithis in eight phases that mirror the solar cycles we will delve into a little further on: initiation, fruition, death, and renewal. Included are suggestions for working with each phase for optimal flow.

The Creative Cycle of the Moon
New Moon—amavasya—fertile darkness (day 1). For sadhana, the day of the new moon is a powerful time to ignite or renew of any aspect of your inner or outer life: spiritual study, relationship bonds, creative projects. This is a good time to clear the space to plant seeds for the next creative cycle.
Crescent Moon—light emerging—the germinating seed (days 3 to 7)
Half Moon—waxing energy—building the organic structure for what was planted to emerge. (days 7 to 14)
Full Moon—peak creativity and fulfillment
Waning Moon—krishna—harvesting the fruits (days 15 to 19 days). Moon rises in mid-evening and sets in mid-morning.
Quarter Moon—light and dark in balance, with darkness increasing (days 19 to 23). The moon rises at midnight and sets at noon. As the last waning cycle begins, it is a good time to focus on completing creative projects.
Balsamic Moon—completion, and processing the shadow (from day 23 until New Moon). This is a time to release, compost, and integrate any shadow work that is arising before the next lunar month cycle begins. This is the most powerful phase for personal retreat time to digest and understand the wisdom gained through the last cycle, to cleanse and to envision and set intentions for how you will enter the coming moon phase. The symbolic seed contained in the fruit of the full moon now returns to be reborn again with the new moon. Screen Shot 2012-05-26 at 6. 48. 14 AM. png

The Woman's Moon Cycle and the Creative Journey
The circle of the Nitya Saktis (the phases of the moon) is a reservoir of delight, for they embody all those aspects of life that make existence a celebration of the spirit. _ Madhu Khanna
Screen Shot 2012-05-26 at 6. 21. 34 AM. png
All of these energies associated with each phase of the moon are reflected in women's lunar cycles. The New Moon and the few days that follow are often when a woman " receives her moon" or begins menstruating. As the waxing moon moves from new moon toward Crescent (days 3 to 7), a woman will feel her energy rebuilding and her creative energy begin to take focus. This is a time of " light emerging" as the womb prepares for the possibility of new life. As the waxing cycle of the moon continues into Half Moon (days 7 to 14), light is balanced with darkness. A woman's energy begins to shift with the coming ovulation, and she feels more sensual and has a greater sense of beauty and luster than she did in the New Moon phase. More energy is now available for outward creative expression and for building the structures to support it. The Full Moon (day 14) can aligns with a woman's ovulation. Now she is at her sexual peak, and she can feel her own radiant splendor and channel it into creative powers. The fullness of the moon is mirrored by the flowering or ripening of her creative fruit. The Waning Moon phase (days 15 to 19) is a time for inner cleansing and to gather energy. The tended plant flowers and then passes its peak, and this is mirrored in the womb. The unfertilized egg creates a hormonal shift that can generate a subtle sense of " grieving" for the life that did not arise, especially at mid-evening when the moon rises and when it sets at mid-morning. This is the most potent time for moving inward. The Quarter Moon (days 19 to 23) is a turning point when

most women begin to feel a tugging inward to process the "dark" or shadow aspects of their inner landscape, their home life, and the world around them. The dark increases and gives way to a "composting" of whatever needs to be released or returned to the earth, the Great Mother. As the moon continues to wane during the Balsamic Moon (from 23 days until the New Moon), the creative cycle for women continues inward with a sense of "moving into the temple," or the womb. Sometimes a woman is opposite the cycles, having her moon cycle linked with ovulating on the new moon and menstruating on the full moon. Here the opposite can work in polar balance – relaxing on the full moon and revving up with the new moon. Moonbathing is one of the recommendations for women with a wavering moon cycle along with herbs, nutrition and lifestyle changes as a way for a woman's body to resyncopate with the lunar light. Screen Shot 2012-05-26 at 6. 42. 43 AM. png

The rhythms and energies of the doshas are also found in a woman's lunar cycle providing a beautiful healing way to go with the flow is essential along with food and herbs in healing any pre-menstrual stress and imbalances. Days of blood flow—vata phase. Follow a vata balancing lifestyle during this time that is grounding. Stay at home, rest, and save "solar activating" practices for after your blood flow ends. End of flow to ovulation—kapha phase. This is the best time in the month to follow an ojas-cultivating mode of practice and the period in which a woman feels her solar power. From ovulation to beginning of flow—pitta phase. This is the best time of the month to balance pitta through calming, grounding, and excessive-fire balancing practices. In many parts of the world, a woman on her moon cycle does not do any housework or cooking or any active, pingala nadi types of

activities. In places such as Kerala, which has a strong reverence for the goddess and Ayurvedic practices, a woman is honored during her moon cycle and is allowed to rest completely during her moon cycle. Ideally, premenstrually and on your moon cycle, it is good to reduce your solar activity as much as possible to completely going within, particularly activities that aggravate vata and pitta, such as computer and phone calls. travel, overstimulation, imbalanced food choices, or anything you find stressful. Follow the lunar cycle and gradually begin to pull inward as you become closer to your cycle taking time to enjoy a lunar retreat for as long as you can particularly on the first day of your cycle to three days of retreat and meditation practices to restore your natural essence

