

## **INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A preliminary discussion of meditation introduces conscious breathing, cellular memory, the chakra system and the processes at work in meditation, not the least of which is the re-training of our awareness. Living Breath is the key – the umbilical cord between human awareness and the Universe. Diagrams and meditations provide some navigation points. Symbols, mantras, posture and other forms of focus are used at different levels of mental entrainment. Beginner's Mind, without the struggle to get it right, is emphasized as a vital travelling companion – particularly for experts!

### **Reverence for Conscious Breath and Light**

The link between the unborn child and the mother is the umbilical cord, through which life sustaining energies are passed from mother to child. The umbilical cord for human awareness is breath. To breathe with reverence and awareness of the moment of breathing sanctifies the conjunction of Earth and Universal energies. Breath is the fundamental exchange between the energies of the human organism and the Universe. The quality of connection to Divinity, through breath, activates all that the human organism expresses in speech, thought and action. The effects of reverential breath on the body and cells are specific. When directed through the heart center, this central source connects and ignites other energy centers of the body, activating their potential resonance. This affects the cells directly, by activating material that secures glowing health and youthfulness physically and metaphysically. Reverence for breath surfaces a fuller recognition, bringing the soul to life through individual expression. It provides a driving force for creative expression that is extraordinary. Further reverence for breath takes this appreciation of quality deeper, and exponentially on it goes. The conscious use of breath is like a sacrament, and in its circulation the body, mind, soul separation cannot exist. All is one - a golden glow of aliveness.

Light is a metaphor for Divinity, God presence, energy of mindfulness. The reverence for light is reverence for your inner consciousness. As metaphor and vibration, light works on the energy centers of the body in precise ways, and may be experienced in the meditations described in the following section. Being in light refers to many things. Reverence is the most important factor, and the metaphorical properties of the connection between light and inner consciousness show us they are one and the same. What may not be so evident is the effect of light on cellular patterns within the body. Light taken in to the heart center, and consciously connected to other centers has the power to defuse patterns that do not serve higher purpose, and activates those patterns that do. Thus light has a multitude of properties as metaphor, and as vibration it ignites our finest qualities.

To breathe brings in air by which the lungs work to place oxygen into the blood stream, pumped by the heart to keep the physical organism functioning. To breathe in light giving energy, with awareness, feeds the metaphysical heart center, which then circulates this energy throughout your entire being. To breathe with reverence and awareness is a precious quality. This sequence works on the dormant information of the cell so that the whole body is filled from within, awakening inner consciousness by bringing in light. Reverence is the key, for it puts one in touch with the gentleness, firmness and abundance of the Universe. Meditation provides the opportunity for light and breath to be consciously focused by the mind into the body, providing the stepping stones for symbolic metaphor to be rooted in bodily experience and finally expressed in thought and behaviour.

### **Meditations**

In meditation the mind focuses on the breath and light circulating through particular energy centers in the body, and it is the mind that initially directs the movement of breath and the energy of visualization. You breathe with the entire body, in and out of the pores to every part of your physical being. The mind selectively chooses which energy centers and parts of the body are to receive a primary focus. In the approach put forward here, there is a conscious decision to place the heart chakra, or center, as a primary focus through which energy and breath are initially brought into the body by the mind. The heart chakra does not refer to the physical heart but to the area in

the middle of the chest behind the sternum. This is where the deepest and most transformative component of our physical and metaphysical being resides. It helps if one is aware of different energy centers in the body. In Hindu philosophy and other traditions the body's major energy centers are described as chakras, and run from the bottom of the spine to the top of the crown. The personal choice to focus on the heart center in meditation enables breath to connect all other energy centers to the center of spiritual awakening.

By bringing breath, light and symbol through the heart center, then filling the entire body with this energy, each individual brings to the surface the fullness of being with Godself, with Buddhahood, with Krishna Consciousness, and with all cultural expressions of the invariant inner consciousness common to all human beings. What is felt physically in the heart center during meditation is a deep intense glow, a central beacon of energy, which travels up and down the spine through to the crown, forehead and throat and circulates throughout the body. The body feels almost suspended and this sensation indicates that your whole being is in a high state of receptivity. The invitation is to a renewed focus on breath, so that the chatter of the mind is stilled and you listen within to whatever insights emerge. Concentrated focus on in-breath and out-breath enables you to be present with heart consciousness. In this location you are not troubled by the ghosts of the past and of the future. Fears, anxieties, hurtful memories – these cannot affect you when you are present with the awareness of breath. Moreover this state of mind enables you to deal with fears, anxieties and painful memories from a place of calm and clarity.

