

# The Journey Toward Ecstasy



Lee Timmerman

The Journey  
toward  
ecstasy

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*when the flame  
becomes  
the fire  
and the fire  
becomes  
the flame  
the dance  
and the  
dancer  
are one*



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*the Eightfold Path*  
*the Royal Path*

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*There is a universality of the human experience that transcends time and boundaries; and it is the human experience that inspires and uplifts the human spirit.*

## Introduction

All humanity has an innate desire to experience happiness. We seek after happiness throughout our life, each in our own way. The diversity amongst humanity is most evident in what we believe will bring us happiness, and in the manner and process through which we strive to attain our beliefs of happiness. Most of our interests and activities are undertaken with the belief that our endeavors will help us to attain happiness.

In the process of the attainment of happiness, we must understand the soul is Satyam (love, ecstasy), Shivam (harmony, bliss), Sundaram (beauty, joy). The soul is happiness, and to attain happiness, we have to attain realization of the soul.

Meditation is a process of self-discovery that leads to knowledge of our wholistic nature. The goal of meditation is to realize that our nature and the nature of all life, both manifested and unmanifested, are one and the same. Knowledge of our oneness with all life leads to a natural unfoldment of the human spirit into our nature of wholistic consciousness. Realization of our wholistic nature is a twofold process of self-awareness. Firstly, by calming the mind, breath, and ego (meditation) we discover who we are—our



human nature, our spirit nature, and our wholistic consciousness nature. Secondly, this knowledge is then utilized to allow us to let go of our mindsets and go beyond our limitations, thereby freeing us into our wholistic nature and harmonizing with all life (God). We will then have true freedom to live within our wholistic nature of love, harmony, beauty, joy, and ecstasy. We will have freedom into life and life more abundantly.

Meditation can help us to attain one of the greatest blessings anyone could receive, which is to know our self. Through discovering our nature as eternal, consciousness, and ecstasy, we will be freeing our self into life where we will be able to live and harmonize with all life. There is only one life. The soul, once born never dies, and lives forever experiencing life within the many realms of existence. The realization of our nature and the nature of all life as one and the same is the awakening into our true self.

*The very fountain of power is in the breath. The breath is the link between body, mind, and spirit. When there is harmony between the body, mind, and spirit, we can accomplish anything.*

## BREATH OF LIFE

*In* the journey towards developing a happy, healthy, and loving relationship with our self, others, and life around us, we need to come to our breath. We must understand the importance of breath in our life. Without the understanding of the importance of the breath and regulation of the breath, we will not be able to live a happy, healthy, and harmonious life.

The average person will breathe approximately 500 cubic centimeters of oxygen per breath, yet our lung capacity is approximately 3500 cubic centimeters. The average person will breathe 16–22 times a minute. Someone doing deep diaphragmatic breathing would only need 2–3 breaths a minute. Not only does deep breathing provide more oxygen to the system, it also removes more carbon dioxide and toxins from the body. The average person is providing 1/7<sup>th</sup> of oxygen nutrition to the body and removing 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the toxins with each breath.

It is more important to breathe properly than it is to eat properly. Proper breathing will positively affect us physically, mentally, and emotionally. It is easy to see the need for oxygen nutrition when it is put into the context of: How long can we live without food before we die? How long can we live without water before we die? How

long can we live without oxygen before we die? Oxygen is the primary nutritional need of the body and mind, yet most people will give little, if any, time to the breath.

By increasing the fullness of breath, more oxygen will be coming into the body and more toxins will be removed. When we realize the benefits of more oxygen, we will be more inclined to make the effort to improve our breathing habits. Most people would never dream of cutting their food or caloric intake to 1/7<sup>th</sup> of what they normally eat, nor would they consider cutting their water intake to 1/7<sup>th</sup> of what they drink. However, we don't give much thought to providing the body with only 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the oxygen it can utilize. Stress, anxiety, conflict, and discord are a direct result of this lack of oxygen nutrition to the body and mind.

If we view oxygen as nutrition and approach it from a nutritional point of view, we will see the physiological need to change our breathing habits. We will then begin to see the connection between the mind and body. As we begin to take in more oxygen and get rid of more toxins, we will notice how calm and peaceful our mind is. A mind that is peaceful and calm will see and enjoy the diversity of life. The very act of proper breathing will bring about a tremendous change in our view of life, or our moods and attitudes.

