

# STEPS TOWARDS FREEDOM & ENLIGHTEMENT

**Courtsey: Meditation Techniques** 

# **DEDICATION**

I offer this book to us - humanity.
That we may realize our true Divine Nature and manifest it here on Earth through thoughts, words and actions permeated with Love, Peace, Harmony, Truth and Righteousness.

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# **An Inspiration for meditation**

The crucial skill of meditation is learning to focus, to be completely concentred. As your whole being gets engrossed in meditation, every tension and stress of daily life will fall from your shoulders. In barely a couple of seconds, you will feel rested and refreshed. Your mental attitude will be more constructive and compassionate. Your family and colleagues will immediately see the benefits of your meditation. You'll attain best conclusions, have greater creativity, and become playfully adroit in dealing the challenges of the day. The world is full of exhausted, ill-natured, stressed-out persons trying to be the best, attempting to do the correct thing, trying to equilibrize their career and bring up a healthy family. Meditation helps you make an honest, loving attitude, so that you can endure even the hardest or most intense times.

On a regular basis meditating will help you feel positive about your day -to-day life, rejuvenated, and spiritually attuned. Meditation is a great source for preventing feelings of distress and overwhelm, frustrations that often stem from modern-day stresses. We scurry from place to place, troubled by our cellular phone\* and our pagers, consumed by the demand and convenience of e-mail. We have so much to pay attention to that the priority of our relationship with ourselves, the most significant relationship of all, is badly ignored. The fact that you're curious about meditation Signifies that it's not too late to begin your journey towards a healthier, better life -style. You must remember that you're the foundation of all that swirls around you. When you are sp iritually Fit, you will be able to serve other people. Have in mind the saying by President Lincoln, "You don't strengthen the weak by weakening the strong." Every building bears a base. The larger the building, the Firmer the base. Once the building is fully built, the foundation is covered. It is buried deep into the earth, even though it holds the entire construction. Try to look at building your own spiritual strength in this manner. When we forget our roots, our foundation, life is full of stress and f ear. Only by diving deep inside can we reconnect with our own roots, our own foundation.

Meditation is a scientific discipline of self-discovery, self-understanding, and self-transformation. By meditation, we recollect who we're and hence, regain our dign ity and our luv for life. This is among the significant reasons why meditation is a basic, foundational issue for all of us. We have to devote attention..

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What Is Meditation ???

In the West, meditation means a condensed state of mind in serious reflection. The word meditation is derived

fom a Latin root ,mederi, means "to heal." It is an attempt to heal hardships of the mind, the hurt ego, by trying

to interpret the cause of the trouble and finding a way to solve it, that is, by knowing w hat counter-measures to

take. To meditate thus, is to intensify a state of understanding.

In the East, however, meditation does not mean thinking at all but setting the mind in a spiritual ideal, to be one

with it, or the thought-process fading out in the consciousness of it. According to Zen, meditation does not

imply any concept but is an consciousness of inner muteness.

Meditation is not a technique but a way of life. Meditation means a cessation of the thought processes. It depicts

a state of consciousness, when the mind is liberal of illogical thoughts and various patterns. The observer (one

who is doing meditation) realizes that all the activity of the mind is brought down to one not practicing it.

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**Expert Views About Meditation** 

Swami Satyananda Said:

"Yoga is meditation and meditation is yoga - Never forget it". Yoga and meditation can both be seen as

processes and goals."

**According To Swami Chinmayananda:** 

"Meditation has been glorified as the most sacred vocation. Hu mans alone are capable of the highest effort, by

which they can hasten their own evolution. In preparing ourselves for meditation, we should first acquire the

ability to look within. You must learn to go about your daily routine and uninterruptedly watch the mind...Let it

be a silent observer of the workings of your inner life and estimate the motives, intentions and purposes that lie

behind your thoughts, words and deeds. "

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# **MEDITATION TECHNIQUES**

## As Swami Bhajananda says:

"Meditation is not an entirely independent discipline but a stage in concentration common to almost all spiritual paths. In every path, the aspirant begins with a large number of thoughts in the mind. These gradually become reduced, and the aspirant reaches a stage when they exists only one thought in the mind."

