Foreword by the Editor: The Higher Self Within

Be mindful of your self-talk and meditation, it’s a conversation with your Higher Self Within and the Universe.

Within the consciousness is a power centre of harmony, love and wisdom. It is the 'Sanctuary' of the 'Higher Self'. This unique and deeply empowering meditation takes you into a Pathway of Light and an inner journey to the Sanctuary of the Soul, yourself. On a hill in the distance a white domed sanctuary is brightly silhouetted against a clear blue sky. Shining like a beautiful crystal it releases colour and light as the sun's rays reflect its radiance. Seven white marble steps lead up to the entrance to this sanctuary. On each step up to the great arched doorway you will be letting go of something you need to release. As you rest and absorb strength from the light you prepare to take the first step. On the seventh step you feel totally free and now ask permission of your 'Higher Self' to enter the sanctuary. Your Higher Self Within, your highest bliss, greets you inside where you are led to an inner sanctuary of love.
and light. Here you can seek and receive inner guidance as you kneel alongside your Inner Teacher ready to receive a blessing and listen to that great 'Voice of the Silence' which speaks with wisdom and truth.

The Higher Self is a divine imprint of our perfection into which we are unfolding. Through our physical experiences and choices we come to more fully integrate the Ideal Qualities and Values of the Divine. These qualities are offered by the Higher Self as a means of instilling the blueprint of perfection into being. It is the conscious decision – or the free-will aspect which brings forth the unfolding of this greatest potentiality.

The process of the Inner Counsellor suggests that we are on an intentional journey of transformation and transcendence.

It is a roadmap for the unfolding of consciousness in the polarity of the physical world….It answers “why” we are on the spiritual journey and what we can expect as the journey continues to unfold into being. Pointing toward the unfoldment of Self-Actualisation, and Self-Realisation and Enlightenment, it specifies the integration of conflicting opposites in the development of physical, personal, interpersonal, group, integral and transpersonal qualities.

When we strive to achieve an inner balance through energy work and spiritual healing, we form a kind of union with our Higher Self from which lasting healing can be imparted. In this union we are connected to the higher vibrations of unconditional love. It is this enhanced state that creates for us the deep healing and profound insights so that we begin to live in a conscious manner taking full responsibility for our thoughts and actions.

The Inner Counsellor Process is one which invites the presence of the Higher Self to join us in conscious awareness to facilitate a change of perception and an integration of fragmented aspects of ourselves to bring about lasting healing. It is a symbolic process of awareness which allows the mind/body to grasp the wholeness of the concern…do you see the big picture!. In this way we see our part in the creation of our health and well-being; we come to know how truly powerful we are as spiritual beings in physical form, for we see how we have created the reality that we live today. In a holistic way, this symbolic process captures the entirety of the issue and the Higher Self transforms the old into a new way of being, a new way of perceiving, a new way of living….a more empowered stance is created.

By taking the time to create for ourselves a wonderful Sanctuary of Peace and connect with the energy of the Higher Self, we gain access to this higher part of
ourselves in a most conscious manner. We can call upon the Higher Self, this idealised organizing pattern of our greatest potential, to join us through conscious interaction within our daily lives.

I invite you in the following pages to use this sacred space in your daily meditations and create a sanctuary for the Soul’s Intentions to unfold into your life. As we continue to work with this energy, allowing it a more conscious and full expression within the mind/body, we establish a state of spiritual health and well-being which is called our Real and True Self. So, be one with the Higher Self and take the consciously creative path to express your True Self! This is achieved first of all through meditation and correct living.

The following study is all about the deeply spiritual experience as you connect with your very essence, your Higher self Within. You will feel replenished, re-energised on every level as you blend and harmonize with the light of your being.

You will centre yourself within a protective cocoon of joy and upliftment resting and responding to the stillness and peace of the body consciousness. Crossing a bridge of light you walk into a garden of paradise filled with love, grace and beauty everywhere. A circular pathway winds its way through this garden; you cross over a crystal stream. This garden is so revealing. You explore the heart of the sanctuary in the knowledge that deep within its heart lies your Higher Self, your true identity.

Here are a few guidelines to help you get started before going any further reading this manuscript. Always remember that very rarely do people hear a voice! Real inner communication usually comes as a deep “knowing,” a flash of inspired understanding or revelation, or sometimes a ‘downloading’ of awesome, enlightening spiritual information. And remember that guidance from your Higher Self is for you, not others.

1. Ask your Higher Self Within, the 'I AM' Presence to take charge of this process to ensure that you only connect with Its inner communicator. A powerful aid is the Mantra and Invocations given decades ago by the Indian Rishis and masters to help us with this most important step of mastery in our spiritual maturing and to help raise our energy frequencies. Mantras and Invocations are most effective when used every morning at the beginning of your meditation and before asking any question.

2. Learn how to go into a deep meditative Alpha state and practice this daily even early morning and before going to sleep. When your brain waves slow to Alpha state, you’re able to transcend your everyday thinking, self-talk and
concerns that jam your inner 'lines of higher communication.' With practice, this inner stillness enables you to clear the static or interference and activate your receptive abilities. Techniques like beginning with deep breathing, chanting, or sublime music can greatly help this process. You will know you’re succeeding, when you start experiencing periods of profound peace or bliss, and when you are unaware of time and even of your body.

3. A good way to encourage the development of your inner reception is to contemplate some deep spiritual concepts that you’d like to expand your knowledge about or understand, or to ask a question concerning spiritual matters. This higher communication is to help us become spiritually mature - not for asking such ordinary everyday questions as what socks to buy or what to do in mundane matters which are of no lasting consequence! These things according to the Masters are our responsibility.

4. If you have the slightest doubt or uncertainty just wait and ask again later. The Golden Rule is to ask, ask and ask again! Ask for confirmation and you will be led to reliable sources. Ask for more details. Using the list below will help you discern if your communication is from the highest level. You can ask for guidance concerning important life-changing or service issues, once you feel confident that your connection is strong and clear enough.

Remember that guidance from your Higher Self Within is for you only, not others. As part of your everyday spiritual life and meditation ask the following questions:

- **Am I loving, gentle, compassionate?** Connection with your Higher Self Within is never ‘loud’, hurried, angry, judgmental. Self-talk, however, can be any of these and often comes in very quickly with an answer or direction.

- **Does my daily life leave me with a sense of total peace and calm?** Is it freeing, positive, credible, helpful? Will it never generate fear, panic, worry, urgency or anxiety?

- **Is my way of thinking and living empowering and uplifting, leaving me with a sense of absolute rightness, certainty and joy?**

- **Does my way of thinking and living leave me feeling loved, strong, secure and protected?** It will never suggest for example, you have dark energy around you, implants or the like.

- **Does information received from within or without apply only to my own understanding and growth?** Higher or more profound information can be applied to everyone, and is always for the highest good of all and emphasizes our oneness. The unification to which the forward looking
people aspire, does not to neglect of any part, but it does involve the care and nurture of each part in order that it may contribute to the well-being of the entire organism.

- Does it address your soul (inner) progress, which is the reason for each life experience? Your Higher Self Within never appeals to your ego by suggesting, for example, you’re the only one being given this information – you will have a special mission, special powers or fame and fortune – you’re a master, ascended, or of high spiritual status etc. If the last was true, would you still need to be here? Richard Bach explains this perfectly in his book “Illusion”.

This manuscript will help you to take a quiet times in contemplation and meditation creating an avenue for your Higher Self to communicate to you through your intuition.

What is correct method and science of doing Namaskar to God?

Namaskar/Namaste

What is the meaning and the benefits of ‘Namaskar’?

There are various ways in which one can do Namaskar. The various mudras or positions and methods along with the intention with which one must do each form of Namaskar are discussed and explained hereby.

Origin and the meaning of the word ‘Namaskar’

The word ‘Namaskar’ is derived from the root ‘namaha’, which means paying obeisance (Namaskar) or salutation.
From Science of Justice – ‘Namaha’ is a physical action expressing that ‘you are superior to me in all qualities and in every way’.

The main objective of doing Namaskar to someone is to derive spiritual as well as worldly benefits.

**Worldly Benefits**

By doing Namaskar to a deity or a Saint, unknowingly their virtues and capabilities are impressed upon our minds. Consequently we start emulating them, thus changing ourselves for the better.

**Spiritual Benefits**

1. Increase in humility and reduction of ego

   While doing Namaskar, when one thinks, ‘You are superior to me; I am the subordinate. I do not know anything, you are omniscient’, only then does it help in reducing the ego and increasing humility.

2. Enhancement in the spiritual emotion of surrender and gratitude

   While doing Namaskar when thoughts like ‘I do not know anything’, ‘You alone get everything done’, ‘Grant me a place at Your Holy Feet’ come to mind, only then does it help in increasing the spiritual emotion of surrender and gratitude.

3. Gaining the sattva component and faster spiritual progress

   A. We receive the highest amount of sattva component from the posture (mudra) of Namaskar.

   B. By doing Namaskar to Deities or Saints we receive subtle frequencies emitted by them, e.g. frequencies of sattva or Bliss.

   C. By doing Namaskar to Deities or Saints we also receive their blessings in a subtle form. This helps in hastening spiritual progress.

**On Meditation and Yoga**

**Introduction – The Head Centres**

It is given in Eastern philosophy that there are two great chakras in the head of man. One of them, the Ajna centre, is situated in the etheric body between the eyebrows, and the other lies within the etheric body just above the head. In time and through due process the centre between the eyebrows blends and fuses the five types of energy which are transmitted to it from the chakras below, these comprise the energies of the three lower centres below the diaphragm and the throat and heart centres.
The head centre at the top of the head is where the most important centre in the body is situated, from the standpoint of the Higher Self Within (soul). There is the point of entry and exit for the light of the soul; it is the great radio station of reception, and the distributing centre for direction. The head centre is awakened in time and through due process by the practice of meditation, the assimilation of right knowledge, unselfish service to others, and aspiration. As the soul becomes increasingly potent in the mental and emotional life of man, the energies of love, wisdom and the will to good, pour in with greater power into the head centre, transforming most naturally the life experiences and expressions of the man on the physical plane.

As we work with our personalities, purifying and bending them to the service of the higher will, we automatically raise the energies of the centres in the body up to the centre between the eyebrows. In time, the influence of these two centres – the Ajna and head centres – become vibrant, alive and intensely active. A line of contact between them is set up and established with increasing potency. As the life of the soul grows stronger, the radiance of the centres increases, and the periphery of their sphere of influence is felt. This is indication that the soul is now in control.

Through aeons of time and long experience in repeated births, the human race has reached the point where the lower energies are now being raised into the higher centres, and everywhere people are becoming politically, religiously, scientifically, or artistically creative, and the impact of their mental energy and of their plans and ideas is making itself felt competitively. It is this transition which is causing much of the trouble in our world today. There are those who are keenly sensitive to the subtle developments that are taking place in the world of men, and many who are still insensitive to these changes, for old habits die hard and it is difficult to perceive the urgent need for the replacement of the old with the new.

Until the idea of brotherhood dominates the race, we shall see these (newly arising) powers prostituted to personal ends and ambitions, and to consequent disaster. . . Some few, however, are raising their energies higher still and translating them into terms of the heavenly world. “As more of us lose sight of the little self in service, and as we arrive at the stage of indifference to our personality claims and happenings, we learn to cherish a spirit of confidence, of joy and of true love, deep and lasting, for each other; we learn to work together wholeheartedly for the helping of the world . . .” Such is the advice given by the wise.
There is not one type of meditation which is “Yogic Meditation”, so here it is meant the several meditation types taught in the yoga tradition. Yoga means “union”. Tradition goes as far as 1700 B.C, and has as its highest goal spiritual purification and Self-Knowledge. Classical Yoga divides the practice into rules of conduct (yamas and niyamas), physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), and contemplative practices of meditation (pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi).

The Third Eye - Anja Meditation

Here are some types of meditation practiced in Yoga. The most common and universal one is the “third eye meditation”.

- **Third Eye Meditation** — focusing the attention on the “spot between the eyebrows” (called by some “the third eye” or “ajna chakra”). The attention is constantly redirected to this point, as a means to silence the mind. By time the “silent gaps” between thoughts get wider and deeper. Sometimes this is accompanied by physically “looking”, with eyes closed, towards that spot.

**The method of Third Eye Meditation**

*Please don’t do this meditation in train or bus i.e. while traveling. You’ll not be able to do it properly when your body is in motion.*

Sit in the lotus pose (cross legged). [if it not possible for you then sit comfortably on a chair] and keep your spine straight.
Close your eyes or slightly open not to go asleep.

Inhale and exhale deeply for three times.

Now concentrate on the middle of your forehead around the area which is a few centimetres above the middle of your eyes.

Keep your eyes closed or slightly open not to go asleep, and draw both of your eyes towards this centre point of third eye. I mean just look upwards with your eyes closed. Focus your closed eyes at 20-25 degrees above just at the centre of the forehead (at the place of third eye.) Now slowly at about two-second interval, start counting in your mind backward from one hundred to one (that is 100,99,98,97….and so on). As you do it, keep your eyes centred towards the third eye.

Here I want to clear a doubt which comes in the mind of many people

Well it seems too vogue to know the exact position of third eye. In the middle of forehead is understood. but as I try to concentrate my both eyes at that point I get confused where is the exact point of third eye ? Is there a way to know that I have centred my eyes exactly on third eye?

Answer : To know exactly that you have centred your eyes on the third eye is very simple. As you draw your eyes towards the centre of forehead by looking upwards at 20-25 degree angle, at a particular point both of your eyes will become still, absolutely motionless.

You will feel as if a force is slowly pulling your eyes towards itself. It will be just like a magnetic attraction. As and when you experience this state, you’ll be at the right point!

Do you know what you’ll feel ? You’ll feel a pleasant strain on your eyes. Yes! It gives a pleasant strain in eyes.

There will be a strain but you will enjoy it. By the time you reach 3..2…1(in backward counting), you will feel a strange sensation in and around your third eye. There will be a feeling which is difficult to describe in words. Keep your concentration on third eye.
Once you achieved this state of stillness of eyes many of you will feel as if you can see your thoughts. Just like a screen you will see your thought appearing before you.

Have you ever thought what is the source through which we see the inner thought process of our body? When you close your eyes there are many things which we see and observe. We observe all those things through third eye.

Your thoughts will stop. If they appear at all, you will be able to see them like a dream. In this situation you will realize the real watcher in you. You will be able to easily perceive the witness inside you. Something different from body and mind and yet a part of you.

**Just be in this state for 10-15 minutes.**

Now slowly return from this state to the state of normalcy. Release the strain from your eyes and slowly shift them from the third eye to their normal position. Let them loose and free. Move your consciousness from the third eye. Be still for few minutes. Allow the eyes to retain their normal movements. Inhale and exhale deeply for three time. Slowly open your eyes. Your meditation is complete.

This third eye meditation is a very powerful method for developing concentration. This is also a very, very helpful exercise for eyes too. Your eyes will remain healthy. No matter how much strain and tension your eyes are subjected to in a day, doing this meditation daily in morning and evening insure your eyes against any further damage.

Meditating on ‘Ajna Chakra’ is also believed to be helpful in developing intuitive power. Doing this meditation regularly certainly helps in developing intuition but I must clarify that the concept of intuition and clairvoyance are beyond the scope of this website. Here we will restrict ourselves with just learning meditation. Please note that we should not learn meditation for gaining some kind of meta-physical or supernatural expertise.

Learn meditation for the sheer joy of meditation, for the bliss it provides us. Meditation is scientifically proved, not at all religious in the first place. If you expect something from it, you will deviate from the path. Don’t expect anything and you may get many rewards.
Few words of warning

Though I have taken care in explaining this meditation technique of Trataka (Yogic gazing) by telling you just that which is sufficient for you; I still feel that you should be aware of the sensitiveness of this meditation and about some precautions which you should follow while trying this.

When you meditate on Ajna Chakra, you meditate on a part of your subtle body. It may happen that when you meditate on your third eye, you feel that the centre of your forehead is heating up. When it happens it indicates that the third eye is attracting energy of the Kundalini. Though this heating is not harmful, you should be very careful.

There may be a feeling of hotness with itching on third eye area. As and when it happens stop immediately. As a layman who does not know the intricacy of this Kundalini and its various paths, it’s better to limit oneself to the process of meditation only i.e. achieving a still and thought-free state of existence. Please don’t indulge in this meditation too deeply if you start feeling too much hot sensation on your third eye area. Few things should be used only in moderation if we do not have the capacity to handle their larger implication.

So be happy and be meditative. Try third eye meditation without giving any thought to Kundalini awakening. Just do what has been told and you will be in meditation. The awakening of Kundalini is a concept of yogis who are full time dedicated to this subject. We, as a common men and women of twenty first century, neither have the time nor the patience which is required for Kundalini awakening.

- **Chakra Meditation** — the practitioner focuses on one of the seven chakras of the body (“centres of energy”), typically doing some visualizations and chanting a specific mantra for each chakra (*lam, vam, ram, yam, ham, om*).

**What is the Chakra System?**

There are seven chakras, or major energy centres, in the human body. Chakra is a Sanskrit word which means “wheel”.

The chakras are similar to wheels in that they are spinning vortexes of energy. They are centres of force located within your body, through which you receive, transmit, and process life energies.

Each chakra is recognized as a focal point relating to spiritual, physical and emotional energies. The chakras are the network through which your mind, body, and spirit interact as one system.
The seven major chakras correspond to specific aspects of our consciousness and have their own individual characteristics and functions.

Each has a corresponding relationship to one of the various glands of the body’s endocrine system, as well as to one of the seven colours of the rainbow spectrum.

**Chakra Meditation in eight steps**

The following steps describe how to practice a chakra meditation to balance and align your chakra energies. It is brought to us by Holistic Review Quarterly:

1. Chakra meditation begins by sitting in a comfortable position with your spine straight, but not ridged. You then want to focus on each part of your body starting with your feet and working up. As you do this, have that part of the body relax and let the stress melt away.

2. The next step in chakra meditation is to focus on the breath. Do not force it, but let the breathing become steady and deep. The mind will most likely wonder, just gentle bring it back to the breath and maintain the focus on each inhalation and exhalation you take. Visualize the oxygen coming into your lungs and passing into the bloodstream. Visualize it nourishing all the muscles, organs and cells of your body and then see it removing the toxins from your body which you expel with each breath.

3. Next in chakra meditation you want to visualize the beating of the heart and the perfect function of the body. See how all the parts work together in complete harmony. See how the breath sustains all these parts and the body as a whole. Become aware of how the breath is the life giving force of the entire organism you call your body.

4. Next in chakra meditation you should imagine a life giving energy that you are breathing in along with the air. See this energy as a yellowish orange colour. See this energy encompass your entire body and infuse your aura. As this energy infuses your aura, imagine the aura growing stronger, brighter and being charged with this incredible energy. Do this step gradually, let the aura grow brighter little by little and keep this energy flowing in with each breath.

5. The next thing we want to do in chakra meditation is energize each individual chakra. Start with the root chakra in the lower back. Imagine a clockwise swirl of energy and the energy you breath in feeds this swirl and makes it strong and brighter. We want to next imagine another source of energy that is coming up from the earth. This is the same life giving energy and it adds to the swirling energy at the root chakra.
6. Next in chakra meditation we want to move up to the sacral chakra. Then one by one the solar plexus chakra, heart chakra, throat chakra, head chakra and finally the crown chakra, infusing each with the life giving energy. Take your time with this and do not worry about spending more time on one chakra if you need to. It is strongly advised to always work from the bottom, going up and not skip around. Each chakra will influence the other chakras and energizing a higher chakra before a lower chakra could have an adverse effect.

7. The last step in chakra meditation is to visualize all the chakras at once being feed by this energy coming in from the breath and up from the earth. Remember to see the chakras and your aura become brighter, clearer and super charged from this life giving energy.

8. Finally we can open our eyes and relax a couple minutes with our eyes open. Pay attention to your body and how incredible and energized you now feel. Try to practice 15 – 30 minutes each sitting. Enjoy, this is a really good, uplifting chakra meditation.

- **Gazing Meditation (Trataka)** — fixing the gaze on an external object, typically a candle, image or a symbol (yantras). It is done with eyes open, and then with eyes closed, to train both the concentration and visualization powers of the mind. After closing the eyes, you should still keep the image of the object in your “mind’s eye”.

![Sunset Image](image.png)
What it is really? Gazing meditation

To put it briefly, Trataka - also called Yogic gazing - is a practice where the gaze is fixed on an object for some time and then that object is visualized clearly with the eyes closed, as an inner image at the eyebrow centre.

Benefits

Trataka has several benefits which would be helpful to everyone and not only mediation aspirants:

- Trataka is believed to have a helpful effect in treating and even resolving several eye disorders such as weak eyesight. It improves the internal and external optic function.
- It improves concentrative powers and mental resolve.
- It helps in disconnecting with the noise and distractions of the external world. This is deeply relaxing.
- In yoga, it is said to also develop the "third" eye - the seat of intuition or that associated with "psychic" powers.

How it Works?

At the physical level it is said to strengthen the eye muscles by exercising them to focus upon a point. Practicing Trataka on an object such as the candle flame is said to provide a unique 'balming' effect to the eyes which help in eye health and in the alleviation of certain eye disorders.

At the pre-meditative level, it is necessary to stall eyeball movement for great benefits and experiences. As we are aware, eyeballs are constantly in motion even while sleeping in the form of REM (Rapid Eye Movement). The aim is to minimize and eventually stall even this minutest of movement. Trataka is a wonderful practice in Yoga to achieve this, as it helps in overcoming this by focusing on a point and then visualizing its after-image with the eyes closed.

Many of the hurdles in our personal lives and even on the path to meditation have to do with our inability to disconnect with the external world at will. In yogic terminology, this would mean the inability to withdraw our senses from the sense objects. Trataka, through the focus on one object, helps to make this disconnect more easily and prepares us to do so at will. This is relevant to almost everyone, but specifically vital for the meditation aspirant.

How it is done?

Trataka can be practiced on several objects, but the most popular and effective is Trataka on a flame. This is because a flame (such as a candle flame) produces
the best after-image that helps in easier visualization of the flame even when eyes are closed. This is the desired effect of Trataka - wherein you can visualize and concentrate on the image even when the eyes are closed.

You should first be seated in a comfortable meditative posture or a squatting position with spine erect. If you have trouble squatting on the mat, you may raise the seating by a few notches.

A candle is placed in a Trataka Stand and the height of the stand is adjusted so that the wick of the flame is at horizontal eye level. The stand is placed at an arm's length. Trataka is to be practiced with spectacles removed, so people with spectacles may have to adjust the distance between the stand and themselves, so that they observe a clear image of the candle wick without blur.

The focus should on the top end of the wick, as the candle burns. Keep your eyes relaxed while fixing the gaze on the wick. Try not to blink as blinking will interfere in the formation of a clear inner image.

This gaze is kept constant for some time and then eyes closed. With the eyes closed, you should try to observe the inner image of the flame at the eye brow centre.

If you don't see it, don't be disappointed - you should start seeing it with practice. Keep the eyes closed for as long as you see the inner image. Then re-start.

It can be safely said that the practice of Trataka is a powerful practice especially relevant in today's stressful times and a necessary one for the sincere yoga aspirant.

**How it is done detailed**

- Close all the doors and windows and make sure there’s pitch darkness in the room
- Light a candle and place it on a small table around 3 to 4 feet in front of you.(arm’s length)
- Sit in a comfortable posture with the spine upright and the arms and shoulders relaxed. You can assume any meditative posture which you can maintain without any movement for the duration of the Trataka practice.
- Make sure that the flame is at the level of your eyes. Also, make sure that you are facing the candle directly without having to turn the neck even slightly.
• It is important that the flame remains steady during the concentration routine. So, make sure that there no breeze around of any kind to disturb the flame. If needed, turn off any fans or air conditioner in the room.

• Take a few deep breaths to relax. Close the eyes and watch your breath as you inhale and exhale for about five to seven breaths. This will allow the breath to settle down and bring you into the present moment.

• Now, open your eyes and gaze at the flame intently and keep your gaze on it without getting distracted towards outer disturbances and thoughts.

• Keep your vision focused and steady on the flame without blinking, for as long as it is comfortable to you. Try to avoid any kind of body movement during the entire practice.

• Keep your gaze anchored on some part of the flame, rather than the candle or wick. (I recommend the bluish invisible point at the centre of the candle.)

• If thoughts come up in the mind, just become aware of them and then ignore them. Try to maintain your awareness and focus on the flame.

• Continue to gaze at the flame until you cannot keep your eyes open and tears start flowing. Once this happens, close your eyes.

• (You can do this part lying down or seated if repeating the practice) When you close the eyes, try to visualize an after-image of the flame with closed eyes. Try to bring this image to the mind’s eye, the point between the eyebrows at the centre of the forehead (the third eye location).

• The depth and level of your concentration will determine how clear the after-image is. (This develops over time, be patient with yourself.) If you cannot visualize the after-image of the flame with closed eyes, or it wavers constantly or loses clarity, then re-apply your concentration, open your eyes and restore the position of the after-image. (repeat this only 3 or 4 times)

• When the image begins to fade out completely (from minds eye), bring your awareness back to your breathing and begin to watch the flow of breath at the nostrils for about 7 to 8 breaths.

