



## **LEVELS OF MEDITATIVE EXPERIENCE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This essay explores the pilgrimage from the “I” of ego-attachment to the “I” of the soul, and investigates the drives and patterns of ego-attachment. The first level of meditative experience is learning how to Stop. The next level is that of self-healing - the other side of the meditation coin. We store our traumas and psychological life histories deep in our unconscious where they form blockages. These blockages have to be surfaced and cleared if we wish to journey further on our pilgrimage. The deep rest of meditation helps to unravel the knots of suffering, and supports self-healing. The many levels of healing prepare us for a major encounter with the ego – the third level to consider. The ego was there in the distractions of the initial level of learning to stop. It was also there in our self-healing, hanging on grimly to every drama of our life history. Yet, these prior levels of experience have empowered us to become stronger, to be more spiritually mature, and capable of transcending and transforming ego-attachments.

### **Introduction**

Meditation is a simple and straightforward pilgrimage, only we tend to complicate it with so much attention to form and structure, and insufficient attention to understanding the process of transformation. Meditation is a journey from the “I” of ego-attachment to the “I” of the soul, that boundless inner nature that harbors no separation. On this journey we experience different manifestations of the “I” of the soul, which are culturally shaped and socially constrained, yet we know intuitively that these glimpses on the journey enable us to touch that face of God which rests eternally within us. Our journey in meditation investigates the drives of ego-attachment, enabling us to remove ignorance about the false identification of our true nature with these same ego-attachments.

The investigation of meditation guides us to look deeply, past the attachments to ego, to the experience of our true nature. As we learn to let go of our attachments and as our false identifications dissolve, then there is a step into freedom. For all that remains is the “I” of the soul, and we know that we are home in God consciousness, the energy of mindfulness, and the question of who we are becomes redundant. We are THAT – the consciousness within us that has been deeply hidden and obscured, and is now revealed to experience.

The Indian sage Ramana Maharsi wrote in *Ulladu Norpadu 30*:

*When the mind turns inwards seeking  
“Who am I?” and merges in the Heart,  
then the “I” hangs down his head in shame  
and the one “I” appears as itself.  
Though it appears as “I,I” it is not the ego.  
It is reality, perfection, the substance of the Self.*

The investigation of our true nature is not a philosophical or scriptural enterprise. It is a step by step journey through our illusions and attachments, so that we experience the consciousness that Ramana Maharsi, the Buddha, Jesus, Swedenborg, and many other masters have guided us to. There are many traditions, cultural styles and methods in meditation, all of them provide methodologies to arrive at the resting place of the heart. Despite the differences between Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Shamanic practices, to name only a few, the similarities in experience are astonishing. Yet how quickly the similarities are forgotten in the rush to proclaim predominance and superiority of one path or faith over another. Different seekers are drawn to different paths, yet when they fulfill their quest their entire perspective changes. In the ultimate perspective it is clearly seen that those who argue over the relative merits of different paths have not arrived. They have yet to understand how interconnected the different access routes to Divinity are. The quarrels between faiths are unwise, because they are all one at a deep, fundamental level, so what is the point of arguing with yourself?

There are many doors for seekers after truth, each one with a different appeal to particular cultural preferences, personality style and state of awareness. Further doors then open and each seeker finds her personal pilgrimage along various roads, all of which lead to an experience of Divinity within, however it may be defined in different

traditions. Meditation is an internal exploration and is ultimately about transcending ego-attachments to directly experience the energy of God within, by coming to rest in our true nature. Yet there are levels to consider and some preliminary steps to take.

### **Level 1: Quietening the Mind**

The first level encountered in meditation is the restlessness, clutter and ceaseless chatter of our minds. This presents us with a very real difficulty in understanding what stillness and inner silence is all about, and why it is a necessary part of meditation. In our modern world of fast paced lifestyles, there is an information explosion that produces so many surface distractions that we readily become outwardly dependant, un-centered and fail to find the discipline that enables us to access our inner core of being. The external restlessness amplifies the internal restlessness in an on-going feedback loop that feeds the monkey mind within us, that cannot remain still or tolerate silence. The problem is that we have closed the doors to our true nature, due to our wrong perceptions, continual suffering, and because of our small hearts and limited consciousness. Understanding this provides us with a necessary direction to turn inwards. We must look deeply into our suffering, and at the same time take the steps to expand our consciousness. These are not separate elements, for when our consciousness is narrow, we hold on tight to all our self-imposed dramas and suffering. We slam the door shut on our true nature, and keep our dysfunctional habits intact. We remain wounded, driven by our scars, angers and fears, and we suffer all our lives. The remedy of meditation and mindfulness practice places us on a path of consciousness expansion, and on that path, the knots of suffering begin to unravel. The knots are not so tightly held when the tapestry of our consciousness expands. With that step, the inner doors to the heart begin to open and the tight grip we have placed on suffering releases. Our fidelity to meditation and diligence in practice truly serves, for as we expand consciousness and connect to our true nature, it becomes harder to hold on to suffering.