Breath is part of the autonomic nervous system, so we can breathe without even thinking about it. When we bring our attention to the breath, we can change the depth, length, and frequency of our breath. How we breathe is basically just a habit we have formed. Because it is a habit, it is something we can change. By paying attention to what we are doing, we can change shallow and irregular breathing to slow, deep, rhythmic breathing. When we understand that increased oxygen and reduced toxins will help make us happier and healthier, we will be willing to take the time and make the effort to change our habits.

Changing our breathing habits begins with simply taking full, gentle, deep breaths every day. While doing this, pay attention to how the body and mind respond. Be aware of how you felt physically, mentally, and emotionally before you began the diaphragmatic breathing and how you feel afterwards. The mind will become calmer during slow deep breathing. A mind that is anxious, angry, or irritated will be accompanied by short and rapid breaths. The mind will follow the breath, so if we

regulate our breathing we can have better control of the mind. We can use deep full breathing to attain a calmer and more peaceful mind.

In the beginning, we will need to use discipline to regulate our breath. We change our shallow breathing to deep diaphragmatic breathing, which begins to calm the mind. More oxygen is available to the body, which improves our health. More carbon dioxide and more toxins are being eliminated. The body and mind now have maximum fuel.

To discipline ourselves with proper breathing, we simply take a little time each day to practice deep diaphragmatic breathing. We take deep slow breaths. We count from 1 to 12 as we inhale. If we can't make it to 12, we choose a lower number that we can reach. Then we exhale to the same count. It is deep, slow, and even. The brief pauses between breaths should also be even. Ideally, we take a few minutes each hour for this practice. We pay attention to the differences in how we felt before the practice and how we feel afterwards. Also pay attention to the length of the deep breathing. The first deep breath may have been to a count of 1 to 4. After a couple of minutes, it may be 1 to 12. The goal of practicing this 1–12 breathing technique throughout the day is to have a calmer breath and therefore, a calmer mind, but this practice also allows us to change our whole breathing habit.

Breathing is part of the autonomic nervous system and is an automatic function. However, we can control *how* we breathe. The way we presently breathe is by habit. Habits can be changed. By consciously practicing deeper breathing, it will eventually become our new breathing habit. When this new habit is established, we won't have to give it much time and attention.

Another breathing practice is called Bellows Breathing. It is a deep and full inhalation through the nostrils with four or five quick and short exhalations through our mouth to expel all the air from the lungs. This process will allow us to take a deep breath *and* help our body and mind to relax and calm down. When we concentrate on expelling all the air, we will be focused on what we are doing. This will relax us, and this relaxation will allow us to take an even deeper breath. The inhalation is done slowly and gently. The exhalation is done with four or five quick explosive exhalations. Both the 1–12 breathing technique and the bellows breathing will help us change our breathing habits if we do them consistently and daily.

When we have experimented with changing our breathing patterns and see how effective and important it is in controlling the mind, we will begin to pay more attention to our breathing. It will become natural to check how we are breathing throughout the day. In the beginning, we will have to set aside a few minutes a day to consciously work on diaphragmatic breathing, but eventually it will become routine. Within a few days, if not hours, we will begin to harvest the benefits of increased oxygen and reduced toxins with more peace, joy and calmness of the mind, less agitation, more positive thinking, and less negativity. We will see the connection of the deeper breathing to increased energy and enthusiasm for life.

## BREATH/MIND CONNECTION

In a healthy person, generally one nostril will be predominantly more open than the other. Throughout the day, this phenomenon will alternate back and forth between the right and left nostril approximately every two hours. What is interesting about this fact is that each nostril correlates with a different (opposite) side of the brain. Which side of the brain is more easily accessed and activated is affected by which nostril is more open. When the right nostril is the more predominant, the left hemisphere (male/reasoning and logic) is more active. When the left nostril is more predominant, the right hemisphere (female/intuition and communication) is more active. Left and right brain studies have shown that the left brain (male) is more aggressive, assertive, and outgoing. It is more orientated to the external world. Concentration, will power, and action are functions of the left brain. The right brain (female) is more collective, communicative, passive, internally orientated, intuitive, and is better suited for multi-tasking.

