

Full Moon Meditation

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Full moon meditation has become an inherent and important part of my spiritual journey and practice. It has become particularly more regular and interesting in the last couple of years as I travel the world as part of my ongoing spiritual journey. The very first full moon meditation I had experienced was at Bodh Gaya in 2000 around the millennium, on the terrace of the Root Institute guest house. Two of the more recent experiences I will share here. But first, what is full moon meditation?

Every full moon is when the sun shines the brightest in the night! Yes, this appears to be a paradox, but true and therein lays the significance of full moon meditation. As we all learnt in school, the moon has no light of its own. It is the sunlight reflecting off the moon's surface that we call moonlight. As we also learnt and see in the sky, this moonlight changes from total darkness on new moon day to full bright light on full moon day, as the moon goes through the different phases with respect to its position with reference to the sun. So the Creator in its myriad magical ways has given us this wonderful gift of light even in the darkness of night. We think the sun has set and darkness descends on us, and lo and behold, it comes back on the opposite side reflecting its light through the moon. There is never total darkness. Even on new moon day, our experience tells us that we will start seeing the crescent of light from the next day, giving us hope and something to look forward to. This play of the sun and the moon is extremely symbolic and totally reflective of our own lives as we go through the ups and downs. There is never any reason to be totally depressed and give up hope, because we know the sun is shining even when it is dark.

There is another aspect of the moon and its phases that has a very important impact on the human body. Again, from our science lessons

we are familiar with the fact that the oceans rise and fall with the phases of the moon, and give rise to high and low tides. The human body is made up of almost 70% water and the brain alone has a much larger percentage of water. This water in our body is subject to the same gravitational pull from the moon as the oceans, and instead of manifesting itself in the form of tides, it manifests in the form of mood swings and various health related issues. There are many folklores, fairy tales and even personal anecdotes of strange things happening on new moon and full moon days. Some may be true, some may be imagination. But there is a valid basis behind it. In my workshops and meditation sessions which are predominantly attended by women, it is very easy to quickly determine the impact of the moon's phases on a woman's menstrual cycle, and if she is lactating, the impact on the flow of milk from her breasts. Many women, who keep a diary of their monthly cycle, also correlate it with the lunar calendar and find a very interesting relationship between the two. Men are quick to claim they do not have to go through any of this 'womanly' stuff. But that is not entirely true. It manifests in men in a different way, through their mood swings and energy levels, especially sexual energy. I have noticed this myself, and also challenged many men to maintain a diary to establish this correlation. They are all surprised when they see the results.

So, if the moon has such a profound impact on the human body and wellbeing, what could be better than to harness this wonderful energy on full moon day, try and remove the blockages that clog our energy channels and synchronize ourselves with the discipline and regularity of the moon's phases? The moon, like everything in Nature, works like clockwork, never late, never behind schedule, no sick day, no excuses. There is no reason why we, who are also gifts of Nature, should be any different. Meditating in the full glory of the moonlight, absorbing the moon rays full of cool, soothing energy, allowing it to melt away all the darkness within ourselves, is one of the most powerful practices in spirituality. In many tribal and traditional cultures, there are numerous rituals that take place on full moon days. In the world of tantra, Shiva performs his tandava dance on full moon day to woo Shakti, and the ecstasy of the male and female energies coming together helps them transcend this mundane world to the highest level of existence. Some of us have already experienced the sensual pleasure of a simple walk in

the forest, or by the shimmering lake or by the beach on full moon day, and reveled in it for hours later.