Before we can take these steps, we must learn to come to a stop. This is known as *Samatha* in Sanskrit. We have to slow down from our busy lives and mental clutter, learn to silence our monkey mind and come to rest. In the first level of meditation we learn breathing techniques, deep relaxation exercises, mantras, and practices such as walking

meditation, to slow us down and bring us to a stop, so we can still the mind and experience silence. Yet inevitably our shopping lists, telephone calls, dinner plans and other mental busyness preoccupy our meditative space. What are we to do? We must simply persist, overcome any discouragement and learn to steadily remove attention and energy from the distractions and awaken to the prompting of Grace from within us. One by one we learn to close the external doors to events which preoccupy our senses with one kind of illusion or another. When the mind is full of thoughts, prejudices, and opinions about others, and external events, we become lost in all that is external. We must learn to shut the door. As these outer doors close, the inner door to the heart opens, and in that location there is only love and goodness.

We must create the conditions for this to happen. There is no point in having this kind of insight, then doing nothing about it. It is necessary to implement silence in our lives, to have fidelity to daily meditative practice, and to bring mindfulness to everything we do. From this stopping, we can see deeply into ourselves, glimpse and experience our true nature. At the same time we see the patterns and blockages within, that prevent us from fully experiencing our true nature. This is *Vipassana* - deep looking and insight. But first we must stop. When you stop, do not move from that place – the center of your being. Stay there and be still, for that is where the inner door to your heart opens and such love and compassion fill you. Go beyond the "I" of ego attachment – just become Love and enter the state of your true nature, and do not move from that location.

The importance of a community of practice is vital in the early stages, as more experienced practitioners can assist with guidance and presence at regular meditation sessions. With practice we learn to quietly witness our thoughts – that are surely going to arise. We learn not to participate with the internal mental formations that come up. We do not repress or ignore the thoughts that arise. We remain aware, but do not give them energy, and thus they fall away and we begin to experience deep silence. It does take practice. Whether it is sitting meditation, walking meditation, guided visualizations, focus on symbols, or chants, – these various practices enable us to bring stillness to the mind and body. In that stillness and silence the energy of the mind turns deeply inwards to the heart, and we begin to experience who we truly are. So in the early stages we create the conditions for meditation to happen, so we can begin to experience silence, and

feel the energy of the mind begin to infuse the heart. As we become more and more able to enter the silence of meditation we begin to listen inside.

Listening carries with it one very important question. What is it you are listening to? How do you know it is the voice of God, your own inner consciousness that you hear? There are many voices that compete for our attention. Seductive voices from other dimensions of our unconscious, disguised voices that emanate from personality projections and other voices that are ego based. They will all certainly masquerade as the voice of inner Divinity. We can only discern the difference by entering the silence more deeply, so that the imposters can be identified and we make the choice to listen to that Divine Voice that speaks clearly to us from inside. Calming the mind's chatter, knowing which voice to listen to, takes discipline, time and silence; yet the rewards in terms of increasing clarity and grace of Being are unsurpassable. There are many lessons in this first stage, yet perhaps the most important lesson is about listening within, learning to trust your intuition and being able to distinguish that from ego based projections.

The discernment required comes about through focus and attention to the detailed information that your own body provides. There are numerous false prophets, misguided mystics, power seeking shamans, and unscrupulous seminar facilitators who may seek your attention as teachers. The discomfort you feel in your body when in their presence is enough of a clue for you to move on. Discern the men and women who live their lives simply, and from the heart, who do have something to teach you, or more correctly remind you of, for you already have it all. Your body will respond to teachers such as these with a warm glow of recognition. Your body is a critical barometer for discernment and Truth.

Should there be any tension or ill feeling in the body, you know that your ability to listen to the voice of your own Godself, the energy of mindfulness, is restricted. When you notice a state of relaxation in your body, wellness, joy and lightness - you are picking up the radio station of the voice of your own Godself and of others. To use the radio analogy further, there are instruments that fine tune and clear static in order to get a better reception. Two of those instruments are breath and light, particularly the reverence for both, and noticing the effect of this in your body. As breath and light come gently yet strongly into your heart center, there is a glow in the middle of the chest area. As light is

sent to your crown, this central glow in the heart remains and intensifies as light is sent throughout your body. This bodily feedback is a precise mechanism of fine-tuning.