We can tell which side of the brain is more active by being aware of which nostril is the predominant one. The side that is more activated can play a part in our moods and attitudes. If we were going into a business meeting where we would need to present new material, it would be best to have the left brain more active. If we were attending a seminar and needed to gather information, it would be best to have the right brain more active. Also, the right nostril/left brain regulates the heating function of our body, while

the left nostril/right brain helps regulate the cooling unit. By understanding that the breath through the nostrils has an affect on the different sides of the brain, we can have some control over, or even temporarily change which side of the brain is more activated.

There are breathing exercises, which allow us to balance our left and right brain. These techniques are called pranayama breathing exercises and will be described in more detail in the section on meditation. *Prana* means “life force” and *yama* means “control.” The pranayama techniques will balance the left and right side of the brain, giving us equal access to both sides. This will help us to be more balanced human beings. There is so much more to breathing than just getting oxygen into the body. It affects our thinking processes, the mind, our moods, attitudes, our emotions, our digestive and elimination processes, our immune system, and our physical and mental health.

There is another technique we can use to help switch which nostril is open. By placing our fist under our left armpit and applying pressure or lying on our left side, our right nostril will be predominately open. By reversing this process, we can open the left nostril.

Moods, attitudes, and emotions are of the mind. We see life with our mind and we hear with our mind; the mind causes us to see, interpret, and translate. The mind is what interprets what others say to us. Our emotions, moods, and attitudes reflect how we interact with the rest of life. Proper breathing, or improper breathing, will affect how we think, interpret, and translate what we see and hear every day. We can experiment and notice how we are affected by our breathing. When we are angry or frustrated, the breath is trembling and uneven. When we are crying or angry, we also have a very narrow view of things. It is at these times that we can use the breath to gain control of the mind.

It may be helpful to make notes or keep a journal while you are practicing or experimenting with regulating the breath. Note how you feel physically, mentally, and emotionally before you begin the breathing techniques, then note how you feel afterwards. During the day, when you experience happiness, sadness, calmness, anger, or any mood or emotion, make note of your breathing pattern. If you consciously took control of your breath by a few minutes of deep breathing and experienced a change of mood, note that. When focus is shifted from the mind to the breath, the mind will naturally calm down. The more happiness and joy we have in life, the more successful

our journey will be. True success is measured by the amount of love, joy, happiness, and enthusiasm we have as we journey through life.

I can't emphasize enough the importance of proper breathing. Proper breathing is the single most important nutrient for health and happiness. The breath is what regulates a healthy body and a healthy mind. Without the breath, there is no such thing as a healthy and happy human being. The most valuable nutrient for the body and mind is oxygen. By having proper breathing habits, both nostrils will be open fairly equally, the entire brain will be accessible, and we can function at peak and full potential. This starts with the regulation of the breath or pranayama.

## PRANAYAMA: THE FOUNDATION OF POWER

“Prana” means life force, and “yama” means control. Pranayama literally means controlling the life force. The foundation of life is the breath, whether it is the prana one attains through the individual breath, or through the Breath of God (called the Word, or the Christ/Krishna Consciousness).

Pranayama begins with diaphragmatic breathing. It is a simple process. We inhale completely, filling the upper and lower lobes of the lungs, and then we exhale completely to expel the air from the upper and lower lobes. This brings in more oxygen, dispels more carbon dioxide and toxins, and also acts as a pump to bring in more prana directly through the medulla oblongata at the base of the skull. The prana is drawn in through the medulla on the exhalation, so the longer our exhalation, the more prana is taken in. This is why it is important to have a long full breath. On the inhalation, we are bringing in oxygen, which is a vehicle for the prana, and on the exhalation, we expel carbon dioxide and are drawing in the prana directly through the medulla. Regulated diaphragmatic breathing also calms our mind, and if we do not take control of our breath, it will be difficult to take control of our mind.

