

Practising Meditation

When you meditate at home, you should have a corner of your room which is absolutely pure and sanctified - a sacred place which you use only for meditation.

Before beginning to meditate, it is helpful if you can take a shower or a bath. The purification of the body is essential for the purification of the consciousness. It is also advisable to wear clean and light clothes.

It will help if you burn incense and keep flowers in front of you. The physical flower that you have in front of you reminds you of the inner flower. Its colour, fragrance and consciousness gives you a little inspiration.

It is the same thing with using candles during meditation. The flame of the candle itself will not give you aspiration; it is the inner flame that will give you aspiration. But when you see the outer flame, then immediately you feel that the flame in your inner being is climbing high, higher, highest.

In the beginning you should not even think about meditation. Just try to set aside a certain time of day when you will try to be calm and quiet, and feel that these five minutes belong to your inner being and nobody else. Regularity is of paramount importance. What you need is regular practice at a regular time.

"There are many things which are very easy with practice, but just because we do not practice them we do not get the results."

Sri Chinmoy

Class I Goals

- 1) Choose a part of your room where you are going to meditate. Try to make it as beautiful and inspiring as possible.
- 2) Meditate every day. Be determined to do it! At first it will be difficult to do this but after some time it will become a natural part of your daily routine. Choose one of the exercises from the first class or this handout.
- 3) Read the first 3 chapters of the meditation book.

meditation

Class I – Introduction to Meditation

If you want to simplify your life

Meditation is the answer.

If you want to fulfil your life,

Meditation is the answer.

If you want to have joy

And offer joy to the world at large

Then meditation is the only answer.

Sri Chinmoy

Meditation does not mean sitting quietly for five to ten minutes. It requires conscious effort. The mind has to be made calm and quiet; at the same time it has to be vigilant so as not to allow any distracting thoughts or desires to enter. When we can make the mind calm and quiet, we will feel that a new creation is dawning inside us. When the mind is vacant and tranquil and our whole existence becomes an empty vessel, our inner being can invoke infinite Peace, Light and Bliss to enter the vessel and fill it. This is meditation.

When we concentrate we focus our attention on one particular thing. But when we meditate we feel that we have the capacity deep within to see many things, deal with many things and welcome many things all at the same time. When we meditate we try to expand ourselves, like a bird spreading its wings.

Breathing Exercise

Each time you breathe in, try to feel that you are bringing into your body peace, infinite peace. The opposite of peace is restlessness. When you breathe out, try to feel that you are expelling the restlessness within you and also the restlessness that you see all around you. When you breathe in this way, you will find restlessness leaving you. After practising this for a few times, please try to feel that you are breathing in power from the universe. And when you exhale, feel that all your fear is coming out of your body. After doing this a few times, try to feel that what you are breathing in is joy, infinite joy, and what you are breathing out is sorrow, suffering and melancholy.

Feel that you are breathing in not air but cosmic energy. Feel that tremendous cosmic energy is entering into you with each breath and that you are going to use it to purify your body, vital, mind and heart. Feel that there is not a single place in your body that is not being occupied by the flow of cosmic energy. It is flowing like a river inside you, washing and purifying your whole being. Then when you start to breathe out, feel that you are breathing out all the rubbish inside you - all your undivine thoughts, obscure ideas and impure actions. Anything inside your system that you call undivine, anything that you do not want to claim as your own, feel that you are exhaling.

Our Meditation Tips

We have found that people get the most out of meditation if they follow these tips. In fact, once you have learnt to concentrate and meditate well you will be able to use these tips to help you learn any skill.

- 1) **Regularity.** Try to meditate every day at the same time. You will make much more progress in your meditation if you do this. Feel that each time you meditate you are feeding your inner self. You would not miss a meal or let your body starve - so also try not to miss a meditation.
- 2) **Slow and steady wins the race.** To start off with just try to meditate for about 5-10 minutes. Do not try to do too much, too soon. It is better to make your meditation short and effective than long but with many thoughts running through your mind!
- 3) **Expectation leads to frustration.** When you meditate do not try to get a particular experience that you may have had before. Just try to be receptive to whatever experience the meditation wants to give you.
- 4) **Don't give up!** Even people that have been meditating for a long time experience ups and downs in their meditation. This is entirely normal so do not be disheartened if you feel that "nothing is happening". Often when we meditate the changes are happening inside on a level that we may not be aware of yet.
- 5) **Reading and Music.** Reading the books of a spiritual teacher can tremendously help you in your meditation. By reading you will be inspired and uplifted by the meditative consciousness of the author. In fact, you can consider it as a form of meditation. The same is true of music that is played in a very high consciousness.

Now you know the principles it is time to practice!

*"No preparation, no attempt.
No attempt, no progress.
No progress, no perfection.
No perfection, no satisfaction."*

Sri Chinmoy