The use of symbols takes the fine-tuning of discernment and clarity a stage further. Humankind through its Masters and religious functionaries has used a vast array of symbols, at times to dazzle and awe the uninitiated, or to convey a special sanctity to ritual proceedings, and at other times to focus more precisely on the highest truth within themselves. The symbols that facilitate this latter focus vary in outward form from culture to culture, yet all are similar in basic structure and purpose. Symbols are highly specific instruments of focus, and require of the individual the highest level of commitment to service and an unflinching awareness of Truth. Symbols connect the individual from the cellular level within their bodies to the majesty and power of Universal Law. The use of symbols requires that individual attention and proper guidance are available for those who use these valuable tools as a guide to focus on the voice of God within. They serve as keys to open doors and access what is already within. At some point they become totally integrated and consolidated within Being. Reverence for Breath is the foundation for this practise. The nature of listening is to be clear that it is the Voice of God within your heart that you hear. Breath brought gently and with love into the heart center establishes the beginning focus.

The voice of God is a metaphor that cannot ever be understood fully. It is ever present but not always heard. There is a time and phase of self-awareness when the voice of God becomes your internal automatic pilot that is always switched on. The exclusive focus on listening intently for a voice may well exclude other means by which the voice of God comes through to awareness. It appears in writing and painting, in the composition of music, in creating and performing dance and song, in how you go about your work, in being with nature. The voice of God is All. It is everywhere, and when you are open to this, an internal Universal dance shapes everything you do. This is the automatic pilot, or guidance system, that comes into form when love fills you. The guidance of the voice of God is not something you frantically search for. It is a state of Being that is suddenly yours through all the steps taken. When you feel this easy going grace of being throughout your body, note the difference. See your vitality in standing still looking at the sky or waiting for a taxi. Know that just being there makes a

difference without any effort on your part. You exist in this state as a magnet, drawing to the surface in others the grace of God that lies within them. By so honoring yourself in this way, you honor all, for people may begin to openly recognize what resides within.

## **Level 2: Meditation and Self-Healing**

The second level encountered in meditation lies deep in our unconscious, where we store the traumas, hurts and psychological histories of our lives. These storage vaults exist as blockages to the evolution of our consciousness, and carry a load of emotional pain and personal suffering that has to be brought to the surface, cleared from our beings and released from our body, mind and spirit. This second level is about healing, and the experience of Divine Love in meditation provides a safety net for the healing process to be deeply rooted in the supportive energies of the Universe, and of our selves. Healing is an integral part of the meditative journey, and I do not separate considerations of meditation from those of healing. This second level of meditation is a vast territory.

Surfacing and clearing are of great importance to all those who are committed to meditation and self-healing. This path takes you on a journey to a deeper and fuller experience of the inner consciousness that you know is there. The names and metaphors for this inner consciousness are many and varied. The means to access it is through focus and breath, within meditation. The impediments to experiencing this inner consciousness are a series of blockages that draw their origin from upbringing and conditioning, from genetic heritage and from the constraints of karma. The three domains of conditioning, genetics and karma are very significant, and blockages from all three have to be surfaced and cleared. There are ways and means of doing this, but first of all one must understand what is at issue and what is taking place.

Much of the human journey is a preoccupation with conventional levels of truth and the expediencies of the day, as we deal with our existential realities in a way that protects the presumed identities of our ego. Whereas the goal of Ultimate Truth is being, and expressing, the inner consciousness that underlies all that we are. This inner source is there to express itself in all that we do, yet it is blocked by internal patterns that we are often not aware of. What occupies our minds is a concern with conventional truth and what may feel right for our personality preferences at that time. The whole process of

meditation is designed to take us through the conventional levels to experience Ultimate Truth constantly. The different levels of Truth are interconnected, and by allowing ourselves to experience Ultimate Truth in meditation, we then infuse our existential identities with this energy. It is a higher vibration, and its voltage is often sufficient to alter the circuitry of conventional truth so that it is tripped into this higher energy.

In the domain of conventional truth our rationality, emotions and intellect can convince us of all kinds of things, yet the body expresses something different, for it is able to respond to the absence of Ultimate Truth in highly unique ways. The consideration to bear in mind is that the body knows Truth in a manner that intellect, emotion and rationality do not. How do we get at this Ultimate Truth that the body knows but the mind does not? It is first of all necessary to reflect on our outbursts, to understand why we react to situations from anger, greed, hate and fear. When our behavior explodes into reaction there is often a small voice at the back of the mind saying:

"Why am I doing this?"