The gunas (sattvic, rajasic, tamasic) come into play with the mind. The sattvic gunas are those activities, thoughts, or vibrations that lead to stillness and peace, and therefore ecstasy. The rajasic activities, thoughts, or vibrations are those that lead to joy

and delight. Tamasic activities, thoughts, or vibrations are those that lead to destruction or suffering. Until we learn to breathe deeply, our mind will constantly be struggling with the duality of the rajasic and tamasic vibrations that are continuously dominating the mass consciousness at this time. Simply by extending our breath to diaphragmatic breathing helps our mind transcend this tamasic level of thoughts and ideas. Once we are able to transcend the tamasic level, we no longer have to struggle with the constant bombardment of negative vibrations. Once we have transcended to a higher vibration of sattvic and rajasic vibrations, our thoughts will be more uplifting, delightful, and joyful.

The deeper and calmer the breath, the easier it is to transcend from the rajasic state of joy and delight, to the sattvic level, where we want to experience the peace and ecstasy that is our nature.

Most people just breathe out of habit, and habits are things we can change. It may take a couple of weeks or months of practicing these techniques to change our habit of breathing, but once we do, we will no longer even have to think about making the effort. We will just normally be breathing a deep, calm, diaphragmatic breath. Our mind will then find it easier to stay focused on that which is positive and uplifting to the human spirit, and easier to focus on the accomplishment of our life goals.

## BODY, MIND, SPIRIT CONNECTION

Not only does the breath connect the mind to the body, but it also connects the spirit to the body.

When the breath quits, the spirit leaves the body.

The breath is the link between the body, mind, and spirit. When there is complete harmony between the body, mind, and spirit, we can accomplish anything. To accomplish any goal, to attain any desire, it will be easier and more quickly accomplished if the body, mind, and spirit are in harmony. The slower and deeper the breath, the more we can focus.

The very fountain of youth is in the breath. You feel more energized, healthy, and happy with deep breathing. Proper breathing will make us calmer and more peaceful.



Slower breathing will cause the heart to slow down. When the breath and heart are slower, there will be less wear and tear on the physical body. Better health, more happiness and joy all start with the breath.

Without regulating the breath, there will be little control of the mind. If there is little control of the mind, there will be no concentration. Without concentration or focus, there will be little accomplishment in anything we undertake.

Another important step we take to developing a relationship with our self is taking control of the breath. Once we change our breathing habits, all else will follow. The mind will be easier to discipline and direct. It will be easier to utilize willpower. The next time you are upset, angry, sad, or irritated, just try 10 minutes of deep diaphragmatic breathing and you will see that it changes everything. Physically and psychologically, you will feel lighter and happier. Colors will seem more colorful. Negative emotions make the world seem heavy and dull. Our “burdens” are not part of our nature. They are merely things we have taken on with an agitated or overly active mind.

A calm mind will have controlled and directed thoughts that will be able to accomplish things that are beneficial to the individual and the international community. A calm mind will not be overwhelmed, frustrated, or irritated when something new comes along, nor will it be stressed by too much information because a calm mind will automatically dismiss all non-essential information. A calm mind will have clarity and vision because our true nature will be able to separate the essential from the non-essential. On a subtle level, this clarity and vision will simply dismiss negative, anxious, overactive thoughts that may start to form. A calmer mind begins with breath regulation.

When we have a calm mind, we won't have to get away from our work or family and friends in order to get away from stress. We will be able to embrace the life we want. We will have the time and energy to do the things we enjoy because we have quit wasting our time and energy on all the unimportant and negative things that we used to allow in.

## BREATH OF LIFE BREATH OF JOY

In the beginning, we can begin to make changes in our life by starting with 10 minutes a day of deep breathing. Then we

begin to increase that to a few minutes every hour. We continue to increase how long we do the deep breathing until eventually it will be the way we breathe normally. The next time you are feeling stressed, agitated, angry or irritated, try 10 minutes of slow, deep diaphragmatic breathing. There will be a marked difference. Once we have done this and found that it does work, we will find we have the key to health and happiness. Now, it isn't just the breath of life, it has become the breath of joy and happiness. With this knowledge, we now have the ability to determine how much happiness and joy are in our life. Our view of life and our choice of how to interact with life will change for the better.

Deep breathing and a calm, balanced mind allows us to come to our self and begin to *live* our life rather than spending our life sorting through the demands of an overly stimulated world. This is what an agitated mind is doing—working on sorting out and dealing with the bombardment of external information. If you have deep breathing and a calm mind, this information overload will naturally sort itself out as to what is essential to your life and what is non-essential.

