

SÁL | Rite (Studio 0.1)

Practical Introduction

Thank you for being here, for participating in this experience. Here is some very practical information. The first concerns the sitting position you have on this stool; you could also be seated on the floor but the stool is a guarantee of safety and comfort.

The distance between the feet needs to be a little wider than the hips, so that the pelvis can rotate forward and have an adequate lumbar curve to support the spine. I ask you to drop your shoulders down.

The image that is suggested is a tree that sinks its roots into the ground, also receives strength from the ground, extends its foliage from above and receives from above. This image can be useful during our experience.

In other sections of this journey I will ask you to lie down on the ground, I will give some indications at that moment .

Another practical indication is that you can exit this journey at any time, you can disconnect from what I am saying, you can go back to the breath, you can change your position, feel free to do this. A final indication is that I will give you a rather complex path: don't worry if you lose a piece, don't worry about being a good student, don't be wonderful! Do just what you are doing.

Sàl | Rite Introduction (3'40'')

The proposal we've studied and experimented with for this experience, it's not a "performance" or "show". The term that seems closest to us is "Rite", in the etymological sense. It comes from a Sanskrit root meaning "order", the root "Ṛtā". The rite is what brings order and structure to the world. Furthermore, the rite is also an opportunity to explore, to celebrate something that touches us very closely, which is the passage between the so called "intermediate states" in Tibetan Buddhism. They are studied and tested both in the passages that we all do every evening, therefore of falling asleep, deep sleeping, dreaming and awakening. In Tibetan Buddhism they are traced in parallel with the great passage, therefore with the process of dying, with the moment of death, with what they call the "Bardo State", which is a dream state ultimately - between one existence and the next - and with rebirth. The third way to experience all of this is through a meditative journey, so that's what you do every night, that's what we're all going to do at some point and that's what we do today, are the same steps.

The purpose of these maps, which are hundreds of years old and have been experienced by generations of meditators, is primarily to familiarize and become intimate with a process that affects us all but happens every night. How to face it without fear, without getting scared and without getting excited, without losing our mind in any case.

As far as the ritual is concerned, the second element I think it is right to talk to you about is that of the context. Obviously this is a tradition very far from us in time and space and we don't have the cultural context to receive it, because it is another world. However, it must be received with a form of reverence, of very great respect that we cannot invent. It is something we should feel. So to build this matrix that welcomes the experience we are having, my advice is: find something, an experience, a person, a place, an atmosphere in your life which you refer to as a value of sacredness. Whatever. Something that is worthy of the utmost respect to you, something that has intrinsic value. Find it! Keep it in your heart and mind and give this context to the experience.

We will drive this path following tradition, but drying it of all symbolic, metaphysical and confessional elements, so there is no need to adhere to anything to do it. There is no need to be Buddhist, Hindu, not even agnostic. There is no need for any declaration of intent. It is simply proposed as a simple and delicate way to approach those passages we were talking about earlier. And to cross them.

So the first element is the Rite dimension, the second the context that welcomes it, and the third and last element that I want to indicate before starting is the body. The shape of the body, the intention of the body. The energy that is inside the body is essential. This experience is done with the body, not with the ears or the head. So the posture you take must be exact. Not right in objective terms, but exact so that you feel it within yourself. The movements you make to move from sitting to lying down must be precise, conscious movements. It is the body that is having the experience.

The body should be considered as a symbol of the mystery that we are going to go through. A continuous reference to that mystery. It is not something we can take for granted. In essence, it is a question of restoring volume and density to the tremendous fact that we are alive and that we will always be alive.

So to start I ask you to lie down, take your time. Arrange the body neatly on the ground.

Meditation (11' 40")

Let your toes fall outside.
Let your shoulders drop.
The palms of the hands upwards.

As soon as you are completely still, we can bring attention to the weight of the body
Let it surrender completely to the force of gravity
as if this were a current that flows through you from top to bottom
We completely stop resisting this current.
It is easy to grasp the densest areas of the body, the support on the heels, the sacrum, the bones of the shoulder blades and those of the nape.
We grasp the structure of the body that is diluted, from solid to soft, tender.
Of this solid body we grasp the extension, the limits, the resistance.
We let the shape dilute.

As when a louder noise stops and we start noticing more subtle noises
as the solid sensation of the body is diluted, a more subtle one emerges
The clear perception that this body is made up of almost 3/4 of water
The liquid perception that initially is more cohesive and then slowly becomes fluid,
begins to flow.

In this flow of liquids, the body widens - in the soft tissues - the muscles of the buttocks, calves widen and the upper part of the trunk widens. There are completely liquid tissues, such as blood, lymph and others that are increasingly soft, loose.

The character of water is to cleanse and as this element is diluted, the mind is also cleared of the habit of evaluating, judging.
We let go of the considerations of whether we live in a pleasant, unpleasant or neutral dimension.
Let us leave them alone as flavors, as energies of the body.

As the liquid element flows away, a more subtle sensation emerges. The body heat. Internally it is a kind of vitality, a dense heat in the stomach area, in the heart.
Or you can catch it on the surface of the body, which radiates from the skin, hands, face, from the skin under the clothes.

