
MEDITATION 101 - STABILIZATION

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(Video Transcript)

In the last presentation, we discussed approaching meditation in three steps: stabilization, mastery of mind, and self-inquiry. Let us just briefly review what we have covered earlier.

We are distinct from thought as we are aware of them. Thought is habit; and identifying with thought is also a habit. Each time we identify with thought, they strengthen their hold on consciousness.

Today, we take up the first step in guided meditation: stabilization. Looking within, we realize our distinctness from thought and are able to continue without getting mixed up with thought.

Let us then begin...

Sit in any cross-legged posture. The use of a cushion will raise the buttocks and remove the strain from the knees and hips while bringing about flexibility gradually. It is important to keep the back and neck straight and the head facing forward naturally, without bending down. If you cannot sit cross-legged on the floor, sit on a chair, but keep your legs uncrossed to preclude the urge to switch the legs over and keep the feet flat on the floor, with your back straight.

Light a candle and/or incense in your prayer area and offer some prayers from the heart. Set the timer for 15-18 minutes and close your eyes while you recite the mantra 'Om' three times.

You should not have any expectation from meditation itself while still meditating with all being.

Today, let us meditate together for about 20 minutes.

Let us meditate...

Om... Om... Om...

Become aware, or realize, that you are seated here for meditation. To become aware, or to realize, does not involve thought. The inner intelligence knows this and it is your direct experience. The inner intelligence will now come to the activity of meditation.

Now become aware of the general area, room, or space in which you find yourself. The attention will go from the activity to the space or room in which you find yourself.

Become aware of the footprint of your body. The footprint of your body is that surface area with which your body has contact with the floor, or the floor with a chair if you are seated on a chair. Try to feel this footprint at one stroke – all of it.

Now, become aware of the act of breathing. As you do so, the inner intelligence, or your attention, will go from the footprint within to the breathing, and start to investigate it. It will follow your breathing all the way in, as far as it can go, ... and all the way out – as far as it can go. If your attention is keen, you will also become aware of the warmth and humidity of your breathing.

Now introduce the mantra – shorter mantras, ishta mantras – like ‘Om Namah Sivaya’ or ‘Om Namo Narayana’ – and it doesn’t matter which one. Introduce the mantra to the rhythm of your breathing. Do not alter your breathing; instead, stretch the mantra to cover the natural span of your breath – so that you are repeating the mantra one time with every inhalation, and one time with every exhalation, ... mentally, within you. Your attention is on repeating the mantra clearly and listening to the mantra clearly, and afresh each time. Introduce an image that corresponds with your mantra, ishta devata, chosen deity, or any image of your choice, and hold that image in the center of your chest. This will help reduce the amount of obstacles, especially the visual distractions. What is important is not to change the mantra, or the image. You have to go beyond them.

Your attention is still on repeating the mantra and listening to the mantra – mentally, within you. Soon, other thoughts which are generally called distractions, but they are just other thoughts, will rise in the mind. Let them. Your attention is on repeating the mantra and listening to the mantra while you hold the image in the center of your chest. Let these other thoughts rise; they will fall just as they have arisen, on their own, as long as you do not get entangled with them, or identify with them. Because other thoughts, or distractions, are not the problem, but *being distracted is*. Do not suppress them. Simply be curious about this mantra. You are facing the mantra completely – as you repeat it and listen to it clearly. The sound of the mantra, though mental, will start – or should start – drawing you to it, becoming clearer and clearer. Let these other thoughts rise and fall. They will exhaust themselves.

...meditation ends...

Om... Om... Om...

Some closing thoughts...

These things are helpful:

Same time, same place, same method.

Try to stay with the same ishta mantra and the image; we have to go beyond them.

Make sure you have nothing pinging on your attention, awareness, within 40 minutes after your meditation, or your mind will naturally tend to gravitate towards it, initially at least.

Try not to have too heavy a meal - keep meditation between an hour to two hours *after* you have eaten.

Stay well hydrated.

Wear loose and comfortable clothing.

And above all, be patient and diligent.



Next, in Meditation 201, let us go through these steps and further into inquiry into the mantra. Remember, the mat or field of practice includes all life. Be diligent in your practice.

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