After removing some of our stress, anxieties, or obstacles, we don't then just sit and do nothing. Having a peaceful life doesn't mean we have to go off to the mountains or sit in a garden all day. It means we are at peace with our self and life around us. This lets us accomplish and fulfill the things we enjoy, allows us to fulfill our very purpose. It is being at peace with the activities we do. Having developed a relationship with our self, we now want to succeed in our goals. We become able to see what we would like to experience. We may want to become a better parent, or accomplish something in the art or music world. We may have a personal goal, like that of greater peace in our life. We may have a goal in the scientific field or medicine and research. The goal may be in the humanitarian field, trying to help others remove obstacles in their life, like teaching or social work. By removing the obstacles from our own life, we have more freedom to live the life we choose.

Once we have attained some balance in our life and have removed a few obstacles, we begin to utilize all our efforts. Thus far we have used simple breath control that has brought about these almost miraculous results. Now we develop the mental discipline to take control of our life. Regulating our breath has been a step. Without it, no other steps can be made. Having taken control of the breath, we now start to develop discipline. We bring in a healthier physical diet that brings more energy, more harmony, and less conflict. If we pay attention and have more positive and uplifting thoughts, we will be calmer, happier, and more peaceful. We begin to see the reasoning behind being virtuous or thinking positive thoughts.

The process of developing this relationship with our self starts with the breath, which affects the mind, moods and attitudes, and how we even perceive life. Remember, we don't see with our eyes, we don't hear with our ears, rather we see and hear with our mind. How open to life we are is reflected by the healthiness of our wholistic self, that of our body, mind, and spirit. We change our thinking and begin to nurture our self with deep breathing. Simply by regulating the breath, the rest of the disciplines will become easier to establish. It's almost miraculous what happens to the body, mind, and spirit when we begin to breathe properly.

A relationship with our self includes the body, mind, and spirit. We add physical and mental nutrition. We add meditation, which is beginning to know our self on a much more complete level. The knowledge, techniques, exercises, nutrition, and psychology are all tools to help us on our journey. Getting to know our self is the self-discovery of the joy, happiness, and success of our life.

*Happiness will come when we balance a life with  
interest for our self, knowledge of nature (God),  
and healthy relationships with other people.*

## TO KNOW OUR SELF

To know our self is an inner journey that must be undertaken in order to live a healthy and happy life. We can learn to enjoy the process of life. Since our self is within us at all times, developing a relationship with it is the only sane approach to life.

Most of humanity believes that they are body, mind, and spirit. Therefore, the relationship with the whole self must involve the physical body, the mind and thoughts, and the spirit. We begin where we are and allow for knowledge and understanding of who we are to grow. We start with the premise that we are body, mind, and spirit.

Like an iceberg, which has only a small part visible above the water while the majority of it remains unseen below the water, we also are aware of only a small part of who we are while the major part of who we are is hidden to us. We see only some of our physical life, but there is so much more that is beyond what we are currently aware of. The conscious, subconscious, and superconscious<sup>1</sup> are all part of our wholistic self. The relationship with our self has to start with where we are and from where our current vision is. We are aware that we are a body, mind, and spirit, so we will start there.

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<sup>1</sup> *Conscious*: awareness of body, senses, and breath; *Subconscious* (active in sleep): associated with little or no conscious awareness of body, senses, and breath; *Superconscious*: state of freedom from the delusion that “existence” depends on the body, senses, and breath.

Unless the mind is understood and brought under control, we will get nowhere. Thoughts are just thoughts. They are not who we truly are. To go deeper into the question of who we are, it is essential that we understand the workings of the mind better. The mind is a tool. We need to learn what this tool is for and how it works in order to use it skillfully. G. I. Gurdjieff<sup>2</sup> told a story about a man driving a horse and cart. He said the driver, the man, is the conscious mind. The horse is the subconscious mind. The cart is the superconscious. Most drivers think they are in control, doing what they want to do and going where they want to go to be happy. They are going to a party, a wedding, shopping. Then something runs across the road and spooks the horse. Now the horse is running off through the ditches. The driver is hanging on for dear life yelling, “Whoa!” Still the horse is running where it wants. Everything in the cart is falling out and the cart is getting damaged. The cart, the superconscious, is where we have our dreams and purpose of being. To fulfill our life, we need to learn how to direct and control the horse, which is the subconscious mind.

