

"... The kingdom of God is within you." -*Luke 17:21*

"Mankind is engaged in an eternal quest for that
"something else" he hopes will bring him
happiness, complete and unending. For those
individual souls who have sought and found God,
the search is over: He is that Something Else."
- *Paramahansa Yogananda*

MEDITATION The Journey Home

As long as we depend on people or circumstances to provide us with personal fulfillment and happiness, we will remain disillusioned. True fulfillment lies in the realization of "the kingdom of God" within our own individual consciousness. Seeking for this realization has often been compared to a journey; the soul's journey home.

The myth of the quest for the Holy Grail is symbolic of this search for God. The searchers went looking for the Grail; the symbol of the Divine, the Sacred. It was considered the Holiest of all missions. The searchers valiantly and courageously faced the greatest of dangers and life threatening situations. After searching the ends of the earth for the Grail, frustrated, worn, and weary, they would return home. It was always on the return home that the Holy Grail was discovered. The Grail, the Divinity, was always there unbeknownst to them. The problem was in the direction of their seeking.

Likewise with us, our lives are a search for happiness, freedom, and fulfillment. Upon what we base our success varies. Ultimately, when we look past all transitory and erroneous values and accomplishments, we discover that the only true fulfillment lies in our individual relationship with, and awareness of, our Higher Power. To experience this is the purpose of our existence. We may search, try various paths, fulfill our desires, but ultimately our seeking will be to no avail unless it turns within.

The Divinity that was symbolized by the Holy Grail lies within the center of your being. It is only a matter of communing with or consciously contacting that Power of which you are an extension. We are an outflow, an expression of a common Source that can be contacted and lived with in harmony. Just as a tree's leaves and fruit are the evidence of its invisible nourishment, so will your life be. The fruits of this conscious contact, the nourishment we call Grace, will be increasingly evident in your life as harmony, serenity, and true fulfillment.

Meditation is a method to facilitate this inward journey. It is a journey home to the center of your Being. As the searcher for the Holy Grail faced obstacles, we who undertake this inner search in the form of meditation will also face challenges. The first requirement is discipline; the commitment to sit in the silence once or twice a day to practice meditation.

Physical distractions may be a challenge. Various aches and pains may become more pronounced as we sit in the silence. Thoughts and memories may become seemingly overwhelming to our practice. However, we will find that if we discipline ourselves and adhere to the guidelines, our awareness will naturally and effortlessly be led beyond thoughts, beyond feelings, back to the Source within. The self-limiting concept of personal ego expands to the larger experience of our true self. The spiritual faculties awaken, perception becomes clear, and our thinking more orderly. Outer circumstances unfold to align us with our highest good, fulfilling all of our worthwhile needs on time and in abundance. We discover the truth of our Identity. Beyond our names and personalities, beyond all seeming separation, we have

one common ground and that is the Reality—the basis of all life and all being. When we consciously experience and live out of this awareness we function as participants with God's evolutionary intention (His will), fulfill our soul destiny, and live in harmony with all life.

THE PROCESS

The following guidelines for the practice of meditation will enable you to make your inward journey:

Your Meditation Environment. Choose a clean quiet, comfortable place, free of distractions and conducive to peaceful thoughts and feelings. It is useful to have a chair or a room, if convenient, set aside specifically for your meditation sessions.

Time of Day. Schedule meditation sessions at the same time each day, preferably before meals or at least two hours after meals. Learn to tune into your body's energy cycles and determine the time of day most suitable to your needs. In the beginning, sessions of 20 to 30 minutes in length, once or twice a day are suitable. Later, when you become more proficient, longer sessions may be experienced.

Proper Attitude. Approach your meditation session with a relaxed mental attitude, free from expectations. Be patient. Meditation is not an attempt to force anything to happen. It is a time to experience the serenity and tranquility that occurs when practiced properly. Eventually thought waves will settle down and you will experience peace within.

Posture. Meditation is a fully conscious process. Avoid the tendency to fall asleep. Your posture should be conducive to alertness and mental clarity. Sit with your feet flat on the floor, hands placed on the thighs or folded in the lap, back erect and as straight as possible, head upright and chin up. The ideal posture is firm, yet comfortable.