## As Vethathiri Maharishi a spiritual teacher says:

"Meditation is a scientific method of enhancing the capacity of the mind. It fixes the mind on one's magnetic force, enhancing the ability to focus. This is the key to self realization."

#### Others:

"The whole purpose of meditation is to make you aware of your kingdom, to make you aware of your highest potential."

"Meditation is the study of attention. Attention is cognitive phenomenon. Meditation is the capacity of the brain to attend to something over a period of time.

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# THE BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

People from all walks of life, throughout the planet belonging to all the probable religions, meditate for a wide range of reasons. The same method offers something different to each according to his requirements and motives. Thus Meditation can be called as panacea which can work accordance to the motives of the practitioner. Some of the motives for which people meditate today are:

- 1. To unwind the body and mind and rejuvenate one's flow of energy in order to more efficiently face the responsibilities of one's demanding and active life.
- 2. To cure illnesses (especially psychosomatic ones).
- 3. To conquer emotional problems.

- 4. To develop a more calm, and optimistic view towards life.
- 5. To develop a peaceful and more clearly functioning mind.
- 6. For larger ability to pierce into the core of problems and find inspirati onal solutions. This has been found especially useful by scientists and businessmen.
- 7. To tune into creative inspirations for artistic expression.
- 8. For liberation of oneself from addictions such as cigarettes, narcotics and tranquilizers.
- 9. To cleanse one's character.
- 10. To build up will-power.
- 11. As a means of self-examination and self-discovery.
- 12. To build up the dormant powers of the mind.
- 13. To make a connection with God.
- 14. To build up an inner relationship with God.
- 15. For divine growth, self-knowledge or clarification.

Meditation has been and is being used for a wide variety of other realistic uses, which there is no space to talk about here. The possibilities are countless, as the powers of the human mind are unlimited.

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# **TYPES OF MEDITATION**

There are two types of meditation - Active and Passive.

Active meditation relates to activities of everyday life such as walking, working, eating etc. This in fact is the aim of Yoga, to experience a meditative state ineveryday life which has the effect of increasing performance manifold as the work is done with more efficiency and energy.

To achieve active meditation, passive meditation is required which involves taking time out to be seated and perform Meditation Techniques or practices. This is called passive as it involves withdrawing ourselves in calm, sitting postures to achieve a meditative state that can help us in our active life. The aim of all passive meditation techniques is to still the mind from wavering and distracting thoughts and gradually make one pointed. Passive Meditation Techniques though of many kinds, essentially have the same modus of operandi:

- **Stage 1:** Introversion: Involves seating postures and awareness on an object. This has the effect of calming the mind and making it 'receptive' to see what's inside.
- **Stage 2:** Introversion leads to the free flow of thoughts, visions, complexes, memories etc. from the lower mind. Our passions, fears, doubts and desires arise and we are now in a position to observe these and remove the undesirable content from our minds forever.
- **Stage 3:** Having observed the lower mind, we are now in a position to explore the subconscious realms. It is here that real meditation begins. Our limitless storehouse of energy and knowledge starts manifesting itself.
- **Stage 4:** Self realization: As these stages are transcended, supreme bliss is attained. There are many mediation methods known today. Some are best for beginners; others are better tackled after a few years of experience. So to just give you a starting point the following method can be followed:

## 1) Body Position

The body should be in erect and relaxed stillness. The spine must be perpendicular to the Earth. The stomach should be empty. A check should be made of each part of the body that it is relaxed and not tense. Check especially the muscles in the abdomen, neck and shoulders.

If sitting on a chair, the feet are flat on the ground, muscles relaxed. If on the floor or rug, legs are crossed in either lotus or half lotus position (this enables the back to remain straight for longer periods of time). A pillow under the buttocks is helpful. The arms are resting on the knees with the palms relaxed opened upwards. Check the shoulders to make sure they hang naturally and are not tensed upwards. In this position the body will be of the least distraction and you will not be weighed down by discomforts and tenseness.