• You can open your eyes at this point and repeat the full gazing routine as given above one more time.

• In the beginning you may feel that the eyes begin to water after only a few seconds. However, with practice, your eyes will be able to continue the
gaze for longer periods and you can practice Trataka for up to twenty minutes or so.

Candle Gazing Meditation and the Third Eye

Candle light meditation is said to bring energy to the “third eye” and we all are aware of the power of the “third eye”. We have experiences beyond all experiences when it gets activated. As the energy in the third eye grows, it provides perceptions beyond our ordinary sight and opens the door for the inflow of the unlimited knowledge from this cosmos.

After practising this form of meditation and with patience you might experience vivid dreams and visions as you sleep or just upon waking up. Write them down in a journal before these visions start to fade. One image may be meaningless one day but at the end of a week of visions they may tell a deeper story or offer healing to a past trauma or situation.

The other health benefits of Candle Light Meditation

1. It improves eyesight and vision
2. It enhances your ability to focus on a task and hence improves concentration
3. It reduces stress and provides deep relaxation
4. It improves the quality of sleep and cures sleep related disorders
5. Enhances self-confidence, patience and willpower.
Extra Tips for Candle Light Meditation

1. It is best to practice it very early in the morning or before going to bed at night. You will be able to concentrate better on the candle flame when it is peaceful and dark.

2. Make sure there is no strain on the eyes. Do not sit too close to the flame but also not far. Find the right distance between you and the flame. It might take a few tries to find a comfortable position.

3. Many candles are made with toxic substances such as paraffin, which release harmful vapours when burning. Look for candles made from beeswax, or soy wax. They are non-toxic, and burn longer.

- **Kundalini Meditation** — this is a very complex system of practice. The goal is the awakening of the “kundalini energy” which lies dormant on the base of the spine, the development of several psychic centres in the body, and, finally, enlightenment. There are several dangers associated with this practice, and it should not be attempted without the guidance of a qualified yogi.

**Kundalini Meditation - what is it?**

The first thing to know is what it isn't. It isn't magic, and it isn't a belief or a religion. It is simply a technology - a set of simple techniques that use what you have (your mind, senses, and body) to create a communication between you and your mind, and between your mind and your body.

Meditation is a time to be with yourself. Meditation is a time to connect with your breath, a time to be present to the life force in your body, a time to re-
establish your own rhythm, a time to talk to your higher self, a time to be in love with your unique life. Meditation is between you and YOU.

Just like a daily shower cleans your body, a daily meditation cleans your mind, to help you focus your energy, avoid mistakes, stay healthy, and become more kind and prayerful. It helps you clear your subconscious, and to stay fully present.

It is an opportunity to create a stillness within yourself where you do not react to the unceasing flow of the mind. You can quickly and comfortably process all sorts of feelings and thoughts, and easily rejuvenate and relax yourself so you can handle stress and create rapport with those around you.

Where do I do it?

Any place where you can be undisturbed for a while, preferably someplace that is neither too hot or too cold. Sit on something supportive, but soft - most Kundalini Yoga practitioners like a wool or cotton blanket, or a sheepskin. For people who are stiff, a firm pillow (4-6 inches thick), placed under the buttocks, relieves pressure on the lower spine. If you can't sit comfortably in a cross-legged position on the floor, then sit in a chair, making sure that your weight is equally distributed on both feet. The goal is to ensure that the spine is erect and reasonable straight (the spine is the central channel of nervous system energy).

Many people like to create a special spot in their home that they set aside for the purpose of meditation, often putting some objects in the spot that uplift them and remind them of their spirit, or of nature.

When do I do it?

Any time you are ready to try it and are feeling alert is a good time. Experienced meditators prefer the early morning hours, between 4 and 8 am (called the ambrosial hours). Nothing much is going on at this time, so you are unlikely to be disturbed by the energy or activities of daily life.

Many people like to meditate before bed. This helps to clear away the worries and troubles of the day, preparing you for deep sleep and to build your energy for the new day.

It is best not to meditate after a big meal, since all the blood is in your stomach, leaving little for your brain.

How long should I do it?

Each meditation is different - they work on different aspects of the mind and body, so the time varies with the technique, anywhere from 3 minutes to 2 1/2
hours. The common times used are 11 minutes, 15 minutes, 22 minutes, 31 minutes, 62 minutes, 1 1/2 hours, and 2 1/2 hours.

Start with what is comfortable for you. Even 5 minutes will bring benefits. The first benefit is the chance to simply stop your automatic routine, the unconscious patterns leading you through life without even noticing that you are alive.

How should I dress? Any way you like, and find comfortable and non-restrictive. There are several aspects of dressing to consider. The first is comfort. Some meditations use physical activity, and many people like to do some yoga or similar exercises to prepare, so you should dress in a way that will allow you to relax and freely do any exercises.

Most Kundalini Yoga practitioners consider meditation a special time, a time to connect with yourself, and choose to dress in a way that honours this. They choose clothing that is clean, fresh, and often light in colour and composition. Many practitioners also use cotton head coverings of various types, such as prayer shawls, turbans, yarmulkes, and so forth. Like long hair, these coverings have been found to maximize the source of etheric and solar energy entering the body. Whether or not you choose to use a head covering, tying your hair up and back aids in concentration.

Is there a special diet?

It is recommended that meditators eat lightly and with the goal of good health in mind. Many practitioners have become vegetarian, choosing the lightest diet that allows the mind to be calm and focused. Lowering the protein and acidity from meat helps. There are some meditations, particularly for healing, that do have a special diet to work on a specific gland or organ, but in general, there are no requirements. Avoiding drugs, other than those prescribed by a doctor, is also recommended, as psychoactive drugs may imbalance your body and mind.

How do I do it?

Before trying a specific meditational technique, it is useful to understand two basic components of most Kundalini Yoga meditations: the use of sounds, and the use of breath.

1) Mantras

Many meditations use sounds (mantras), sometimes words that represent big thoughts (Love, Truth, God), and sometimes just simple sounds. Using basic sounds with rhythm penetrates the mind and redirects the flow of thoughts to allow something new to come in, such as thoughts that break our normal, narrow, confines and fears, to help elevate us. The words come from many traditions, and can be in many languages. For example, a simple English mantra
is: "I am, I am". Rather than words that you make up (because you want to go beyond your own patterns and affirmations), what is needed are sounds or words that provide a taste of the state you want to be in.

Even if the words and language of a given mantra is unfamiliar to you, they are not about chanting to something, or some god that you don't know. Chanting is an energetic act that changes your brain, stimulates hormonal balance, and engages you in a special type of communication with your own mind, about truth and clarity.

One of the basic mantras in Kundalini Yoga is Sat Nam. Sat means truth, and Nam means identity, so the mantra means "truth is my identity". Chanting this mantra awakens the soul.

Many people like to use mantra in everyday life, often repeating a mantra (out loud or silently) from a meditation they are currently practicing. Meditations cause a significant alteration in brain usage patterns, neural chemistry, emotional balance, and so forth. Using the mantra at other times helps to reinforce the changes you are making during the meditations.

There are three ways to use mantra, or three languages of consciousness. Some meditations use all three:

1. A normal or loud voice is the language of humans, of things and of the world;
2. A strong whisper is the language of lovers, of longing to belong;
3. Chanting silently or mentally is the divine language of infinity.

There are two things you can do to make the use of a mantra more powerful, regardless of whether the mantra is silent, whispered, or out loud. One is to see the mantra, as if it is being written as you say it, and the other is to actively listen - often this works best with the first two languages, whereas seeing it written out works for all of them.

2) Pranayama (Breath)

Many meditations also use the breath, perhaps simply bringing your attentions to the flow of your breath, or by consciously using specific patterns of breath, such as regulating the ratio of inhale to exhale, or breaking the breath into segments, or indirectly through the use of mantra. Since breath is correlated with your moods and energy level, altering the depth, rate, and pattern of breath can change them as well.

Be sure to follow the instructions for using the breath in a meditation carefully, and check with an instructor if you have questions. Begin with short times and
gradually increase them as you get used to the changes they cause. If you feel dizzy, stop and make sure you are using the proper technique. Breath meditations create a lot of change and it is important to feel comfortable and balanced with these changes.

Check to make sure that you breathe with a complete breath pattern (please see Lesson 6 of my Free Online Kundalini Yoga Course for a complete description of the long deep breath). About 30% of people do not breathe correctly, but it is easy to change, and will have a profound impact on your metabolism, vitality and moods. Unless the meditation specifies otherwise, breathing is always through the nose.

**Here is a simple Kundalini Yoga meditational technique to try:**

1. Sit with a straight spine, either in a comfortable cross-legged position or in a chair with both feet flat on the floor. Relax your hands in your lap, palms up, with the right hand rested on top of the left. Keep the shoulders relaxed and the upper chest lifted slightly to support the spine. The eyes are 9/10 closed, letting in a little light.

2. Bring your attention to the flow of breath, breathing only through the nose. First, just notice the breath, every part of the process of inhaling, and exhaling, all the little movements within your body. After a few minutes, begin to consciously slow your breath. Normal breathing is 14-17 times a minute. Slow your breath to 8 or fewer times per minute (4 or fewer per minute creates a state of meditation). Listen to the slight sound of the breath as it goes in and out.

3. When beginning with meditation, many people struggle with the "chatter" that the mind creates when we try to be still. Using a mantra like Sat Nam, where you think the word "Sat" on the inhale and "Nam" on the exhale, can help to provide a focus for the mind. If you notice that your mind is wandering, simply bring your attention back to the mantra and the breath. This simple process is how we train our mind and clear the subconscious.

4. Let all the thoughts simply come and go, like the background noise of people talking around you at a party. Just let go of the thoughts, as you stay with the flow and sensations of your breath. Continue for another 6-8 minutes. To end, take a deep breath, exhale, and inhale deeply again as you stretch both arms up to the ceiling. Exhale and relax.

**Meditation for the Negative Mind**

When you need to balance the flashing negativity and protective fervour of the Negative Mind, use this meditation. It clears the subconscious of unwanted negative or fearful thoughts. Then the Negative Mind can give you clear signals.
to protect and to promote you. The posture is one of calmness and humility that lets the Creator, the Unknown, cover and shield you.

**Posture:** Sit straight in an easy cross-legged pose. Make a cup of the two hands with both palms facing up, and the right hand resting on top of the left hand. The fingers will cross over each other. Put this open cup at the level of the heart centre. Elbows are relaxed at the sides.

**Eye Focus:** Your eyes are slightly open and looking down toward the hands.

**Breath:** Inhale deeply in a long steady stroke through the nose. Exhale in a focused stream through rounded lips. You will feel the breath go over the hands.

**Mental Focus:** Let any thought or desire that is negative, or persistently distracting come into your mind as you breathe. Breathe the thought and feeling in, and exhale it out with the breath.

**Preferable Time duration: 11 to 31 minutes**

**To End:** Exhale completely and suspend the breath out as you lock in the navel point. Concentrate on each vertebra of the spine until you can feel it all the way to the base, as stiff as a rod. Then inhale powerfully, exhale completely, and repeat the concentration. Repeat this final breath 3-5 times. Then relax completely.

- **Kriya Yoga** — is a set of energization, breathing, and meditation exercises taught by Paramahamsa Yogananda. This is more suited for those who have a devotional temperament, and are seeking the spiritual aspects of meditation.

**Its History**

The illumined sages of India discovered the spiritual science of Kriya Yoga in the long forgotten past. Lord Krishna extols it in the Bhagavad Gita. The sage Patanjali speaks of it in his *Yoga Sutras*. Paramahansa Yogananda has stated that this ancient meditation method was also known to Jesus of Nazareth, as well as
to disciples such as apostles John, Paul, and others (*stated not confirmed based on suggestions and comparisons among religious faiths*).

Kriya Yoga was lost for centuries in the dark ages, and reintroduced in modern times by Mahavatar Babaji, whose disciple Lahiri Mahasaya (1828–1895) was the first to teach it openly in our era. Later, Babaji asked Lahiri Mahasaya's disciple, Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri (1855–1936), to train Paramahansa Yogananda and send him to the West to give this soul-revealing technique to the world.

Paramahansa Yogananda was chosen by his venerable line of gurus to bring the ancient science of Kriya Yoga to the West, and it was for this purpose that he established Self-Realization Fellowship in 1920.

Formerly available only to a faithful few who renounced the world and lived solitary lives as ascetics, the great ones of India have now made the ancient Kriya science available to all sincere seekers worldwide through the instrumentality of Paramahansa Yogananda and the spiritual organization he established (SRF/YSS).

Yogananda wrote: "In bestowing his blessings on me before I came to America in 1920, Mahavatar Babaji told me that I had been chosen for this sacred mission: 'You are the one I have chosen to spread the message of Kriya Yoga in the West. Long ago I met your guru Yukteswar at a Kumbha Mela; I told him then I would send you to him for training.' Babaji then predicted: 'Kriya Yoga, the scientific technique of God-realization, will ultimately spread in all lands, and aid in harmonizing the nations through man's personal, transcendental perception of the Infinite Father.'"

**Meditation Techniques of the Kriya Yoga Path**

Paramahansa Yogananda provides a description of Kriya Yoga in his *Autobiography of a Yogi*. The actual technique is given to students of the Self-Realization Fellowship Lessons after a preliminary period of study and practice of the three preparatory techniques taught by Paramahansa Yogananda.

Taken together as a comprehensive system, these meditation techniques enable the practitioner to achieve the highest benefits and divine goal of the ancient yoga science.

1. **Energization Exercises:** A series of psychophysical exercises developed by Paramahansa Yogananda in 1916 to prepare the body for meditation. Regular practice promotes mental and physical relaxation and develops dynamic will power. Making use of the breath, life force, and concentrated attention, the technique enables one to draw abundant energy consciously into the body, purifying and strengthening all the body parts systematically in turn. The
Energization Exercises, which take about fifteen minutes to perform, are one of the most effective means of eliminating stress and nervous tension. Practicing them prior to meditation is a great help in entering a calm, interiorized state of awareness.

2. **Hong-Sau Technique of Concentration** helps to develop one's latent powers of concentration. Through practice of this technique one learns to withdraw thought and energy from outward distractions so that they may be focused on any goal to be achieved or problem to be solved. Or one may direct that concentrated attention toward realizing the Divine Consciousness within.

3. **Aum Technique of Meditation** shows one how to use the power of concentration in the highest way to discover and develop the divine qualities of one's own true Self. This ancient method teaches how to experience the all-pervading Divine Presence as *Aum*, the Word or Holy Ghost that underlies and sustains all creation. The technique expands the awareness beyond limitations of body and mind to the joyous realization of one's infinite potential.

4. **Kriya Yoga Technique**. Kriya is an advanced Raja Yoga technique of *pranayama* (life-energy control). Kriya reinforces and revitalizes subtle currents of life energy (*prana*) in the spine and brain. The ancient seers of India (*rishis*) perceived the brain and spine as the tree of life. Out of the subtle cerebrospinal centres of life and consciousness (*chakras*) flow the energies that enliven all the nerves and every organ and tissue of the body. The yogis discovered that by revolving the life current continuously up and down the spine by the special technique of Kriya Yoga, it is possible to greatly accelerate one's spiritual evolution and awareness.

Correct practice of Kriya Yoga enables the normal activities of the heart and lungs and nervous system to slow down naturally, producing deep inner stillness of body and mind and freeing the attention from the usual turbulence of thoughts, emotions, and sensory perceptions. In the clarity of that inner stillness, one comes to experience a deepening interior peace and attunement with one's soul and with God (*man created the God Spot in the mind, read the author’s EBooks on the subject*).

- **Sound Meditation (Nada Yoga)** — focusing on sound. Starts with meditation on “external sounds”, such as calming ambient music (like Native American flute music), whereby the student focuses all his attention on just hearing, as a help to quieten and collect the mind. By time the practice evolves to hearing the “internal sounds” of the body and mind. The ultimate goal is to hear the “Ultimate Sound” (*para nada*), which is a sound without vibration, and that manifests as “OM”.

26
The History of Nada Yoga

Any practice or technique of meditation that brings about complete cessation of consciousness is called laya yoga. There are many Sadhanas recommended in laya yoga and nada yoga is one. The word nada is derived from the Sanskrit root nad, meaning 'to flow'. Hence the etymological meaning of nada should be a process or a flow of consciousness. Ordinarily the word nada means sound. There are four stages of manifestation of sound according to frequency and subtlety or grossness. The four stages are: (i) para, (ii) pashyanti, (iii) madhyama and (iv) vaikhari. These four stages of sound should be understood scientifically.

Para Nada

Para means 'transcendental, 'beyond' or 'the other side'. It is beyond the reach of the indriyas, or sense organs, and the mind and other means of cognition. Hence para nada is the transcendental sound. It is indicative of a truth that there is a sphere of super-consciousness where the sound is heard in different dimensions. Students of classical music are aware of the fact that every note is made up of different numbers of vibrations per second. They vary in length, speed and pitch. In Indian music these vibrations are called andolana. In one second a sound may make many thousands of vibrations. Above a certain level of high frequency, sound becomes inaudible and can only be perceived subjectively. The ears cannot receive such sounds that are vibrating at a very high rate. Therefore, we are not aware of all the sounds that are present in the cosmos. Sounds having a
very high frequency are transformed into silence. Beyond a certain limit, the ears do not have the capacity. No one can hear or understand a sound like that even if it is present.

Para or transcendent sound has the highest vibration frequency. This intense vibration faculty makes para inaudible. Various texts mention that para sound has no vibration. It is a sound that has no movement and therefore no frequency. It is a still sound, but we cannot conceive of a sound that has no vibration, no movements, no motion. When a sound goes to its maximum pitch, it attains a sudden stillness, and that is para nada.

In the Upanishads, the sound of Om is said to be the manifestation of para. The audible chant of Om which we produce is not para because it is physical, subject to our hearing, understanding and logic. Therefore, the audible Om cannot be called the transcendental Om. Para is a cosmic and transcendental sound devoid of all movement. It is both still and infinite. It has shape and light too. Its nature is jyoti (light). It is different from all sounds usually heard or conceived. The Upanishads clearly state, "That is Om, that sound is Om."

**Pashyanti**

The second stage of sound, which has less frequency and is more gross than para, is pashyanti. It is a sound which cannot be heard, but it can be seen. Pashyanti in Sanskrit means 'that which can be seen or visualized'. The ancient scriptures maintain that sound can also be perceived. How does one see a sound? Well, have you ever heard a piece of music in a dream? This particular dimension of sound, as it is in dream, is called pashyanti. It may be called a mental sound, which is neither a conscious sound nor a semi-conscious sound. It is a subconscious sound pertaining to a quality of mind and not belonging to the quality of the sense organs, like the tongue or ears.

When I say out loud "Rama, Rama, Rama, Rama," it will be called vaikhari, but when I close my eyes and mouth and go in and repeat mentally the sound of Rama, visualizing its colour and form with the inner eye, it is known as pashyanti. When the word or the sound is heard in a sphere where one is not aware of the outer surroundings, it is called pashyanti. When every outer sound is extinct and you hear a new sound altogether unlike the nature of audible sounds, know it as a special sound or the nada of pashyanti.
**Madhyama**

A form of sound having lower frequencies than para and pashyanti, but still subtler than the audible vaikhari form of sound, is known as madhyama. It is a sound produced in whispering. No audible effect is produced in it. Madhyama produces very minute vibrations in the act of a whisper. In an ordinary sound, two objects strike against each other in order to produce sound. But in madhyama no two things strike violently so as to produce audible sound. For example, when a sound is produced like 'thuck, thuck, thuck', it is called a gross sound. The word madhyama means 'in between' or 'middle', so madhyama means a middle sound, a whispering sound or the sound of a whisper.

**Vaikhari**

The fourth and gross stage of nada is called vaikhari. Vaikhari sound is audible and producible. The spoken sound is vaikhari. It is produced by friction or by striking two things against each other. Its frequencies of vibration are conducted within a certain limited range.

To sum up, vaikhari is the gross quality of the vocal organs, madhyama is the subtler quality of the same physical organs, pashyanti is the quality of the subconscious or unconscious, and para is the quality of the soul.

**The Universe and Nada**

According to nada yogis and the scriptures dealing with the subject of nada yoga, the nada brahma, or the ultimate and transcendental sound, is the seed from which the entire creation has evolved. A nada yogi believes that the world is but a projection of sound alone. The whole macro cosmic universe is a projection of sound vibrations. From that sound the whole world has evolved. In the Bible there is the reference: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God." This word is called the nada or the shabda. Sufis in India call it surat. Surat or shabda yoga is another name for nada yoga practice. The Sufi saints of philosophical temperament also believe that out of sound and form the world evolved. The nada yogis believe that the five elements, five karmendriyas, five jnanendriyas, the fourfold mind and the three gunas have evolved out of one eternal sound. It means that prakriti, the material, mental, psychic and intellectual universe, is all an outcome of nada brahma. This is the ultimate belief of all nada yogis. So a nada yogi believes in a reality which has manifested itself in the form of vibration. It is a vibration that either does not vibrate at all or at such a high frequency that it is beyond the reach of the human faculty.
The eternal or original nada has the highest rate of frequency and vibration. When any object vibrates at a tremendous and unimaginable speed, it becomes still. It means that the highest point of motion and vibration is stillness. And that nada appears to be the creative principle of all matter and the entire material substance.

Nada yogis contend that everything in the universe originated and evolved from the eternal and infinite nada. In this context a study of the Upanishads is recommended, with special reference to Nada Bindu Upanishad and Hamsopanishad.

Music is also a materialized form of nada and the movements of prana in the body are also nothing but the expressions of nada. The purpose of nada yoga sadhana is to find out the primal, the finest, the ultimate inner sound - the word or shabda. In order to discover this transcendental and non-empirical sound, the process starts from the external gross sound. From there the ultimate form of sound is conceivable only through going into the deeper realms of our consciousness.

**The Centre of Nada**

There are different centres where the transcendental nada is said to be situated. Bhaktas try to find the centre of their ishta in anahata. Yogis try to find the centre of intuition in ajna. Vedantins try to find the centre of hiranyagarbha in sahasrara. Likewise, nada yogis locate the centre of nada in bindu. Bindu is the centre where the continuous, eternal, inaudible, unbroken and unbeaten sound goes on. For the purpose of the discovery of nada, it is true that the bindu has to be discovered primarily and finally.

Before venturing into the depth of this science, it would be better for the aspirant to locate or discover the mental, astral and psychic nature of the sound of nada. Different nada yoga practices are introduced in order to help the aspirant to get through the different psychic and non-physical sounds, before the consciousness can finally be attuned with the real nada.

**Practice of Nada in Bhakti Yoga**

The practices meant for bhakti yoga are also included as practices of nada yoga. When a bhakti yogi performs mantra japa, in the first stage he tries his best to maintain awareness of the sound produced by the mantra. After having developed a deeper awareness of the sound of the mantra, he stops producing an
audible sound vibration and in the second stage tries to intensify his awareness on the basis of the mantra repeated in whispered tones.

When this task is accomplished satisfactorily, he stops whispering and repeats the same mantra mentally. He tries to hear the mental and subtle notes which, though inaudible, can be visualized through a deeper form of awareness. Sometimes at this stage, it is possible to actually experience hearing the same mantra internally. The bhakti yogi will feeling as if he has really chanted the mantra in an audible tone. When the awareness of mental mantra chanting is absorbing and the mind is completely fused in a deep realm of awareness, mantra or nada is transformed into a constant inaudible repetition which will appear to the aspirant on the plane of consciousness as audible; but it will be imperceptible and inaudible to others. This is the way to experience the nada in the practice of mantra yoga by bhakti yogis.

A few kriyas combined with bandhas and mantras should also be included in order to stimulate the dormant psychic regions. The aspirant should begin the task of discovering the first sound or nada by plugging the ears and listening to the inner sounds. When the practice is fairly advanced, the ears need not be plugged in order to commune with the different dimensions of sound. Instead one should try to commune with the inner sound during the stillness of the night without closing the ears. It is easy to apprehend the inner sounds at midnight or early in the morning.

**Diet of a Nada Yogi**

The diet of a nada yogi should be light and easily digestible. Any food that sends quick influxes of blood to the brain is undesirable. Food which causes hypertension or high blood pressure should be avoided. The normal nutritional supply required to maintain normal functioning of the body should be provided.

**Music and Nada Yoga**

Music is also nada yoga, where the music is rendered absolutely scientific and classical in order to experience the nada. The development of musical systems in the past was done strictly in accordance with the views of nada yoga sadhanas. The well-known and most ancient Sama Veda is always sung with a scientific exactness and in accordance with nada yoga sadhana.

At different stages of conscious awareness, the mind is easily attracted by different waves of nada. Certain vibrations of nada seem to be agreeable at a particular time, while others are disagreeable at a particular time of the day.
Certain combinations of nada are agreeable to some people and disagreeable to others. In music these nada vibrations are known as raga or musical notes. A raga having short vibrations is not relished by some. The morning music of India, like the Bhairava or Bhairavi raga, is appealing to a few, but not to all. I like the midnight music of India, the Malkos, the Durga or the Jogia ragas. The evening raga, like Bhimpalasi, is also popularly appreciated. Generally, girls and boys of a tender age prefer Bhairavi. This shows that the mind reacts differently to different sound waves at different times.