It is important to be without preconceptions in meditation, and not try to make things happen. The "trying to" meditations usually produce headaches! As a normal part of meditation thoughts and other distractions will certainly arise. You do not, however, invest energy or further contemplation on them, simply allowing the thoughts to fall away. It is natural for thoughts to spin around until the mind's chatter is stilled and bodily agitation is calmed. In meditation it often takes 4-5 minutes before the mind settles down. This is due to the continuous feedback loop of the body-mind connection. If the body is in an agitated state it necessarily affects the mind, so you must wait patiently for the body to slow down. The thoughts in the first stage of meditation are due to body

metabolism. Even after settling down, thoughts can still carry you away. This is prompted by the tension releases of mental stresses that are felt in the body, and they reactivate the mind, giving rise to further thoughts. You must be patient and come back to the concentration on breath and the symbolic focus of the meditation - then immerse yourself in the ensuing silence of nothingness. This is where the power to be lies, the power to create, and you will find that you grow progressively stronger from being in the silence.

The focus on mantra, symbol or visualization brings your attention back to the silence of meditation. The symbolic focus establishes an initial inner connection, then gives way to silence. It is only called upon to reconnect you with silence and stillness, as and when distractions overwhelm the senses. The symbolic focus cuts through the agitation of thought, in order to put you back in touch with the vital connections between mind, soul and cell. So once you have settled in to meditation, begin with a symbolic focus to direct the mind inwards, after a while the focus is abandoned and replaced by silence. You come back to the symbolic focus only when subsequent thoughts and distractions cause you to drift away.

Prior to meditation it is beneficial to do a series of breathing exercises called *pranayama*. They slow the body and mind down and prepare you for meditation. Particular patterns of breathing through a constricted throat, following appropriate ratios of in-breath: holding fullness: out-breath: holding emptiness - activate the entire respiratory system and induce a state of calm in the body right down to the cells. There is an infinite set of combinations of breathing ratios, methods of alternate nostril breathing, explosive breaths and breath retention that are part of *pranayama*, with variations suitable for different climates and cultural preferences. It is wise to consult a good meditation teacher for the *pranayama* sequences appropriate for the region you live in, as it is not a practice that can be communicated through a book or manual. Breath control through *pranayama* is designed to connect the meditator experientially with Cosmic Breath - the prime mover of the Universe. The breathing exercises of *pranayama* prepare the body for meditation and retrain the senses back into yourself, thus you learn to discriminate that which is eternal from that which is transitory. In meditation your body is regarded as the Universe, and its vital energy – *prana* - is brought to your experience and awareness

through *pranayama*. This is Living Breath in practise, a revitalizing and purifying force that can be consciously used for growth and spiritual evolution. Thus *pranayama* is a very important preparation for meditation that, unfortunately, is often overlooked. It enables you to enter more deeply into meditation because the body is calm, the mind is still, and you are better prepared to experience the benefits of Living Breath.

The fundamental structures of matter unfold to your awareness through the connection instituted by breath to the heart center and thence to the crown and body. This particular sequence has a structure that connects all energy receptors to a central focus - the source energy located in the heart. Meditation sequences have precise attention to detail in terms of direction and symbolic focus, and a structure is established from the heart center that connects a dynamic of creative energy to the higher faculties of insight, expression and transcendence. It is through breath that energy, visualized as white light, can be taken by thought to different parts of the body with particular focus on the forehead, throat and crown centers.

The meditations described later in this section place an emphasis on reverence for breath and light brought into the heart center. It is not implied that you abandon whatever meditation techniques you have learned and use in daily practice. Bear in mind that meditation is not sculpted by adherence to the sustained practise of any particular system, for this can shape thought and consciousness to a conformist pattern that does not allow your inner consciousness to freely express. A particular form of meditation is only a beginning step to bring awareness in tune with the physical body, and all meditations that focus on breath coming in to the body are valuable. The main criterion to keep in mind is a sense of reverence and awareness for the breath and light brought into the body. Ultimately you move to a state where all structures and methods are suspended and you just breathe in and out, with awareness. Attached to the breath is only your trust that this energy has intelligence, and knows what to do, what energy centers to connect with and what faculties of insight, intellect and expression to focus upon.

