

SKYwriting

Swami Kuvalayananda Yoga Foundation Newsletter

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Moses on Mount Nebo
Israel Museum Collection

Moses 1300-1180 B.C.E.

LIFE SKETCH

Name	Moshe Rabbenu (Moses, Our Teacher)
Father's Name	Amram
Mother's Name	Jochebed
Birth Date	Approximately 1300 B.C.E.
Sex	Male
Caste	Priestly House of Levi
Place	Egypt
Marital Status	Married
Lifespan	120 Years

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

Home

Moses was born into a Hebrew slave family. To save his life from the Egyptian decree that all male Hebrew children would be put to death, Moses was set adrift in a reed basket on the Nile. His sister kept watch over him, until a daughter of Pharaoh found the child and adopted him into the royal court, choosing his real mother as wetnurse.

Education

He was educated as an Egyptian prince.

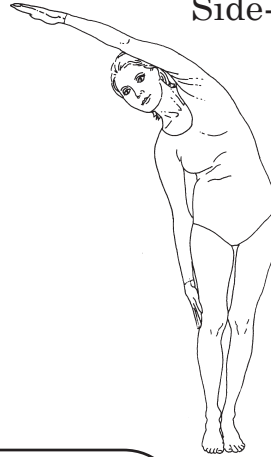
Caste

He was a Levite, one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Under his direction, the Levites became the Temple priests.

Other events

Under divine guidance, he freed the enslaved Hebrew people from Egypt and led them for forty years in the desert, where he taught them the Law (Torah) and forged them into a sovereign nation.

CAKRĀSANA Side-Bending Pose



Technique

Stand with feet together, toes together, and hands along the sides of the body. Raise the left arm slowly until it comes to the line of the shoulders. Turn the palm up and bring your arm up to your left ear, keeping it straight. Now bend to the right and hold for some time. Come back slowly to the original standing position.

Repeat with the right arm in the same way. Raise the right arm to the shoulder line and turn the palm up. Go further up to the ear and then bend to the left side. Hold for some time and return to the original standing position slowly. Repeat three times.

Suggestions

1. While bending, keep your head and arm together, without bending the neck and keeping the arm straight and stretched.
2. Look ahead, in the line of your eyes.
3. Don't bring your hip out in order to get the curve.
4. Keep your feet close together.

Results

It gives the spine a lateral stretch, and adds to the health of the abdominal viscera. It increases the circulation in the upper extremities with a feeling of blood flow in the arms; and, in general, it tones the spine.

Discussion and References

This is a modern and easy variation introduced by Swāmi Kuvalayānanda (1883-1966) in order to provide a lateral stretch for the spine, which generally is not found in classical poses. The traditional Cakrāsana (V.U. V, 15 & 17), is quite different from the Cakrāsana described here.

A Teacher's Guide for Beginning Yoga, Chapter XV

ॐ चन्द्रमा मे मनसि श्रितः ।
मनो हृदये ।
हृदयं मयि ।
अहममृते ।
अमृतं ब्रह्मणि ॥

om candrmā me manasi śrītaḥ /
mano hṛdaye /
hṛdayaṁ mayi /
ahamamṛte /
amṛtaṁ brahmaṇi //

OM
Chandrama (moon) dwells in my mind;
the mind in the heart;
the heart in me;
I in immortality.
Immortality dwells in Brahman.



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Satisfaction lies in the effort,
not in the attainment.
Full effort is full victory.

Mahatma Gandhi

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REACTION

After slaying an Egyptian slavemaster, Moses fled into the desert where YHVH (Yahweh, Jehovah) first revealed himself in the form of a bush that burned miraculously without being consumed.

Divinely inspired, with his brother Aaron at his side to speak for him (he had a speech impediment), Moses returned to Egypt and confronted the all-powerful Pharaoh with the demand "Let My People Go." After performing public miracles and bringing ten plagues on Egypt, he was able to free the people, only to be trapped between a powerful Egyptian army and the Sea. Calling on YHVH, he parted the Sea long enough for the Israelites to escape while the Egyptian chariots were engulfed.

In the desert, he performed the miracles of bringing water from stone and Manna (life sustaining food) from the heavens. He ultimately led the people to the Jordan River, overlooking Canaan, the promised land where Israel would find a home.

Moses saw the Promised Land, but died before he could enter it. This final disappointment was seen as repentance for his anger in killing the Egyptian - the act that began his historic mission.

PRACTICES

Forty-day solitary fasts preceded his direct revelations "face-to-face" with YHVH, God of Israel. It was his profound humility, even as he assumed his leadership role, which earned him God's graciousness.

TEACHING

At the age of 81, on Mount Sinai, Moses received the code of Laws from YHVH. The Torah, or five Books of Moses, prescribe every facet of daily and spiritual life, both for the individual and for the community. In all, there are 613 specific *Mitzvot* (responsibilities) that each Jew is obligated to perform. The best known of these are the so-called Ten Commandments:

- I am the Lord your God.
- You shall have no other gods before Me.
- Do not use My Name profanely.
- Remember My Sabbath and keep it holy.
- Honor your parents.
- Do not kill.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not lie.
- Do not covet.

FINAL MESSAGE

In three farewell addresses, recorded in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses recalled for the Israelites the story of their forty-year sojourn in the desert; expanded and refined their religious and legal code; and foretold the

experiences they would encounter in the land of Canaan. He summed up the essence of his revelations with the exhortation,

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד:

Shema Yisrael Adonay Elohainu Adonay Echad

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One.

SUMMARY and CONCLUSION

Moses is unique as both a political leader and a religious prophet. There is no other incidence in recorded history of slaves being led out of bondage and formed into a viable nation. Without physical resources, Moses confronted the most powerful empire of his day, armed only with his spiritual belief, and prevailed.

Until Mahatma Gandhi won independence from Britain in this century, the world had not seen such a demonstration of the political power of a single man's unshakable faith.

As a religious teacher, Moses created a new way of understanding man's relationship to the Creator. The Oneness of his monotheism allows for no separation from God. The synthesis of his political and religious teaching is the Sabbath Day. It was the political promise of one day of rest in seven that won the loyalty of a slave people which knew no holidays or vacations. And in its most sublime form, the Sabbath Day provides every individual the religious experience of union with the Oneness of God.

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contributed by Gershon Levitt
Your suggestions are welcome.

From the forthcoming book,
Explorers of the Truth
by Vijayendra Pratap

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