## 2) Movement of Breath

The rhythm and volume of the breath are directly related to our state of mind. A nervous or anxious mind produces irregular breathing rhythms. Anger generates rapid, short breat hs. In a relaxed state our breath is deep, rhythmical and longer in duration. We may reverse this process and affect the mind through breath control.

Relax the abdominal muscles and begin breathing with the diaphragm in long even inhalations and exhalations. Nothing should be forced. Do only what comes easily and naturally. If you are not used to breathing with the diaphragm, then spend some minutes each day on your back practicing this breath. It will develop gradually. With time the breath will be longer in duration; slowly and evenly in and out. There is no need to retain the breath. Keep an even relaxing rhythm. (In later stages of meditation you may be guided to retain breath. This is not suggested in the beginning).

It will be necessary to start the process consciously at first with a certain control over the mechanism of breathing. After a while this will take place automatically as you sit down to meditate or relax, just as you are now breathing automatically without thinking.

Eventually you will want to learn the "alternate breath" technique in which we alternatively breathe in through one nostril (holding the other closed) and then exhale out of the opposite nostril (now hold the other one closed). This technique is described in our book "SELF THERAPY", but you would do well to have an experienced yoga teacher check your position and method.

This technique is a very powerful means of creating balance and harmony in the bioenergy and the nervous systems. Scientific tests have shown that breathing only through the right nostril stimulates the left hemisphere of the brain, and that breathing only through the left nostril stimulates the right hemisphere. Thus, by breathing alternatively through one and then the other nostril, we create a harmonious balance in the nervous system.

This corroborates the intuitive findings of the practitioners of yoga, thousands of years ago, who named the technique "that which cleans theenergy channels". The energy channels are directly related to the flow of nerveenergy and the quality of mental impulses. Alternate breathing harmonizes, purifies and calms

this bioenergy flow in the body and the mind, thus creating an excellen t inner atmosphere for meditation.

Concerning the breathing ratio and its gradual evolution, we suggest that you refer to our book "SELF THERAPY" or to an instructor or person experienced in guiding others in breat hing techniques or in meditation. Until you find such a person you can work with one of these simple ratios using whichever suits you most.

- a) Equal Breath (1:1) in which the inhalation and exhalation are equal in duration.
- **b) Double Exhalation** (1:2) in which the exhalation is double the duration of the inhalation. (For example, if you count to 3 inhaling, then you count to 6 exhaling. Or 4 inhalation and 8 exhalation).
- c) Triangle Breathing (1:1:1) in which the inhalation, the retention and the exhalation are all equal in duration.
- **d) Square Breathing (1:1:1:1)** in which the inhalation, the retention (with lungs full), the exhalation and the suspension (with lungs empty) are all equal in duration.

Choose any of these ratios which suits you best and breath slowly, counting silently within your mind in order to keep one of these ratios. Have someone check you if you have any doubts. Perform this conscious, slow, rhythmic breathing for about five minutes as a prelude to your meditation. After this five minutes of harmonizing your energy, leave the breath to continue on its own without your conscious intervention.

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# **Difficulties During Meditation**

Many people sit down to meditate, but find it difficult to do so, because either they don't prepare themselves enough, or they don't really know what's it all about.

### Some difficulties usually faced are:

• Mind Goes Haywire: If the mind is not disturbed it is spontaneously blissful, just as water. It is by nature transparent and clear. The mind in meditation can be compared to a jar of muddy waterthe more we leave the water without interfering or stirring it, the more the particles will sink to the bottom, letting the natural clarity of

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**MEDITATION TECHNIQUES** 

the mind shine through. So take care not to impose anything on the mind. When you meditate there should be

no effort to control, to be peaceful...