The descriptions are to assist those who may be unfamiliar with meditation and you may be surprised to discover how easy it is. The important thing is to relax in a place that is quiet and comfortable. Stiffness in the body is a signal that stiffness and anxiety also exist within you. Do a few yoga stretches, relax, feel peaceful and open, then sit

comfortably with the spine erect. The hands can be placed on each knee, either with the palms open and facing upwards or with the forefinger connecting to the thumb in a circle and resting lightly on the knee. Another position for the hands is on the lap, below the navel. The right hand rests gently on top of the left hand, with the thumbs touching to create the shape of a triangle, and the right leg crosses the left, so that major energy circuits in the body are connected. The eyes are partially closed and relaxed and may close during meditation. Spectacles are removed so that there is no distraction.

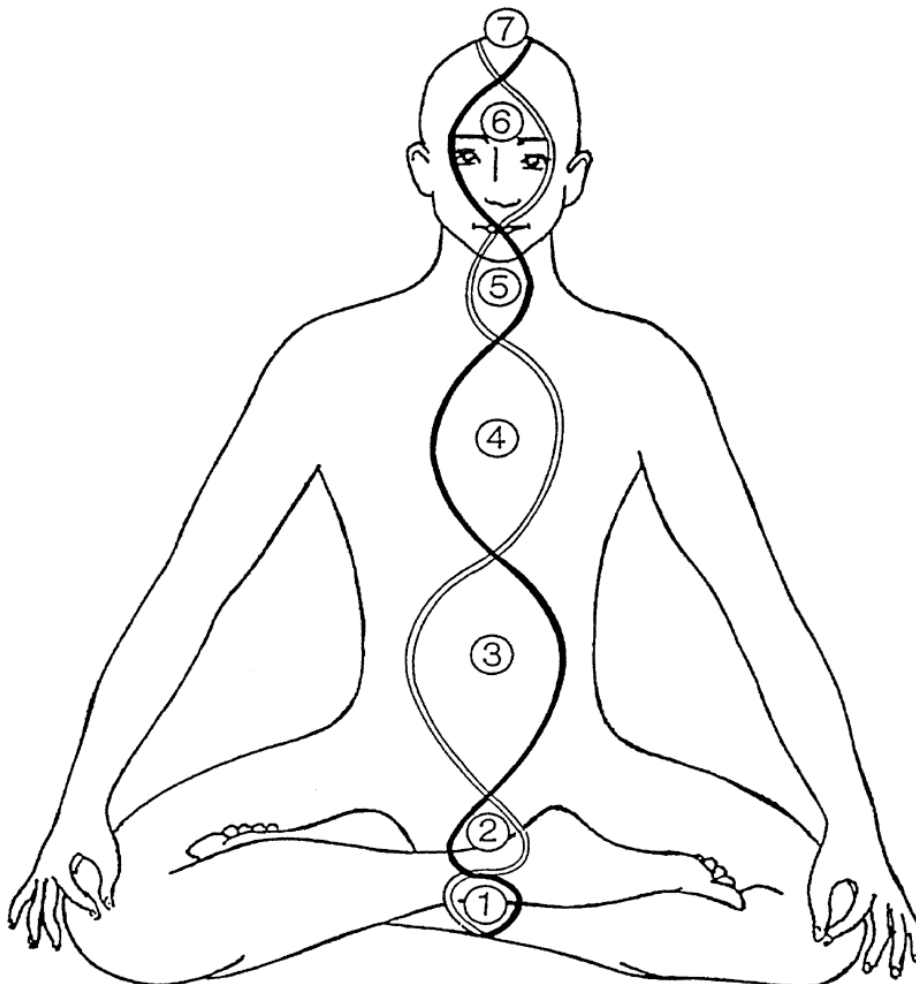
Meditation is a fourth, multi-levelled state of consciousness beyond the waking, sleeping, dreaming, states. It is ultimately about being fully alive in the moment that is right in front of your nose – i.e. right now! It is not about endless and dutiful toil in the hope of enlightenment. The optimum times for daily meditation are sunrise and sunset with a period of meditation at mid-day. It is always better to meditate on an empty stomach so that your awareness does not compete with the digestive system. Always remember to come out slowly at the end of meditation. Open the eyes for 10-20 seconds, looking downwards, then close them for a further minute before slowly opening them again.

For simplicity of expression the meditations are divided into two sequences, in-breath and out-breath, though in actual fact it is one continuous flow. The diagrams depicting energy centers and the flow of breath (**Figures 1 and 2**) may be consulted prior to doing the meditations.

