

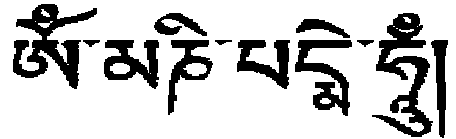
Meditation: The Common Path to Truth

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*Leave the body at rest, like an unmoveable mountain.
Leave the speech at rest, like an unstrung guitar.
Leave the mind at rest like a shepherd after dusk who
Brought his flock home and sits by the warm fire.*

Meditation in some form has been systematised in most great religions of the world. The Hindu philosophical school of Yoga prescribes a highly elaborated process for the purification of body, mind, and soul. One aspect of Yoga practice, *dhyana* (Sanskrit: "concentrated meditation"), became the focus of a school of its own among the Buddhists, in China as *Ch'an* and, subsequently, in Japan as *Zen*.

In numerous religions, spiritual purification may be sought through the **verbal** or **mental repetition** of a prescribed efficacious syllable, word, or text (for example: the Hindu and Buddhist mantra; Islamic *dhikr* and Christian Jesus prayer).



The focusing of attention upon a **visual image** (for example: a flower, a distant mountain, an effigy) is a common technique in informal contemplative practice and has been formalised in several traditions. The Tantric Buddhists of Tibet, for example, regard the *mandala* (Sanskrit: "circle") diagram as a collection point of universal forces, accessible to man by meditation.

Tactile and **mechanical devices**, such as the rosary, the prayer wheel, and music play a highly ritualised role in many contemplative traditions.



'Select a clean spot, neither too high not too low, and seat yourself firmly on a cloth, deerskin or kusha grass. Then, once seated, strive to still your thoughts. Make your mind one-pointed in meditation and you will be purified.' These words come from the Bhagavad Ghita, the best known and most influential of the Hindu Scriptures. The book devotes an entire section to the practice of meditation, which is central to the Hindu way of life. It is also an integral part of the other great oriental religions, Buddhism and its close cousin, Zen.

But while meditation is married in the minds of many to the East, it also has its place in Sufism, Christianity and Judaism. Different meditation forms have somewhat different goals. Practitioners of Christian meditation, Zen, and Tantra may each think differently about their practice. The details of their practice vary, but each uses meditative skill to live in greater awareness and to step beyond the limits of mundane existence.

You can experiment with different meditation forms, or you can focus your energies on one that seems right for you. In either case, persistent practice will lead to success!

In modern society, most people are striving for worldly perfection, happiness and success. Many of us strain ourselves to gain material desires. These uncontrollable desires cause suffering, for when the desires are being fulfilled people are contented, but if not, they despair, or can even, become insane. Thus, people can easily become the victims of failure simply because they cannot realise that success and happiness lie within themselves.

The Mind and Meditation

According to the teaching of the Lord Buddha, the real cause of our suffering is our lack of skill in utilising our minds. The Buddha taught that the mind is the place where both happiness and suffering is stored. It is also the only means by which we can release ourselves from our own suffering through the practice of meditation.

Meditation is the most direct method by which we can start to diminish our suffering. Meditation improves the mind from the unhealthy condition suffered by most people who have not yet discovered

the "secret" of meditation. From a state vulnerable of distraction and superficiality, the meditator will begin to recover the still and shining mind which lies beneath the chaos of mundane thought. Far from being something mysterious or supernatural, this shining mind is the most healthy and natural mental condition, which can be attained by human beings. It can be enjoyed by anybody who is willing to practice meditation.

The meditator's ultimate benefit is to be able to really penetrate and understand for themselves, the source of their religion or philosophy. The human lifespan is short one. Surely the best that any human can achieve, is to find the source of True Happiness; and to allow True Wisdom and Compassion to reflect in the dealings of their everyday life.

***Breathe. Breathe again.
Smile. Relax.
Arrive
Where you are.
Be natural.
Open to effortlessness,
To being
Rather than doing.
Drop everything.
Let go.
Enjoy for a moment
This marvellous joy of meditation! (* Lama Surya Das)**



Kaz Thorpe is the Director of the **Asclepius College of Healing**. Seeking to enhance your knowledge of healing, parapsychology, spirituality? The Asclepius College offers wonderful courses and studies can even lead to a Diploma of Intuitive Sciences. Need guidance for your spiritual journey? Individual consultations are of course available. **Ring Kaz on 02 49 562 263.**