Text Box: Men's Moon CycleI have come to observe through life, love and anecdotal conversations that men too have their own equivalent to a woman's " moon cycle" that is related to the release of their seed. Within the theory of Ayurveda, men's shukra or seminal fluid is the energetic equivalent to a women's " pushpa" - the blood of their womb as well as female sexual fluid (also shukra). These fluids are distilled through many days of work from foods and liquids to become precious life-creating substance.

[URL: This is from Shiva's own article, so she's quoting herself: <http://www.elephantjournal.com/2012/10/all-hail-the-moon-kings-shiva-rea/>]Although semen is created daily (85 million sperm per day per testicle), it takes 72 to 90 days to develop mature sperm. Leaving aside the many theories and practices about men withholding and releasing their seed which is really very individual, seasonal, constitutional and unique to every man, there is a wonderful period of absolute lunar, yin, receptive, relaxed, content, open, loving space that men enter into that deserves to be honored particularly by women who are often the one's to start poking that Lion King to get up and do something again. Why do women disturb men when they are so beautifully resting in their lunar nature – a quality women long to be reciprocated when it's their turn in the cyclical flow? Just as men are often resistant to honor their ladies on their " moon" or menstrual cycle when they need the most loving and nurturing support, ladies need to be called out for disturbing men in their spontaneous but very real release of precious essence – their own " mini-moon". For those precious few hours to a few days, these Lions can be adored as " Moon Kings" too just as the " Moon Queens" are waiting to be held and respected. Love your " Moon King"

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up and he will be come to know exactly what a Moon Queen needs to receive during her pre and menstrual time. Our lives can nourish a living balance of sun and moon.

Rhythms of Love—the Balancing of Ida and Pingala Nadis for Men and Women
The union of moon and lotus is by the act of Divine Love alone. Where there is real passion there is Divine Love. - Song of Bhava
For men and women who are in a relationship, harmonizing your changing rhythms is an important aspect of the relationship, creating greater flow, more balance, and closer bonding. Amid the fluctuating rhythms and constant demands of householder life, particularly when you have children, the heartfire of your partnerships can easily waver. By becoming aware of the solar and lunar dynamics at work within the relationship, including when each partner goes into ida nadi (the inward-moving current) and pingala nadi (the outward-moving current), you can learn to respect each other's natural way. When men and women honor ida nadi within each other and within their union, a harmonization of solar and lunar rhythms takes place that can significantly reduce tension and stress among all family members. The entire household

benefits by honoring the moon cycles, including children and teenagers, who naturally savor their "down time" to play and relax. Communicate with your partner when you feel yourself shifting into ida nadi —whenever you're naturally recovering your life force, whether it's at the end of a long work day, or in the quiet, inward times of the lunar cycle. Find your own way to communicate this to your partner. When you acknowledge your true energetic state, it allows your partner to support you, as he or she hopes to be supported when in ida nadi. Equally important is to honor the solar expression of pingala nadi: passion, adventure, and the desire to take action and manifest that arises naturally, as well as the joy of sharing and collaborating together in partnership.

Tiger Time TogetherQuote: Wherever you experience satisfaction, the very essence of bliss will be revealed to you if you remain in the place without mental wavering. – Vijnana Bhairava Tantra When you and your partner are both in ida nadi, this is the perfect time to bond, offer and receive affection, and enjoy the nonverbal space of hanging out together. Honor a love sadhana in the mornings and evenings when you can relax in each other's arms or massage each other for your daily abhyanga—enjoy the nourishing power of touch. This "tiger time" of deeply surrendering your bodies to the earth and to each other is one of the great joys of life. Many busy adults pass this opportunity by, but you can reclaim it. Double page spreads ends