In the first diagram the figure seated in the Lotus position shows the location of the major *chakras* or energy centers, running along the spinal column from the sacrum to the crown. In meditation not every one is able to do the Lotus position, in which case ensure that the spine is erect and the feet are firmly connected to the floor as one sits in a chair, or cross legged. The dark and light spirals, which look like the D.N.A. double helix, are neural channels that connect one's physical and metaphysical systems. They carry the energy of conscious breath from the left and right nostrils into the spinal column. In Sanskrit they are known as *Pingala* and *Ida* and are the energy channels that correspond with breath originating from the left and right nostrils respectively. In **Figure 1** *Pingala* is outlined as a white channel, whereas *Ida* is shaded. They intersect and enclose the main energy centers, or *chakras*, right down to the base of the spine. The

*chakras* are an ultimately connected energy system that can be integrated through the vehicle of breath. Breath from the right and left nostrils provides an energy impulse that spirals around the spinal column right up to the crown, intersecting and enclosing both the brow and the crown *chakras* as well as all the other major energy centers. The breath from the right and left nostrils brings the separated opposites of dualistic thinking together, eventually producing integration. For instance, masculine/feminine, solar/lunar, dark/light are qualities of energy that lose their separateness as breath is consciously brought into the body and integrated with all energy centers. As this experience deepens, the central spinal channel directly connecting all the *chakras*, the *Sushumna*, comes into operation. Yogic practise and meditation is designed to activate and direct energy through the *Sushumna*, so that one moves beyond polarities and separation, thus experiencing non duality in the higher levels of consciousness.

**Figure 1: Major Energy Centers in the Body – *Chakras***



Each *chakra* represents a particular level of consciousness. It can be accessed with awareness through the vibrational tones of particular symbolic forms used in meditative practise. You move from level to level through continued purification, self-discipline and a yearning for liberation, and it may be difficult to maintain your awareness at the higher levels for any length of time. The fleeting experiences of union, however, are sufficiently glorious to compel you to continue the journey to liberation. Each energy center has a particular location in the body. In addition it is associated with special syllables (mantras), symbols, colours and other physical and metaphysical properties.

1. The first *chakra* is located at the base of the spine. Known as the root *chakra*, it is associated with the colour red, the Earth element and the syllable "lam." It is known as *Muladhara* in Sanskrit, and represents dormant consciousness, a sense of immanence and limitation. Yet the earth element is integral in our enlightenment as we learn not be attached to it.
2. The second *chakra* is in the region of the sexual organs and is associated with orange, the element of Water and the syllable "vam." It is known as *Svadhishthana*, the wheel of the self-base, and embodies our taste for life experiences.
3. The third *chakra* is in the region of the solar plexus. It is associated with the colour yellow, the element of Fire and responds to the syllable "ram." It is known as *Manipuraka*. It embodies a concern with the elemental world above all others. These three *chakras* are the centers of basic physical energies and worldly consciousness - control, progeny, power and wealth.
4. The fourth *chakra* is the heart center behind the sternum. It is associated with green, the Air element, the syllable "yam" and is the location of Spiritual Birth and Awakening. It is considered as the bridge between the physical and the metaphysical. Without the activation of the heart center,

a focus on other centers can cause physical and emotional problems. This is why the heart center is a primary focus for moving energy through all the other centers in the body. This is known as the *Anahata chakra* and represents movement beyond the centers of worldly consciousness.