Breathing. Breathing is an important key to successful meditation. Breathe from the diaphragm; belly breathing. With inhalation, the stomach expands; with exhalation, the stomach contracts. Inhalation and the exhalation should be approximately the same lengths. Breathing patterns are not to be overly controlled. A smooth flowing, even rhythm is most desirable. With observation you will notice that your thought waves are intimately connected to your breathing patterns. By learning to slow the breath, and breathe in a pattern that reflects deep relaxation, your mind will be calmed.

Focus of Attention. Meditation is a process of inward turning. Normally our attention flows out to our environment. Few of us are aware of what is taking place in our minds and bodies. When meditating, we are reversing the flow of attention, concentrating and directing it within. After your body is relaxed, lift your attention to the point at the center of your forehead between the eyebrows. Feel that you are gazing out into the distance through that point. Do not cross or strain your eyes, just gently gaze upward at whatever angle is comfortable for you.

Feel that your attention is flowing up to that point and continue to hold it there throughout the duration of your meditation practice.

Mantra or Focus Word. "Man" means mind; "tra" means to take beyond. The mantra is a word or a phrase with or without meaning. It functions as a tool for focusing attention so that thoughts do not distract us. The mantra is simply "listened to" in the mind and regulated by the rhythm of breathing. Any word or phrase can be used according to your inclination, such as God, peace, love, or joy. A widely used Sanskrit mantra is so-hum. When the mantra is a two syllable word, each syllable is listened to in conjunction

with inhalation and exhalation. Example: So-hum. So is "listened to" with inhalation; hum, with exhalation.

Rest in the Peak Experience. Every meditator eventually begins to experience a feeling of deep inner peace during meditation. This is the therapeutic phase of meditation. When it occurs, the key is to rest in the experience. Allow serenity to saturate mind and body. At this point, repetition of your mantra or focus word can be discontinued, as thought processes will have subsided. Feel that your awareness is flowing back to the Source of life within you. Meditation is not an attempt to escape reality or create a pleasant mood. Nor is it self-hypnosis. When practiced correctly, meditation serves as a tool that will enable you to consciously reduce stress and bring you to a greater understanding and awareness of your mind and body. Finally, meditation will lead you back to conscious contact with your Higher Power.

Flowing Out of Meditation. After resting in the peak experience of peace for a duration, the mind will naturally begin to become active and your attention will flow back to your environment. Feel refreshed; don't overly analyze the process. Just go about your normal daily routine.

What About Distracting Thoughts? Beginning and advanced meditators occasionally experience sessions during which distracting thoughts and memories flood the mind. Sometimes, even nightmarish scenes or startling pictures emerge from the depths of the mind. The more you try to suppress them, the more intrusive they become. When this occurs, don't judge or analyze them. Assume an attitude of being an objective witness. Be as neutral as possible. Observe the thoughts without being overly concerned with their contents and they will subside. Keep your attention on your focus word or mantra. With practice, the clarity and serenity that lies beyond thoughts will become more influential.

The Procedure Summarized

1. Sit upright with your head, neck and spine in alignment, eyes closed.
2. Smooth your breathing rhythm; eliminate any tension, pauses, or jerks. Even the length of inhalation and exhalation.
3. Progressively relax your body starting at your toes, ending at your forehead.
4. With your awareness focused at your forehead, "listen to" your mantra or focus word synchronized with inhalation and exhalation.
5. Continue for 20 or 30 minutes. Be patient. If your attention wanders, gently bring it back to your mantra.
6. End your meditation session feeling relaxed and refreshed.

These guidelines will assist you in your journey as they have hundred of thousands of others.

My wish for you is that you find your way home as soon as possible and that you enjoy the journey along the way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mr. Wuttke began his "journey home" in 1978 after having a profound spiritual awakening. He attended several colleges in New York and Georgia, studying psychology, philosophy, and chiropractic. In 1982 he met his spiritual teacher, Roy Eugene Davis, director of Center for Spiritual Awareness in Lakemont, Georgia. He lived and worked at CSA Headquarters from 1985 until 1987.

In 1987 he began his work as director of Bio-feedback and Meditation Therapy at Woodridgo Hospital, specializing in addictions and eating disorders. In 1997 he founded The Institute for Family Wellness which is devoted to helping adults and children with special needs including traumatic brain injury, attention deficit disorder, depression, and learning differences. The Institute incorporates a holistic model of health and healing, combining the wisdom and methods of ancient traditions with advanced technologies of today. Mr. Wuttke conducts seminars and lectures on these methods and their application in the United States and Europe.

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