Music can be taken up as a spiritual sadhana, as a preliminary practice, or just as a pleasant, interesting and inspiring sadhana of nada yoga, through which the mind can be attuned to the subtlest vibrations before proceeding to discover the last transcendental sound of nada.

**Time for practice**

One can practise nada yoga whenever one is free. A beginner should practise between midnight and two a.m., the period free from the disturbing influences of external sound. Absence of light in the atmosphere also aids the practice. These help to introvert the mind.

**Precautions**

Some precautions should be borne in mind because nada yogic sadhana can bring about a manifestation of any sound. Sometimes, if the practitioner has a weak state of mind, there may be a buzzing in the ears throughout the day. Sometimes he may hear the sound of a bell or various other sounds. Manifestation of these different sounds disturbs the peace of the aspirant. If the sound continues to agitate the mind, the nada yoga sadhana should be given up. It is sure and certain that by correct practice of nada yoga, inner sounds are developed by stages. They are not heard at any other time during the waking period.

The Nada Yogi is capable of hearing a voice in the waking state if he is at a very advanced stage. It appears as if someone is whispering into his ears. This is a kind of Siddhi; a power to hear a sound from an unknown.

**Preparation for Nada Sadhana**

First of all, the nada yogi should practise moola bandha, vajroli/sahajoli mudra and yoga mudra. These are important. When these have been learnt, one should practise kumbhaka and focus the consciousness on bindu. Pranayama also forms
an important preliminary and essential part of this sadhana. There are many pranayama practices that can cause nada to manifest. One is moorcha. Brahmari should also be practised, with the ears plugged, and the eyes pressed with the fingers as in shanmukhi mudra. The upper and lower teeth should be kept apart, the jaw unclenched. Then the actual practice of nada yoga should follow.

**Practice for the manifestation of Nada**

Sit down on a firm pillow in a squatting position, placing the soles of the feet on the ground with the elbows resting on the knees or thighs. For some a lower pillow will be comfortable and for others a higher one. The most important point here is that the coccyx and the perineum should be pressed against the pillow at the point of mooladhara, and therefore the pillow should be round and hard. Thus, without contraction of the anus, the mooladhara chakra should be pressed by sitting on a high and hard pillow.

After practising moorcha pranayama, shanmukhi mudra, moola bandha, vajroli/sahajoli mudra and brahmari pranayama first for a few minutes, start the practice of nada yoga in the following manner. Plug both the ears. Take the consciousness to bindu and try to find out or be aware of any sound that is internal. This internal sound may resemble anything. It may be like a cloud passing or a stream flowing, the sea roaring or a bell ringing. It may also be the sound of a flute, the rhythm of a guitar or the sound of birds chirping in the evening at the time of sunset. It might be in the form of an awareness of the distant ocean or the sound of a thunderbolt. Or it might even be the vision of a starry night devoid of any sound. These internal sounds are to be discovered by the aspirant.

If it is difficult to discover a sound in bindu, circulate your awareness in sahasrara or ajna, or in the centre of the brain, or in the right or left eardrums. Or focus your mind at chidakasha or at the centre of the third eye until you are sure to get the sound. The method of discovering the sound is simple. Instead of imagining a sound, make your mind one-pointed, then discover the first sound and pursue it up to the end. One inner sound of nada should be followed to the extent where it becomes more and more clear and prominent. As soon as it is clear and prominent, another sound (a different sound altogether) is heard and felt in the background.

When you discover the second sound, give up the first one and follow the second. For instance, close your ears and listen to the first sound, for example, the evening sound of birds. Keep on listening to it. When it becomes completely clear and distinct, find another sound manifesting behind, like the sound of a
nightingale. Now continue to follow your consciousness up. Move on from the sound of the evening song of the birds. Let the music of the nightingale become clearer until the first sound has gone. When that is completely distinct and clear to your consciousness, another sound will be heard in the background. The forthcoming sound may be like the sound of crickets going ‘chin, chin, chin, chin’. When this sound also becomes very clear to you, reject the previous one, the singing of the nightingale, and pick up this new one. This will also become clearer after some time, and will be replaced by a fourth one. This process continues until the consciousness is completely lost, or the consciousness is completely devoid of the contents of the mind.

**Nada in the Koshas**

These sounds which are heard are true. They are the symbols of the content of the mind and of consciousness. The mind rests on these symbols and it goes in quickly with their help. These sounds are experiences of the deeper layers of consciousness belonging to annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha and manomaya kosha. These sounds are not imaginary. They may be understood as the vibrations of different spheres of one’s existence. The physical, pranic, mental, supra-mental and the ananda or atmic are the five spheres of one’s existence. In different spheres of existence different sounds are heard. There are physical sounds first, but when consciousness becomes fine and transcends the physical plane, it will come in touch with the subtle sounds of the movements of pranic consciousness in the physical body.

The entire range of human consciousness is divided into three, or subdivided into five parts. The conscious state consists of the annamaya and the pranamaya koshas, and these two bodies are made up of food and of prana. The second sphere of the personality is comprised of manomaya and vigyanamaya koshas and mainly contains mental and astral matter. The third dimension of consciousness is the realm of anandamaya kosha, which is full of bliss.

In the practice of nada yoga, the manifestation of nada takes place in accordance with the relation established between the mind and the other spheres of consciousness. For instance, if the mind or consciousness is rooted in the physical body, by closing your ears you will hear the sounds or vibrations produced by the movements of the heart, lungs, brain, blood circulation and the process of metabolism and catabolism that are going on inside the body.

If consciousness has penetrated the pranamaya kosha, you will hear many more sounds. And if the mind has gone deeper into the anandamaya kosha, then all other sounds will disappear and in its place the effect of nada yoga will remain.
It is difficult to tell which particular nada belongs to a particular sphere. In India, illustrations are given in the form of symbolic stories. The individual consciousness, which keeps on soaring high and discovering the transcendental notes, is symbolized as Rishi Narada in Indian mythology. Without denying the historical existence of Rishi Narada, the esoteric significance of the word Narada should be understood. Narada is supposed to be a rishi who has a veena in his hands. In nada yoga, the sound of the veena is considered to be the music of a very high sphere. According to all the traditional nada yoga cults, the nada of the flute and veena belong to that sphere of consciousness where dwaita bhava, or the duality of consciousness, ceases to exist.

Nada Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita

Nada yoga is illustrated in the great book entitled the Bhagavata (different to the Bhagavad Gita). A symbolic and allegorical description of nada is given in the form of the story of Krishna. It says, "Lord Krishna left his place at midnight and went into the jungle. It was the full moon night of the first month of winter. He began to play the flute. The echo of the flute spread in the calm and undisturbed atmosphere. Music rose from the jungle and was heard by the gopis (the village cowherd girls). When they heard the sound of the flute, they immediately left their houses and their husbands, forgetful of all that was taking place. They ran, without consideration, to the place from where the nada from the flute was emanating. They started dancing about the flute player. After some time, it so happened that each one found herself dancing individually with Krishna."

The story seems fantastic, but in fact it is not properly understood by people of the world. It is understood only by nada yogis. They consider Krishna to represent that higher sphere of consciousness where the nada of that sphere emanates during the deepest state of nada sadhana. When the emanation of flute music takes place, the senses, the indriyas, or the sense-consciousness, forsake their respective objects and withdraw from their respective centres of pleasure and perception. They recede and go back to the place from where the flute sound or the nada is emanating. There the senses dance around the nada. In that state, the senses completely withdraw from the outer objects. In other words, a yogi may say that dharana has taken place and dhyana is about to dawn.

In Sanskrit the word Krishna means, 'that which draws' or 'that which attracts'. It is derived from the root word karshan. So the word krishna means 'the puller', 'the with drawer', or 'the attractor'. It also means 'farmer', and, the word gopi means 'cow'. In Sanskrit, go means 'senses', 'cow', 'poor', 'humble' and the 'whole
perceptible universe'. Ordinarily, the word gopi means 'the daughter of a cowherd family'. Symbolically, gopi means 'senses'. And who are the husbands of the senses (the gopis)? It may be said that for the eyes, the form is the husband and for the ears, sound. When the music of a flute is heard, the sense of hearing leaves or withdraws itself from the outer audible sounds and merges itself in the inner nada. This process is called pratyahara.

**Nada Yoga and Kabir**

A famous nada yogi named Kabir says in one of his poems: "Who is there playing upon a flute in the middle of the sky? On the confluence of the Ganga and Jamuna, the flute is being played, and the confluence of three rivers - Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati - takes place in trikuti. Oh, this is a meeting point of Ganga and Jamuna. The sound emanates from the north! Cowherd girl, hear the sound of the flute and lo, they are all hypnotized by the nada."

The ultimate experience in nada yoga is a sound higher than the sound of the flute. The music of the highest sphere is not of the flute, veena, thunderbolt, clapping or any musical instrument. It is not even similar to the classical music of either east or west. The music of the highest sphere is 'anahad nada'.

**Anahad nada and anahata nada**

What is anahad nada? No one has been able to tell even till this day. Some say that is the cosmic sound of Om. Others say it is like brahmari, a sound resembling the unceasing and unbroken sound of the honeybee. Some say that it is the beat of the heart.

Some people call it anahad, while others call it anahat. These two words convey two different meanings. Anahatderives from 'an' + 'aahat'. 'An' means 'no', 'aahat' means 'that which is striking, hammering or beating'. Therefore, anahat means 'no beating or striking of two things'. Usually a sound is produced by two things striking against each other, but anahat is a sound which is not produced by striking. It is spontaneous and automatic. Some scholars say that the nada is anahad. 'An' means 'no' and 'hada' means 'boundary' or 'compound'. Hence, anahad means 'without any limit, without any boundary,' or 'without any specification'. It is a sound upon which no limits can be put. It can be any sound.

**Nada Yoga and Gorakhnath**

The great guru Gorakhnath, disciple of yogi Matsyendranath, gives a description of nada yoga. He writes, "Oh sadhu! Do japa of Soham. That japa should not be
done through the mind. It should be done through the consciousness, so that even when you are engaged in your day-to-day activities, you should be aware of 21,6000 rhythms of your breath throughout the 24 hours of the day, at the rate of 15 or 19 rounds per minute (which means 900 and more breaths per hour). Anahad nada will emerge and will manifest on its own." He says further, "There will be light in the spinal cord. The solar system of the surya nadi will be awakened. You will feel an indescribable vibrating sound from every pore of your body and that will be like Om or Soham."

**Finally, the Ultimate Nada**

The ultimate nada that manifests in the highest sphere of consciousness is indescribable. It is a sound coming from the sphere beyond the anandamaya kosha. A nada yogi believes that the actual point where the individual consciousness fuses with the cosmic consciousness is in the highest state of nada. The aspirant or sadhaka realizes his higher consciousness in nada and sees the whole universe in the form of sound.

- **Tantra** — unlike the popular view in the West, most Tantra practices have nothing to do with ritualized sex (this was practiced by a minority of lineages). Tantra is a very rich tradition, with dozens of different contemplative practices. The text Vijnanabhairava Tantra, for instance, lists 108 “meditations”, most of them more advanced (already requiring a certain degree of stillness and mind control). Here are some examples from that text:
  - Merge the mind and the senses in the interior space in the spiritual heart.
  - When one object is perceived, all other objects become empty. Concentrate on that emptiness.
  - Concentrate on the space which occurs between two thoughts.
  - Fix attention on the inside of the skull. Close eyes.
  - Meditate on the occasion of any great delight.
  - Meditate on the feeling of pain.
  - Dwell on the reality which exists between pain and pleasure.
  - Meditate on the void in one’s body extending in all directions simultaneously.
  - Concentrate on a bottomless well or as standing in a very high place.
Listen to the Anahata [heart chakra] sound.

Listen to the sound of a musical instrument as it dies away.

Contemplate on the universe or one’s own body as being filled with bliss.

Concentrate intensely on the idea that the universe is completely void.

Contemplate that the same consciousness exists in all bodies.

**Tantra Yoga**

The simple principle of Tantra Yoga is: whatever can take you down can also take you up. The ways in which a man usually sinks in his life are through food, alcoholic drink and sexuality. Tantra Yoga uses the same three vehicles to rise up. Unlike sexuality, which tends to find release at the lower level of the energy system, Tantra is about building our energies to the fountainhead of the uppermost dimension of the energy system, so that one’s energies spill from the top. Of the different energy manifestations in the body – referred to as the 114 chakras – spilling from the top three is considered the highest. If you have to build up to this, every basic instinct, including the sexual instinct, emotions, intellect and survival process must be used to build and hype the energy system. The intention is to deploy all instincts for which a certain amount of energy is dedicated in the body. If one goes into an actual sexual act, the build-up and the purpose of it will be lost.

The human mechanism is a composite of the physical body – an accumulation of food consumed; the mental body – the software and memory part that makes individuals function in specific ways; and the energy body – the fundamental upon which these two are housed. What is beyond this is non-physical.

The compulsive and cyclical nature of the body and mind render themselves a barrier for higher possibilities. Tantra is to go beyond, so that compulsiveness of the body and mind does not keep us trapped in our limitations. It is about learning to use the body, not as oneself, but as a stepping-stone to deliver this being to the highest possible dimension.

Tantra is not about unbridled sexuality, as assumed by many. Sexuality is a fundamental instinct instilled in our bodies to ensure the species perpetuates itself. This is a basic requirement. At the same time, one must know the limitations beyond which it will not carry us. It is only on recognising the limitations and the longing to touch other dimensions enters, that yoga and tantra become relevant.

People thinking in terms of “I have sexual needs so I will follow the tantric path,” is nonsense. In tantra, it is not that someone is using just sexuality to
grow. They are using every aspect to grow. Unfortunately, there may be people who are attracted to such a path for the wrong reasons. They go because they want a spiritual sanction for their sexuality. Why do you want to bullshit yourself about spirituality? Handle your biology as biology, you do not have to give it other names.

Sexual needs can be fulfilled by forming relationships for that purpose, either within or outside the fold. Using spiritual process to fulfil sexual compulsions is reprehensible and irresponsible. It can lead to various levels of loss because the tantric process is not only used for the individual’s spiritual growth, but also to create an energetic space to support other possibilities that bring wellbeing to many.

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But once people start using certain substances, they must be in a certain state, otherwise it just becomes addiction. This needs extreme discipline, a kind of discipline which is not possible for most people to even attempt. When people walk this kind of path, if a 100 people take it up, 99 will end up only as drunkards.

**Left and right-hand Tantra Yoga**

However, this is what is known as left-hand tantra which is cruder technology. It involves various rituals. There is also a right-hand path which is very refined technology. These two are completely different in nature. The right-hand path is more internal and energy-wise, it is all about you. It does not involve any ritual or outside act as such. Is it tantra? In a way it is, but the word yoga includes all of them together. When we say yoga we are not excluding any possibility – everything is there in it. It is just that a few perverted people saw a certain type of process which is purely left-hand tantra where there is certain usage of the
body. They just took that part, magnified it and wrote books about it with all kinds of weird sex. That is not tantra.

Tantra means you are able to use your energies to make things happen. If you can make your mind razor sharp to cut through everything, this is also one kind of tantra. If you make your energies work upon your heart to become utterly loving and you can burst forth with enormous love that just overwhelms everyone, this is also tantra. If you make your physical body enormously powerful to make it do incredible feats, this is also tantra. Or if you can make your energies do things by itself without employing the body, mind or emotion, this is also tantra.

So tantra is not some weird nonsense. It is a certain capability. Without it there is no possibility. The question is “How refined is your tantra?” If you want to make your energies move, do you have to do 10,000 rituals or can you just sit here and do it. That is the big difference. Low technology or high technology is the question, but without tantra, there is no spiritual process.

**Tantra Yoga: It’s not about huffing and puffing**

The Guru-shishya relationship is to deliver the shishya to a higher dimension of consciousness, not trap one into the compulsive nature of sexuality. Above all, this sacred relationship is definitely orgasmic, but not sexual. I am talking about upgrading your technology. You don’t have to huff and puff to get into an orgasmic state. If you sit with your eyes closed, you can drip with orgasms in every cell of your body. Those who have failed to achieve an orgasmic state of existence will associate an ecstatic state with sexuality because that’s probably the highest level of experience they have known.

People always try to take recourse in the Krishna-Gopi relationship. As the legend goes, Krishna gave an orgasmic experience to 16,000 women simultaneously. This cannot happen with sexual union. A shishya can establish a very intimate relationship with a Guru. Intimacy is generally understood only as two bodies touching. The body is not intimate enough for one who is on the spiritual path. The physical body is an accumulation from outside, so in the tantric and yogic systems, the body is never considered an intimate part of you. Only when energies meet and mingle and a Guru’s energies overwhelm and override the shishya’s energies, it leads to an orgasmic experience – a union, but not of the sexual kind.

If all you want is to do a meditation or spiritual practice, you don’t really need a Guru. The Guru is here essentially to overwhelm you with nameless ecstasies. So tantra is a technology of liberation, NO.
• **Pranayama** — breathing regulation. It is not exactly meditation, but an excellent practice to calm the mind and prepare it for meditation. There are several different types of *Pranayama*, but the simplest and most commonly taught one is the 4-4-4-4. This means breathing in counting up to 4, holding for 4 seconds, breathing out for 4 seconds, and holding empty for 4 seconds. Breathe through your nose, and let the abdomen (and not the chest) be the one that moves. Go through a few cycles like this. This regulation of breathing balances the moods and pacifies the body, and can be done anywhere.

**What is pranayama (yogic breathing)?**

Your body is like the wick of a candle and the mind is like the glow all around it. ‘Prana’ is the vital energy needed by our physical and subtle layers, without which the body would perish. It is the *prana* or life force in us that nourishes the mind and keeps the body alive. ‘Prana’ refers to the universal life force and ‘Ayama’ means to regulate or lengthen. Pranayama means working in the dimension of prana.

**Understanding prana**

The prana creates an aura around the body. It flows through thousands of subtle energy channels called ‘nadis’ and energy centers called ‘chakras’. The quantity and quality of prana and the way it flows through the nadis and chakras determines one’s state of mind. If the prana level is high and its flow is continuous, smooth and steady, the mind remains calm, positive and enthusiastic. However, due to lack of knowledge and attention to one’s breath,
the nadis and chakras in the average person may be partially or fully blocked leading to jerky and broken flow. As a result, one experiences increased worries, fear, uncertainty, tensions, conflict and other negative qualities. Every problem first generates in the subtle and then surfaces on the physical level. Sickness shows up in your prana (Pranic Body) much before you get sick physically.

Benefits of regular practice of pranayama

- Increases and enhances the quantity and quality of prana
- Clears blocked nadis and chakras. Clears the whole energy around you, expands your aura and heightens the spirit
- Makes one energetic, enthusiastic and positive
- Brings harmony between the body, mind, and intellect, making one physically, mentally and spiritually strong. It brings clarity to the mind and good health to the body

Types of pranayama and their application

The ancient sages of India realized some breathing techniques which are simple to practice and brought great relaxation to the body and mind. These breathing techniques can be practiced with ease and at any time of the day on an empty stomach:

- Is your mind buzzing with activity? Can't stop thinking about what someone said about you? Find a quiet corner and try the Bhramari pranayama (Bee breath) to apply brakes in the buzzing mind. This breathing technique is a boon for those with hypertension.

- Among the breathing techniques, Kapal Bhati pranayama (Skull Shining breathing technique) is considered the most important and effective for detoxifying the body and clearing the energy channels.

- Low energy levels? Three rounds of Bhastrika pranayama (Bellow breath) will get your energy levels soaring!

- Can't concentrate on the task at hand? Try nine rounds of Nadi Shodhan pranayama (Alternate nostril breathing technique) followed by a short 10-minute meditation. Nadi Shodhan pranayama calms and centres the mind by bringing into harmony the left and right hemispheres of the brain which correlates to the logical and emotional sides of our personality.
Yoga is a very rich tradition, with different lineages, so there are many other techniques. But the ones above are the most well-known; the others are more specific or complex.

Nadi Shodhan pranayama - Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique

What is Nadi Shodhana?

Nadi: subtle energy channel; Shodhan: cleaning, purification; Pranayama: breathing technique.

Nadis are subtle energy channels in the human body that can get blocked due to various reasons. The Nadi Shodhan pranayama is a breathing technique that helps clear these blocked energy channels, thus calming the mind. This technique is also known as Anulom Vilom pranayama.

Cause of Obstruction in the Nadis:

- Nadis can get blocked on account of stress
- Toxicity in the physical body also leads to blockage of nadis
- Nadis can get blocked due to physical and mental trauma
- Unhealthy lifestyle

What Happens when these Nadis are blocked?

Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are three of the most important nadis in the human body.

When the Ida nadi is not functioning smoothly or is blocked, one experiences cold, depression, low mental energy and sluggish digestion, blocked left nostril.
Whereas when the Pingala nadi is not smoothly functioning or is blocked, one will experience heat, quick temper and irritation, itching body, dry skin and throat, excessive appetite, excessive physical or sexual energy, and blocked right nostril.

**Three reasons: Why you should practice Nadi Shodhan Pranayama**

1. Nadi Shodhan pranayama helps relax the mind and prepares it to enter a meditative state.

2. Practicing it for just a few minutes every day helps keep the mind calm, happy and peaceful.

3. It helps in releasing accumulated tension and fatigue.

**How to do Nadi Shodhan pranayama? - Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique** alternate nose breathing

- Sit comfortably with your spine erect and shoulders relaxed. Keep a gentle smile on your face.

- Place your left hand on the left knee, palms open to the sky or in Chin Mudra (thumb and index finger gently touching at the tips).

- Place the tip of the index finger and middle finger of the right hand in between the eyebrows, the ring finger and little finger on the left nostril, and the thumb on the right nostril. We will use the ring finger and little finger to open or close the left nostril and thumb for the right nostril.

- Press your thumb down on the right nostril and breathe out gently through the left nostril.

- Now breathe in from the left nostril and then press the left nostril gently with the ring finger and little finger. Removing the right thumb from the right nostril, breathe out from the right.

- Breathe in from the right nostril and exhale from the left. You have now completed one round of Nadi Shodhan pranayama. Continue inhaling and exhaling from alternate nostrils.

- Complete 9 such rounds by alternately breathing through both the nostrils. After every exhalation, remember to breathe in from the same nostril from which you exhaled. Keep your eyes closed throughout and continue taking long, deep, smooth breaths without any force or effort.
Cautions to be taken while practicing Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique)

- Do not force the breathing, and keep the flow gentle and natural. Do not breathe from the mouth or make any sound while breathing.
- Do not use the Ujjayi breath.
- Place the fingers very lightly on the forehead and nose. There is no need to apply any pressure.
- In case you feel dull and are yawning after practicing Nadi Shodhan pranayama, check the time you take to inhale and exhale. Your exhalation should be longer than inhalation.

Tips while doing Nadi Shodhan Pranayama

- It is a good idea to do a short meditation after doing Nadi Shodhan pranayama.
- This breathing technique can also be practiced as part of the Padma Sadhana sequence.

Seven benefits of Nadi Shodhan Pranayama (Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique)

1. Excellent breathing technique to calm and centre the mind.
2. Our mind has a tendency to keep regretting or glorifying the past and getting anxious about the future. Nadi Shodhan pranayama helps to bring the mind back to the present moment.
3. Works therapeutically for most circulatory and respiratory problems.
4. Releases accumulated stress in the mind and body effectively and helps relax.
5. Helps harmonize the left and right hemispheres of the brain, which correlate to the logical and emotional sides of our personality.
6. Helps purify and balance the nadis - the subtle energy channels, thereby ensuring smooth flow of prana (life force) through the body.
7. Maintains body temperature.
Contraindication
None. After you have learnt this breathing technique from an Yoga teacher, you can practice this pranayama on an empty stomach, 2-3 times a day.

Eight best pranayama techniques for the lonely meditator

In short again
Pranayama is a breath-control technique. In Sanskrit, pran means life and ayama means way. Pranayama can help you regulate your system, alter your mood and offer longevity. The main aspects of pranayama are inhalation, exhalation and retention. Pranayama always begins with inhalations and exhalations. This strengthens the lungs and balances the nervous system, preparing the body to hold the breath [retention]. Practising pranayama on a regular basis regulates energy flow to the seventy-two thousand nadis [channels through which consciousness flows] in our body, helping us improve our wellbeing.

Types of pranayama
There are about fifty different pranayama’s described in the Vedas. Below we list eight most common and significant ones:

Chandrabhedan

Method
1. Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor
2. Keep your back straight and shoulders relaxed
3. Close your right nostril with the right hand thumb
4. Inhale from the left nostril
5. Close the left nostril with the right hand index and middle fingers
6. Exhale from the right nostril.

This completes one round of Chandrabhedan pranayama. You can gradually do up to twenty rounds.

Benefit
Chandrabhedan cools the body and cures heartburn.
Contradictions

Avoid this pranayama if you suffer from low blood pressure. Note: This pranayama is to be done only during summer.