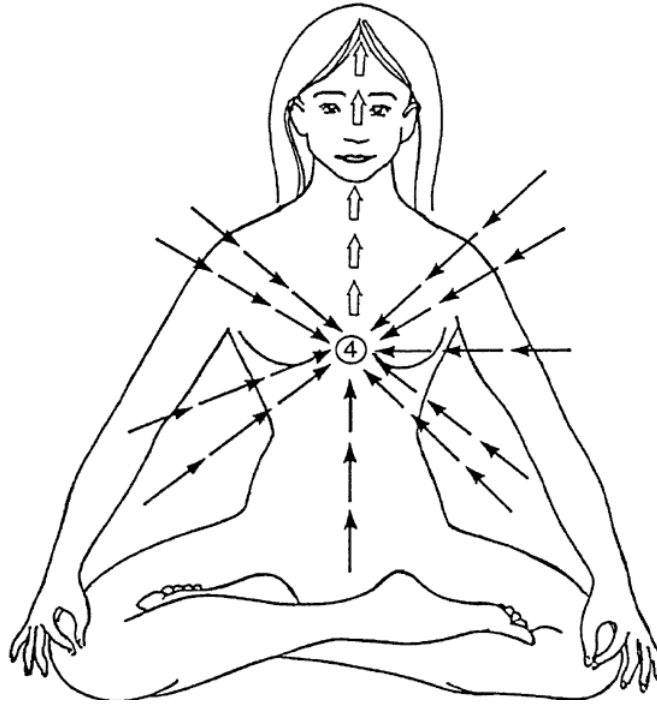
5. The fifth *chakra* is in the middle of the throat. Its colour is blue, element Space and it is associated with the syllable "ham." This is the center for higher expression and is known as *Visúdda* and denotes a state of balance.
6. The sixth *chakra* is located in the middle of the forehead, and is the meeting place of the three principal channels – *ida*, *pingala* and *sushumna*. It is associated with the colour indigo (dark blue), the syllable "OM," and represents insight and revelation. This third eye is referred to as *Ajna* and its element is undifferentiated energy and matter.
7. The seventh *chakra* is located at the crown on top of the head and is associated with both radiant white and purple light. It represents the fully opened lotus of awakening and is known as *Sahasrara*, the thousand petal Lotus, a center above and beyond all others, yet intimately integrated with them all.

The last three *chakras* - throat, forehead and crown - are associated with increased awareness and integration of spiritual truths and higher levels of consciousness. There are many other energy centers in the body, **Figure 1** denotes the seven major energy centers to consider during the beginning stage of meditation.

In **Figure 2**, the Circulation of Breath, the top Figure represents the physical location and movement of the In-breath. Breath is focused into the heart center and taken, by thought, up to the crown center passing through the throat and brow centers. The bottom figure is of Out-breath. After a brief pause at the end of the in-breath, the out-breath then moves downward, filling the entire body with conscious breath thus connecting all of the major energy centers within the body.

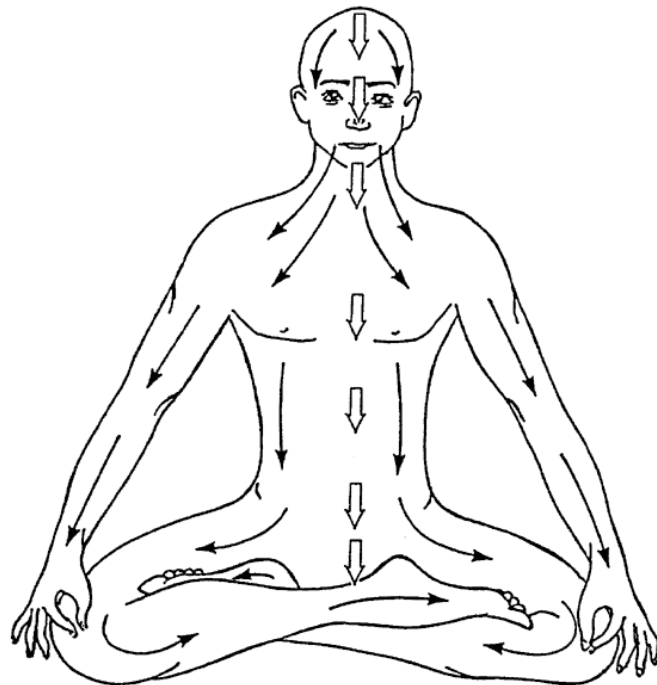
**Figure 2: The Circulation of Breath**

**INBREATH**



Breath is brought in to the heart centre, and taken up to the crown through the throat and brow centres.

**OUTBREATH**



Breath fills the body from the crown to the toes, and connects all energy centres in the body.

### **Meditation I: Wake Up Call to the Cells**

This meditation is straightforward - a wake up call to the cells. Prepare for meditation by sitting comfortably with the spine erect. As you breathe in and fill your lungs on the in-breath, visualize white light coming in to the middle of your chest - your heart center. You can visualize this as light floating gently down to the area behind the sternum, or as a funnel of light coming directly into your chest from the Universe. Whatever works. If you do not visualize easily, then **think** the light coming into your heart center. Feel this white light as a gentle glow and take it through the heart center, inside the chest and throat, up to your crown. All this is on the in-breath. At the end of the in-breath, at the top of the crown, hold for a moment and place a thought into the procedure. The thought is "Send this light to every cell in my body." Then, on the out-breath imagine the white light moving from your crown, thence filling your entire body right down to the toes. Complete the meditation by grounding the energy through your feet into the floor. Do this quite a few times until you feel something different in your body, a different sensation or a greater feeling of relaxation, and remain within the silence and energy of it for approximately twenty minutes. If thoughts distract you from the process, as they surely will, simply come back to the focus and direction of breath and light in the meditation. It is important to register with the information the body provides as feedback. This meditation, as a wake up call to your cells, announces that with focused thought from your mind you are directing Universal Love, the Breath of God, from your heart center to your entire being. This is an important beginning. Once you know this sequence and can discern a different feeling within your body, take the next step.