• Body Become Restless And Back Become Sore: This happens due to lack of preparation. It becomes difficult

to sit for a long duration in the same pose as the body is not used to it. This is where yoga comes in - by which a

person can prepare his body to remain in a particular meditative pose for the desired duration of time.

According to Integral yoga a routine of asans, yoga nidra and pranayam should be followed prior to meditation.

• Expectation Are Too Much: If you think mediation means instant peace or that it shall clear the hassles of

the mind in minutes then you are wrong. The state of meditation does not mean a warm, fuzzy feeling, a mind

full of loving thoughts. If you hope meditation will cure incurable diseases in several weeks, again you shall be

wrong. The first thing about meditation is that you should not have any expectations. Every person comes with

a different mind set when starting meditation. One person may be close to inner space and others may be years

away from basic relaxation. There shall be doubts and confusions, all of which will be solved by practice and

dedication in time.

· Which Method Is Best Suited To Me: There are plenty of methods some for beginners, some for

experienced, some for intellectual, some for devotional or mystical kind of person. So the only way to find out

the best method suited to you, is to learn yoga under the guidance of an experienced teacher who will be able to

guide you about a method, you may adapt depending on your lifestyle, your ability and your need. But then trial

and error has done no harm and you can go ahead and find out for yourself what suits you b est.

• Experience Of Duality In Your Life: Many mediators have a dualistic kind of existence. Some people love

doing meditation but find that for many hours in the day they are unconsciously working against the very thing

they are trying to achieve in their quite times. If harmony is not created in the personality, then self control and

self-discipline will create more conflict rather than peace of mind. A person shall have to develop a harmonious

relationship between his personality and his lifestyle.

Many people sit down to meditate, but find it difficult to do so, because either they don't prepare themselves

enough, or they don't really know what's it all about.

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There are a numerous meditation techniques for efficient meditation. Diverse cultures have different mediation techniques, but one thing is sure - meditation isuniversal. The different techniques are well-matched to different personality types. While some techniques are concentrative, involving focusin g, other techniques are expansive such as 'Vipassana' meditation which allows for the free flow of thoughts and their observation. Presented below are some of the common meditation methods. Only a brief insight is provided and meditation should be learnt under the guidance of a Guru.

## Mantra Meditation

Mantra, exactly means 'revealed sound', means a sound or mixture of sounds which develop spontaneously. In mantra meditation, definite sounds are repeated (japa) to accomplish a meditative state. A Mantra is a combination of sound vibrations which have a result on the mental and spiritual consciousness. Although traditionally given by a Guru, in the absence of a Guru, the practitioner may choose his mantra. An important criterion for mantra selection is that it must plea to the mind fully when spoken orally. Mantra chanting creates powerful vibrations which are said to be focussed to the right "chakras" to draw divine forces. This procedure is said to mysteriously cure the pious, physical & psychological body. It is significant that when the mantra is chanted, the words and their rhythm must be enjoyed and one must give up oneself to this experience. Mantras do not have any specific meaning. Their power lies not in the meaning of the word but through the vibratory effects of the sound that they produced when spoken verbally or psychologically. In fact, a Mantrashould not be confused with religion. Just because a mantra refers to a Hindu God, it does not mean that it cannot be said by a Christian. Also, a Mantra should not be translated as this has the result of altering the sound vibrations wherein lies the strength of the Mantra. Repetition of a Mantra forms the basis of Mantra Meditation. Mantras for pious evolution should be practiced for a fixed amount of time each day. Repeating a mantra too much may not be right for susceptible or psychic people as it may affect them adversely. Generally, if you repeat a mantra for about 10 minutes every day, then, within a few days you will know whether the vibrations feel right for you. Mantra Meditation is the easiest and safest form of meditation and can be practiced by anyone at anytime and under any circumstances. The most ordinary way of practicing mantra Meditation is Japa. Japa (exactly means 'rotate') is performed by repeating a mantra in sync with the turning round of a Japa Mala. A Japa Mala is a rosary of 108 beads where each bead is turned after the mental or audible recitation of the mantra. Using a

Japa Mala for Mantra Meditation is very efficient as it provides an anchor to bring the mind back as it experiences wavering thoughts. The Mantra combined with the Japa Mala provides concrete anchors to which the thoughts are focussed back as they spin out of control. That is why; Japa Meditation is one of the most recommended forms of meditation for the beginner.