## FOUR FUNCTIONS OF THE MIND

The mind has four main functions. One function of the mind is to question everything and to have doubts. A second function is to evaluate, discriminate, and make decisions. The third function is to store information pertaining to our experiences and knowledge. This information that is stored can be drawn upon to help us make decisions. The fourth function is the ownership, the “I, me, mine.” This is the part that wills us to make choices. “I have questioned and evaluated and compared this to other experiences. I have now made a decision. This will benefit me. Now I will use my willpower to do it.” These four functions of the mind need to work together for a healthy human being.

A mind in control will use these four functions in a natural way to accomplish its goals. A mind out of control will war against itself. It will make decisions and then question the decisions. It will draw from stored information, but will be unable to move forward with it. It will evaluate and make decisions, but will begin to come up with

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<sup>2</sup> Russian teacher and writer (1877-1949)

questions and excuses as to why it shouldn't be done. In conflict with itself, the mind will be in a chronic state of indecision. In this case, the four functions of the mind were all there, but not being properly controlled.

To control the mind, we have to first understand how these four functions work for us, and then we have to use discipline. When a situation comes along, the mind should question what it is about. It then evaluates the situation and draws from prior knowledge or experience. It then makes a decision as to what will be done. Finally, it has the ownership and the will to carry out the decision. Doubts and uncertainty may continue to come in, but we have already addressed those in the decision making process, so we don't have to keep rehashing them. We follow through to accomplish our goal.

An easy example of how we use the four functions of the mind would be, "What will I have for supper tonight?" *Function #1 Questions/doubts*: "Do I want to cook, or would I rather go out?" *Function #2 Evaluate and decide*: "I'd rather stay in tonight, so I will cook." *Function #3 Access warehouse of mind*: "I had fish last night and I don't want it again tonight. I have everything I need to make spaghetti, salad, and garlic bread." *Function #4 Will the decision into action*: We begin preparing the meal. The same four functions of the mind that help us make the small decisions in our life should be consciously used to make the larger or harder decisions in our life.

Most people want to be more disciplined and want to exercise more willpower. What stops them is that they don't understand how to control the mind. When we make good decisions but don't follow through on them, it is easy to blame it on other people, places, or situations. People make the reasonable decision to take better care of their health and come up with an exercise plan through using the four functions of the mind. There will be feelings of happiness and calmness when the decision is made. Then comes the time to exercise and the excuses start—not enough time, something came up, too tired. If we recognize the excuses as the first function of the mind, we will not start undermining our self, but rather will implement the action for our benefit.

Once we understand the four functions of the mind, we understand that we can simply dismiss the questions and excuses that come up after we have made a decision, because we know we have already gone through the proper process to make the decision in the first place. We know that our original decision was already based on questioning,

evaluating, drawing on stored knowledge, and that we willfully decided on a plan. Discipline is simply using the willpower function of the mind to follow through in acting on our decisions.

## THOUGHTS

Thinking is a process of the mind. Most people think their thoughts are the “truth.” A thought comes in and because it feels comfortable or familiar, it is declared the truth. For example, “I know I decided to exercise, but this exercising may not be what I want to do. This doubt has come in and it feels like a legitimate doubt, so therefore it is true that exercising is not what I want to do. I better not exercise.” We are not the mind. The mind is a tool that has functions. We are not our thoughts. Thinking is just a process or function of the mind.

A negative thought will bring agitation, anger, irritation, frustration, fear, or depression. A healthy mind is a calm and quiet mind. The anger or fear did not cause the thought, rather it was the effect of the thought. For instance, if we are at the funeral of our best friend, we will feel sad. The sadness arose because of an event, the death of our friend. However, if we sit and think (fantasize) about what it will be like if our best friend was to be killed tomorrow in a car accident, we will get very sad and upset. Our best friend is alive, but here we are in tears because we aren’t living in the moment and we aren’t living in reality. Our sadness arose from a thought. Most of our moods and attitudes are caused by our thoughts rather than actual events. Negative thoughts will lead to negative moods. For decades, psychologists have said that our feelings are legitimate. That may be true, but negative moods do not fill us with happiness and love. Our feelings may be legitimate, but not all are happy and healthy and may have come from fantasy, non-legitimate, or dysfunctional thinking.