Practising pranayama on a regular basis regulates energy flow to the seventy-two thousand nadis in our body.

Suryabhedan

Method
1. Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable posture
2. Close your left nostril with your index and middle finger of the right hand
3. Inhaling from your right nostril
4. Close the right nostril with your right hand thumb
5. Exhale through the left nostril.

This completes one round of Suryabhedan pranayama. You can gradually do up to twenty rounds.

Benefits
- Increases body heat and energy levels
- Improves digestion
- Purifies blood
- Delays ageing.

Who should avoid
- Avoid doing this pranayama if you suffer from acidity, hypertension or heart problems
- It is to be done only during winter.

Anulom-vilom

Method
1. Sit in a comfortable balanced meditative pose.
2. Use the right hand thumb to close your right nostril.
3. Inhale from the left nostril.
4. Close your left nostril with your right hand's index and middle fingers
5. Exhale from the right nostril.
6. Do the reverse: inhale with the right nostril.
7. Close your right nostril with your right hand thumb.
8. Exhale with the left nostril.

This is one round of anulom-vilom pranayama.

**Benefits**

Anulom-Vilom aids in:

- Balancing body temperature
- Relieving stress
- Cleansing the nadis in your body
- Improving blood circulation
- Promoting longevity.

**Remember**

While practising this pranayama, you must breathe into your lungs and not into your stomach. It can be done the year round and by everyone.

**Bhastrika**

**Method**

1. Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor.
2. Keep the back straight and shoulder muscles relaxed.
3. Close the right nostril with your right thumb and bring your right elbow to the level of right shoulder.
4. Close your eyes. Inhale and exhale through left nostril—first slowly, then a little faster
5. Do the above steps about 20 – 25 times.
6. Take a long breath in and retain it for as long as possible
This is one round of bhashrika pranayama. Now, repeat this round by closing your left nostril and breathing through your right nostril.

**Benefits**

This pranayama:

- Releases toxins from the body
- Reduces excess fat
- Enhances digestion
- Regulates the nervous system
- Purifies blood.

**Who should avoid**

Avoid practising bhashrika pranayama if you suffer from hypertension, heart/lung complications or hernia. Weak persons [people with some illness or a low stamina] should avoid doing this pranayama too often.

**Ujjayi**

**Method**

1. Sit erect in a comfortable posture.
2. Inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils.
3. Hold your breath for as long as possible.
4. Exhale slowly with a whispering sound, contracting the air passage.

This is a single round of ujjayi pranayama. You can start by doing 2 – 3 rounds.

**Benefits**

**Ujjayi pranayama:**

- Strengthens the vocal cord
- Stimulates the thyroid gland
- Improves blood circulation
- Eases diseases of the lungs, chest and throat.
Who should avoid
Avoid doing this pranayama if you suffer from cardiac problems.

Sheetali

Method
1. Sit in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes and relax your whole body with normal breathing.
3. Put the tongue on the lower lip and try to roll the tongue.
4. Inhale deeply from the mouth.
5. Retain your breath for as long as possible.
6. Close the mouth slowly and exhale through the nose.

This is one round of sheetali pranayama. You can start by doing 2 – 3 rounds, and gradually go up to 15 rounds.

Benefits

Sheetali Pranayama
- Cools the body
- Cures acidity and hypertension
- Relieves indigestion and disorders of the bile
- Improves health of eyes and skin
- Cures tonsillitis.

Who should avoid
This pranayama is not recommended during winters. People suffering from a heavy cold must avoid sheetali pranayama.

Sheetkari

Method
1. Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable posture on the floor.
2. Keep the back straight and shoulders relaxed.
3. Place hands on the knees, fingers relaxed and eyes closed.
4. Join lower and upper teeth

5. Fix front portion of the tongue against the front teeth and the rest of the tongue on the palate

6. Separate the lips and inhale from the mouth making a chilling sound

7. Retain your breath for as long as possible

8. Exhale through both nostrils

This is one round of sheetkari pranayama.

**Benefits**

Sheetkari pranayama cools the body and keeps teeth and gums healthy.

**Who should avoid**

Avoid this pranayama if you suffer from low blood pressure.

**Bhramari**

**Method**

1. Sit in a meditative pose or in a comfortable position on the floor.

2. Keep your back straight, shoulders muscles relaxed and eyes closed.

3. Close both your ears with the index fingers of both hands.

4. Raise your elbows to the level of your shoulders.

5. Inhale deeply.

6. Retain your breath for as long as possible.

7. Exhale slowly making a buzzing sound like that of a bee.

**Benefits**

**This pranayama:**

- Calms the body
- Relieves stress
- Makes the voice pleasant and melodious
- Strengthens vocal cords
• Cures diseases of the throat
• Increases concentration.

Remember
For best results, practice this pranayama at night or early morning.
The more you control your breathing, the longer you will live. Pranayama also helps you stay healthy and young for longer.

Yoga in the Vedanta
Yoga is a comprehensive set of spiritual practices designed to enable us to realize the greater universe of consciousness that is our true nature. The term Yoga means to unite, coordinate, harmonize, work, or transform. It refers to the linking all aspects of our being, from the physical body to our highest intelligence, with the true or universal Self that dwells within the heart. This process occurs in different forms and stages relative to the condition of the individual and variations of time, place and culture. Vedic knowledge is that knowledge of the Divine or higher Self that the practice of Yoga is seeking to realize. Veda is spiritual wisdom and Yoga is its application.
Yoga has developed over many thousands of years and has evolved into many branches and types. For this reason the older basis of Yoga in the Vedas is not understood by many people today. Today Yoga has been reduced, particularly in the West, to its physical or asana side, and little of the greater tradition is understood. Even in India the Vedic basis of the tradition is seldom given proper attention.

Yet as we move into a new planetary age, such older spiritual traditions are beginning to resurface in the collective mind. As we move forward we must comprehend our origins and reclaim our ancient spiritual heritage. The Vedas contain keys to the perennial wisdom of humanity. The Vedas proclaim that we are all children of light, children of the seers, who have wandered far. In order for us to evolve in consciousness we must revitalize the seeds of our higher evolution that the ancient sages planted within us millennia ago. Hence the relevance of the Vedas must continue to grow and is crucial to the emergence of a new spiritual global culture.

The American Institute of Vedic Studies aims at researching the original Vedic Yoga. In this regard it follows the teachings of Ganapati Muni, the chief disciple of the great South Indian sage Ramana Maharshi, and Ganapati’s disciple, Daivarata Vaishvamitra, whom Maharishi Mahesh Yogi once brought to the West and called a great modern Rishi. This Yoga is also connected with the work of the great modern seer-poet Sri Aurobindo, who based his integral Yoga on a Vedic model, and Kapali Shastri, an important disciple not only of Aurobindo but of Ganapati Muni.

The Vedic Yoga is part of an integral tradition that includes classical Yoga, spiritual (not sexual) Tantra and Vedanta, as well as Ayurveda and Vedic Astrology. The Vedic Yoga through Ganapati Muni connects to the Dasha Mahavidya or the Ten Great Forms of the Goddess. It has special affinities with Samkhya and Yoga cosmology and with non-dualistic forms of Vedanta, such as taught by Ramana Maharshi.

There are several other modern Vedic teachers who have contributed to this inner revival of Vedic knowledge including Swami Dayananda Sarasvati of the Arya Samaj, Swami Gangeswarananda, Pandit Satvalekar, and Jagannatha Mishra, another important disciple of Sri Aurobindo. Their work also has relevance here.

**Vedic Yoga**

Vedic Yoga is the oldest form of Yoga dating back to the Rig Veda, which is perhaps the oldest book in the world. It is the oldest Sanskrit text and the oldest work in any Indo-European language. According to the great Yogi Sri
Yukteswar, guru of Paramahansa Yogananda, Vedic teachings date back to Satya Yuga or Golden Age over ten thousand years ago.

According to the Vedic view, humanity was one in language and religion during the Golden Age. Human beings possessed an innate contact with the Divine Self within and also had telepathic powers and photographic memories. This made books and other media unnecessary. Religious institutions were also not required and no technology was needed either. Human life was spent in Sadhana or spiritual practice and human consciousness freely moved through the domains of cosmic consciousness, remaining in harmony with both nature and the Spirit.

At the end of the Golden Age, human spiritual intelligence began to decline. Differences in language along with the growth of the ego brought about an increase of ignorance and division between people. At this time the Vedic teaching was first compiled in an oral tradition to preserve the spiritual knowledge developed in the Golden Age.

The Vedic Yoga was created by numerous Vedic seers of the Angiras and Bhrigu families, of which the most important are the seven great seers Vasishta, Vamadeva, Bharadvaja, Gritsamada, Vishwamitra, Kanwa, and Atri. Through the vision of the Rishis, the Vedas set forth all the main possible spiritual paths for humanity. The Vedas contain a comprehensive key to cosmic evolution as well as to human spiritual unfoldment, unlocking all the laws of the universe.

Vedic language employs powerful mantras to set forth this teaching that have many different levels of meaning and application. In this regard the Vedic language has a depth and dimension that modern languages, products of the outer mind and ego, cannot approach. Vedic mantras reflect the pattern of cosmic law and the blue print of cosmic intelligence, through which all that exists can be comprehended in ones in most consciousness. Vedic mantras contain the prototypes of all knowledge and all powers of creation. Yet to understand and use them correctly requires a special insight. Vedic mantras cannot be grasped by the ordinary intellect, which is why academic renderings of the Vedas are almost useless and breed many distortions.

**Three Basic Types of Vedic Yoga**

The basic Vedic Yoga is threefold and has several important correspondences:

1. Mantra Yoga – Speech – Rig Veda – Earth
2. Prana Yoga – Prana – Yajur Veda – Atmosphere
3. Dhyana Yoga – Mind – Sama Veda – Heaven
4. Waking State – Agni or Fire – Brahma, Creator
5. Dream – Indra or Lightning – Shiva, Transformer

6. Deep Sleep – Surya or the Sun – Vishnu, Preserver

**Mantra Yoga** involves developing Mantra Shakti, the power of mantra, through which the mantra becomes alive as a tool of transformation in the mind. From this arises Mantra Sphota, mantric insight, through which the inner meaning of the mantra can be grasped, linking us up with Divine laws. This allows us to understand all forms in the universe as manifestations of the Divine Word, the creative vibration OM. This mantric force sets in motion all other inner energies, not only on an inner level but can also provide mastery over all the forces of nature.

**Prana Yoga** involves developing Prana or Vidyut Shakti (lightning or electrical force), and Pranic insight (lightning perception). This allows us to work with our vital energy as a manifestation of the energy of consciousness. Mantra becomes Prana as Prana (breath) itself is unmanifest sound. This Prana provides the impetus and vitality for inner transformations.

**Dhyana Yoga,** or the Yoga of meditation, involves developing Buddhi or awakened intelligence, called Dhi in the Vedas, and its power of truth perception. This allows us to understand the universe and the human being as integral unfoldments of Cosmic Intelligence. This higher intelligence arises through the energization of speech and Prana and brings an extraordinary transformative power into the deepest level of the mind. In Dhyana Yoga the light of truth floods the mind and we come to know the unitary nature of all reality.

The Three Yogas relate to our three basic faculties of speech, Prana and intelligence dominated mind (Buddhi-predominant Manas). These are not just our ordinary faculties but our ability to develop the Divine Word, the Divine Life and the Divine Mind within us. They relate to the three bodies, the physical, astral (Pranic) and causal (soul or deeper mind).

The Three Vedas correspond to these three Yogas. The Rig Veda, the Veda of mantra, sets forth the basic mantras or seeds of cosmic knowledge. The Yajur Veda, the Veda of sacrifice, shows their application through ritual, which is both external and internal (yogic). The internal ritual is Pranayama. The Sama Veda, the Vedas of unification, shows their realization through ecstasy and insight.

The three main Vedic Deities or Devatas correspond to the three types of light. Agni is fire, which is heat or thermogenic light that burns up all negativity and reformulates our nature on a higher level. Indra is lightning, which is light energy or electrical force through which we can ascend and move on a higher level of being. Surya is the Sun, which is pure light or magnetic force that draws us into the omnipresent infinite.
These three forces operate in our three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, and can transform them into states of Divine waking or perception, Divine dream or creation, and Divine rest or peace. These are the three worlds of Earth, Atmosphere and Heaven, not as external but as internal realities, through which we can grasp all the worlds as formations of our own mind.

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**Vedic Yoga and Classical Yoga**

The threefold Vedic Yoga is a little different from the classical eightfold or Raja Yoga taught by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. In the Vedic Yoga the yamas and niyamas, the observances and restraints that constitute the first two limbs of Raja Yoga, are part of the Dharmic foundation of Vedic life. This means living according to our higher nature and keeping our lower nature in check through right values, right effort and right diet. Asana or yogic postures, which is primarily a comfortable sitting posture, is not a separate limb of the Vedic Yoga.

Vedic Mantra and Prana Yogas include Pranayama, control of Prana, and Pratyahara, control of the senses, of the Raja Yoga system. Pranayama consists of developing Pranic energy, while Pratyahara consists of withdrawing it from the senses and motor organs. Mantra allows us to direct both Prana and mind. Vedic Dhyana Yoga includes Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, concentration, meditation and realization of Raja Yoga, which are the three aspects of merging the mind back into the Divine Self.

**Mantra Yoga**

The Vedic Yoga begins with mantra as its foundation, using mantras from the Vedas, particularly those of the Rig Veda. These mantras are also of three types:

1. **Name Mantras** – Names of the Deities like Indra, Agni, Soma and Surya. These are mainly part of the Yoga of devotion or Bhakti Yoga. Deities like Shiva, Vishnu and the Goddess can be used in the same way, as in mantras like OM NAMAH SHIVAYA.

2. **Bija or Seed Mantras** – Root sounds of key Vedic terms like OM, AIM, HUM, HRIM, KRAM, SHRIM. These are to be chanted silently along with the breath and are also part of Prana Yoga. They unite the mind and Prana, transforming unconscious patterns and attachments into new powers of attention.

3. **Suktas** – Extended Mantras and Prayers like Gayatri mantra (Tat Savitur vareniyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yo nah prachodayat). These are to be meditated upon and are part of Dhyana Yoga. They engage our entire awareness in the higher light and in a comprehensive manner.
These mantras are generally given through special initiations or empowerments, which constitute the foundation of Vedic practice. Practice of Vedic Yoga begins with Vedic mantras. This requires an awakened speech and contact with the Divine Word. This in turn requires that our soul, the immortal part of our individualized consciousness, which is a form of Agni, the inner flame, comes forth. The student repeats various Bija Mantras, Nama Mantras and Suktas as per his or her state of consciousness and approach to Divinity. The most common Bija mantra is OM. The most common Sukta is Gayatri Mantra.

Prana Yoga

Vedic Prana Yoga includes all types of Yogic techniques involving Prana, including different forms of Pranayama. It includes an observation of and gaining mastery over all the five main Pranas, the senses and the motor organs. It leads to the awakening of inner Prana and Kundalini Shakti, which is an internal form of electrical energy. For this to occur one must learn to offer the different aspects of one’s being, particularly one’s Prana, as a sacrifice to the indwelling Deity. Prana Yoga requires the development of Ojas (vital power) and the renunciation of sensory enjoyments to fuel it. Vedic Prana Yoga is of several types.

1. Mantra – Prana Yoga: In this Yoga mantras are repeated along with the breath, particularly special Bija Mantras, but Name Mantras and extended mantras (Suktas) can also be used. In the Vedic understanding Prana is unmanifest speech. So Mantra Yoga is itself already a form of Prana Yoga.

2. Pure Prana Yoga – One works directly with the force of Prana, not just as the breath but as our basic will and motivation. One works to bring the Prana out of the lower chakras to the higher, developing the power of will through surrender to the descent of Divine grace.

3. Dhyana – Prana Yoga: In this Yoga one meditates upon the Prana in the form of the Vedic deity Indra or the power of perception. Other deities of Prana can be used in this regard also including Shiva and Kali. In the Vedic view the mind is unmanifest or subtle Prana. Through Prana one can control the energy of the mind and awaken its lightning power of direct perception.

For Prana Yoga the power of Indra or Divine Prana must be awakened. This requires awakened vitality and energized insight. This occurs through the descent of Divine grace and power into the soul. One must contact God or the Divine creator within. The student performs various types of Pranayama using the breath along with the mantras learned, connecting more deeply with the
Deities as forms of cosmic energy. The Kriya Yoga taught by Paramahansa Yogananda is one such practice.

**Dhyana Yoga**

Vedic meditation includes meditation upon mantra, Prana and the Deities (Devatas). Ultimately it leads to meditation upon the Self. This Yoga of meditation is also of several types:

1. **Dhyana Devata Yoga** – In this Yoga one meditates upon the various Devatas or Deities of the Vedas and their inner significance as powers of the light of consciousness, like Indra, Agni, Soma and Surya. This requires working with light and energy on a subtle level.

2. **Atma Dhyana Yoga** – In this Yoga one meditates upon the inner Self. It is of three types:
   a. Self-inquiry
   b. Self-observation
   c. Atmic mantras

Self-inquiry (Atma vichara) involves tracing the source of the I-thought back to its origin in the spiritual heart (hridaya). In the Vedic view this is tracing back our inner flame, the soul or Jiva, Agni, back to its original home and highest birth in the heart. This is a practice of constant wakefulness through which we become conscious in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep.

Self-observation involves contacting the solar light of consciousness and letting this effortlessly illumine all mental states, through the power of the illumined intelligence (Dhi or Buddhi). It consists in taking the attitude of a witness (sakshi-bhava) in all that we do.

Atmic mantras include great Vedic statements like “I am God,” Aham Brahmasmi, which are to be meditated upon in the expanse of the quiescent mind. They are useful only for a high level of disciple. Without preliminary self-purification they have little power. They must be done not with ordinary speech or mind but the highest level of speech, which speech on the level of the Divine Self.

For Dhyana Yoga, the expanse of the Sun or truth consciousness must be created. One must contact the Divine Self or Paramatman within the heart. The student meditates upon the Prana energized mantras and uses them to move into deeper states of consciousness.

The space of light and the light of space must be opened for this realization to proceed.
Samadhi Yoga: The Ultimate Yoga

All three Vedic Yogas all lead to Samadhi or the state of absorption with the indwelling Divinity. This Samadhi Yoga is symbolized by Soma, which is the Ananda or Amrita, the bliss or nectar of immortality. Letting the Soma or bliss energy flow is the basis of this, perhaps the highest of the Vedic Yogas. This requires an opening of all the nadis or channels of the subtle body, through which the Amrita or Soma can flow. This in turn requires proper development of all three Vedic Yogas.

Vedic Integral Yoga

These four Vedic Yogas together form an integral Yoga. They culminate in a complete or Purna Yoga. Generally the Purna Yoga relates to Indra and to Prana but in the expanded sense as the energy of consciousness and insight on all levels. However there is also a Purna Yoga of Agni called Vaishvanara Vidya (knowledge of the Cosmic Person), which proceeds through Self-inquiry. There is similarly a Purna Yoga of the Sun, particularly in the form of Vishnu or Savitar.

In this Purna Yoga the second world or the Atmosphere becomes the all world or the Cosmic Ocean, the ocean of the heart as the fourth world. This ocean is space and its waves are the worlds. In the space within the heart is contained all the universe and the Supreme Self beyond all manifestation. This leads to a slightly different formulation of the threefold Vedic Yoga.

1. Mantra Yoga – Earth – Body – Mother
2. Dhyana Yoga – Heaven – Head (Mind) – Father
3. Samadhi Yoga – Waters – Heart (Soul) – Child

The main form of Purna Yoga is meditation on the heart, which involves tracing the origin of speech, Prana and mind back to the Self in the heart, which is the main practice of Self-inquiry. This search is called gaveshana, or anveshana in Vedic texts. It is not done simply by repeating “Who am I?” but requires mantric and meditational control of speech, Prana and mind and an examination of all their movements in all states of consciousness as powers of the Atman.

The Vedic Yoga is vast and many sided. We have only outlined a few of its characteristic features. It has teachings which are appropriate for each individual and his or her level of development. It therefore has no mass teaching or standardized instruction. Each individual must be treated differently.
What is a Yogi?

A yogi is someone who practices yoga, a traditional Indian spiritual discipline which includes meditation and spiritual exercises. The female equivalent of this term is yogini. A yogi is a fully realized human being, and deals with a few people, a section of humanity. Generally, these terms are only used to describe masters and teachers of this discipline, and they are certainly not appropriate for people who only practice one aspect of yoga, such as the breathing and physical exercises incorporated into this ancient tradition. Numerous famous yogis have developed their own special interpretations of yoga traditions, and they teach them to disciples who are interested in expanding their spiritual practice.

In Sanskrit, *yuj* means “yoke” or “union,” and yoga is a practice which focuses on achieving union with the divine. Archaeological evidence suggests that Indians have been involved in yoga for several thousand years, as seals, texts, and artwork show people in meditation and yoga poses. Several other Asian religions integrate yogic practice, especially in India: Buddhists, for example, may use meditation positions from yoga for their own meditation.

When Westerners think of yoga, they usually visualize the poses known as Asanas which are used to channel and focus energy in some yogic traditions. However, the physicality of yoga is only one small aspect of this practice. A yogi is very focused on inward development through asceticism, meditation, contemplation, and manipulation of physical energy. Many dress and live simply as part of their ascetic values, and they spend a great deal of time in deprivation and meditation to ponder the divine.

In many cases, a skilled practitioner of yoga will lead others along their own spiritual journeys. He or she position may become socially prominent or revered as for the Dalai Lama in Buddhism, but this is not supposed to interfere with his spiritual practice. In the West, some yoga teachers also style themselves as yogis, and in some cases this can be technically correct, if the teacher follows a particular yogic tradition such as hatha yoga and observes the spiritual aspects along with the physical ones. One hint, Westerners commercialise everything even religiously, which is against non-detachment, breaking as such with true spirituality.

A yogi is generally treated with veneration and respect in Indian society. Various schools have their own etiquette when it comes to yogis, and it may be a good idea to consult a knowledgeable source if you are intending to meet a prominent yogi. Small slips can be perceived as insults, and even when an insult is unintended, it can still hurt.
The Inner Sanctuary - the Higher Self

Meditation, the yoga of the mind, is easy to add to your daily routine, extremely effective, and will help you awaken and cultivate wisdom and love—the goal of yoga. Regularly practicing meditation enhances all aspects of your life. As you begin to experience mental clarity and relief from stress and anxiety, the challenges of life will become easier to manage. Even if you have a busy schedule, or difficulty staying motivated, once you've learned these easy methods you'll soon be looking forward to your daily practice of meditation.

When you meditate, you need to go within and relax yourself. The best way to do that is to open the inner sanctuary. An inner sanctuary is a temple of sorts that you create in your mind. The best part of this temple is that you don’t have to go to it—it is there with you already, whenever you want to meditate you enter this most holy place. All you have to do is close your eyes and go within. By using creative visualization you can design your own inner sanctuary.

The Inner Sanctuary is a sacred space within each one of us where you use the power of your mind to connect with your Higher Self (Spot) Within, and through awakening and strengthening your moral and psychic abilities, and positively transform your life. The Inner Sanctuary of the Higher Self Within is developed by meditation for anyone seeking to live a more authentic life, empowered with their own unique psychic gifts. This daily meditation habit is especially beneficial for intermediate to advanced meditation practitioners, as
well as therapists, healing practitioners, instructors, and all those who want to
learn how to activate their imagination and develop the ability to create Light,
Love, Peace and Goodwill manifested with ease and confidence. However, even
if you have never meditated before, we are giving you a step by step process that
will help you build a solid foundation, by which you can manifest more love,
healing, and creativity in your life. Through daily meditation, you will be able to
use more and more the power of your thoughts and the brilliance of your mind.
Man is able to create, to destroy, but also to restore.

We can stop the uncontrolled, busy mind and come into our calm heart. Instead
of always thinking, our awareness can be open, soft, and present. No matter
what are the circumstances of our day, the details, frustrations, and desires do
not need to constantly occupy and overflow the river of our awareness. We do
not need to live in constant stress. Meditation can bring us to the beauty of the
moment, simple, and free. There is an alternative to our minds constantly on the
go.

Meditation brings us back to the river of our own being without all the mental
traffic. Thinking and awareness are two separate things. We can see, hear, taste,
touch and feel life directly without the filter of our constant thoughts. Imagine a
life where you can simply be when you want to be and think when you want to
think. Our thoughts, dreams, feelings become more clear, bringing more clarity
to our relationships, work, and life in general.

Beside the traditional procedures of entering into the silence, meditation does
not have to be difficult. We are changing the habit of constantly thinking. We
are changing our pattern of carrying the details and challenges of daily life all
the time within us. Meditation can teach us to let go of our busy mind and be in
our heart. It is all a matter of practice, practicing a meditation of the heart. There
are two steps in what we call “heart contemplation.”

The first step is offering. Begin the meditation by offering everything that is in
our heart. This is with our out breath. Whatever we are busy thinking about
during our day is what we are carrying in our heart. Maybe we are preoccupied
with work, health, or a relationship. Whatever we are constantly thinking about
is what is keeping our heart occupied and our mind busy. Our busy mind is the
overflow from a crowded heart. As we offer, we begin to empty our mind and
open our heart. The busy mind gradually becomes still. Our awareness is
returning to our heart, soft, free, and naturally calm.