### **Meditation II: Play With Light**

The next meditation is again very simple. On the in-breath take in light to the heart center and up to the crown. Imagine your heart center in the middle of your chest, and your crown center on the top of your head, as opening. The opening can be imagined as a lotus flower or as a tin can lid that flips open on command from your thoughts. Use

whatever feels easy for you to visualize. On the in-breath the light from your heart center travels up through the inside of your chest, through your throat and forehead to the crown of your head. On the out-breath take the light out through the open crown. Let the light suspend itself over your head for a moment. Then direct it to play, float down and re-enter your body through your heart center. This sequence is to get you used to the delicacy and strength of your own light and energy, and to experience the joy and fun of playing with it. Do this exercise several times over a period of approximately twenty minutes and register with your body to discover any differences in physical sensations. At the end of this practise close the heart and crown openings, be they tin can lids or lotus flowers, and reflect on what you felt and visualized.

### **Meditation III: Light Around the Body**

The next meditation enables you to experience your own light around you. On the in-breath proceed as before. Gently open your heart and crown centers. Take in white light to the heart center with your in-breath. Take the light up through your chest and throat to the crown of your head. Pause before the out-breath. The thought in your mind directs this light to go out through your crown and totally envelop your body. Do this is on the out-breath. Feel how different this is. Repeat ten times and see if you register with a feeling of security, strength and delicacy. This meditation envelops yourself in your own light, so that you stay clear, in Truth and protected from all that may push you into confusion or untruth. It is a wonderful procedure to protect yourself with light that comes from your heart. Practice this, then remain in the silence of the energy, simply breathing in and out.

This particular meditation is very useful when your energy level has been depleted, either by the actions of others or by having self-judgement about actions of your own. In these situations stop the process of negativity induced by yourself or others. Quietly and with great reverence for breath, bring light into the heart, out of the crown and around yourself and place yourself in a state of witness. Do not react to the situation, merely observe the negativity or self-judgement for what it is. This meditation raises your vibration instantly, and you are then equipped to respond to the situation from a higher level, hopefully without reaction.

### **Meditation IV: Connecting With Light**

If you are meditating in the company of another person, or in a group, the following meditation may be used to make a connection between those meditating. Once again, sit comfortably with the spine erect and proceed with meditation.

Once the body feels calm, consciously open the crown center on the top of your head. Breathe gently into the heart center and take breath up to the crown. On the out-breath take the light out of your crown and extend it in a clockwise direction to the other(s) you are meditating with. You will feel in your body a collective surge or jolt of connection as you do this. A different method of achieving a similar form of connection is to breathe into the heart center then up to the crown on the in-breath. On the out-breath fill the entire body from head to toe with white, crystalline light. Feel yourself as an emanating source of this light, a crystalline beacon. On subsequent out-breaths feel this light extending out from you, beyond your body, to encompass all who are present with you. Even if you are meditating alone you can use this meditation to extend Grace and light to others who are not present, or to the planet in its entirety, if this feels appropriate.

It is important to take time to practise each type of meditation without haste, for there is no need to rush. After several weeks of noting the distinct physical aspects of each meditation you can run them together as a simple foundation meditation (**V**) lasting approximately thirty minutes.

### **Meditation V: Foundation Sequence**

Begin with visualizing white light coming in to your heart center with breath. The in-breath takes this light up to your crown. Pause and enter the thought "Send this light to every cell in my body" and on the out-breath imagine white light from the crown flooding through your entire body right down to your toes (**I**). Do this continuously for five minutes.

Then take light through the heart to the crown on the in-breath, and having opened the heart and crown centers, take the light through the crown on the out-breath and allow the light to play and re-enter your heart center (**II**). Do this continuously for five minutes.

Then take the breath and light up to and through the crown and envelop your entire body in your own light **(III)**. Breathe regularly within this security for five minutes.

Then close the crown center. Take breath into the heart, up to the crown and on the out-breath fill the entire body with crystalline white light. On subsequent breaths feel this light extend beyond your body **(IV)**. Breathe in this manner continuously for five minutes.