"Why am I saying this?"

Everything is clearly out of control and the task is to understand why. The origins of negative reaction lie deep in the unconscious. We have unhealed scars and emotional wounds deep within us from our upbringing, genetic heritage and karma. All this is repressed in the unconscious, as the scars and wounds are too painful for our awareness to deal with. When an event is presented to us, that feeds these old scars, that event starts to accumulate power, and it is this negative power that generates and fuels those afflictive emotions associated with painful memories. This force increases and comes charging up from the unconscious, so that by the time it gets to conscious awareness it has the power of a runaway express train - nothing is going to stop it. And so it charges out of us. We react, say, do and think things we often later regret, for this negativity is necessarily extended outwards and projected onto others. Yet there is always this small voice, if we choose to hear it and it is saying one or all of the following:

"Why am I doing this?"

"Why am I saying this?"

"Why am I reacting in this way?"

"Why am I out of control?"

If we listen to this voice and wish to stop the sequence of events, we must take steps to surface the cause of negativity then clear it from our entire system, so that we are liberated from the consequences of the negative energy that has been created. Is it possible to get the mind to tune in to what is taking place, so that something constructive can be done with this negativity that has the power of a raging bull? The major difficulty is that our minds get caught up in the power of negativity, so that clarity about its cause is denied. The mind contributes analysis and expedient rationality that may account for symptoms and consequences, yet rarely address the deeply hidden causes. Despite this difficulty, we are aware that something is wrong, yet do not know what to do. Can we deflect the mind to get it to think of something else so the raging bull energy subsides? Is this the trick to use? Though it may lead to a different mental state, occupying the mind with alternatives merely drives the negativity deeper into the unconscious and it then becomes even more difficult to surface. Mental diversion represses further into the unconscious whatever afflictive emotion caused our distress and reaction. Mental avoidance allows rationalizing to enter in, with sophisticated analysis and cognitive gymnastics, so that we can rationalize anything to anybody, in particular to ourselves. Deflection does not deal with the cause that is generating reaction.

If we had a detached state of mind we could look at the negativity in abstract terms. To observe and engage negativity in a detached manner requires a high level of consciousness and that is what we are moving towards, and cannot yet call upon. There has to be a middle way to understand what is taking place, that does not draw upon either the mind as rationalizing expediency, or on the mind as a purely detached vehicle. We know that reactive emotions such as fear and anger have the power to overwhelm, to the extent that we react in distressful ways that are harmful to others, as well as to ourselves. Rarely can we know on a conscious level when negativity and distress take hold. Secondly we rarely possess the detachment to face in an abstract manner just what the afflictive emotion and distress is about.

The middle way comes from knowing that something else that always occurs the instant that negativity and distress is activated in the unconscious. *The physical body registers immediately with that instant.* Before our mind is aware of what is taking place, the body has got hold of it all and intelligently communicates to us. The moment that negativity is created, our breathing pattern changes, becoming irregular, and sensations of physical discomfort or agitation are felt distinctively in different parts of the body. We do not have to rely on diverting our mind, or having a detached mind to draw upon. We simply need to pay attention to our body, for the body responds to the quality of energy affecting it. Our body is this wonderful register of when and how negativity of any kind impinges upon us, whether this is presented from elsewhere or is internally generated. The ability to surface and clear entails critical attention to bodily sensations and to respiration. The mind is rarely able to key into the origins of the out of control, express train of negative reaction, but the body *always* keys in to this state of energy.

Think back to a situation that you later recognized as being imbued with negative reactions, and try to remember the state of your breathing and the physical feelings in the body. If memory serves, you may recall that your breathing became irregular and that it was accompanied by physical agitations in the body. There may be the feeling of energy draining out of your limbs, knots in your tummy, constriction in the chest area, pressure in the head, dryness in the mouth, feelings of nausea, sudden sweats or tightening in the throat. These and many other body sensations are triggered the moment that negativity takes root. You need not rely on the mind states of deflection or detachment when you know that the onset of negativity within, directly affects your breathing and bodily sensations. With guidance and training it becomes easy to be self aware about these two physical domains - respiration and sensation - and recognize their direct association with negativity and untruth. Thus you learn to observe and discern the significance of agitated breathing patterns and bodily sensations, and know they are caused by deep cellular responses to distress and negativity - your own and that which is presented to you. In your bodily sensitivity there is a monitor for the quality of thought and of reaction within your physical system. Observing the consequences of thought with discerning awareness allows you to see reaction clearly for what it is.