This inner fire, this very slow combustion that is the life of our body is what makes us mature, grow, transform.
Let the most common activity of the mind burn, the one of giving names, establishing links, telling a story.
We are alone only with the flavors of the body.

As the heat is diluted, the body becomes cooler, an even more subtle, gaseous element emerges, the wind that passes through the body in the form of breath, but

also in the form of variations, vibrations, changes.

We let the wind pass through the scene in a completely spontaneous way, taking away the mental habit of control, of will, of intention.

The wind goes where it wants and becomes slower, lighter and thinner.

It could happen that the breath gets longer and longer. Let it flow, we honor the wind.

As the breath is diluted, the subtlest element emerges, the very space in which all this is happening. It is a living space, a space that knows, that welcomes the solid, the liquid, the heat, the wind. Which lets them dissolve and re-emerge.

The element of space is a fresh, lit and completely vast presence, without borders. If you find a boundary, it is within this space.

This space is not inside the body, rather in the body every sensation is enveloped by this space. Check it out.

When you want to get back in touch with the movements of the extremities of the body, fingers, toes and with extreme care, with precision, rotate on the side - better the right one, if that's okay with you. Let the body rotate following its own weight, bending the knees, the arms. If you need to support your head, you can do it with one arm.

Let your back breathe and then - pushing the floor with your hands, bring yourself sitting on the ground, with your eyes still closed. Or hatch them, slowly though. Let's simply put the body vertically, you will feel that the heartbeat and breath are already changing.

And then from here, take yourself sitting on the stool. The pillow, the inclined plane that you have prepared. If anyone wishes to sit on the ground, they can do so.

Place the body as stable as possible, so the distance between the feet, the position of the hands, the elbows should be below the shoulders, their weight makes them give way. The nape stretches upwards, the roots sink. And we relax the abdomen. From here in a few simple steps we return to redepositing the elements. We perceive the element of the earth under the soles of the feet, in the support of the buttocks and in the solidity of the structure that supports us, the skeleton, the bones.

We simply leave it a little softer, but completely firm and stable. We grasp the liquid element in a sensation of slow cascade that passes through us, the liquids descend from top to bottom and settle, stabilize like a lake whose surface is completely still, the internal content of the basin.

Once again we contact the sensation of internal heat, the heat of the skin, the irradiation of the surface of the body. And then this breath, quiet, spontaneous, when the air enters we grasp its touch at the edge of the nostrils, it flows along the pal-

ate until it touches a cool spot behind the palate, every time the air enters. While it comes out, this breath descends into the heart. Every time. The mind and the breath are intertwined, fused together. They flow from the edge of the nostrils to the back of the palate, when the air enters; they sink into the heart when the air comes out.

The illuminated internal space of knowing, feeling, experiencing, lights up when inhaling. And in the same way when the air comes out, while the mind and the breath sink into the heart, we can perhaps also feel from the pelvis, from below the navel - always on the exhale - rise like a channel that lights up to the heart. For short stretches it is possible to grasp the living, awake space in which all this happens. It is a space inhabited by the taste of me, that is the last point where the mind can arrive. A flavor that we sometimes express by saying: "I'm here! That's me".

It is not simply a container space, it is a living space. An awake spontaneous presence, which on the one hand cannot be denied because as soon as we say: "There is nothing here! .. Here it is".

But on the other hand it cannot be grasped, because it is always himself the one who grasps, who notices. The eye cannot see itself. At best it can see his reflection on a mirror or a picture, but it's not him.

This space has no place, it has nowhere because every place is inside it.

There is another characteristic of this living space that for Buddhist tradition is the most crucial: all phenomena arise and dissolve in this space, everything changes, everything is transformed. One way to say it is that every phenomenon has no intrinsic nature of its own, and the crucial element is: "So am I". This event is called the union of bliss and emptiness.

From this impalpable dimension, the desire to have back a body arises in us. It can arise because we feel the need for a "where", for a more concrete dimension, we need to define our place. And it may be that we feel the desire of a body for the desire to benefit with its actions all beings. To donate the wisdom of this deep, ultimate condition for the benefit of others. And then we go through a denser, more corporeal dimension even if it is still an almost dream body. It can be useful now to lie down again. With careful, precise, slow movements, being aware of every change in gravity.

To regain the body we start from the energies of the body, the emotional energies. Try to contact an image, a memory relating to a state of safety, protection. It can be a place or a person that brings you a sense of deep reassurance. They make you feel guarded, that nothing bad can happen. Above all, contact the energy of the body when it feels this way.

We live these deep energies that emerge with the body, with the 5 senses, with a

point of view like in a dream.

We can also evoke a situation of threat or danger, a risk, a restlessness. Let's note how the body feels, where it feels, with what flavor, with what color.

The essential thing is to always remember that all these sensations and emotions are just projections of the mind. Like when we look at a cloud and we see a horse or a turtle. They are just projections of the mind, soothing or disturbing. We observe them with curiosity as we observe a shape, the shape of an animal or the shape of a child while playing. They are interesting because they tell us something about the energies within us, which direction they want to go, which body they want to take. But let's not let that what we really identifies or sticks with them. We are much more.