We stop the busy mind by offering what’s in our hearts. We offer our worries
and desires, our judgments, our likes and dislikes. Everything we find in our
heart, we offer as if we are taking an apple out of our pocket and passing it
along. We do not have to carry so much inside of us. We are offering what is in
our heart to the universe, call it God, whatever we want to call the greatest love.
And what do we do if there is something major holding down our heart like the loss of a loved one or a difficult illness? Instead of the pain just sitting inside of us, meditation helps us find the part of our heart that is always greater. In our offering we are opening the door for something else, another part of us to be also present. The point is not to keep everything locked inside of us. With caring, gentleness, we offer everything in our heart. When we offer, we cannot be thinking at the same time. Our habit of constantly thinking is slowing down, slowly changing.

The second step is to go deeply within our heart and receive. Underneath our busy mind is the beauty, the landscape of our heart. Here is a great space, a valley of lightness, a reservoir of calm, an ocean of peace. We bring our awareness to the depths of our heart. We practice receiving. This is with our in breath. Our mental chatter recedes as we explore and receive the many qualities within our heart. We cannot be thinking and receiving at the same time. In our heart contemplation, there is so much to receive and enjoy.

Gentleness, equanimity, vastness, we find our awareness expanding inside. Our awareness expanding without end is a normal experience of people who receive the depths of their heart. Unencumbered by lots of thoughts, our awareness spreads into the limitlessness of our true being. Inner silence, goodness, forgiveness, and gratitude are frequently found. Every meditation we are exploring this inner treasure, our own heart. Our heart is our source of potentiality, trust, creativity, wholeness, our light and love.

There is no fixed rule how much of each meditation should be spent offering or receiving. Sometimes there is nothing to offer, we only want to be in the stillness of our heart and receive. Other times, there seemingly is a mountain of weight inside to offer. No matter how heavy or overwhelmed life may be, our intention of offering begins releasing the load we carry. Slowly, we find our own balance of offering and receiving. In my opinion, generally it’s best to meditate at least a half-hour each day at a regular time. Whenever possible, we want to make silent retreats where we are not disturbed or distracted to develop further our meditation practice.

Why are we offering and receiving? In modern culture, we tend to hold onto everything. Our heart is stuffed full of grievances, desires, memories, old news, new news, too much news. We carry our problems, our friend’s problems, the problems of the world. We are overfilled with mental activity. Our intellectual ability so often is at a cost of losing touch with our feelings and our heart. Our mental traffic covers the inner jewels of golden peace and harmony. Our complicated minds are a heavy veil hiding the true wealth inside of us. Meditation is removing this filter, uncovering our inner sanctuary of the Higher Self, the temple of our heart. Our practice is stopping our busy mind and
bringing us to an awareness of oneness, our centre. Restfulness, compassion, and joy are the fruits of heart contemplation that grow and spread in our lives.

**Gayatri, author’s most chanted mantra at the beginning and end of his private meditations**

The mantra is implied for acknowledgment of Brahman itself and is viewed as speaking to the Supreme Godhead. It is implied for profoundly propelled individuals. Accomplishment in Gayatri empowers one to enter the supernatural position of the Lord. In any case – it is vital for one to first obtain the characteristics of the splendidly adjusted individual as far as the characteristics of goodness and the laws of material nature before chanting the mantra for all round benefits. The Gayatri mantra has always been viewed as vital in Veda.

The mantra is specified in the Srimad Bhagavatam too. Awesome sins are said to be appeased by a devout recitation of the Gayatri verse. The starting point of the celestial society and logic of old times has been credited to the Gäyatrï Mantra.

The ancient Indian saints had dedicated their lives to the Sädhana of Gäyatrï Mantra for a definitive acknowledgment and for spiritual refinement of the internal identity and accomplishment of every kind of celestial possibilities. The Gäyatrï Sädhana has been an essential part of the lives of both common men and and sages of the later ages as well.

**Gäyatrï Sädhana** in reality gives extraordinary gifts to the one who recites it with dedication and understanding. In spite of the fact that, the beneficial outcomes and astounding fulfilments by Gäyatrï Sädhana happen through the unpretentious logical procedure at more profound spaces of cognizance, the reverential assumptions of appreciation towards the force are prudent so as to keep up modesty and devoted truthfulness of psyche – which are essential for the steady progression of the spiritual Sädhana."

Prompt impacts of the mantra is the development of self-assurance and valour in the Sädhaka and steady enlightenment of his judgment, force of basic leadership and awareness of other’s expectations and decontamination of the inward centres of psyche.

Therefore for the one who chants the Gayatri mantra with dedication – his common life too – starts to advance well at individual, expert and social levels. Further headway of the Gayatri Sädhana with expanding commitment stirs the concealed abilities and perfect notions and opens the gateways for materialistic and spiritual improvement.
Gāyatrī is known to provide wellbeing, imperativeness, life span, riches with elegance, eminent achievement, co-operation, love, scholarly rise and heavenly climax of the self”.

This can be confirmed by everyone earnestly rehearsing the Gayatri mantra in everyday existence with inherent dedication.

The Gayatri Mantra

“Aum Bhoor Bhuvah Svahaa
Thath Savitur Varenyam
Bhargho Devasya Dhee Mahi
Dheeyo Yo Nah Prachodhayaath”

Gayatri is the mother of all Vedic mantras: “Gayatri chandasaam maataa “. To be effective, it must be imparted by one who is qualified ( ie who has practised the japa of the mantra and attained competence ).

How to chant the Gayatri mantra correctly

I found that chanting the Gayatri mantra is as much a surrender to the cosmic forces – a mystical experience and a prayer to the absolute – than just a mechanical daily ritual but Gayatri chanting should be done properly for utmost benefit. For those interested, here’s a way I personally chant the Gayatri mantra.

The process of chanting the Gayatri mantra which I follow.

Step 1: By heart, learn all word meanings in Gayatri. ( First )

Step 2: When reciting words in the mantra, visualize in parallel the corresponding scenery or God there while maintaining a steady calm breath. ( Second )
While reciting the **mantra** – visualize while reciting the first line “**Aum bhoor bhuva suvaha**” (a picture of the galaxy with planets in bluish white and violet colours).

For the second line “**Tat Savitur varenyam**” (a bright sun and mountains rivers green trees and flowers with picture of Aditya Sun God in His Chariot going around seeing His grand creation)

For third line “**Bhargho Devasya Dheemahi**” (visualize a reddish yellow sun rays from the sun descending to the seeker’s head through his / her Guru’s right hand).

For the fourth and final line, “**Dheeyo Yonaha Prachodayaath**” (i visualize a white ray coming down on my head portion from the sky )

Hope this simple imagery helps you with your worship of Gayatri Devi. Also, the Gayatri mantras should be chanted after knowing the meaning as it will help the person much more.

While chanting this mantra bring out the sound OM from your navel for the mantra to become effective.

**If you are a woman then it’s safer not to chant the Gayatri mantra**

If you are a woman its better not to chant Gayatri Mantra. The reason for this is when chanting the Gayatri, the energy of ‘OM’ should be generated from the navel. When a woman does it there is a very high possibility of her uterus getting shrink-ed and may even get damaged. This might affect her child bearing capability.

**Creating Peace of Mind**

There was a time when in the twenties, I thought peace was a destination, in much the same way I imagined I’d eventually arrive at happiness or success. It seemed like something I needed to chase or find—definitely not something I could experience without dramatically changing my life.

I needed to work less, relax more, and generally revamp my circumstances and relationships in order to be a peaceful person. Despite seeing peace as an endpoint, I also saw it as something passive; after all, that’s why I was so stressed: I had so much to do.

I’ve since realized that peace is always available, and like any desirable state of mind, it requires effort, even if that effort entails consciously choosing to be still. Sure, our circumstances affect our mental state, but they don’t have to control them, not if we make tiny choices for our well-being.
Admittedly, it’s not easy to choose peace when we’re going through tough times as we experience today. I still go through periods when I get caught up in worries and stresses, and it can feel like that’s the only available response to things that have happened.

But it’s not. There are countless things we can do to create peace of mind, both in response to events in our lives, and proactively, every day. If you’d also like to develop a greater sense of peace, you may find these suggestions helpful:

**Through Meditation**

1. Take five to ten minutes for a simple seated meditation.
2. Take one-hundred deep breaths, counting “and one,” “and two,” and so on, with “and” on the inhalations and the numbers on the exhalations.
3. Take a meditative walk, focusing solely on the physical sensations of walking—the earth under your feet, the swing of your hips.
4. Find a guided meditation the way we are presenting it to you, or even on YouTube and let it silence you into a blissful state of presence.
5. Practice alternate nostril breathing. Hold the left nostril down and inhale through the right; then hold the breath. Release the left nostril, hold the right one down, and exhale through the left. Now start on the left with an inhalation, exhaling on the right. This is one set. Do up to five of them.

**Communicate**

6. Write down everything that’s weighing you down mentally and then burn it as a form of letting go.
7. Write down everything you’ve learned from a difficult experience so you can see it as something useful and empowering instead of something to stress you out.
8. Tell someone how their actions affected you instead of holding it in and building resentment.
9. Call someone you’ve denied forgiveness and tell them you forgive them.
10. Apologize for a mistake instead of rehashing it, and then choose to forgive yourself.

**Being creative**

11. Engage in a little art therapy; grab some crayons, markers, or paint and put all your feelings on the page.
12. Create a peace collage. Include images that make you feel relaxed and at ease. (Google “peace collage” and you’ll get lots of ideas!)

13. Meditate on your favourite peace quote and then write it in calligraphy for framing.

14. Take a walk with the sole intention of photographing beautiful things that make you feel at peace, like a tree with colourful autumn leaves.

15. Write a blog post about what gives you peace of mind. (This has been a calming experience for me in the years 1960s)

**Being active**

16. Get up and dance to your favourite song, focusing solely on the music and the movement. Get into your body and get out of your head!

17. Take a long walk on the beach, focusing on the feel of the sand between your toes and the sound of the crashing waves. Cliché, but highly effective!

18. Go for a bike ride in a scenic part of town, and immerse yourself in the calm of your environment.

19. Take five to ten minutes for stretching, syncing your breath with the movements (or if you have an hour, visit a local studio for a yoga class, or exercise yourself at home in “Surya Namaskar Yoga exercise”. There are methods for young and old as the Surya Namaskar Chair Yoga.

20. Declutter a cluttered part of your home, creating a more peaceful space.

**Forgive, forget and accept**

21. Muster compassion for someone who hurt you, instead of wallowing in bitterness, which will make it easier to forgive them and set yourself free.

22. Set aside some time to actively enjoy the good things about the present instead of scheming to create a better future.

23. Create a list of things you love about yourself instead of dwelling on how you wish you were different.

24. Focus on what you appreciate about the people in your life instead of wishing they would change (assuming you’re in healthy relationships).

25. Recognize if you’re judging yourself in your head with phrases like “I should have” or “I shouldn’t have.” Replace those thoughts with, “I do the best I can, my best is good enough, and I’m learning and growing every day.”
Withdraw yourself in solitude for a time

26. Start reading that book you bought about dealing with the challenge you’ve been facing.

27. Schedule a date with yourself, a time when you don’t need to meet anyone else’s requests, and do something that feeds your mind and spirit. Go to a museum or take yourself to your favourite restaurant and simply enjoy your own company.

28. Sit in nature—under a tree, on a mountain—and let yourself simply be.

29. Be your own best friend. Tell yourself what’s on your mind, and then give yourself the advice you’d give a good friend who had the same issue.

30. Repeat some positive affirmations that help you feel present, peaceful, and empowered.

Connect with others and the world

31. Tell the truth in your relationships. When we hold in our true feelings, we create stress for ourselves. Be kind but honest and share what you really feel.

32. Catch critical, blaming, or self-victimizing thoughts. Instead of ruminating on what someone else did wrong, express yourself and ask yourself what you can do to create the change you’re seeking.

33. Have fun with someone you love. Forget about everything that feels like a problem and do something silly and childlike.

34. Connect with someone online who can relate to what you’re going through and create a mutually supportive relationship by sharing and listening.

35. Let someone into your self-care routine—ask a friend to join a meditation Satsang with you, or invite someone to jog with you somewhere.

Be charitable

36. Volunteer your time to help a charity you believe in. Put all your energy into helping someone else, and you will inadvertently help yourself.

37. Volunteer at your local animal shelter. Animals are naturally present, and it’s contagious!

38. Do something kind for someone else without expecting anything in return. If they ask what they can do for you, tell them to pay it forward.

39. Leverage your passion to help someone else (i.e.: if you’re an aspiring designer, design a logo for a friend). You get to get in the zone doing something you love; someone else gets support they need. A win/win!
40. Leverage your purpose to serve someone else, not for money—just because. That might mean helping them pursue their passion, or motivating them to reach their fitness goals. Whatever gives your life meaning, give it to someone freely.

As is often the case with these types of list, this can seem a little long and overwhelming. The important thing is that we do at least one tiny thing every day to create mental stillness. What helps you create peace of mind?

**Psychosynthesis Meditation**

**Five rejuvenating techniques to enter your Inner Sanctuary**

Daily meditations are a great way to relax, find the peacefulness that exists within you, and get in touch with your Higher Self Within. It’s active meditation, in that your mind is opening up and you’re accessing your inner sanctuary, where you become aware of the whole cosmos that is uniquely yours and where there are no limits - a serene getaway.

You can access this inner sanctuary the same way you would get ready for meditation – sit (the usual way) or lie down comfortably, close your eyes, and become aware of your breathing. Feel free to do it silently or be gently guided with music.

Go into each meditation with the knowledge that you are safe and that this is for your higher good. Any information or guidance you receive will be understood (if not now, then when the time is right).

Here are five examples of meditations I’ve retained - each of them has brought clarity, comfort, and joy.

1. **The Inner Garden.**

This is a place where you can get in touch with nature, no matter where you are. A loving space to find your roots. Inside of you is a lush garden full of plants and life. Let it permeate your senses by touching the bark on nearby trees, smelling the beautiful flowers, listening for the cheerful chirp of birds above and water running nearby.

Get acquainted with the area and find a comfortable place to lie down, where the sunlight can kiss your skin as the soft ground caresses your body. Rest here for as long as you like, reconnecting with the earth and yourself.

2. **The Beach Gathering.**

On the shores of a beach is a circle of people and beings, sitting around a large fire that has burned for eternity. They see you walking towards them and they welcome you into the circle, giving you a seat.
This is a chance to talk to your guides and loved ones, and anyone else who shows up. The people gathered are all here because they love you and want to talk. You can discuss with them or sit back and listen as they tell stories and laugh and sing. You are in a circle of friendship and love. You can be absolutely yourself here, they all came for you and they know your heart - you are welcomed and cherished.

3. The Quartz Castle.

You are standing before a beautiful castle made entirely of quartz crystals that shimmer in the sunlight. The castle sits among trees and grass fields. There is water behind it and many kind creatures inhabit the area.

Play outside the castle, knowing you can enter whenever you want. Or go directly for the door, pushing it back softly to see what's inside. Explore the many levels within it, picking different doorways to walk through. Listen to your heart and be guided in the direction that is calling out to you. Perhaps it is a room with the softest looking bed you’ve ever seen, which is ready to clear away all your worries. Maybe it is a room that opens to the sky, where the dragons and birds are asking you to come fly with them.

In this realm, you always have enough time to explore. You’ll be sure to find the things you’re looking for - even the things you didn’t realize you wanted, until you see them before you.

4. The Meadow.

This is a meadow full of whispering flowers that sway in the embrace of the wind, where the faeries dance and celebrate. It stretches before you, going on forever. They invite you to join them in their merriment, free to dance or play or simply sit - watching the love that is expressed to the earth and to life itself.

This is a space where you can get in touch with yourself as a divine and eternal being. You have access to the ancient wisdom and childlike wonder that are the faeries. Let your energy match theirs, remembering that this life is so full of vibrant possibilities and your dreams are yours for a reason. So enjoy the silliness and see the beauty, it is there for you.

5. The Forest Circle.

There is a glade that rests surrounded by strong and forgiving oak trees. Inside this circle of trees your heart is free to show itself. All of who you are is given the room to be expressed, without judgment or pressure. The trees stand tall - protective sentinels giving loving space for your unfolding.
Let yourself unravel or let loose, you are free. When you are ready, the spirit of your heart may reveal itself to you so that you can begin caring for it, for yourself. This is where self-love is cultivated.

Remember that you can visit these places whenever you like - learn something new each time, visit your guides and spirit friends, return for deeper relaxation - it’s all up to you. You are the creator and this inner sanctuary is yours to make with it what you will.

So go have fun! Explore new places inside yourself and see what turns up. You may even find a new favourite destination that’s all yours!

**Entering into the Silence of Meditation**

There are times in our life when our worlds fall apart, when we are overwhelmed by the intensity of events, when we feel alienated from ourselves or others, and when our life seems to make no sense. In those moments when we feel most adrift and confused, there is still a way to find a sanctuary of renewal within yourself.

The Silence of the Inner Sanctuary, your Higher Self Within, is a refuge, where you can offer renewal. In moments of confusion and complexity we are tempted to do more, to act, to find explanations, to speak. If we listen to our heart, we come to know the wisdom of being still. We calm the turmoil of our mind, feeling our feet on the earth, and connecting once more with a depth of inner silence that can guide us, heal us, and restore us.

The Power of Silence is an ever-present reality revealed to us in the moments when we remember to listen. Silence is revealed in moments of wholehearted attention, when we are fully present in this life. Like a Christian mystic reminds us, “Absolute, unmixed attention is prayer.” The art of cultivating silence does not take us to a destination divorced from the present moment of reality in our life. Cultivating the art of silence, we learn to discover its richness in all moments and encounters. Treasuring its rich potential, we learn to discover what it means to live with silent heart, rich in vitality, creativity, energy, and life.

Silence of Meditation is the ground of happiness, communion, and oneness. We can learn to find it in all moments and things; we discover it has never been lost but only hidden.

**Positive Affirmations (self-talk) and meditation go together**

For basic breath meditations, it’s best to keep the affirmations short. This way they will be easy to remember and you won’t run out of breath while repeating them. Be sure to keep the words positive and in the present tense. Say the
affirmation silently to yourself with each intake of breath. And with each exhalation, feel the increasing serenity that your chosen affirmation brings.

The following can be used in reflective meditation (see my EBooks)

Simple and effective meditations can be created using affirmations of release and acceptance.

I release tension … and accept tranquillity.  
I let go of all anger … and welcome complete serenity.  
I give away sadness … and receive bliss.  
I exhale worry … and inhale peace.  
I breathe out hate … and breath in love.

You can also choose a few simple words to use as a mantra while meditating. My personal favourites are: “Return to source.” and “Energize me.”

Positive Affirmations for Reflective Meditation

1. As I relax in my mind, I relax in my body.  
2. As I relax in silent meditation all the muscles of my body let go.  
3. As I relax, my body and mind begin to merge as one.  
4. By being still and quiet, I discover my inner wisdom.  
5. By quieting my mind, I allow answers to arise from within.  
6. Every day I spend time in quiet meditation to rejuvenate my entire being.  
7. Every day I take time to listen to the quiet voice within me.  
8. Every moment I spend in quiet contemplation brings welcomed balance into my life.  
9. I allow myself special time for contemplation.  
10. I allow myself to rest whenever my body expresses the need.  
11. I am able to relax my body at any time.  
12. I am connected to a higher intelligence that speaks to me when I meditate.  
13. I am willing to spend time each day being quiet and still.  
14. I bring forth the quality of calm and well-being my nurturing my inner being.
15. I cherish every opportunity to enjoy a moment of quiet contemplation.
16. I communicate with the Universal Force daily.
17. I connect with my inner wisdom daily by taking the time to quiet my mind.
18. I contemplate the wonders of life daily.
19. I create time and space to meditate every day.
20. I easily achieve a state of absolute relaxation.
21. I easily let go of tension and tightness in my body.
22. I easily let go of tension and tightness in my body.
23. I emerge from meditation with renewed energy and inspiration.
24. I enjoy spending time in quietude.
25. I feed my soul daily by through the practice of quiet meditation.
26. I feel empowered and refreshed after meditation.
27. I find time each day to simply be.
28. I find time to meditate every day.
29. I have the ability to quiet my thinking mind.
30. I know that meditation is a retreat into reality.
31. I look forward to my daily meditation.
32. I love spending quiet time in my inner sanctuary.
33. I make inner quietude a daily habit.
34. I make time every day for quiet meditation.
35. I meditate daily to reacquaint myself with my true being.
36. I meditate every morning before I start my day.
37. I play many roles in life, but the most important one is when I play none.
38. I practice quiet meditation to recharge my mind and my life.
39. I receive perfect guidance through daily meditation.
40. I regularly find time for solitude and stillness.
41. I rejuvenate my being in the peacefulness of my inner sanctuary.
42. I rise early so that I can enjoy the silent sanctuary of meditation.
43. I sit in silent meditation as a gesture of respect to my inner being.
44. I spend time each day reflecting on things.
45. I spend time on my birthday to reflect on my life with immense gratitude.
46. I take time every day to commune with my inner being.
47. I take time to be alone, reflect, and enjoy the quiet.
48. I take time to rejuvenate myself in silence.
49. I use meditation to connect with the eternal wisdom within my being.
50. I use meditation to discover my true higher self within.
51. I use repetitive tasks to focus my being inwards.
52. I visit my quiet inner sanctuary every day.
53. In quietude, I converse with the gods within.
54. In the stillness of thought, I hear the wisdom of my heart.
55. Meditating energizes my whole being.
56. Meditating rejuvenates my mind.
57. Meditation allows me to tap into the unlimited potential of the universe.
58. Meditation brings me closer to my creative self.
59. Meditation gives me renewed energy and insight.
60. Meditation helps me approach life with more energy and peace.
61. Meditation helps me clear my mind of negative chatter and fill it with thoughts of love and abundance.
62. Meditation helps me develop lightness of being and a harmonious life.
63. Meditation helps me to get in touch with my rich inner resources.
64. Meditation lets me approach my life with a lighter, calmer heart.
65. Meditation lets me know the invisible me.
66. My breathing is relaxed and easy.
67. My day runs more smoothly when I take the time for quiet contemplation.
68. My inner sanctuary is always there when I need it.
69. My inner space is my power space.
70. My quiet inner voice is heard best in meditation.
71. My quiet mind is a peaceful sanctuary that I can visit any time.
72. My quiet mind is as important as my thinking mind.
73. Practicing quiet contemplation helps me align with my true purpose.
74. Practicing quiet meditation helps me meet challenges with a more relaxed mind.
75. Quiet meditation brings harmony to my work and my home.
76. Quiet meditation enriches my life in ways that no material objects can.
77. Quiet meditation revitalizes my body and refreshes my spirit.
78. Quiet stillness fills my being now.
79. Quietude is a gift I give my being each day.
80. Silent meditation allows me to reunite with my soul.
81. Taking time to be quiet and stop my thinking is one of the best gifts I give myself.
82. The silence of meditation helps me to reconnect with my soul.
83. Through daily meditation I discover my true self within.
84. Through meditation, I peacefully rejoin my true inner being.
85. Through meditation, I hear the whispers of my soul.
86. Through meditation, I open myself to inner joy and knowledge.
87. Through quiet contemplation I…
88. Through quiet meditation I allow my being to return to source.
89. Through quiet meditation, I discover my strengths and talents.
90. Through quiet meditation, I discover my true purpose in life.
91. Through quiet meditation, I discover my body's innate ability to be whole and well.
92. Through silent meditation I… (this includes your wishes and intentions)
93. Today I am allowing time for the healing power of meditation in my life.
94. Today I ignore the ego's mental chatter and instead focus on my quiet voice within.
95. When I quiet my mind, I easily hear the wisdom of my inner voice.
96. When my mind and body are still, my spirit reunites with the universal force that is all things.

97. With every breath I take, I allow my being to return to source.

98. With every breath I take, I return to my infinite centre of being.

99. I am the Power, I am the Glory, I am another God.

**Your Inner Sanctuary’s Vision**

Your imagination can also be called the inner vision, it is a gift that has many positive applications, but more than often it is not well-developed or correctly used. Few people possess the ability to control what enters their minds. They let their minds and imagination do as they please, and let any stray thought or mental image appear on the screen of their inner vision. This lack of control leads to lack of control over their lives.

Let your imagination run riot, and your life will be a complete mess. Control it and visualize only what you intentionally decide to visualize, and you change your life in accordance with your will.

**What is imagination or inner vision?**

It is the ability to see in one's mind mental images of something that exists, and also the ability to imagine objects, situations or circumstances that do not exist now. Imagination is not only visualizing mental images. It is possible to visualize using all the five senses. You can visualize a sound, taste, smell or a sensation.

If you watch your mind, you will find out that you are constantly using your imagination in various ways. You use it while thinking about the past or future, planning, painting, writing, and describing something. You use it when you describe how to get to a certain street, when you read and when you daydream.