## Steady gaze (Trataka):

Trataka (to stare steadily) has been followed by most spiritual systems including Christianity and Sufism. In Trataka, a steady gaze is performed on a point. While, it strictly come s under the category of a yoga cleansing technique, effective trataka practice takes one to the shores of meditation. Trataka means steady gazing. It is a very simple and beautiful Meditation Technique.

#### Method:

In this a ordinary candle is used, however any other object of choice can be used. The candle is set up at an arm's distance, height with eyes, and steady gazing is first done with the eyes open. After a moment or two, the eyes are closed, and the after picture of the flame is 'gazed at' with eyes closed at the eye brow center. Try not to move through out the practice. Relax your breath, let it extend, deepen. This open gazing of the flame and then with the eyes closed is alternated a couple of times before concluding the practice. If using a candle for Trataka, the gaze should be fixed at the wick tip and not on the flame.

### Caution:

If practicing Trataka on a Candle flame, do not continue the practice for more than a month or two at a stretch as it may lead to damage of the retina.

#### Benefits:

It improves the optic function, both external and internal, such as poor eyesight and visualization abilities. It helps develop concentration and mental resolve. Develops the ability to maintain one -pointed ness in amongst the noise and distractions of daily life. Develops the psychic eye that is the ability to "see" or understand what is

inside and beyond the obvious. It develops the power of Intuition.

### Chakra Meditation:

Chakras means "wheel" and represent the major nerve plexi which branch off the spinalcord to serve the major organs of the body. Chakras represent a different level of energy manifestation and consciousness development. Chakra Anusandhana means "discovery or search of the chakras". It is a simple way for beginners to explore the chakras self-tutored. It helps in awakening them gently, and in a balanced integrated way.

#### How To:

It can be done sitting, or lying. Close your eyes, adjust your body, clothing. Let the breath relax, slow and deepen, but do not control it. After a few minutes of settling in, commence Ujjayi pranayam, and carry on for some time Now bring awareness to the spinal passage, such that awareness of breath is from bottom to top, Spend a few minutes establishing this inner breath pattern up and down. Ascending with inhalation, descending with exhalation.

Begin to locate chakras within that channel. Need not pin point the exact location, just focus on general area. Try to feel the location of each station and mentally repeat its name as you pass by it. On your way up mentally repeat from Mooldhara to Ajna, and way down reverse the order. Just before finishing let go of breath sound, then names. And chant mantra' 'Om' 3 times.

## **Precautions:**

Awakening of Chakra can have its side effects. Excessive mental energy can be a problem with t hose who do not have abundant physical activity. Never meditate on one Chakra without qualified guidance. It can lead to an imbalance and cause personality problems.

### Vipassana Meditation:

Vipassana means "insight" -to see things as they really are, through a process of selfobservation. It means insight into your own nature which enables one to recognize himself the cause of suffering and eliminate it.

#### Method:

It is usually done in a course of 10 days, when the participants refrain from reading, writing, and even talking (except discussing difficulties faced during meditation with the teacher). Set aside 15 minutes. Find a quiet place. Sit down cross-legged on the floor or a chair with a straight back. Become aware of your breath. Take a mental note of whatever feeling you are experiencing. Open your eyes slowly after 10 or 15 minutes and get up gradually. Do not worry if you do not get any great insights in your first session. Try to be aware of your senses and emotions and their impact on you.

#### Benefits:

It is free of rites. Allows one to study sensation in the body like cold, pain, itching etc. One develops wisdom.