Each of the twelve full moons (sometimes thirteen) correlate to one of the zodiac sign, and the significance of each may vary for each individual, depending on the individual's zodiac sign and the moon sign. On October 28th of last year, I was in Vilnius, Lithuania, and it was the Scorpio full moon day. We organized a full moon meditation. It was chilly at that time of the year, so we had to be indoors in a beautiful tea house with tatami mats, cushions and lots of hot tea of all kinds. Full moon meditation is ideally done outdoors basking under the moonlight. If it is tolerably chilly, I organize a bonfire. Only if it is unbearable, do I go indoors. The benefits are no less. There were 15 of us. I start with a healing circle, holding hands, giving thanks. We share deep hugs all around. We sit comfortably on the floor, warm and cozy. I start with a short talk on full moon meditation. This being the Scorpio full moon, I talk about the Warrior and the Disciple, urging the fighting spirit within us to come through and accept the leadership and guidance of our teacher or guru and surrender ourselves as disciples, totally and unconditionally; just as the moon has surrendered itself to the gravitational pull of the sun, and then shines in its radiant light every full moon day. The guru will never let his disciple down. I chime the gong by my side to start the quiet period. Lights have been dimmed, there is only candle light. Everyone is now visualizing the beautiful moon shining bright outside, and drawing its energy within themselves. The energy permeates every part of the body, as we draw it in through the sahasara chakra, and see it flow down the spine touching each chakra, and then back again to the top, forming a full circle. We let it wander a little longer on the anahata chakra where it energizes our heart and we feel it bursting with love and compassion. We feel the pull in our hara and lower chakras as our energies get in tune with the pull of the moon. We experience a sense of upliftment as we try and reach out to the bright shining moon. A sense of calmness descends on us. A smile flutters on our lips and we want to stay in this reverie forever. But I strike the gong again. We look around and see smiles everywhere. We now take a piece of paper and write an affirmation on it, something we want to share with the Universe. We gather around a small fire set up in the middle of the room. Each of us, one by one,

offer the affirmation to the fire and let the Universe take care of it. We again hold hands and sit quiet for a few minutes. It is bliss. We do another round of energy healing, this time keeping the affirmation in our attention. We close with another healing circle and lots of hugs all around. There is complete silence. No one wants to say a word.

On December 28th of last year, I led a group of twelve people for full moon meditation at the Sun Temple in Konark, Orissa. No location on earth could perhaps be more appropriate for full moon meditation than the Sun Temple. The symbolism was just awesome. The logistics were a bit of a challenge. The temple is open from dawn to 8PM each day. No one is allowed to stay after 8PM. The Universe was with us, and we managed to convince the guards to allow our bunch of crazy meditators to stay after the crowds had dispersed. We had packed some snacks, flasks of hot lemon & ginger, brought our mats and blankets. We did not need any candles. The beautiful moon would be our guide. We sat on a porch under this beautiful banyan tree on the North side of the temple. We got a small fire going in the center as we gathered around it. The ritual followed the same pattern as described above, except it was more drawn out. This was the Capricorn full moon. It was about grounding and being with Mother Earth, with our self firmly planted here, as we gaze at the moon in the beautiful infinite sky. It was cool, but nice and cozy under our blankets. The energy was amazing and enough to keep us all warm. The warm yellow glow of the rising moon belied the cool energy it emanated, as it gradually bathed the entire Sun Temple in its radiance. This was irony at its peak. The Sun God was being bathed in its own light and energy through this luminous celestial body slowly rising up in the sky. It was almost as if the moon was giving back to the sun what it had gotten from it. There could be no bigger tribute or offering to the Sun God. It was a full circle. We stayed till midnight, enjoying the eerie silence all around. No one wanted to leave. But now the blankets were not enough to ward off the chill. Slowly we gathered ourselves, and walked back in meditative silence. This was the most powerful full moon meditation I had participated in.

After the full moon meditation in Vilnius, one of the women in her mid-twenties came up to me, hugged me tightly, had tears in her eyes and

confided that she has not had her monthly cycle since she was 18. She said she felt this surge of energy inside her as if she was rising up like a balloon. She had never experienced anything like it. I asked her to continue the meditation and the ritual every full moon. A few days ago, she called me up on Skype and was crying and could barely talk. She finally calmed down, had a huge smile on her face and said she just had her period last week after 8 years!

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