Do you write, paint or engage in any creative activity? Do you cook, decorate or love to do new things? If you do, then you are using your imagination.

When you worry or feel fear you use it too. At such times you automatically visualize unhappy or unfortunate situations. If you keep visualizing these negative mental images you may eventually attract them into your life.

If you see in your inner vision how you want your life to be, and continue watching this mental scene every day with faith, concentration and love, one day your life will look exactly as you imagine.

There are some people who say they have no imagination. There is no such thing. It may be weak, but they certainly possess it. It might also happen that
their visual imagination is not strong, but they can visualize using their other five senses, as mentioned earlier.

The ability to visualize clearly can be developed, and this can be fun. Exercises for developing this ability will at the same time also improve your ability to concentrate, and as a bonus, you might find that you gain a power which you can use to shape and improve your life.

**Developing the imagination, the power of your inner vision:**

1. Find some fifteen minutes every day for the exercises.

2. Visualize something simple that you can believe you can get, such as going to a movie with your girl/boyfriend or with your husband/wife, eating at a certain restaurant or doing something else you would like to do.

3. Visualize your desire clearly, and include in the visualization all the five senses. If it is watching a movie together with another person, imagine the two of you entering the cinema and sitting down. Listen to the people around you, use your sense of smell and feel the coldness or warmth in the cinema hall. Visualize eating popcorn or drinking some soft drink, and enjoy the taste and smell.

4. You might find out it is easier to imagine with some of the senses, and a little difficult to imagine with the others. Go on with the exercises and you will strengthen your ability to imagine with all the senses.

5. Do the same exercise every day, and you will find that it gradually becomes easier.

6. Sometimes you may find that your mind starts to verbalize about what you are imagining. Be careful not to replace the imagination with words. The aim is to use the imagination, not words.

If you follow these suggestions you will develop your imagination, the power of the inner vision, which will be useful to you in many situations. You might also be surprised to discover that what you see in your mind, in your inner vision, comes true in real life.

**How to make your mind and heart work together**

Have you ever made a decision and doubted it? Was there a tiny, nagging voice in your head? Did you have a vague feeling you were making the wrong decision? This was probably your intuition – your heart speaking. Everyone has this sense, a certain way of knowing things based on our past experiences, our unconscious wants and needs, and our current situation. Intuition can give you important insight. However, it is not necessarily “better” than our normal
decision-making. The two – mind and heart, reason and intuition – can in fact work well together. It just takes a bit of effort and training.

**First Part – Evaluating the Mind**

1. **Start with the brain, the mind.** People generally consider the “rational mind” to be a good thing. We think of it as a function or process that guides our actions, logically, usually by avoiding emotion or biased judgement. Mind helps us to maximize good or benefit. For this reason, many philosophers tout mind as better than our more intuitive reactions.
   - What is the mind? This is a big philosophical question. Let’s be clear that we’re not just talking about your brain. The mind is more than just your brain. In part it’s the seat of consciousness, the “I” that makes you who you are.
   - The mind is also responsible for higher thought. It combines sense, thinking, judgement, and memory. It allows you to weigh cost and benefit to make reasoned decisions.

2. **Recognize rational patterns of thought.** Rational thinking is the ability to take many variables into account and to access, organize, and analyze information to reach a sound conclusion. Whether it is planning a budget, weighing the pros and cons of a new job, or arguing politics with friends, you use rational thinking every day. Rational thinking is very human. In fact, it’s what separates us from other animals and is how we are able to use tools, build cities, develop technology, and spread as a species. So, it is a very valuable, useful trait.

3. **Learn the advantages and disadvantages of the mind.** As you can see, rational thinking is a big reason why we are here today. This does not mean that more is necessarily better, however. Star Trek fans know that super-rational beings like Mr. Spock or Data are not really human, because humans also need emotion. We are not like machines. •To a certain point, rational thinking is beneficial. We can distance ourselves from strong emotions that might otherwise direct our decision-making. If emotion guided us, would people leave home to go to college, for example? Many would not – the emotional strain and distance from loved ones would be too powerful, even if they knew, in their mind, that college was good for them.
   - Rational thinking can sometimes go overboard, however. We would probably be paralyzed if we based our decisions only on reason. All choices, big and small, involve so many variables that it would be impossible to decide without listening to the heart. What should you
eat for breakfast, for example? Should it be the healthiest food? The best priced food? Recognize rational patterns of thought. Rational thinking is the ability to take many variables into account and to access, organize, and analyse information to reach a sound conclusion. Whether it is planning a budget, weighing the pros and cons of a new job, or arguing politics with friends, you use rational thinking every day.

- Rational thinking is very human. In fact, it’s what separates us from other animals and is how we are able to use tools, build cities, develop technology, and spread as a species. So, it is a very valuable, useful trait.

**Second Part – Evaluating the Heart**

Learn to discern your heart from your rational mind. People often talk about having a “feeling” or “gut instinct.” It is hard to define. Think about it as a way of knowing that takes into account different things than your normal, rational thinking. Heart may be based on things like the past (your experiences), personal needs (how you feel), and the present (other people around you, choices, etc.). All of this can lead to a different calculation than reasoning alone.

- Try to tell distinguish what comes from your heart. Did a thought just pop into your head, for example? Reason usually relies on analysis – step by step thought: i.e., “Well, if I don’t do X, Y will happen. Therefore I should do X.” Heart does not always follow this pattern.

- What about that “feeling”? Sometimes intuition comes to us as vague sense. It’s hard to describe. It’s hard to even know what the feeling means. You may feel uncertain about changing jobs and not know why, for example. Outwardly, everything about the new job is great, but you still feel a nagging sense that something will go wrong. This is intuition.

2. **Listen to your heart.** Your inner voice may not always be clear, but it’s trying to tell you something. Learn how to listen to it. To start, you’ll need to temporarily drown out our rational thought processes and focus on the voice. There are some ways that you can do this.

- Keep a journal. Writing your thoughts on paper may help open up the unconscious mind. Write what comes to you; be spontaneous. Begin sentences with phrases like, “I have a feeling that...” or “My heart tells me that...” The point is to follow emotional responses rather than rational ones.

80
• Temporarily drown out your inner critic. It may take some effort, but be watchful over your rational processes. Listening to the heart is hard because we try to rationalize it away. Allow yourself to write or think without letting in the doubting voice that says, “This is silly.”

• Find a quiet place. One of the best things for opening your heart is quiet contemplation. This could be meditation. Or, it could just be taking a walk by yourself in a park or woods. Find a place where you can let your thoughts and emotions flow freely.

3. **Don’t overrate the heart.** Intuition is only one way of knowing. But it is not necessarily better than your sense of reason or the best way to make decisions. While you should try to listen to your heart, don’t trust it automatically. Sometimes it’s wrong.

• Say that you are on a jury. The accused insists very persuasively that he is innocent – he stirs your confidence. However, all the physical evidence says that he committed the crime. Do you listen to your reason or your intuition? In this case, your intuition is probably false.

• Think too about the possible consequences of relying only on heart. Would you bet your life savings on a gut instinct, for instance? Say that your financial planner advises you to invest in secure mutual funds, but you have a really good feeling about an up-and-coming company called Enron. It is probably better to listen to the rational advice of an expert than to trust your instinct.

**Third Part – Reconciling your mind and heart**

1. **Identify your core values.** Mind and heart don’t have to be mutually exclusive. That is, you can find ways to make them work together. Start with your values. Heart often speaks to a sense of deep-seated values that don’t always get included in your rational thought process. The reconciliation starts here. You need to be able to identify what your deepest values are and let them guide your rational thought.

• Try to deconstruct your values, if you have never really thought about it before. How were you raised? Ask yourself what values your parents emphasized – wealth, education, status, appearance? Were you rewarded for high achievement in school, for instance?

• How do you live now? You should be able to see how your values have shaped your life. Do you live in the city, the suburbs, or the
country? What led you there? What do you do for a living? Someone who teaches probably values money less than someone who is a banker. On the other hand, a banker may put less importance on education than a teacher.

- What do you spend your money on? This more than anything else says a lot about what values drive your behaviour. Do you spend money on cars? Travel? Clothing? Or perhaps the arts and charity?

2. **Think about decisions in terms of your values.** The aim of thinking in terms of your values is not to tame your rational mind, but to work with it. Since values usually lie behind your heart, you should try to harness them and use them within your rational thought process. Who should you marry? Where should you work? These are things that need rational consideration, but that should also align closely with your most cherished values.

- Gain as much information as you can about choices. What is the probable benefit of a decision? Will it be something you'll ever regret? Your rational mind and heart may be giving you conflicting thoughts about a decision, and you will need to seek out all possible detail and evaluate it.

- Identify problems: what might go wrong? Say that you are thinking of getting married and really want children. However, your girlfriend has said she isn’t interested in having a family. While your rational mind may say that you love her, you should also listen to your heart and recognize that the importance you place on family does not align with her values.

- Explore options: think carefully about what's best for you. Sometimes, your first intuition will be right. However, at other times your heart needs to be balanced with a rational decision.

3. **Consider your highest values before deciding.** One way to help you come to a good decision is to consider the problem in terms of your highest values. How do the possible solutions relate to your values? You may have to make a map of your values – going from most important to least – in order to see where they land in your personal hierarchy.

- Back to the problem of marriage. If family is a make-or-break issue for you, marrying someone who doesn’t want children could be a disaster, even if you love her. But if you value close bonds with your partner more than having children, there might be room to negotiate.
4. **Make a decision based on a rational look at your intuitive values.** It seems strange, right? Thinking rationally about the heart? Just remember that the two are not contradictory. You only have to learn to listen to your heart and discover what lies behind it. Think carefully and let your values play a big role in decision-making, but do so rationally. Make choices that best serve your values and that prioritize the ones that are most important to you.

- Keep practicing. Eventually, you’ll start to find personal power in your decisions and create a marriage of your heart and mind. By listening to your heart, you can train your mind to work in harmony with it.

**Epilogue**

Whether you currently feel it or not, you have a kind heart, fierce mind and brave spirit. It’s so important to remember the inner resources you possess. You are so much stronger than you think and you are capable of great love and kindness. Sure, we can get frustrated and discouraged and start doubting ourselves but we must not listen to our inner mean girl when this happens.

We have to come back to who we truly are deep down inside. Beyond the insecurities and traumas from the outside world.

Sometimes we may feel lost, like we don’t know what our next move should be. In those moments, the best thing to do to feel inner peace despite the external circumstances is to just BE LOVE.

Be loving to yourself (don’t listen to the harsh words of the ego that’s telling you should have it all figured out) and be love to others (let go of the judging, fixing and comparing). In the end, all that will truly matter is how much we loved. How we made people feel when they were in our presence. It’s our spirit that people will remember. Not how much we did or how much money we made.

Let the worry thoughts just float away and allow yourself to BE, even if just for a moment. Remember that you are a human BEING not a human doing.

Centre in on your kind heart, fierce mind and brave spirit. You are a beautiful soul no matter what you do in the outside world. Just bring beauty and peace into your life and the life of others and you will have done plenty.
Creating Your Own Private Meditation Location

You understand the benefits of meditation. You might even use deep breathing exercises in daily life. Perhaps you’ve advanced to yoga or some other meditative art. Now it’s time to create the most sanctified room or even a corner in your own home so you can take the practice of meditation to the next level. The problem is you’re not too sure just what that is or how to go about making your own personal meditation space.

In the grand scheme of things, a spiritual retreat is any location that facilitates your efforts at meditation. It can be religious by design or simply a place that reminds you that you are, in fact, a part of a “bigger picture.” If you can go there and connect with your archetypal deity, nature or even your own higher consciousness, you’re on the right track.

So, what do you need to create your own private sanctuary at home? You’ll likely want to consider things to create your own relaxing retreat:
A space to call your own – It doesn’t really matter how big or small the space is as long as it’s free from major distractions. You can just as easily create a sanctuary in the corner of your bedroom as you can in an outdoor garden.

A way to remove clutter from your space – Clutter is the bane of relaxation. Whether you intend to create your space indoors or out, free the area from “junk.” Consider following the principles of feng shui here. Go for cool, relaxing colours or neutrals. Make sure that your seating area does not place you with your back to a door. If you’re going for a space that’s outdoors, keep it as natural and soothing as possible.

A comfortable seating area – It doesn’t matter whether you choose to use pillows on the floor or you want a cosy recliner to relax and meditate in, make sure comfort is priority number one here.

A focal point – Whether you choose to use religious imagery or something more secular, place a focal point for meditation in your sanctuary. This aid will help you with meditation and can give you something to hone in on as you learn to relax your mind and body.

Other enhancements – No altar, candles, incense like smoking cigarettes not good for you, no pictures of a renowned guru, etc. In meditation, normally you are closing your eyes, so you don’t see the items anyway.

Creating a spiritual retreat at home doesn’t require an interior designer and a lot of work. With just a little careful planning you can have your own meditation location to retire to early morning, midday or at the end of the day.
A Zen Meditation Location as example

The meditation in which people are guided at The Meditation Zen Temples is initially based on the practicalities of the true art of ‘yoga of the mind’ and then later, the more advanced forms of authentic meditation found in the classic Soto Zen practices. Zen is said to have originated more than four thousand years ago. It’s wisdom was passed down through the ages by the ancients and then refined by both Chinese and Japanese Masters over more recent centuries before being carried into modern times by men and women of vision and enlightenment.

Zen meditation has several layers of practice. In the initial stages, it is a complete, gentle, enjoyable and utterly natural way to gradually calm our entire physical, mental and emotional being. It then enables us to see, understand and ‘let go’ the negative aspects of our being that hinder our natural and joyful engagement with life.

For those seeking deeper life-relevance and meaning, continued practice gently takes us to our natural higher consciousness of kindness, compassion and love – the expression of which unfolds true happiness, serenity, wisdom and enlightenment.
Additional and Helpful Knowledge about Yoga Meditation

Yoga Nidra

Yoga Nidra\(^1\) has been around as long as the practices of yoga have been around (nearly 4000 years.) It has only recently gained acclaim because the teachings of Yoga Nidra have actually been written down in the past one hundred years (mainly by Swami Satyananada Saraswati, the Bihar school of yoga and Swami Sivananda. traditionally, Yoga Nidra was given from teacher to student as a means of deep meditative self-inquiry on the path to self-realization or enlightenment.

More recently, yoga practitioners and modern western clinicians have explored the benefits of Yoga Nidra with regard to the daily stresses of modern life and have found the practice to be helpful in soothing the nervous system, increasing relaxation and mental focus. Yoga Nidra is actively being utilized by the US military to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and by psychologists and therapists to manage feelings of anxiety and depression.

The word, "nidra" is often translated as "sleep" but taken from the the yoga surtas, "Swapna Nidra Gyanalamabanam" 1:38 it is more correctly translated as "throughout all stages of consciousness." But yoga is much more than relaxation. Its orginal intention was to bring "awakening" or enlightenment so the potential of Yoga Nidra includes the ability to provide a radical shift in understanding the self and its relationship to the world as "pure being" or "oneness" Practically speaking this realization leads to a greater understanding of mental patterns, hidden core beliefs and provides insight into the causes of dukha, or suffering.

\(^1\) Self-Realization is the path of the Tradition of the Himalayan masters in simple, understandable and beneficial ways, while not compromising quality or depth. The goal of our sadhana or practices is the highest Joy that comes from the Realization in direct experience of the centre of consciousness, the Self, the Atman or Purusha, which is one and the same with the Absolute Reality. This Self-Realization comes through Yoga meditation of the Yoga Sutras, the contemplative insight of Advaita Vedanta, and the intense devotion of Samanya Sri Vidya Tantra, the three of which complement one another like fingers on a hand. Employed the classical approaches of Raja, Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti Yoga, as well as Hatha, Kriya, Kundalini, Laya, Mantra, Nada, Siddha, and Tantra Yoga. Meditation, contemplation, mantra and prayer (despatching positive, loving thoughts) finally converge into a unified force directed towards the final stage, piercing the pearl of wisdom called bindu, leading to the Cosmic Absoluteness.
The practice of Yoga Nidra is both a mediation and deep form of guided relaxation. Once the process is learned it can be practiced alone with cds, or in quiet self-meditation. However, its suggested that one study with an experienced teacher to properly and safely learn the method. Yoga Nidra is considered by some to be more accessible that seated meditation in that it gives the mind access to other states of consciousness and pervading experience of pure being by beginning with what is most accessible; bodily sensations. Yoga Nidra's basis rests in the five koshas, or coverings that tend to prevent our knowledge of the true self.

"We are more than our bodies and minds" is a common element of a Yoga Nidra session -- Yoga Nidra teaches us not only the "I am not this body, i am not this mind" (classical meditation repeated in the sanskrit as, "neti neti") but "I am more than this body, more than this mind, more than these emotions." Even without any experience or interest in traditional adviata philosophy one can easily experience the benefits of Yoga Nidra as it is the ultimate practice of "not doing."

Yoga Nidra is delivered while lying down, in svasana with a light covering. The body is made as comfortable as possible and participants are invited to let go of any agenda and to simply listen to the guided instructions with the knowledge that nothing needs to be achieved or "done." A tone of welcoming is set where all thoughts, and feelings are honoured as guides back to the true self, or ground of being. It is in this atmosphere of gentle loving kindness that negative thought patterns and beliefs can be curiously examined and moved through, as the samskaras (karmic seeds) are burned away and a sense of spaciousness and new path can be fostered. Yoga Nidra sets a tone of self-acceptance and ultimate self-love.

Guided Visualization is similar in practice and intention. While one is in a deep relaxation, gentle suggestions are made from an experienced teacher, guiding you into the "Inner Healing Sanctuary" of your own mindful imagination. Your imagination is linked to the Higher Self level and to the subconscious. Deep connection, healing and inner guidance is possible in your own "Inner Sanctuary". It can be visualised a surrounding in nature from memory or imagination. It is a beautiful place in the natural world where the profound harmony of nature restores harmony to our beings. Archetypally, one can meet imagined and mythological Devatas, angels, shamans, spirits but above all our own Higher Self the only reality, for guidance, protection, inspiration and answers to our deepest longings. What happens in the Inner Sanctuary (the Higher Self Within) where imagination and visualisation have the greatest role, is real and lasting.
The Benefits of Inner Peace

The benefits of inner peace are a sanctuary away from the stress associated with everyday living. By finding some time to look deep within yourself to find peace and tranquillity, you are giving your mind and body, the time to revitalize itself and help you look, feel, and be a happier and healthier and a more controlled person.

Inner peace is all about taking much needed time, and dedicating it to yourself to regain control over your life, and reflect on things that are happening in your life, to make you more able to have healthy relationships with others in your life. These are only a few of the benefits of inner peace that you will notice.

Without inner peace in your life, you are unable to clearly think things through, learn from your mistakes, and treat the people around you with the respect that they deserve. This is simply because you will be feeling negativity, manifesting as restfulness, annoyance and anger, towards yourself and others, along with other negative feelings.

How To Find Inner Peace?

Simply taking time away from your daily activities, finding a place that makes you feel peaceful, and is free from distractions, or interruptions, easily attains the benefits of inner peace. When you take this time out for yourself, try to find a place that is not only quiet, but makes you feel safe, secure, and at one with nature.

Calmly sit, and meditate. Meditation is a state of deep relaxation where you push all of the chatter in your mind out, and let your mind be quiet and peaceful for a while. As you sit quietly meditating, thoughts through the day are likely to try to surface - push these out. Sometimes sitting quietly, taking slow breaths, and counting as you exhale can help keep your thoughts at bay. With practice, quieting you mind becomes easier.

Stay in this position with your mind clear of clutter until you feel that it is time to end your inner peacetime meditation. Then slowly let your mind begin working again. Spend some time quietly thinking things through in a stress free way before you end your session.

Repeat your sessions as often as possible to really get the maximum benefits of inner peace, and watch as you start to think more rationally, behave better, and enjoy your life more than ever before. Inner peace will provide you with hope when you feel that there is none, calmness when things seem to be spiralling out of control, and a sense of wellbeing that will help you get through anything.
Useful Final Tips for Meditation as part of Self-Realisation Development

Below are a few simple, straightforward examples about how to get started as a beginner and older in meditation. With practice and time, the rest of the process can build upon this basic practice. There is a challenge in describing beginning meditation. At one extreme of explaining beginning meditation it is possible that nothing is said about the depth of meditation, and one can stay stuck at the surface-most levels for years or decades. At the other extreme of describing beginning meditation it can sound so complicated that meditation seems impossible. Throughout this website there are many explanations that expand on the entire process of meditation. However, it all rests on the foundation of beginning meditation, the principles of which also apply to the later, more advanced stages.

Beginning Meditation:

1. **Stretch the body:** It's very useful to do a few stretches before sitting for meditation. It need not be a lengthy process, but can be longer if you wish. Even a few minutes or literally a few seconds can help. The main emphasis is on the spine and neck, bending sideways, forward and backward, and twisting both left and right. Even if you don't do a series of stretches, a few simple stretches while sitting on your meditation seat is helpful.

2. **Sit straight:** If you are sitting straight the weight of the body is evenly distributed. Gravity holds the body in place without leaning or falling to the left or right, or to the front or back. This amazingly simple principle is a great aid to meditation. Sitting "straight" means having a natural curve in the spine. It can take some time to develop a good sitting posture. Use the posture that is comfortable for you, such as sitting on a chair if sitting on the floor does not feel right.

3. **Reflect on your day or life:** For the first couple minutes intentionally give your mind the time to chatter about the activities you've been doing in daily life. This is not to get involved in a worry session, but giving the mind time to run on its own will help it to naturally settle down. It's also nice to take a minute to quietly reflect on your spiritual purpose of life, however you might personally think of that.

4. **Be aware of the Body:** Bring your attention to your body. Explore the body as if you are really curious about it. Do it with your eyes closed, using your inner attention. Mostly this involves the cognitive sense of touch, as you "feel" your body. Go through all of the parts: head, arms, trunk and legs. There are many systematic methods you can learn, but the
important thing is to actually explore, as if you are an interior researcher. There's no need to say words like "relax, relax," as the exploration itself will naturally relax the body. If this feels really comfortable to you, your whole meditation time can focus on this body awareness. Some people like to do this style for months or years even though it is a beginning meditation. While it misses the greater depth of meditation, it can be extremely useful for stress reduction, as you repeatedly bring your attention back to the body when the mind wanders. If it feels comfortable, and if you want, go on to breath meditation after several minutes with the body.

5. **Be aware of the Breath**: Breath awareness is one of the finest focal points for beginning meditation. Interestingly, breath awareness can also be an extremely subtle, advanced meditation if attention is allowed to deepen into and through the subtle energies at the root of breath. With beginning meditation, it is easiest to just feel the air flow at the nostrils. This is the cognitive sense of touch, with which you feel the air come in, and then feel it go out. It's useful to also eliminate and jerkiness or irregularities, allowing the breath to be smooth. So too, it is useful to allow the breath to be comfortably slow, though not trying too hard at this. Above all, gently eliminate any pause in the transitions between breaths, allowing one to gently flow into the next. It's like a little game of seeing just how smooth and continuous you can make it flow. In beginning meditation, we might say that having different techniques of breathing is most important, but the actual techniques rest on the solid foundation of awareness. Therefore, it is breath awareness itself that is the most important part of beginning meditation. The rest will come in time.

6. **Concentrate the Mind**: Breath awareness alone can be a quite sufficient focal point for the mind. Please know that there is a sort of debate going on between approaches to meditation. Some say you should concentrate the mind, and others say you should not do that, allowing the mind to just wander wherever it wants. For most people, a blending of these two approaches is most useful. At first, in beginning meditation, you focus on the body, as described above. Then comes concentration on the breath, such as breath awareness at the nostrils. If you feel comfortable with it, you can go on to hold attention in the space between the breasts, the heart chakra, or the space between the eyebrows, the Ajna chakra. There are many choices one has about the object of concentration, but the principle is the same. Once again, one of the most straightforward "objects" of meditation is the breath. The Soham Mantra is very useful in practicing breath awareness, if that feels comfortable to you.
7. **Witness the flow of thoughts:** While the mind is focused, you can also let the thoughts in the mind field flow without interruption. It's somewhat like driving a car, where your eyes are on the road, but you awareness is taking in all of the other activities in your periphery vision. We all do this often in our daily lives in this and many other ways. Even in beginning meditation one can cultivate this stance of gently focusing the mind while witnessing the other thoughts flow in the mind. They flow, but are not distracting or disturbing. This can seem quite difficult, but it really is not. As long as we remember the simplicity, like driving a car and seeing the periphery, we can stay focused and still witness the inner process of mind. Starting this practice even in beginning meditation goes a long way in setting the stage for advanced meditation. Remember to keep the mind focused in that one location or space, one that one object, such as breath, allowing those other thoughts to do as they wish, while you remain a neutral witness.

8. **Reverse the process to end:** When meditation is finished, it is extremely useful to end the meditation by reversing the process, coming "out" the same way you came "in." This may take a minute or less. So, for example, if you were meditating in the heart centre, you briefly come back to the breath at the nostrils. Then you come back to the whole of the body. Then you gently open your eyes. Then you slowly move your body once again, being mindful to bring the experience of meditation outward with you.