The steps for surfacing and clearing internal patterns involve a choice. You choose Truth as a travelling companion and this entails a conscious decision to **not** choose untruth or negativity in their many manifestations. The second step is to trust the body, and focus on breath so that you are not overtaken or overwhelmed by the creation of negativity from within. By doing this - focusing on breath and bodily sensations - you can then address the root cause of the afflictive emotion; the charging express train of negativity that is out of control, driven from the unconscious by old emotional wounds and expressed in thought and behavior. Remember that the body always, and without fail, communicates the moment negativity takes hold in the unconscious. The body never lies. It is essential to trust the integrity of the body, otherwise you are forced to rely on projections, perceptions and expectations for guidance rather than the Truth that the body communicates. The third step is meditation. You know the significance of what the body communicates and in meditation you take care of the distress.

When negativity is being fuelled in your unconscious, it does not allow you to connect conscious awareness to the constant state of the soul, simply because there is a powerhouse of repressed negativity in the way. The obstacles are to do with lack of personal alignment with inner consciousness due to your ego-attachments, afflictive emotions and lack of balance. This combination of factors creates dislocations in the body that interfere with the free flow of inner consciousness coming into being. Attention is required, so that which blocks inner consciousness and enables malformation to take shape is identified, understood and transcended. So when life experience and bodily expression provide evidence that malformation is being created, STOP, place yourself in a meditative state and identify the blockage. It is surfacing and clearing time.

Surface what has to be cleared up, and then in a direct and truthful manner transform it with your mindfulness. Take care of your distress by meditating, surfacing and clearing. The distress may be anger concerning a financial situation, the effects of past patterns of abuse, lack of Truth in a particular relationship, unfinished business with old issues, inadequate attention to a specific area of life, or reaction to something you have been confronted with. All of these items need the clarity of focus, so breathe into the heart center up to the crown on the in-breath, and down to the toes on the out-breath.

The energy to be applied is calm and relaxed - not frantic or desperate. The opportunity provided by reaction and negativity permits you to surface all that is to be cleared.

There are precise tools to bring to awareness all that is to be integrated and all that must be discarded. The human organism is composed of a vast number of patterns that genetic heritage, karma, life experience and conditioning predispose energy to run to. Some patterns require the conscious focus of energy – those patterns that support attitude shifts and changes in behavior and creativity. Other patterns that have characteristics of addiction, resistance and blockage are habits that you do not fuel with further energy. How do you surface the latter and get rid of them, and how do you surface the former and integrate them into everyday expression?

The main tool is focus in meditation. The underlying key is reverence for breath and flooding the physical body with energy focused through the heart center, in the middle of the chest behind the sternum. From this preliminary foundation ask inside about dark areas and inappropriate patterns within yourself. This is often difficult to do, as we tend to hide from internal darkness - the hatreds, self-loathing, shame and denials of Truth - yet the darkness must be surfaced if we wish to move on in Grace. Thus it is absolutely necessary to surface the deeply hidden violence, anger, fear and control that lies within. This means getting truly in touch with your feelings in order that the emotional wounds can be healed. Once you acknowledge and experience the hidden emotional wounds then they can be surfaced and released from your being. When that is done, anger, hatred, fear and their derivatives - violence and control - have less raw material of hurtful emotion to latch on to. Denial of the deep emotional wounds, however, is highly dangerous to your well being, as denial provides the opportunity for anger and fear to strike from within in the form of reaction.

The importance of surfacing and clearing is so you can live a life free of reactive emotions and always have clarity present within you. However, the emotion and pain of old hurts and deep wounds must first of all be identified, surfaced and then released. Anger, hatred, and fear are convulsive, reactive emotions triggered by the repression of deep hurts and wounded feelings into the unconscious. As Jung says, you must make the unconscious conscious, by becoming aware of what lies underneath anger, fear and other forms of distress. Thus you must identify the deeper hurts, feel them, understand them

and release them. The traumas from our upbringing, in our genetic memories and from karma, lodge themselves as energy in our bodies and create an internal state that is negatively charged and self-destructive. These energies have to be removed, not intellectually, but by being discharged physically from the body and mind in an atmosphere that is both safe and sacred. The process of identifying, feeling, understanding and releasing requires an acute candor and honesty with yourself, and a commitment to move through past pain and wounds so that you are not driven in your thoughts and behaviour by reactive emotions. The part played by conscious awareness in this process is of paramount importance.