For the final ten minutes breathe very gently in and out, and trust the intelligence of breath. Do not direct it at all. Be aware of the quality of breath coming in, the breath going out, and be aware of the sensations of energy circulating in the body. If distractions and thoughts occur, which take your mind away from meditation simply focus again on breath. The times set for each stage of this meditation are only suggestions. Each person will have different preferences. The description of the foundation sequence is to provide a structure for whoever requires a starting point. After meditating there is the opportunity to order priorities for the day from an internal place of clarity and calm, to address issues, or listen within and notice whatever emerges without trying to edit your inner consciousness. If you allow inner consciousness to express itself, it will guide you through the day and ultimately through the rest of your life.

There are particular structures at work in these meditation sequences and their importance will be referred to constantly. Practise the initial meditations on rising and in the evening, making sure that you do so before eating breakfast or dinner. In that way the digestive and meditative systems of energy will not be in competition! It may be useful to start a meditation diary so that you can write down what insights come to you. This may provide a reference point for barriers travelled through and patterns transcended. It is a step by step journey. The form and structure of whatever meditation is used is only a starting point.

Meditation structure and focus gives you knowledge and discernment about your own experience of energy. It is a stepping stone to furthering your conscious awareness of within and without. There are times in every meditation where form and structure are abandoned, and you simply trust the intelligence of conscious breath, just breathing in and breathing out. Meditation provides access to a space of stillness, and in this stillness

there is the opportunity for transformation and reversal of non-productive patterns embedded in the cell. Thoughts may distract from the state of stillness, so when they arise all that is required is patience and a return to breath. Do not invest further energy in the thoughts, otherwise you may well be carried away by thoughts of work, home or relationship issues. Meditation provides an opportunity to put these anxieties to one side, so that you may eventually see them more clearly, and engage with them from a higher level of consciousness. When thoughts carry you away, simply come back to the focus of the meditation. Focus light and breath through the heart center. Take it up to the crown on the in-breath, pause for a moment then take it down to the feet on the out-breath into the ground, and feel it throughout your body. This is an aspect of discipline in meditation; to return to breath, light and a heart focus whenever distraction takes attention away. In this manner you begin to experience yourself as presence, and in stillness this experience of the Universe within deepens and expands.

Although discipline in meditation is essential, when it fills you with the inexpressible joy of presence, it is not a discipline at all, merely an opportunity to experience the joy of inner consciousness. This begins with your rising meditation and eventually the practice and benefits of meditation continue throughout the day. The initial practice of discipline and dedication is, however, inescapable. It may be compared to a sprinter's starting blocks; knowing that your feet are firmly planted and supported by discipline and dedication, so that you come out of the starting blocks fully balanced and speeding freely onwards. The speed of transformation is truly awesome, for when there is no resistance you experience only what "is". In this "isness" lies a constant wonder at the brilliance of Creation, and a sense of Thanksgiving that you have the opportunity to experience it. It is so simple. Enjoy the full majesty and gentleness that is within you, and know that service to the Universe and to the planet rests on one law. That law is Love and Interconnectedness. That is where meditation takes you.

The child-like play of innocence is also the wonder of meditation. Total trust, wonder and delight become your natural state of being. There is no thought behind such innocence, and within this sense the most startling creation takes root for there is nothing to impede it. In childlike innocence you know the Universe is a giant sandbox to play in. Everything is in order. This is known and encoded within our cells, yet is often forgotten.

It is through meditation that you remember and rediscover the delight of childlike innocence where distress does not lurk to engender fear, judgement, their attendants and their derivatives.

Meditation also has a destructive effect, a dangerous aspect. It constitutes a danger to anyone who chooses to remain in an unaware and shallow life, for its purpose is to shatter all the psychological refuges and hiding places where illusions and negative patterns are embedded. The destructive force of stillness and silence in meditation makes me aware of the barriers to Truth that must be transcended. The barriers are erected by my ego-attachments and false identifications, and prevent me surrendering to the Grace of my constant Soul — that unbounded consciousness that harbors no separation. I could very easily remain trapped and driven by non-integrated shadow material, unless I stepped into meditation as a way of life. The inner movement beyond these ego-derived frontiers of consciousness through the fireball of Truth and clarity is what meditation brings to me.