## Raja Yoga Meditation:

Raja yoga meditation fills the yogi with super-sensuous elation or ecstasy which is the highest and the most wonderful experience. The bliss elevates the mind and raises the yogi above carnal pleasure, and moulds his bad habits. A Raja yogi establishes a relationship with God. He withdraws from all the superfluous and preventable worldly activities. He spends least amount time and resources on his personal comforts and devotes most energy for noble cause i.e. spiritual awakening of his fellow-beings.

### Zazen:

It refers to Zen meditation as was done by Buddha.

## Method:

In this you sit in lotus position with back straight to allow free movement of the diaphragm. The chin is tucked in and the weight of the body equally distributed on both the legs.

Benefits: It is a way to discipline life, and makes one realize how much valuable time is wasted each day.

## Nada Yoga:

Plug the ears with the thumbs as in Yoni mudra and concentrate on the internal body sounds. At first the sounds will be faint and will progressively become louder. By listening to this sound mind becomes internally focused. Very beneficial meditative object.

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# **Learn to Meditate Fast (Binaural Beats)**

In our fast-paced and interconnected world tension is on the rise. Now, for people who are new to mediation and other related areas, have to put more effort and time for relaxing their body and taking their mind to no thought state. Modern science has chalked out a solution for them and that isBINAURAL BEA TS.

<u>History of binaural beats:</u> Binaural bests were first discovered in 1839 by Heinrich Wilhelm Dove. However, Dove didn't realise the full potential of this technology, he merely observed that it occurred. It was another 134 years before Gerald Oster penned an article called "Auditory Beats in the Brain" which was published in Scientific American in 1973.

What is it: It was proposed that a binaural beat occurs in the brain if you apply slightly different frequency sine waves independently but simultaneously to each ear. This beat affect is created by the brain itself and is largely due to the structure of the brain's internal wiring.

These binaural beats are auditory brainstem responses, originating in the superior olivary nucleus of each hemisphere of the brain due to the interaction of the two different impulses.

The frequency of the two tones is between one and 30 Hz. Lets take the example that the difference between the two tones is 10 Hz. This 10 Hz difference is experienced within the superior oliv ary nuclei as a beat. The brain has a tendency, through the frequency following response, to resonate at the same frequency as the auditory

stimuli being presented. In our example this would be 10 Hz, which is that frequency of the Alpha state. If we offer a binaural frequency of 5 Hz, the brain will begin to resonate with that and produce Theta brainwaves. If we present a binaural beat of 3 Hz, Delta brainwaves are detected. Alpha, Theta and Delta brainwaves are connected to altered states of consciousness that can be used to reprogram the subconscious mind, eliminate negative thought schemas and release emotional connection to memories.

In layman's terms all this means is that you can relax, put on some stereo headphones and let your mind synchronize with the binaural beat frequency to create real measurable changes in your mind and body.

**Benefits**: There are immediate benefits of using these beats such as the creation of relaxed states, aided sleep or even energy boosts. However, this is not the limit of binaural beat technology. It is also possible to produce very unusual states of consciousness like lucid dreaming, creativity, out -of-body experiences, and transcendental meditation, to name but a few. However, there are also very real permanent benefit ts from using binaural beat technology. This technology has been used to create some very dramatic life changes.

<u>Dangers</u>: Thousands of individuals use Binaural Beats every day with no adverse reactions. After all they are non addictive and certainly not a busive in any way. There is a small number of people that should never use these Beats. This should be read very carefully and if you have any doubts you should then seek the opinion of a medical practitioner before using them.

People who suffer from any type of seizure should never attempt to use any type of Brainwave Entrainment technology. These work by emitting a constant pulse of sound, which causes electrical impulses in the brain, changing brainwaves. These may bring on seizures in people prone to t his complaint.

It is not advisable to use this therapy on children due to them being more prone to seizures. Even children that have never had seizures before can sometimes be affected by the like of certain television programmes or computer games.

Download binaural beats at: <a href="http://www.meditationtechniques.co.cc/2010/05/learn-to-meditate-fast-binaural-beats.html">http://www.meditationtechniques.co.cc/2010/05/learn-to-meditate-fast-binaural-beats.html</a>

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