For our last passage, I ask you again to step onto your side and sit on the pillow. This passage can be a real awakening. Of course, if you are lucid, alert and deeply embodied, you can also stay on the ground.

This path of the dilution of the elements, the deep dimension, the intermediate stage of dreaming and awakening, this path happens every single day. Every single life. As we end this experience, we bring with us 3 themes, so that the meaning of this path remains with us, it extends into our life.

The first theme is to remember and rely on this original nature that we are. This awakening nature, this living, awake, open space that we are. Especially in times of uncertainty, in times of fluctuations, in which something is finished and something new has not yet arisen, we cultivate an original trust in our fundamental nature.

The second theme that we can take with us is a deep gratitude for what we have received, a body, a mind, teachings, love. Gratitude for this clear intuition and aspiration that tells us that the nothing does not exist. That a passage to nothing is not possible, because passage is not nothing. And like when we fall asleep, it is a light, quiet moment, we let go of the weight and it does not cost us to let go of possessions, money, relationships, projects. It does not cost us, it is a rest. Gratitude for the energy that rest gives us.

The third theme that we can remember and bring with us is that of impermanence. It is the very entropy of the Universe, which is not only loss and finiteness but is also what clarifies the preciousness of this moment, precisely in its fragility. It shows us its beauty precisely in its temporality, in its fading and resurrecting. Impermanence tells us that our life is much more than solving problems and obtaining satisfaction. This reality is so rich, profound, precious, inhabited by a mystery. It is a mystery.

It is not obvious to be alive!

DATA VISUALIZATION

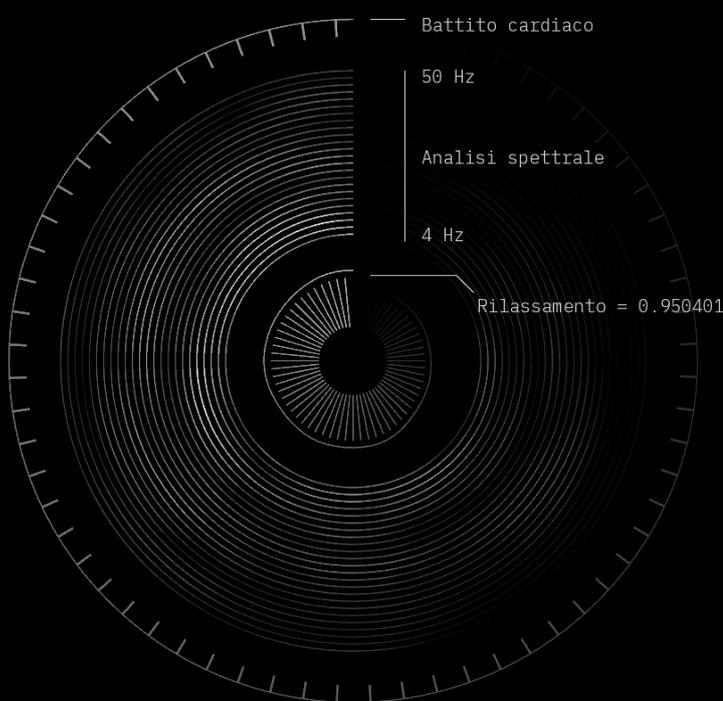


Brain waves (left)

Fluctuations in electromagnetic potential measured in four specific areas of the brain.

Frequency bands (right)

Relative intensity of the different frequencies at which brain waves vibrate.



Heartbeat (outer circle)

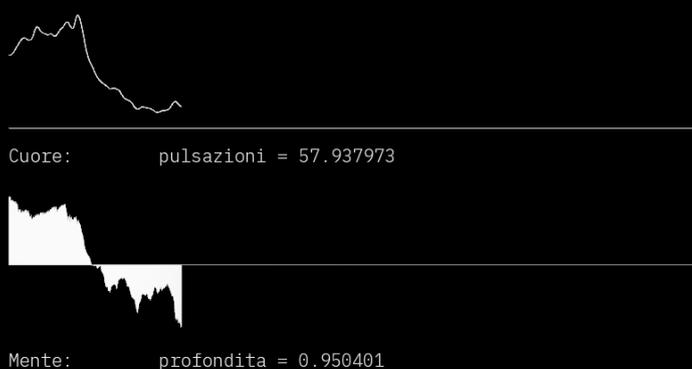
Temporal distance of the heartbeats. As the degree of relaxation increases, this distance becomes more and more variable.

Spectral Analysis (middle circle)

By analyzing the trend of the frequency bands over time, it is possible to observe the trends of brain activity. The lower frequencies (theta, alpha) are associated with states of relaxation and peace.

Depth (inner circle)

By analyzing the ratios between the lowest and highest frequencies (beta, gamma) and using a machine learning model, it is possible to estimate the level of depth of meditation.



Heart (top)

The trend of the heartbeat rate throughout the meditation.

Brain (bottom)

The trend of the level of depth of the meditation throughout the meditation.