If you find that you are angry or fearful, the first step is to identify the deeper emotional pain and distress that anger or fear is reacting to. The pain of abandonment, of feeling unloved, are common emotional wounds that we all experience in some dimension of our lives, yet we cover them up with angry and fearful reactions. To go beyond the anger and fear you must first of all surface the emotional distress, and then take the meditative and therapeutic steps to release it from the body and mind. This means giving up on the denial of feelings and having the courage to recognize the presence of emotional wounds within you. This is not easy to do, as there is a tendency to bury our wounded feelings under a mask, and so we hide from the blackness that lies underneath our public face. Yet the deeper the blackness is buried the more likely it will manifest itself in chronic illness or explode into compulsive acts of self-destruction and violence. Thus it is imperative that you become consciously aware of all that constitutes the hidden blackness and this often requires the support and guidance of a good therapist, shaman or spiritual teacher.

Without such guidance the darkness can take over your life and even masquerade as light, such is its power to confuse and subvert. The recognition of that which is repressed as being part of yourself, is the first and most crucial step in surfacing and clearing. It is a step in learning to be what you are without pretence or artifice, and requires that you dig out all the hidden compulsions by becoming aware of them. It is a most crucial understanding to clearly see your own internal patterns. Furthermore, it is about having the courage to go to the very limits and break down every internal barrier that keeps you in bondage to your dysfunctional patterns.

You have thus taken the step to see inside just as it is. As these deeply buried patterns arise, acknowledge their existence – you can even say “hello old friend I see you are here again!” Then with breath and meditation release them by making a commitment to transcend them. Energy from the heart center releases corresponding energy from the cells so that the pattern is either integrated, or dispensed with in terms of cellular memory. The following meditation is designed for the specific purpose of surfacing and clearing. There are many meditations that are equally valuable, this is to provide the reader with a practice that I have put to good use in my own life. This meditation uses symbolic visualization to accompany the reverence for breath. If you do not visualize very well, then just think it.

### **Sludge Out – Light In Meditation**

When anger, hatred, fear or other distress starts to overwhelm you, and you have discerned from your body that negativity is being created, stop what you are doing and find a quiet place. It is important to remove yourself from the immediate situation of negativity - either physically or by withdrawing energy from that which is presented to you. Take time to honour the body's communication system, for through its agitation it is saying: *Stop; Something Negative has been triggered; Surface it; Identify it; Acknowledge it; Deal with it; Transcend it - this body is in discomfort with its presence!* Breath in deeply, and breath out deeply. Place all your awareness on your breath coming in and going out. Identify the negativity only when calm, because the body and mind become agitated with the activation of afflictive emotions. What evolves here is a step towards body, breath, mind unity through purifying the body of negativities. It is essential to listen to the integrity of the body. Calm yourself and after ten breaths ask inside:

"What is this negativity about?"

"Is it anger? What is the underlying hurt?"

"Is it emotion? What feelings are being denied?"

"Is it fear? What feeling is triggering this reaction?"

"Is it desire? What is the inadequacy about?"

"Is it hatred? Who am I trying to hit back at?"

Find a quiet place and sit comfortably with the spine erect and the feet planted firmly on the floor. Breathe gently into the heart center up to the crown and allow the intelligence of breath to circulate throughout the body on the out - breath. Relax into this all encompassing energy state and allow agitation in the body to diminish. When you feel calm, begin this meditation.

Bring the next breath firmly and gently into the heart center. On the in-breath take it right through the body to the back of the spine and feel it connect to the centre of your vertebrae. Visualize the breath as a laser beam or spiral of white light that bores right through the heart center to the spinal column. Still on the in-breath take the light and energy up the spinal column right to the crown of the head. Pause. Having identified the cause of the negative defilement that has so agitated the body, state quietly to yourself "I choose to rid my body, being and cells of this negativity."

On the out-breath flood the body and entire spinal column with white light and make sure the energy travels through your body and out of your feet into the ground. Repeat the entire meditation sequence ten times until you feel the negativity leaving your body. You will also feel physically lighter. Then in this light and calm take a further step. Breathe in to the heart center with such gentleness and reverence, then on the out-breath fill yourself from top to toe with clear, crystalline white light. Breathe in and out of this purified energy state for ten breaths, and feel the difference in your body. This particular meditation is most valuable for instances where you have keyed into bodily signals about negativity, and the debris of defilement has yet to manifest itself into behaviour. There are other meditations for instances when you are in the middle of creating destruction, but space does not permit further elaboration.