When the mind is calm, we naturally feel love, appreciation, gratitude, thankfulness, and joy. The mind is aware and enjoying the beauty and joy of life. If we watch children, we will see that there is often not much more on their minds than the enjoyment of the world around them. This is the natural state of the calm mind until we have to put the mind to work in order to understand or communicate something. Paying attention to thoughts, moods, and attitudes allows us to see whether we have control of

the mind or whether it has control of us. Understanding and utilizing the four functions of the mind are the first steps towards gaining control of the mind.

Next, there needs to be an understanding of the two sides of the brain. There is the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. The left hemisphere is predominately the male principles and the right hemisphere is predominately the female principles. The left (male) side of the brain is where logic and reason are accessed. It is where we analyze information, sort things out, and it is the source of our assertiveness. The right (female) side of the brain is where intuition and expression are dominant. It is the creative, intuitive and receptive side of the brain. The left side of the brain analyzes things and the right side connects or communicates things. To enjoy life, we need to balance the two sides so we are working with the whole brain when we are in the process of questioning, evaluating, sorting through knowledge, and willing the decision into action.

## THOUGHTS AND PERCEPTIONS OF REALITY

In learning to take control of our mind, we need to understand and accept that thoughts are just thoughts. They are not “truth” or “reality.” At best they are a perception of reality. If a perception of reality changes, then the thoughts will change. Feelings are the accumulation of thoughts. The good feelings like love, joy, gratitude, and peace are our nature. The bad feelings like anger, jealousy, and frustration usually arise from our thoughts. If we want to change our mood or attitude, all we have to do is change our thoughts, and our feelings will follow. If we withdraw our attention from certain thoughts, the moods and attitudes will dissipate. If we are thinking sad thoughts, there will be the feeling of sadness. If we choose to think about beauty or happy thoughts, the sadness disappears. When we have a thought, a feeling will appear. We need to understand that our thoughts are what cause our feelings, and our feelings are the cause of our moods and attitudes. Even in a world that is not filled with continuous joy, we have the ability to choose our feelings and moods by what thoughts we give our time and attention to.

Everyone has his or her own perception of reality. This is called separate realities. One separate reality is not the same as another. When we want validation from



others and we do not get it, we may become angry, hurt, or frustrated at the other. Now the mind is starting to be out of control simply because it does not understand or accept the reality of our self or others. Our individual reality is but one of billions of realities. This variety of realities allows for the spice of life.

Understanding the mind and its functions allows us to take the mind and direct it towards our goals and our relationship with our self. Learning about the mind may seem like pretty dry material, but we need this knowledge in order to take control of it.

The mind a tool is the most powerful tool we have. We have infinite potential, and our true nature is that of love, harmony, beauty, and joy. Yet many people are unhappy, frustrated, pushed and pulled by the simple need for food, sleep, and the desires for procreation, and self-preservation (the four primal instincts). This happens because the mind is not being utilized properly.

To use the mind successfully, we simply utilize its functions. Once there is a basic understanding of the mind, we can begin to use it properly. We then begin to take control of our destiny, of our joy, of our freedom, health, and love. It becomes possible to remove the negative and dysfunctional thoughts. Negative thoughts are not reality and we can let them go when we understand that they are not healthy for us. Understanding the mind and using it properly will positively affect our enjoyment of everyday life.

When we have gained control of our mind and a problem or situation comes up, we will evaluate it and question what we want to do or why we want to do it. This is where we weigh the pros and cons, where we have the inner debate. We come up with an answer or plan. Then we willfully put the plan into motion. We then need to pay attention to the results of our actions. We aren't questioning our plan, rather we are paying attention to the results. If we are happy, then we are doing something right. If we are unhappy, we may be doing something wrong or unhealthy, which is causing discord or conflict. If we are happy, we continue. If we are unhappy, we need to re-evaluate our decision-making process. This can be a little tricky because sometimes we are doing the right thing, but are still not happy. This can happen when we wanted a different result than what we got. For example, we can be a virtuous person, but others may not want to associate with us. If the thought was, "I will be a virtuous person so that others will like me," then the thought was flawed since we cannot control another person.