**Some other useful points for beginning meditation:**

1. **Same Time and Place:** Consistency is very useful to forming a good meditation habit. People often complain of not having "discipline." If meditation is a habit, then no discipline is needed. We go to work, eat meals, and do many other things regularly for the simple reason that we have formed the habit. Understanding that principle is extremely useful in beginning meditation. It's not really so hard to do.

2. **One minute will help:** This is not to try to create some "one minute meditation" method, but far more important than the duration of meditation is that fact that you give yourself a moment just for yourself, for stillness and quiet. There are surely times where you feel "I don't have time," but there is always time to sit for a minute, close the eyes, and remember. It is not duration that develops meditation as a habit, but frequency, and the ideal frequency is every day, even from very in beginning meditation.

3. **Comfortable place:** Create a comfortable space in your home for meditation. It may be a separate room used only for meditation or a quiet
space in a less busy room of the house. Make it a simple place or seat, but allow yourself to customize it, to make it your own private sanctuary. While meditation is an inner process, you may enjoy having close at hand certain objects that help you feel comfortable. All of life will come to revolve around that one special place.

4. **One seat:** Use only one cushion, blanket or chair, using the same one each time. Allow this seat itself to become a "home base" of sorts. Your mind will come to know it as a special place to visit, as you carry this memory with you during the day. It gives a focal point to the 24 hours in the day. Use that cushion or chair only for the purpose of meditation if possible. For example, if it's a chair in a bedroom don't use it as a storage place. That forms a special relationship in the mind that is useful for developing a good beginning meditation habit. Some people like to have a thin cloth put on top of the seat so that this cloth can be taken along when going to some other location, such as when traveling far from home.

5. **Cleaning:** It's great to bathe before meditation, and to empty the bowels and bladder. Even a splash of water on the face or washing your face with a wash cloth can feel good.

6. **Time after food:** Allow some time to pass after eating before meditation. Ideally this should be several hours. However, with beginning meditation people often find that life is not so organized yet. We need to be realistic about meditation. If you feel like sitting quietly after a meal, there's no need to walk around waiting for time to pass. Just go ahead and sit quietly for a few minutes.

**Keep it simple:** With beginning meditation one of the most important points is to keep it simple. Even reading through the suggestions in this article can start to make it sound complicated, which it is not. If we make a simple habit of showing up at the same time and place each day, that habit will allow the practices to expand over time.

**Mantras in Hinduism**

Mantras are sacred sounds that are believed to possess supernatural powers, practiced especially in Indian religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. The word "mantra" is a Sanskrit word, which probably means "that which protects (tra) the mind (man)."

Hinduism is a religion or philosophy, even a way of life, found most notably in India and Nepal. With approximately one billion followers, Hinduism is the world’s third largest religion by population, and the majority religion in India, Nepal and Bali (Indonesia). Hinduism has been called the “oldest religion” in
the world, and some practitioners and scholars refer to it as Sanātana Dharma, “the eternal law” or the “eternal way” beyond human origins.

Most notably yoga and meditation have emerged as popular spiritual practices in modern times that stem from the Hinduism. Below is an outline of the rich and varied types of meditation from the Hindu tradition.

**Mantra** is derived from the Sanskrit root “man” – (to think). **Mantra** is a thought, indicating something subtler, deeper and unknown to the five senses of knowledge. In this article let us check out the meaning of mantras and the types of different mantras in Hinduism.

All the scientific principles like the ‘Law of Gravity’ or the ‘Theory of Relativity’ are unknown to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Knowledge is directly revealed to the ‘inner instrument’ or antah-karan-a. **Mind** is also called by that name in Sanskrit. **Mind** in an intuitive state directly understands all the higher laws. One who knows these higher and subtler laws, unknown to the five senses, is called a scientist in the modern world and is called a rishi in Sanskrit.

Rishi means rishati janati iti rishih ie. the one who sees and knows. Sees and knows all these higher and subtler laws. Rishi is a seer: a seer of Mantras. Mantras are codified forms of the various facets of the Truth.

Mantras are seen by rishi’s in their transcendental mental states, in higher realms of consciousness. Every mantra has a Rishi, a meter and a deity indicating a facet of the Ultimate.

Mantras are sound symbols and are all codified. Mantras consist of one or more letters. A letter in Sanskrit is called aksharam. Na ksharati iti aksharam – one who does not perish is called aksharam.

The ultimate Truth also is called aksharam. This is in the relative phenomenal existence. According to the Veda’s and even to the Hindu mythology the whole creation is a manifestation and unmanifestation.

The same thing is now more or less accepted by all of the top physicists, that whatever is now manifesting was there earlier in an un manifest condition. The Truth according to the Veda’s is Absolute Existence–Knowledge–Bliss and contains the whole creation including time and space.

By knowing this ultimate truth one becomes that or gains that, according to the Veda’s. Hence keeping this goal of gaining the ultimate to become completely free from sorrow, suffering and all limitations, individuals take to the study of scriptures, prayers, austerities and deep contemplation and meditations.

In that process some of them happen to see various facets of the Truth. They are called rishi’s or Mantra Drashtaraha, one who sees mantras. Thus mantras are
facets of the Truth in codified or capsule form. A mantra contains at least one syllable and can contain any number of syllables.

These one-syllable mantras are called bija aksharas or bi-ja’s. Bija means a seed. In Sanskrit when bija is reversed it becomes jiba or jiva, which means the individual. Both the individual and the seed are eternal because no one can ever say when the first individual or the first seed started.

They started with the creation itself. Now each of these bija mantras reflects different aspects of the Truth in a subtler way. Some examples for bija’s are Om, Hrim, Shrim, Klim, Im, Dum and so on.

Meaning of Mantras and the types of Mantras in Hinduism

**Mantras can be categorized in various ways.**

1. The Origin
2. The Purpose

**According to the Origin:**

1. Vedic Mantras
2. Tantric Mantras
3. Pauranic Mantras

Vedic mantras ( Meaning of Mantras and the types of Mantras in Hinduism )

**Veda** is from the Sanskrit root Vid (to know). *Veda* is a body of knowledge covering all aspects of life and creation. It is one body of knowledge, but as it was too vast for the sake of convenience a great rishi – *Veda Vyasa* divided it into four parts and gave them four names.

He was called *Veda Vyasa* because he divided the *Veda*. The four Veda’s are *Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda* and *Atharvana Veda*. Each *Veda* again is divided into four parts called

1. mantra bhâga
2. brahmana bhâga
3. âranyaka bhâga
4. upanishad or Vedanta.

*Bhâga* means a part. ( â indicates a pronunciation of elongation of a, like a in ‘are’). All the **verses in the mantra bhâga** are also called **mantras** only. **All Vedic Mantras** are having intonations for pronunciation and it is very important for them.
Correct pronunciation of words is essential. Intonation is over and above this condition. There are various important mantras from the Veda’s, like gayatri mantra – maha mrutyunjaya – mantra – panchakshari mantra – ashtakshari mantra etc.

There are many Shanti Mantras for individual as well as universal peace and happiness. Vedic mantras are mainly used in Vedic fire rituals called yajñyâs and yâgâs. Every mantra has a particular place in the ritual and is to be associated with a particular procedure to offer oblations in the fire.

Nowadays, since these rituals became rare, individuals are using these mantras mainly for chanting to promote individual and universal peace.

In general all these mantras for peace are ended with uttering of the word Shanti (Peace) three times. Shanti or Peace can be disturbed by various reasons.

These reasons can be categorized into three groups viz. âdhi davika tâpa, âdhi bhautica tâpa, dâhyatmika tâpa.

1. The first one is the tâpa or afflictions born due to natural calamities etc. like foods, earthquakes, cyclones, tornado’s etc. on which the human being has very less control.

2. The second one is afflictions like strikes, wars, battles, insect bites, epidemics and so on.

3. The third type of afflictions is due to the individual alone, from one’s own body and mind. In fact all types of afflictions can fully be covered under these three categories.

In order to ward off these three types of afflictions these mantras are used with a prayer to the Universal Intelligence.

Tantric mantras ( Meaning of Mantras and the types of Mantras in Hinduism )

Tantra is from the root tanu vistare: to expand. All the tantric practices are having this goal of expansion of individual consciousness to the total consciousness or Unity consciousness.

Tantra is a rebel child of Vedic tradition. The reason for this was that Vedic tradition in course of time became more and more rigid in its practices and also was not allowing many practices to women and certain categories of the communities.

In reality Vedas are very liberal in their outlook. But certain people in power started misinterpreting and they abused their privilege. This lead to the raise of tantras. Tantras have tantra, mantra and yantra as its accessories.
**Tantra** is the ritualistic portion, mantras may contain one or more than one syllable, while yantra is a diagrammatic representation of the deity of worship drawn on a copper, brass, golden or on a pancha loha plate (five metals). **Tantric mantras** and practices are **esoteric** in nature.

They are very popular, for they are believed to give quick results. An example of a **tantric mantra** is Om Im Hrim Shrim Shree Matre Namaha. Another one is Ka Ye E La Hrim Ha Sa Ka La Hrim Sa Ka La Hrim Shrim.

This is the famous **Shodashakshari Mantra** (16 lettered mantra). If the last **Shrim** is dropped then it is called **Panchadashakshari Mantra** (15 lettered mantra). There are innumerable **mantras in Tantra**, given for different purposes.

**Mantras** are handed down in tradition from person to person and not taken from books. They need to be practiced at least for some time by that individual. The bija’s are considered as living only if taken from a living person and are considered ineffective if taken from books.

Some people and traditions claim that **mantras** obtained in dreams through yogis, **siddhas** and earlier saints are also effective. **Tantric mantras** are always followed or preceded by rituals, worship and prayers. **Tantra** again has two methods.

One is called **vama marga** or ‘left hand method’ and the other is called **dakshina marga** or the ‘right hand method’. **Mantras** in them are different and so are the practices. The left hand method mainly employs sex as a means to expand the individual consciousness, whereas the right hand method employs various meditation techniques to achieve this end.

**Pauranic mantras** (**Meaning of Mantras and the types of Mantras in Hinduism**) **Puranas** are secondary texts of **Hindus**. They are based on **Vedas** but are full of stories and are poetical. The authenticity of the puranas also is in question. Each **Purana** claims certain things, which are negated by the other purana.

But in their ultimate content they do not differ from the **advaita**, though they talk in terms of **dualistic** language. **Puranas** when not properly interpreted, lead a person to confusion. Sometimes their descriptions are so exaggerated that one loses all the faith in these books.

When **puranas** are properly interpreted, they lead to a vast bank of knowledge through stories and parables. Very difficult **metaphysical** truths are described in easy language. **Puranas** are **18** in number.
There are many mantras given in these 18 puranas. Mantras derived from puranas are called Pauranic Mantras. Vishnu Purana, Padma Purana and Bhagavat Purana give lot of mantras of Lord Vishnu and Lord Krishna.

Shiva Purana, Markandeya Purana etc. give a lot of mantras of Lord Shiva and so on. Mantras are chanted for a particular result and for various purposes. When a person chants a mantra for a particular result then they are called sakâma.

Kâma means desire. Sa prefix gives the meaning “with”, that means mantra chanting done with desires. The scripture accepts such worship.

In the Bhagavat Gita Lord Krishna says that the devotees are of four types: arta, artahrti, jignayasu and jñâni.

1. Arta is one who is afflicted with troubles,
2. Artharti is one who wants to achieve some ends in life,
3. Jignayasu is one who is actively pursuing for the ultimate knowledge,
4. Jñâni is one who has gained the ultimate knowledge.

The scripture accepts that all these four types of people ultimately will reach the final beatitude of life, namely Moksha or Liberation or Enlightenment. Given this background the scripture feels that there is nothing wrong in taking to some means to achieve the ends through prayers.

When a person fails to achieve a thing through known means then he takes to the means called prayer by surrendering to the unseen Universal Intelligence. Mantra chanting is a prayer and hence can be used for that purpose.

Mantra chanting for general well-being Mantras are also selected and chanted for general well-being of the individual, family, community, country or even the entire creation. Either for a desired end or for general well-being the important thing is the Intention, called samkalpa in Sanskrit.

It is spelt out in the beginning clearly and then the chanting is taken up. Many times japa can be carried out for the sake of others also.

Mantras for moksha (Meaning of Mantras and the types of Mantras in Hinduism)

Mantra chanting is also taken up by those aspirants who want nothing other than moksha or enlightenment. They take up the mantra chanting for removing various obstacles in their pursuit and thus try to obtain mental purity and focus.
A balanced, pure and focused mind alone can think of **moksha or enlightenment**. This **type of mantra** chanting is called a **Nishkâma Upasana**. **Nishkâma** means without desire.

Though the – **desire for enlightenment** is also a desire, it is never considered a desire in the scripture because it is a desire which removes all other desires and will bestow the individual a status from where he is no more bound by a desire but may still pursue desires with the freedom and fulfilment.

Thus action is categorized as one which is done for the sake of happiness, completeness and fulfilment and the other one is action done out of fulfilment, completeness and happiness. Since **moksha means fullness** or completeness, the desire for **moksha** is not categorized as any other desire.

Mechanism of mantra (Meaning of Mantras and the types of Mantras in Hinduism)

Now we will discuss **how a mantra works on the body and mind**. The modern Mind-Body medicine has conclusively proved that mind works on the body directly, either in the adverse way or in a beneficial way.

Our **mind** generally thinks in two ways. One of the two is linear thinking and another – is associative thinking. IQ is associated with linear thinking and EQ is associated with associative thinking.

**Japa breaks both these circuits** and allows the **mind** to be in state of **rest and awareness**. It gives the mind – wakeful rest.

This is more effective than a long rest in relaxing the entire system. When **japa of a mantra** is done the next thought is known which is not possible otherwise. This leads to a certainty of the mind leading to rest and focus.

It does not lead to monotony as it is stated generally, because each **chant** is full and complete in itself in meaning and feeling. When a **mantra** is chanted either verbally or mentally then it **vibrates** the brain matter and connects new neural circuits.

This helps in higher understanding of the Truth as **revealed by that mantra**. But this effect comes after repeating the mantra for a long period of time and bringing in the resonance effect in the brain.

For this the seers developed various methods. How much a **mantra** is to be **chanted** and how it is to be chanted etc. were all given in the **Mantra Shastra** (Scripture of Mantras).
Japa or mantra chanting

There are two types of results for every activity. One is called “Drishta Phala” or “Seen Result” and the other is called “Adrishta Phala” or “Unseen Result”.

Many times we see that, though all known factors are taken care of, still the result does not come as it is expected because still some unknown factors played there. All prayers are meant to take care of this unknown factor because known factors are supposed to be addressed by the individual pragmatically.

When the individual is not in a position to take care of a known factor due to incapacity to do so then one can take recourse to a prayer to gain strength and capacity to take care of those known factors. In Bhagavat Gita Lord says “Karmani eva adhikaraha te mā phaleshu kadachana”.

You have right over action only but not on its results because results are taken care of by the law of karma. Then the Lord says “Mā karma pahalahetuhu bhut mā te sangotsva karmani”, let you not be the causes of the results and at the same time do not take to inaction just because the results are governed by the laws of action and reaction.

Given this background japa or ‘mantra chanting’ is mainly taken up to take care of the Adrishta Phala portion or for taking care of the Unseen Factors. Hence here the japa is more centred on chanting with a prayerful attitude.

Whereas mantra meditation is directly to attain tranquility and peace of mind which is a Drishta Phala or seen result.

In Sanskrit there are two ways of looking at the meaning of a word. One is Vyuttpatti Artha or ‘derived meaning’ from the root. The second one is called Roodhi Artha or ‘commonly known meaning’.

The derived meaning of japa is to think – The commonly known meaning of japa is to repeat a mantra number of times for a length of time. Japa is a form of prayer. If the repetition is done audibly then it is called vācika japa and if it is done mentally it is called manasika japa.

There are again variations in vācika japa like loud chanting of the mantra or uttering the mantra at a very less sound wherein only the subject alone can listen and even less than that is muttering the mantra. One needs to prepare oneself before one sits for chanting a mantra.

Benefits and limitations of Mantras

The benefits of mantra japa or meditation using mantra are innumerable in the form of both seen and unseen results. The main benefit of doing mantra
japa – which the modern man can safely expect to get is the overall emotional balancing.

This is a result which can be seen and hence there is no make belief in this. This in turn definitely helps in improving the physical health of an individual. Limitations are always to be understood before taking up any endeavor. Mantra japa is not an exception to it.

If one expects any miracles or some light and sound effects due to mantra japa, then he may be disenchanted or disillusioned. Any exaggerated subjective expectation which is not inherently present in the thing can always lead the person to be dissatisfied and loose charm in that sadhana or practice.

Mantra is not an exception to it. One should remember that mantra is an aid in discovering fullness and joy which are innate to us. Unreasonable expectations about the person from whom the mantra is to be taken etc. always leads to a change of gurus and mantras.

Mantra taken from a person who has done some amount of japa of that mantra sincerely is good enough. Many modern gurus, in the name of Shakti Pat or transferring the power of the mantra are simply exploiting the gullibility of the individuals.

It is true that mantra is always to be taken from a living person and not from books. A live candle alone can light up another – a soul alone can touch another soul. But this does not mean that a person should keep on looking for some special person to do what he is supposed to do.

No one can transfer the responsibility of understanding the Truth from himself to the guru. Hence excessive importance given in selecting the person and the mantra is not considered prudent.

Better than that – is to stick with the mantra and what it is doing for some time with interest and one should understand that as an aid in the ultimate spiritual progress.

The Role of Rosary in Mantra Japa

Doing japa with a rosary can be helpful in certain cases – while doing mantra sadhana but at most other times – counting with fingers is okay.

Rosaries (malas) can be important for specific mantras only. For various deities – various rosaries are there. For example with any Lakshmi mantra – the Lotus Seed rosary can be said to be beneficial.

This is it for today. I will continue this article next time – Meaning of Mantras and Types of Mantras in Hinduism in the next article.
Basic Hindu Mantras

Here we are going to give some basic Hindu mantras to main Hinduism deities. It may sound very basic and known to everyone to more experienced practitioners of Hinduism or born in India, yet a terra incognita to many westerners.

1. Shiva mantra:

**OM NAMAH SHIVAYA**

“Om Homage to Lord Shiva”

Devata of mantra – Shiva. Very ancient and powerful mantra, removes all negative influences and brings inner and outer harmony. Give ability to keep mind silent and calm. Bring intuitive knowledge, fearlessness, stamina, asceticism and great confidence in practice. Protect from evil influences and bad karma.

2. Ganesh mantras:

**OM SHRI GANEShayA NAMAHA**

(Om Homage to Ganesha)

**OM GUM GANAPATAYE NAMAHA**

Devata of mantra: Ganesha – Deva with a head of elephant, son of Shiva, known as ruler over heavenly armies of spirits and who brings good fortune, luck and knowledge. Patron of literature, arts and commercial activities. Gives perfection in intellectual work and right perception and knowledge of people, conceptions, what is real and what illusions.

3. Hare Krishna

**OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VASUDEVAYA**

(“Om Homage to all-pervading transcendental consciousness”)

Devata – Krishna, one of his names.

Qualities: Brings spiritual enlightenment, self-realization, awareness about ultimate values, divine bliss, success in all beginnings.

4. Hare Krishna Hare Krishna

**KRISHNA KRISHNA HARE HARE**

**HARE RAMA HARE RAMA**
RAMA RAMA HARE HARE
(“Glory to Krishna, Glory to Rama”)

- The famous in the western world Hindu sanskrit mantra, brought to the west by Shrila Prabhupada in the 60’s and sung by the Beatles and many devotees around the world and considered by certain groups the supreme. Is it really supreme for you or not, a very nice mantra indeed among many others. Dedicated to the glory of Krishna and Rama, who both are considered avatars or embodiments of great God Vishnu in a human form. Brings many many spiritual benefits. Takes away all worries, brings joy, harmony and energy. Gives clear mind, purifies heart from negativities and sins, gives intelligence. Eliminates confusion and evil, removes sorrows and sufferings. Brings light and love to everything. Have a number of Ayurvedic effects, especially for heart diseases and frees from drug-dependency among other things.

5. OM SHRI KRISHNAYA NAMAHA
(Om Homage to Shri Krishna)

One more mantra to Krishna, the embodiment of Vishnu. Mantra helps to acquire happiness and success in all material and spiritual matters. Gives wisdom, joy, self-awareness and purity.

6. OM SHRI KRISHNAYA GOVINDAYA
GOPIJANA VALLABHAYA NAMAHA

- Mantra mentions several names of Krishna, brings joy, love, light, wisdom, purity, intelligence, spiritual realization, harmony and happiness. Very beneficial for a joyful mood. Harmonizes all health energies.

7. OM NAMO NARAYANAYA
(Homage to Narayana)

Narayana is a name of Vishnu. Mantra gives love to all existing, limitless power, fame, wisdom and liberation. Gives powers to overcome all obstacles arisen as an outcome of selfishness and confusion. Frees from a pride. Brings joy through awareness of absolute truth. Makes water “alive” or healing can be chanted while bathing.

8. OM SHRI RAMAYA NAMAHA
(Om Homage to Rama)

Rama – an avatar of god Vishnu, believed to be a divine ruler in very ancient times. His adventures have been described in Vedic scriptures Ramayana. His
mantra gives spiritual powers, success in worldly matters, relieves from diseases, brings perfection. Helps in sorrows.

9. OM SHRI DURGAYAY NAMAHA
   (Om Homage to Durga)
   - Mantra dedicated to goddess Durga, removes evil influences, protects against dark disturbing forces, removes obstacles. Eliminates apathy, selfishness, gives power. Very popular among unmarried girls, among other things.

10. OM SHRI KALIKAYAI NAMAHA
   - Mantra of black goddess Kali, she takes care of her devotees as a loving mother for her child. Protects from evil psychic influences. Destroys wrong inclinations, brings fearlessness and powers to overcome confusion. Believed to be giving magic powers and drinking blood of demons. Take care!

11. OM SHRI HANUMATE NAMAHA
    (Om Homage to Hanuman)
    - You probably remember the monkey-men, servant of Lord Rama, the son of Sun-god – Hanuman! His mantra gives strength, energy of life, ability to overcome fears, difficulties, gives power over emotions. This mantra may help in very critical situations.

12. OM SHRI KARTIKEYAYA NAMAHA
    - Mantra to Kartikeya or Murugan, son of Shiva, heavenly warrior. Gives strength, might, victory in fights, fame, qualities of a leader, manliness, skills.

13. OM SHRI SKANDAYA NAMAHA
    - Yet another name of Murugan. Gives fame, decisiveness, courage, victory and success in struggles, liberates from bad karma.

14. OM SHRI MAHA LAKSHMIYAI NAMAHA
15. OM SHRI MAHA SARASWATIYAI NAMAHA
or
OM AEEM SARASWATIYAI NAMAHA
Mantra of goddess Saraswati – patroness of arts, knowledge, learning and eloquence. Her mantra gives all kinds of creativeness, true knowledge and intelligence, intuition, love, beauty, self-control, harmony and so on. It is repeated before giving lectures, performances, writing. Not to be confused with the river with the same name in India.

16. JAYA JAYA SHRI NRISIMHA
or
HRIIM KSHRAUM HRIM
- Mantras of Lord Nrisimha – the avatar (embodiment) of Lord Vishnu in ancient times, similar to Krishna, but with a Lion head (simha – lion). A very protective mantra, protects against all psychic influences, fears, etc. Brings the help of a lion.

17. OM UGRAM VIRAM MAHAVISHNUM JVALANTAM
VISHWATOMUKHAM NRISIMHAM BHISHANA
BHADRAM MRITYUMRITYUM NAMAMYAHAM
- Once again – a very powerful mantra-prayer to Lord Nrisimha, helps and protects from all dangers, problems and evil influences.

18. OM TRYAMBAKAM YAJAMAHE SUGANDHIM PUSHTI
VARDHANAM URVARUKAMIVA BANDHANAN
MRITYOR MUKSHIYA MAMRITAT
Considered a very powerful health mantra, a prayer to Lord Shiva from Rigveda. Should be of some worth if kept so long!

1 and 8 gives a very good number 9. We have exactly 9 planets in the universe and I am going to finish for now! Be good, practice mantras and tell me which one is the supreme for you!

People are often searching for experience. If we speak about Hinduism – the word yoga has gained a wide popularity in the west in last decades. However,
not too many people in the west take time to realize, that yoga is a name for a practice of Hinduism or in other name – when we think what actually is Hinduism – most people and state organizations agree that it is Religion. And Hatha Yoga – or gymnastic postures - now wide spread in the west – is one of the forms of religious practice. The lowest one, because the most physical and most rooted in the transitional world, but practiced accordingly can bring a little more healthy and prolonged life.