Making Love in All Forms It is easy to make love First put aside individuality Then you and I will fall in love This very lifetime. - Song of Bhava Making love takes place in many forms, as our senses are vehicles for appreciating and embodying our connection to life. In a loving relationship, lovemaking takes place all day long in the form of subtle communication, tender affection, and rituals of love or sexual union. A tremendous charge is generated through lovemaking that is not just the electrical release of orgasm but literally the synchronization of rhythms together. Lovemaking, like other forms of firekeeping, generates heat and passion that melts the tension and agitation that can suddenly erupt between partners. At the start of union, be in the fire of energy released by intimate sensual pleasure. Let thought reside in the quivering of your senses like wind in the leaves and reach the celestial bliss of ecstatic love. – Vijnana Bhairava Tantra *****dodier Male and female orgasm naturally produces a cascade of oxytocin and a regenerating rhythmic entrainment between our brainwaves and our heart rhythm that creates the feeling of downward stream of bliss that is so healing for every level of our being. The relaxation that follows after reaching this peak is a sacred time for men to experience the healing power of ida nadi – the " lunar current" of our parasympathetic nervous system by resting in the whole body surrender. Women's sexual release creates the same melting-into-being but is often energizing as it is not anywhere near as " depleting of essence" as for men. Hence the rhythmic differences that can emerge post-union. Men and women can begin to authentically recognize the beauty of ida nadi within the shukra-pushpa (seed-ovum) release cycle and give that support and love to each other by creating a natural rhythm

of serving the Moon King-Queen. These can be the smallest of ways to royal treatment service like feeding them in bed or making a special ojas tonic (Ayurveda recommends warm almond milk with honey and cashews sprinkled on top – yum!) Creating space for the rhythms of love is an important art in householder life. While the Tantric view of lovemaking has been exaggerated from the original Tantric teachings, Tantrics have always recognized the love union at the heart of creation: a union symbolized in the stories of the mother and father of the universe: Siva and Sakti. One can be celibate and still cultivate the ability to sense their mythic dance in the divine current and rock in the natural sway and flow of love.

Rtucharya—Tending the Fire of the Seasons
In Ayurveda, the term rtucharya describes the cycle of the seasons through the year. The word is based upon the root rtu from the Vedic rtam, or cosmic rhythm, and in remembering the Vedas through the use of this word, we return once again to the ancient fire altars that first linked our inner rhythms with the outer cosmos. Within the great mandala of the yearly cycle, the earth completes its orbit around the sun, bringing cold and heat, dark and light to our environment, including all creatures and our own bodies. And just as the three doshas are associated with lunar cycles, we find them in the annual cycles as well.[1]The uttarayana, the six-month period that begins with Winter Solstice, is a time for the great exuberance of life. The plant world grows from seed to fullness with the waxing light of the sun, which strengthens and intensifies until Summer Solstice. During the six-month dakshinaya cycle, after the summer peak, the sun's energy wanes and the moon's energy increases, releasing water and cooling energy

back to the Earth. This is vital nourishment that can also cause dampness of spirit or of health that is common towards the end of dakshinaya period of late fall when many people are vulnerable to depression and getting sick.

Winter Winter can generally be divided between the vata and kapha energies. The early part of winter, marked by wind and dryness, shifts to the colder, damper aspects of winter. In this cycle it becomes important to stay in alignment with the forces of nature as we move from the lightness of fall to the heaviness of later winter, then yield to spring.

Spring This is a time of renewal and rebirth for all cycles, offering awakening, warmth, and growth. Kapha predominates during this time as the forces of earth and water are strongest and exert their influence upon the earth and our bodies. Pitta begins to emerge in later spring as the sun begins to peak

Summer This season initiates the pitta time of year, bringing heat and dryness to the wetness and heaviness of spring. The pitta principle of fire is strongest during this time of year when the sun's rays are strongest and hottest. And just as the Earth is absorbing maximum solar energy at this time, so are our bodies.

FallThe vata season of fall is marked by entropy, dryness, and decay as the harvest of the year begins. The heating energy we and the earth have absorbed slowly begins to cool. The last harvests of the year offer abundant and bright colors—red apples and trees, orange pumpkins—while inside we cultivate warmth for the coolness that is to follow. This shifting and changing creates motion, increasing the wind principle in our bodies.

The Solar Cycle And still, after all this time, the Sun has never said to the Earth, You owe me. Look what happens with love like that. It lights up the sky. - Rumi***** will add a quote here
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Every day offers a new sunrise, a new start. Nature is forgiving that way. We get many opportunities through the year to renew our inner fire. As we are now a diverse and global community, both in terms of our cultural practices and our spiritual backgrounds, we have a unique opportunity at these junctures to connect with the collective ritual wisdom of the holy days of the solar vinyasa – a cycle which mirrors the moon from the birth of new light at the beginning of the winter solstice to the peaking of light in the summer solstice like the full moon. We can follow the eight solar cycle sandhays as a way of connecting