Suffice it to say that if you learn to respond with stillness and awareness to a stimulus that is damaging, then its energy is progressively rendered ineffective. It cannot invoke the scars, wounds and memories deep within your being that wait to fuel negativity of any kind. In this kind of healing meditation the stimulus loses its energy and power to ignite the traumas in the body and mind. This is because you have identified the cause of trauma and released some of the energy attached to it through this meditative process. This disables the power of the stimulus, to the extent that it will not trouble you as much at a future point in time. You have taken care of the distress by

placing it within a meditative framework, and the energy of such a framework eventually dissipates the unravelling knot that has lain dormant within you. For your part it does involve the choice to be in a place of stillness, to be aware, to want to be free of knots of suffering and trauma, so that you can connect to the vast consciousness within. There are two steps to be concerned with. The first is to identify precisely what is taking place, by noticing agitation in respiration and bodily sensations. The second is to place this discernment within a meditative framework, and use breath and appropriate symbolic focus to surface and clear reactive emotions and their underlying causes from your body and mind.

Many individuals are not prepared to trust what their bodies tell them. They do not understand that in their bodies their cells are responding to the quality of Truth, or untruth, that is presented. The cells communicate this information through the central nervous system, to the physical domains of respiration and bodily sensation, and also to conscious awareness. Only we rarely key in to this last step in the chain of communication from cell to mind. The cell responds to the qualities of Ultimate Truth in a way that is totally different to its response to untruth and negativity. Discernment about the nature of this bodily information entails a process of self-observation, with the objective being that of self-purification. When we begin to respond to all stimuli from such a standpoint we begin to feel very different about reality. We feel intensely, but without projection, and appreciate things more as they are rather than attempt to paint them in our own colors. It then becomes difficult to react to negativity and afflictive emotion because the body rapidly keys into the agitation and you stop, register internally with what is going on, surface and clear.

With the development of this kind of awareness, then you have ultimately got negativity beat. It is a relief to know that the heavy artillery **is** on the side of inner consciousness, the soul! We all need a big assist from conscious awareness so that a consistent choice is made not to entertain negativity. Whether the source of negativity is from past conditioning, genetic heritage or karma, it is all located within the body and mind, and the task is to liberate yourself from these blockages. This is why it is such an important step to tune in to the body through the practise of focused breath in meditation,

to experience the accompanying release that can be effected through yoga, qi-gong and tai chi, sweat lodges and other systems of healing and energy release.

These steps of surfacing and clearing enable your entire life to change as an internal/external balance is achieved. The balance permeates all that you engage with, and so the journey continues. Throughout this process of surfacing and clearing you need great honesty and candor with yourself. It is to see things just as they are, to surface and clear them. In calm ask inside about blockages, areas of darkness, what is to be surfaced, how to clear and then employ the appropriate meditation technique. No matter what takes place in our inner life or is presented to us from external sources - we respond from the stillness and silence of meditation. This enables us to grow stronger internally, and we engage with the world from a totally different standpoint, and remain detached from reactive emotions and negativity. You must learn to withdraw energy from negativity as it arises, by choosing to surface and clear distress from the body and mind. The cause must be acknowledged and identified as part of you. In the stillness and silence of meditation we experience a deep rest, during which internal reversals occur and energy patterns that fuel dysfunctional habits begin to dissolve. These patterns, deeply embedded in the cell, need an opportunity to be dumped. The stillness and rest of meditation provide that opportunity.

Surfacing and clearing may appear to be a bumpy ride, yet this journey is such a rich one of travelling through to new levels of awareness. Throughout it you engage with more and more of the most magnificent parts of yourself and of others. Life becomes so remarkable and wonderful as you become more responsive to the vast inner consciousness that surfacing and clearing enables you to appreciate. It requires that you learn to observe the magnificent vehicle that carries you around - the body - and take heed of its communications about Truth.

Meditation is about healing and integration. The deep rest experienced during meditation allows deeply rooted anxieties and traumas to unravel, simply because the body and mind has come to a stop, and there is no holding on to the knots of suffering we have identified as being within us. Thus meditation provides a crucial foundation for us, as we face buried memories and enter healing processes and therapies that recognize, then release, the energy of the traumas that have been repressed. Meditation also nurtures

the seeds of Divine Love within us, and this provides a safety net, which is essential to support self healing. We must be aware, however, that therapies, teachers, healers and religious traditions can only provide signposts, energy and navigational referents for healing. It is the individual, taking responsibility for his state of being, who does all the work of surfacing, clearing and releasing the impediments to wholeness.