But practicing only physical exercises it is easy to lose the goal behind clouds. And the absolute goal of yoga is an absolute union with God or Divine. The union with divine traditionally can be reached most successfully with such methods as limitless love to divine and humanity, mantras and hymns to God, contemplation about Divine, selfless service to God and man and finally prostrations to God. While in the west there are many speculations about the word of yoga, like Hot Yoga, Yoga Science, yoga this and yoga that, which often is done due to marketing and commercial reasons and often doesn’t have much in common with yoga actually, according to traditional classification and Vedic scriptures there are generally five types of yoga, which includes Bhakti Yoga or yoga of love to God, Raja Yoga or contemplation about God, Jñana Yoga or yoga of wisdom and knowledge about God, Karma Yoga or selfless service to God and humanity and finally Hatha Yoga or prostrations and other postures to God.

So, there are five major yoga’s. We have heard from scriptures that in the history have been times, when the lifespan of people was like thousand years, everyone was living in a great abundance and religious teachings were flourishing. People had time to practice all five yoga’s and reach the highest realizations and unity with God. Does it sound like about us? Well, in our times the lifespan of people is short, we don’t know what will bring tomorrow for us, we don’t know when we will die and most people are poor and have to spend most time in worldly activities, so we have to make priorities.

Love is one of the most universal priorities possible, and so are mantras, which bring it to us. The one may be not very clever or educated, may be not in a very good physical shape to perform all postures, one may not have a teacher near them or pay for classes or travel. Yet, almost everyone can chant mantras, have love and harmony and be happy. You always have a mind to work with. And Mind is not only brains, but what perceives the world and yourself, what makes you alive or dead.

Religion can be the greatest joy or maybe blind joy, adventure and happiness and it is often sad to deal with people who don’t have such experience, who tend to use different religious elements for commercial reasons, who tend to see religion as restrictions or organizations. And now to the meat. While Hinduism
has collected thousands of effective mantras and hymns, in this article I am going to introduce you with the most popular.

Also, we have to warn that Hinduism mantras are not the same thing as Buddhist mantras you may find elsewhere. They work differently and use different energy channels in the body and although both approaches may be good, mixing is strongly not recommended, at least not in the same session. It is much like with language. While there may be several beautiful languages, mixing them might bring something poor.

**Glossary of Hindu Mantras and Meanings**

**Aham Brahma Asmi:** This is considered an “abstract” mantra (meaning it is not associated with a particular deity) whose words evoke a feeling of “oneness” with all of creation denying confinement to the body and mind.

**Aham Prema:** I am Love of the highest order – Divine Love.

**Om (AUM):** Om sometimes written as AUM is said to be the root of all letters and words. Representing the most important of all mantras it is the representation of the Supreme Being. The past, present and the future are all included in this one sound. Meditation on this sacred syllable is said to lead to liberation.

**Om Aim Hrim Krim Chamundayai Vichche:** The benefit of chanting this mantra is to facilitate concentration of mind and for the speedy fulfilment of aspirations and desires, apart from attaining courage and energy.

**Om Aim Saraswatyai Namah:** Aim is the bija of the deity Saraswati and responsible for bestowing wisdom and knowledge, she is often worshipped by people in creative arts. It is believed she is involved with the creation of new ideas and things.

**Om Dram Om Guru Dattaya Namaha:** This mantra is a means to sharpen your skills as a spiritual counsellor and teacher (guru), as well as progressing you along your own spiritual path.

**Om Dum Durgayei Namaha:** This mantra is often used for protection against internal or external negative forces.

**Om Gum Ganapataye Namaha:** This mantra can help resolve many problems and difficulties. It works to bring about unity between our desire and the object of that desire.

**Om Hanumanthaya Namah:** This mantra is used to bestow victory and strength.
**Om Hareng Baglamukhi Namaha: Bagalamukhi** means “The Crane-Headed One” and this mantra is used to uncover deceit and to suppress negative against you.

**Om Hiranyagarbhaya Namaha:** This mantra is used to heal the heart and emotions.

**Om Kali Ma:** This mantra calls upon the goddess Kali. It is said to vibrate with her power and serves as a vehicle for transporting you into her domain. The goddess Kali is thought to be a very powerful catalyst for spiritual progression. She is also known as the destroyer.

**Om Kleem Namah:** Freeing the devotee from wrong doing within his/her life returning to purity.

**Om Kleem Shum Shukraya Namah:** The word ‘Kleem in this mantra denotes Kama Shakti, the power of love, delight, contentment and fulfilment.

**Om Sri Krishna Sharanam Namah:** Krishna literally means the one who attracts all. To the beloved lord Krishna I pray to take me under his shelter.

**Om Mani Padme Hum:** A powerful mantra used to embrace and be blessed by the essence of compassion.

**The Mantra explained**

**First, the nature of a mantra and what it means:**

In the Buddhist tradition, special words are repeated over and over again until they begin to gather a certain “emptiness”. This is not “emptiness” in the traditional sense where we imagine an experience of nothing…rather it is experiencing ourselves in the moment without the usual attachment of ego.

**We become free or “empty” of everything but an inner awareness.**

That form of enlightened awareness gives us the intuitive knowledge to save ourselves from suffering.

**The Six Syllables and Their Relationship to Suffering**

Interestingly, each of the 6 syllables has certain Sanskrit meanings that are important.

These oppose certain internal forces that cause suffering.

**Om (ohm)-** Om is the sound or “vibration” of the universe. This sound is the most important of all; but in the context of chanting and mantras, it is meant destroy attachments to ego and establish **generosity**.
Ma (mah)- Removes the attachment to jealousy and establishes ethics.
Ni (nee)- Removes the attachment to desire and establishes patience.
Pad (pahd)- Removes the attachment to prejudice and establishes perseverance.
Me (meh)- Removes the attachment to possessiveness and establishes concentration.
Hum (hum)- Removes the attachment to hatred and establishes wisdom.

“So in this way recitation of the mantra helps achieve perfection in the six practices from generosity to wisdom. The path of these six perfections is the path walked by all the Buddha’s of the three times. What could then be more meaningful than to say the mantra and accomplish the six perfections?”

Om Muni Muni Mahamuni Shakyamuniye Svaha: Muni means “sage” and Maha means “great.” This mantra is devoted to the Buddha and is used to invoke the ideals (compassion, love, kindness, etc.) represented by the great sage.

Om Namah Shivaya: Om and salutations to Shiva, the bestower of inner strength, fearlessness, consciousness and detachment.

Om Namo Narayanaya: Considered a Vishnu mantra, it is meant to bring unconditional love, bliss and a connection to the divine light.

Om Radha Krishnaya Namaha: Manifesting as the lovers Radha and Krishna, this is a mantra is a prayer for conjugal love relationships to call in the divine to the couple and elevate them to an enhanced state of intimacy and love.

Om Sarva Kamadayaya Namaha: This mantra is used to help fulfil individual desires.

Om Shreem Maha Lakshmiyei Namah: a blessing mantra for abundance and prosperity on both the physical and spiritual planes.

Om Shri Dhanvantre Namaha: Used to enhance one’s own healing skills for the self and for others. This mantra works to promote healing on all levels – physical, mental and emotional.

Om Sri Maha Kalikayai Namah: Prayer to the Kali deity to invoke her transformative power and eradicate negative qualities in the world. Maha Kali is one of the most fearsome of all expressions of Divinity.

Om Sri Maha Lakshmyai Namah: Prayer to the Lakshmi deity. She bestows wealth and abundance of a material and spiritual nature. She is almost always
picted as a beautiful woman standing on a lotus blossom with her arms open and giving.

**Om Sri Rama Jaya Rama:** This mantra is used to transcend karma and purify the ego. It invokes the healing energy of the sun and brings harmony and enlightenment allowing the divine within to navigate through problems and issues in life.

**Om Sri Ramaya Namah:** This mantra is used to bring balancing energy into the life and body of the devotee. The syllables Ra and Ma balance energy in the masculine and feminine channels in the body, located on the right and left sides of the body, respectively. It also refers to the avatar himself, as well as to the divine self within.

**Om Tare Tuttare Ture Swaha:** Used to purify all the impurities of your body, speech and mind and liberates the devotee from samsara, from all true suffering or problems.

**So Hum/Ham Sa:** Sometimes called the So Hum breath the mantra is meant to be mentally repeated in harmony with the breath. “So” is the outbreath and “Hum” or “Ham” is the in-breath creating a circle of breath and mantra where one links to the other. The translation of this mantra is “I am that I am” meaning the devotee is without form, without quality, without past, present or future. He or she simply “is” in the awareness of the Divine. This is a very powerful mantra. Practiced as Ham Sa; the Hong Sau technique; will naturally lead to the So Hum/. Hong Sau is first learned as “Hong” in-breath and “Sau” outbreath. Over time, the mind and breath become one and find the So Hum naturally occurring – in an even deeper state than if first learned that way. Practice Hong Sau technique first and over time begin changing to the So Hum breath.

**What are Puranas?**

The Puranas are ancient Hindu texts eulogizing various deities of the Hindu pantheon through divine stories. The multiple scriptures known by the name of Puranas can be categorized under the same class as the 'Itihasas' or Histories - the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and is believed to have been derived from the same religious system as these epics that were the best products of the mytho-heroic stage of Hindu belief.

**The Origin of the Puranas**

Although the Puranas share some of the traits of the great epics, they belong to a later period and provide a "more definite and connected representation of the mythological fictions and the historical traditions." Horace Hayman Wilson, who translated some Puranas into English in 1840, says that they also "offer
characteristic peculiarities of a more modern description, in the paramount importance which they assign to individual divinities, in the variety ... of the rites and observances addressed to them, and in the invention of new legends illustrative of the power and graciousness of those deities...

**The five Characteristics of the Puranas**

According to Swami Sivananda, the Puranas can be identified by 'Pancha Lakshana' or five characteristics they possess - history; cosmology, often with various symbolical illustrations of philosophical principles; secondary creation; genealogy of kings; and of 'Manvantaras' or the period of Manu's rule consisting of 71 celestial Yugas or 306.72 million years.

All the Puranas belong to the class of 'Suhrit-Samhitas,' or friendly treatises, markedly differing in authority from the Vedas, which are called the 'Prabhu-Samhitas' or the commanding treatises.

**The Purpose of the Puranas**

The Puranas have the essence of the Vedas and written to popularize the thoughts contained in the Vedas.

They were meant, not for the scholars, but for the ordinary people who could hardly fathom the high philosophy of the Vedas. The aim of the Puranas is to impress upon the minds of the masses the teachings of the Vedas and to generate in them devotion to God, through concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, lives of saints, kings and great men, allegories, and chronicles of great historical events. Ancient sages used these images to illustrate the eternal principles of the belief system that came to be known as Hinduism. The Puranas helped the priests to hold religious discourses in temples and on banks of holy rivers, and people loved to hear these stories. These texts are not only replete with information of all kinds but also very interesting to read. In this sense, the Puranas play a pivotal role in Hindu theology and cosmogony.

**The Form and Author of the Puranas**

The Puranas are mainly written in the form of a dialogue in which one narrator relates a story in reply to the inquiries of another. The primary narrator of the Puranas is Romaharshana, a disciple of Vyasa, whose primary task is to communicate what he learned from his preceptor, as he had heard it from other sages. Vyasa here is not to be confused with the renowned sage Veda Vyasa, but a generic title of a compiler, which in most Puranas is Krishna Dwaipayana, the son of great sage Parasara and the teacher of the Vedas.
The eighteen Major Puranas

There are 18 main Puranas and an equal number of subsidiary Puranas or Upa-Puranas and many 'sthala' or regional Puranas. Of the 18 major texts, six are Sattvic Puranas glorifying Vishnu; six are Rajasic and glorifying Brahma; and six are Tamasic and they glorifying Shiva. They are categorized serially in the following list of Puranas:

- Vishnu Purana
- Naradiya Purana
- Bhagavat Purana
- Garuda Purana
- Padma Purana
- Brahma Purana
- Varaha Purana
- Brahmanda Purana
- Brahma-Vaivarta Purana
- Markandeya Purana
- Bhavishya Purana
- Vamana Purana
- Matsya Purana
- Kurma Purana
- Linga Purana
- Shiva Purana
- Skanda Purana
- Agni Purana

The Most Popular Puranas

Foremost among the many Puranas are the Srimad Bhagavata Purana and the Vishnu Purana. In popularity, they follow the same order. A portion of the Markandeya Purana is well known to all Hindus as Chandi, or Devimahatmya. Worship of God as the Divine Mother is its theme. Chandi is read widely by the Hindus on sacred days and Navaratri (Durga Puja) days.
About Shiva Purana and Vishnu Purana

In the Shiva Purana, quite predictably, Shiva is eulogized over Vishnu, who is sometimes shown in poor light. In the Vishnu Purana, the obvious happens - Vishnu is highly glorified over Shiva, who is often disparaged. Despite the apparent disparity depicted in these Puranas, Shiva and Vishnu are thought to be one, and part of the Trinity of Hindu theogony. As Wilson points out: "Shiva and Vishnu, under one or other form, are almost the sole objects that claim the homage of the Hindus in the Puranas; departing from the domestic and elemental ritual of the Vedas, and exhibiting a sectarial fervour and exclusiveness … They are no longer authorities for Hindu belief as a whole: they are special guides for separate and sometimes conflicting branches of it, compiled for the evident purpose of promoting the preferential, or in some cases the sole, worship of Vishnu or of Shiva.

Briefly Shastra’s Hindu Sacred Scriptures

Veda (Primary and Authoritative Scripture)

The Vedas are apaurusheya "not of human agency", are supposed to have been directly revealed, and thus are called śruti ("what is heard"). The four Samhitās are metrical (with the exception of prose commentary interspersed in the Krishna Yajurveda). The term samhitā literally means "composition, compilation". The individual verses contained in these compilations are known as mantras. Some selected Vedic mantras are still recited at prayers, religious functions and other auspicious occasions in contemporary Hinduism.

Upa Veda

The term upaveda ("applied knowledge") is used in traditional literature to designate the subjects of certain technical works. Lists of what subjects are included in this class differ among sources. The Charanavyuha mentions four Upavedas: Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Gandharva Veda, Stapatya Veda

Vedanga

The Vedanga (vedāṅga, "member of the Veda") are six auxiliary disciplines traditionally associated with the study and understanding of the Vedas. 1. Shiksha (śiksā): phonetics and phonology (sandhi), 2. Kalpa (kalpa): ritual, 3. Vyakarana (vyākarana): grammar, 4. Nirukta (nirukta): etymology, 5. Chandas (chandas): meter, 6. Jyotisha (jyotisa): astronomy for calendar issues, such as auspicious days for performing sacrifices. Traditionally, vyākarana and nirukta are common to all four Vedas, while each veda has its own śiksā, chandas, kalpa and jyotisa texts. The Vedangas are first mentioned in the Mundaka Upanishad
(at 1.1.5) as subjects for students of the Vedas. Later, they developed into independent disciplines, each with its own corpus of Sutras.

**Samhita**

Samhita (Sanskrit saṃhita "joined" or "collected") may refer to the basic metrical (mantra) text of each of the Vedas, specifically, these texts with sandhi applied.

**Aranyaka**

The Aranyakas (Sanskrit āranyaka आरण्यक) are part of the Hindu śruti, the four Vedas; they were composed in late Vedic Sanskrit typical of the Brahmanas and early Upanishads; indeed, they frequently form part of either the Brahmanas or the Upanishads.

**Brahmana**

The Brāhmanas (Devanagari: ब्राह्मणम्) are part of the Hindu śruti literature. They are commentaries on the four Vedas, detailing the proper performance of rituals.

**Upanishad (Vedanta Darshana)**

The Upanishads are mostly the concluding part of the Brahmanas, and the transition from the latter to the former is identified as the Aranyakas. All Upanishads have been passed down in oral tradition.

**Yoga Darshana**

Yoga-darsana (the philosophy of Yoga) is based on the exposition of the epistemological, metaphysical, and methodological ideas of an age-long meditative tradition codified in the work of Patanjali and widely known as Yoga Sutras. As distinct from the Tantra and Hatha-Yoga traditions, Yoga-darsana is concerned primarily with acquisition and perpetuation of two states of mind referred to as "collocative" (sapaksa) with Yoga, namely, the state of the one-pointed mind (ekāgratā) and the state of the inhibited mental functions (niruddha). The Yoga itself is being equated with samādhi.

**Sankhya Darshana**

Samkhya, also Sankhya, Sānkhya, or Sāmkhya (Sanskrit: सांख्य, IAST: sānkhya;) is one of the six schools of classical Indian philosophy. Sage Kapila is traditionally considered as the founder of the Samkhya school, although no historical verification is possible. It is regarded as one of the oldest philosophical systems in India.
Mimamsa Darshana

Mimāṃsā (मीमांसा), a Sanskrit word meaning "investigation", is the name of an astika ("orthodox") school of Hindu philosophy whose primary enquiry is into the nature of dharma based on close hermeneutics of the Vedas. The nature of dharma isn't accessible to reason or observation, and must be inferred from the authority of the revelation contained in the Vedas, which are considered eternal, authorless (apurushayatva), and infallible.

Vyesheshika Darsana

Vaisheshika, or Vaiśesika, (Sanskrit: वैशेषिक) is one of the six Hindu schools of philosophy (orthodox Vedic systems) of India. Historically, it has been closely associated with the Hindu school of logic, Nyaya.

Nyaya Darshana

Nyāya (Sanskrit ni-āyá, literally "recursion", used in the sense of "syllogism, inference") is the name given to one of the six orthodox or astika schools of Hindu philosophy—specifically the school of logic. The Nyaya school of philosophical speculation is based on texts known as the Nyaya Sutras, which were written by Aksapada Gautama

Purana *

The Puranas (Sanskrit: पुराण purāna, "of ancient times") are a genre of important Hindu, Jain or Buddhist religious texts, notably consisting of narratives of the history of the universe from creation to destruction, genealogies of kings, heroes, sages, and demigods, and descriptions of Hindu cosmology, philosophy, and geography.

Aagama Shastra

Agama (Sanskrit आगम) means, in the Hindu context, "a traditional doctrine, or system which commands faith". Elaborate rules are laid out in the Agamas for worship, construction of temple, and so on.

Smriti *

Smriti (Sanskrit: स्मृति, Smrti, IPA: [smṛti] ?) literally "that which is remembered," refers to a specific body of Hindu religious scripture, and is a codified component of Hindu customary law. Smriti also denotes non-Shruti texts and is generally seen as secondary in authority to Shruti.
Tantra Shastra *

The word Tantra also applies to any of the scriptures (called "Tantras") commonly identified with the worship of Shakti. Tantra deals primarily with spiritual practices and ritual forms of worship, which aim at liberation from ignorance and rebirth, the universe being regarded as the divine play of Shakti and Shiva.

Sutra *

In Hinduism sutra denotes a distinct type of literary composition, based on short aphoristic statements, generally using various technical terms. This literary form was designed for concision, as the texts were intended to be memorized by students in some of the formal methods of scriptural and scientific study (Sanskrit: svādhyāya). Since each line is highly condensed, another literary form arose in which commentaries (Sanskrit: bhāṣya) on the sutras were added, to clarify and explain them.

Itihasa

The ancient Sanskrit epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, also termed Itiḥāsa (History) or Mahākāvya ("Great Compositions"), refer to epic poems that form a canon of Hindu scripture. Indeed, the epic form prevailed and verse was and remained until very recently the preferred form of Hindu literary works. Hero-worship was and is a central aspect of Indian culture, and thus readily lent itself to a literary tradition that abounded in epic poetry and literature.

Gita (Bhagavad Gita)

The Gītās (Song of God), also more simply known as Gita, is a sacred Hindu scriptures, though its philosophies and insights are intended to reach beyond the scope of religion and to humanity as a whole. It is at times referred to as the "manual for mankind" and has been highly praised.

The Bhagavad Gita is called a yoga shastra because it teaches yoga. Yoga is currently thought of as Ashtanga Yoga but Ashtanga Yoga is just one of the many types of yoga. Besides Ashtanga Yoga, there is Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Dhyana Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga), and Karma Yoga.

Today the word yoga is equated with Ashtanga Yoga but actually yoga is a generic word which means connection. This connection happens in many ways. So the Bhagavad Gita is called as yoga-shastra firstly because it teaches yoga. We will see that many of the chapters talk about yoga repeatedly; the word yoga appears 78 times in the Bhagavad Gita and in 15 of its 18 chapters. Only in the chapters 1, 15 and 17 is the word yoga not found. And the word yoga has related variants like the word yogi which is found 28 times in the Bhagavad Gita, and
the word yukta which means connected. Yogi is one who practices yoga, Yukta is one who is connected. Yukta is found 49 times, thus the word yoga and its variants appear totally 155 times. Now out of 700 verses of the Gita, 155 times is more than 20%. So from the sheer frequency of the word yoga we can understand that it is a very central teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.

One is the frequency of the word yoga and second is the teaching. As discussed earlier it teaches various paths. The sixth chapter is about Ashtanga Yoga but there are also other paths like Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga being discussed.

Besides the above, we also see that the Bhagavad Gita enables Arjuna to do yoga. At the start of the Bhagavad Gita Krishna and Arjuna were connected, both were there for the same mission of establishing dharma but by the end of the first chapter because of seeing his relatives and thinking about how he would kill all of them, Arjuna became unnerved and there was viyoga (separation) so they became disconnected. Then at the end of the Bhagavad Gita they again came together when Arjuna after understanding Krishna said “karishivachanamtava” i.e. I will do whatever you tell me to.

Thus we see, from its essential message, from the frequency of the word usage and the effect on the hearer, the Bhagavad Gita is a Yoga Shastra, a scripture that teaches yoga.

Contents

Foreword by the Editor: The Higher Self 2
Namaskar/Namaste 6
On Meditation and Yoga: Introduction – The Head Centres 7
The Third Eye – Anja Meditation; The method of Third Eye Meditation 9
Chakra Meditation: What is the Chakra System? 12
Chakra Meditation in eight steps 13
Gazing Meditation (Trataka) 14
What it is really? Gazing meditation 15
How it is done detailed 16
Candle Gazing Meditation and the Third Eye 18
Extra Tips for Candle Light Meditations 19
Kundalini Meditation 19
Kundalini Meditation – what is it? 19
Where do I do it?: When do I do it? How long should I do it? 20
Is there a special diet? How do I do it? 21
Here is a simple Kundalini Yoga motional technique to try:.... 23
Meditation for the negative Mind
Kriya Yoga
   Its History
   Meditation Techniques of the Kriya Yoga Path
Sound Meditation (Nada Yoga)
   The History of Nada Yoga; Para Nada
   Pashyanti
   Madhyama; Vaikhari; The Universe and Nada
   The Centre of Nada; Practice of Nada in Bhakti Yoga
   Diet of a Nada Yogi; Music and Nada Yoga
   Time for practice; Precautions; Preparation for Nada Sadhana
   Practice for the manifestation of Nada
   Nada in the Koshas
   Nada Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita
   Nada Yoga and Kabir; Anahad nada and anahata nada; Nada Yoga and Gorakhnath
   Finally, the Ultimate Nada
Tantra
   Tantra Yoga
   Left and right-hand Tantra Yoga
   Tantra Yoga: It’s not about huffing and puffing
Pranayama
   What is pranayama (yogic breathing)?
   Understanding prana
   Benefits of regular practice of pranayama; Types of pranayama and their application
Nadi Shodhan pranayama – Alternate Nostril Breathing Technique
   What is Nadi Shodhana
   How to do Nadi Shodhan pranayama?
   Cautions to be taken while practicing Nadi Shodhan Pranayama
   Contraindications; Eight best pranayama techniques for the lonely meditator; Types of pranayama ……
Yoga in the Vedanta
   Three Basic Types of Vedic Yoga: Mantra Yoga; Prana Yoga; Dhyana Yoga
Samadhi Yoga: The Ultimate Yoga; Vedic Integral Yoga
What is a Yogi?
The Inner Sanctuary – the Higher Self
Gayatri, author’s most chanted mantra
Creating Peace of Mind
   Through Meditation; Communicate;
Being creative; Being active; Forgive, forget and accept
Withdraw yourself in solitude for a time; Connect with others and the world; Be charitable
Psychosynthesis Meditation; Five rejuvenating techniques to enter your Inner Sanctuary
Enter into the Silence of Meditation; Positive Affirmations (self-talk) and meditation go together
Positive Affirmations for Reflective Meditation
Your Inner Sanctuary’s Vision
   What is imagination or inner vision? Developing the imagination, the power of your inner vision; How to make your mind and heart work together
      First Part – Evaluating the Mind
      Second Part – Evaluating the Heart
      Third Part – Reconciling your mind and heart
      Epilogue
Creating Your Own Private Meditation Location
A Zen Meditation Location as example
Additional and helpful Knowledge about Yoga Meditation: Yoga Nidra
The Benefits of Inner Peace; How to Find Inner Peace?
Useful final Tips for Meditation as part of Self-Realisation Development
Some other useful points for beginning meditation
Mantras in Hinduism
   Benefits and limitations of Mantras
   The Role of Rosary in Mantra Japa
Basic Hindu Mantras
Glossary of Hindu Mantras and Meanings
What are Puranas? ; The Origin of the Puranas
The five Characteristics of the Puranas; The Purpose of the Puranas; The Form and Author of the Puranas
The eighteen Major Puranas; The Most Popular Puranas
About Shiva Purana and Vishnu Purana
Briefly Shastra’s Hindu Sacred Scriptures; Veda (Primary and Authoritative Scripture
Contents

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