The experience in meditation, in a sense, is also one of death; the death of pettiness, of negative thought and the dictates of ego-attachments. Meditation takes me into silence, stillness and a vast emptiness that is beyond time, space and structure. It is a way to the wholeness that is already there, only my vision of such wholeness is obscured by the barriers of afflictive emotions, and the negative patterns and habit energies erected by my ego. As a way of life meditation transcends such barriers and provides propulsion into wholeness.

This is what is involved in the discipline of meditation and there are many structures and forms inherent in different traditions. They are all good, for they surface this negative pattern here, that negative pattern there, and guide us through the process of surfacing and clearing. This occurs most rapidly when there is no intent in meditation, just openness to your own Living Breath. This does not detract from necessary structure and symbolic focus at different stages of the human journey to Oneness. Through childlike innocence you receive the Universe in a matter of fact manner. The solitons of energy created through childlike innocence and wonder, the beginner's mind, shatter illusion and that which illusion is based on - negative thought, fear, distress, anger,

attachment and desire - all from the surrender to innocence and the welcoming in of the Universe.

This beginner's mind, the mind of love, is an essential travelling companion, for it brings you to meditation without the struggle to get it right. The experience of inner consciousness is not available through the various monumental efforts to manipulate your consciousness to a state of nirvana through self-sacrifice or "successful" rituals. That does not work, and if you think it does, know that realms of illusion have successfully worked their seduction. Furthermore, if you avidly pursue the experience of interesting mystical phenomena you set in motion conflicts that generate further illusion. The significance of meditation can become lost if the memory of phenomena excites the personality and imagination, and removes you from the present moment, wherein we rediscover our happiness and true nature. The freedom from seeking predefined experience, conjured up by thought, is found in a childlike innocence that has no motive or agenda. It is aimless – a very important consideration in Buddhist practice. Reality is in place and always has been. This is what the beginner's mind engages with, and it is such a powerful and beautiful engagement. The steps in meditation are to bring you to the sensitivity, awareness and alertness of mind that allows reality to be experienced as it ultimately is. So, it is good to remain with the beginner's mind at all times, as this enables a freshness and humility to frame your compassion and love.

The foundations established within the body through the practice of meditation provide connections for parts of your being that were formerly disconnected. The cellular system of information bearing structures has always existed, yet rarely has the awareness of mind had the capacity to interpret its many signals. This requires the retraining of mind, of awareness, so that all prior categories and conceptions can be released to the experience of cellular Truth. Then may the mind discern through feedback from the central nervous system, just what is evolving from the cellular level. First steps in the discipline of meditation take you into a new awareness of the energy that circulates and pulses in strategic body locations. You also begin to recognize energy leaks and their associated causes. These initial stages of meditation develop a foundation of knowing that the body responds to Truth in a particular kind of way that you must re-discover for yourself. With the continuing use of breath and focus in meditation, you

then find it is possible to raise the frequency of your cellular vibration and proceed with a different level of cognition and perception. It is a level removed from the tendrils and issues of ego-attachment, fear and desire.

Your new awareness serves to keep you removed from the effects of lower vibrations, so that your thoughts, words and actions always reflect the highest good that is within. This comes about through retraining the mind (awareness) to connect fully with the central nervous system (body sensations) and the intelligence of cellular templates (Ultimate Truth). In meditation you use symbols, mantras, sacred posture, mandalas, colors and other forms of focus at different phases of entrainment. The basic foundation for meditation is provided by aware breathing and symbolic focus. Thus you move from foundation to foundation by constant practice that is never the same, until you find in meditation a companion that is part of your daily living. Whether such daily living is in monastic retreat or being in the world, the quality of living constantly in meditation presents all that is highest and finest within you. It is to this point and then onwards, that the entrainment within meditation leads. It also reacquaints you with long-forgotten childlike innocence, the mind of love.

The key to all this is conscious and aware breathing. The different techniques of focus on in-breath and out-breath, alternate nostril breathing, retention and release of breath, at some point bring to your awareness the recognition that the mind and body is moved by the same energy that pervades the planet and the entire Universe. The science of breath in the body is part of the respiration of cosmic breath. The discipline of meditation is geared to bringing the two into a balanced harmony, by gradually experiencing freedom from thoughts and desires. Mastery of the science of breath enables you to still the mind and turn inward. Without such mastery you remain subject to the bondage of the mind's attachments and projections. The human mind is only one portion of the equation that unites cosmic intelligence, human consciousness and the Universe's potential.

The integration of the mind with the soul permits you to seize the arrow that allows spiritual evolution to take place. The arrow is the mind/soul integration and meditation is the powerful bow that drives the arrow through time and space into the timelessness of non- space.