In this process we pass through a series of purifications that set the stage for true awakening, as our deepest traumas and hidden wounds are revealed to awareness, then released through meditative practice and appropriate therapies. This journey in self-knowledge empowers us to seize the keys of understanding our worst patterns, our failed relationships, and we take responsibility for our lives by choosing to change our patterns and ingrained habits. We learn to respond with awareness to life's situations rather than react to them with fear, desire or anger. We react, when the wounds in our unconscious are triggered by an external event or memory. We respond, when we notice the energy of distress in our body, step back into the silence of meditation and respond to the external event or memory from a place of calm and clarity. This enables us to participate in life with insight, through a changed attitude that sees life as full of lessons rather than loaded with calamities. This second level or phase of meditative experience has enormous creative potential if we can move from healing into forgiveness, tolerance and compassion, and we begin to create a totally new relationship with ourselves. When we take these steps, we realize that there is more to the "I" than ego; more to the person we are than the sum of past hurts and injustices. And so we grow in spiritual maturity by recognizing and accepting all we have been and now are, and we participate in life from a sense of fullness, which mirrors to us the huge steps we have taken in self-healing.

### **Level 3: Encounter with the Ego**

This prepares us for the major encounter with the ego – the third level of our evolving meditative consciousness. Our ego was there in the distractions and mental chatter of level one. It was there in level two, grimly hanging on to every trauma and drama of our suffering and psychological life history. It is still there in the third level, constantly resisting our further pilgrimage to our true nature. But in this third level of meditation, the masquerades of the ego can more readily be set aside, because our growth

in self-awareness gives us a sense of what the direct connection to God means to our existence. The experience of dealing with mental distractions, and entering the vast territory of self-healing, has enabled us to grow stronger and become more spiritually mature. There is certainly an existential sorrow at having lived a lifetime of separation, but there now emerges that joyous opportunity to live our lives authentically from the fullest expression of our true nature.

We realize that we are not weak and untrue by nature, it is our habits and dysfunctional patterns that are weak and untrue. It is the clinging and attachment to ego that produces weakness and untruth. As we cease to identify our true nature with the attachments of ego, something wonderful begins to happen that cannot be adequately conveyed by words. Our true nature is that of Divinity. There is no sense of separateness, just a deep well of certitude and the emergence of a radiant self that is changed beyond anything hitherto thought about the self, “I”, or ego. Something immense, undefinable, emerges that is beyond the “I”. The task in the third level is not to kill the ego, as many modern and ancient pundits have exhorted us to do. It is to transform and transcend ego-attachments; to relocate the ego in the heart wherein it eventually dissolves, enabling that which is integral to our very being to become our expression in life. We then do not have to strive for anything, we simply go about our daily business of being Godself, and manifest it in all that we participate in. There is congruence and harmony between thought, speech and action; body, mind and soul – so that such distinctions become redundant. They no longer compute! At all times we know that God is alive and well within us.

The steadily growing spiritual maturity experienced from levels one and two stand us in good stead at this third level. We become well established in our true nature, and see that all our experiences and life lessons have been an essential learning curve. When we are not well established in our true nature, we exhibit the common currency of ego posturing, personality projection and clinging to multiple identities that cover up our state of shallow existence. Then the misgivings and doubts about our selves and others become legion. Yet by being rooted in meditative practice, the doubts, misgivings and obstacles fall away – and now one more light shines where before there was darkness. The steps to transcending ego-attachment are not easy, yet they can be deliberate and

progressive. It is unwise to ignore the levels of mental distraction and healing, for they provide the spiritual maturity to experience God beyond our limited sense of personal identity and attachments. Beyond the frontier of personal identity, as we know it, is an opening – a door. This doorway allows us to enter a “Love” vibration that interconnects with everything and totally changes our lives.

At any point in time and space we may find ourselves at different locations within the three levels, and the reference point can change from day to day. Meditation and fidelity to practice provide the bridge, to move from where we presently are to a point further along the continuum of spiritual maturity. Daily meditative practice may appear to be a small thing, yet if we learn to be faithful in small things, we then extend this fidelity to all of our life relationships and connections. The ultimate secret is that this is already in place within each one of us. It is an experience that we can take steps to awaken to. The three broad levels of meditative consciousness are both wave and particle, simultaneous or sequential, depending on how our vision guides us through the knowledge that the Grace of God, Buddha Consciousness, the Creator, and similar expressions of the same vibration, are inherently within us.