Healthy thoughts are ones that are beneficial to our self and to others. This is basically the Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would wish they would do unto you.” What we do for others, life will give back to us. Healthy thoughts will lead to a healthy mind. A healthy mind is a calm mind. A calm mind is better able to perceive the true reality. An agitated mind cannot be clear. It will be in conflict and will be unable to perceive events or facts accurately or truthfully.

## FROM THOUGHT TO ACTION

The goal of taking control of the mind is not to empty it of all thoughts. Even though a quiet mind is healthy and happy, there is more to life than just sitting quietly. The goal is to calm the mind down so we can empty it of the negative and unhealthy thoughts, then to fill it again with new, creative, and uplifting ideas. This allows us to come up with new approaches to life. Remember, one function of our mind is the storage of the sum total of all our thoughts and experiences. We need to begin adding new thoughts and experiences or we will just continue using the same old thought processes and will come up with the old ideas that weren't getting us anywhere.

Calming the mind opens us to new and creative ideas. However, this is where the ego, the “I” part of the mind, can get stubborn. When a new or creative perception comes in, the ego may say, “No. My perception is familiar and this new way of looking at things is wrong!” This happens all the time. When something new or unfamiliar is introduced into a discussion, people often reject it because it is foreign to their way of thinking. Not being familiar, it is dismissed without further consideration. A calm mind is more apt to view the new or creative idea with curiosity and openness. We need to be open to new material in order to add new information into the storage area of the mind. The ego is part of the mind. However, we don't need to use that part of the mind when we are listening to others. True listening is when we are open to what others are saying. A calm mind will be open to new ideas from within, and it will also be open to new and creative ideas that may come from others. Healthy relationships are founded on people being open to each other's ideas. Troubled relationships are where people have

stubbornly held to their idea that their view of reality is right and the other person's is not. An open mind will understand that there are different ways of viewing things. Several people can watch the same event and give several different versions of what occurred. With this understanding, we will be less likely to judge a view that is different from ours as "wrong" and can remain open to new ideas.

Once we have gained control of our mind, we must then do something with it. We begin to move, to grow, and to discipline ourselves. This will take effort and practice. Once the mind is disarmed through understanding its functions, we can make progress. We no longer have to argue and debate with our self. We no longer have to blame others for our conflict, because we now know that was just the mind warring against itself. We have freed up time and energy to put into motion the plans we have developed.

The mind, with the energy of our thoughts and feelings, is the most powerful tool we have to attain happiness in life. We use this tool to decide to have better nutrition for the body and mind. We use it to decide to have exercise for the body. We use it to decide to meditate or calm the mind. We come up with a plan for how to achieve these decisions. We make it fit into our life. Now we use the ego, the "I will do this," to will our self to do it. We don't allow the other parts of the mind to come and undermine us at this point. This will take making discipline and consistency a priority because without discipline, we will get nowhere.

## DEVELOPING DISCIPLINE

Once a decision has been made, it needs to be willed into action. It will take discipline to do this. Many people have formed the habit of making decisions, then start questioning and doubting and not sticking to their decisions. If a decision is made and carried out, our mind and our life will be cleared of the unfulfilled desires and intentions. Unfulfilled desires and intentions can continue to grow until there comes a state of hopelessness. One by one, we take our desires and intentions and evaluate whether they are still worth doing. Using the functions of the mind, we either drop them or carry them

out. We can take one thought, desire, or plan and evaluate it and continue to rewrite it for the rest of our life, or we can just do it and move on to something new.

Discipline helps us to remove the clutter. It is the struggle with our mental clutter that brings a sense of hopelessness, despair, and depression. Life, people, and obstacles are not standing in our way of being happy and successful. It is our lack of control of our mind that stands in our way. Instead of blaming others for not supporting or joining us, we need to be honest and acknowledge that we alone sabotaged our plan.

We decide what is important in our life because it is *our* life. No one can live it for us. Our habits and choices are uniquely ours, to keep or to change. Habits develop when we have a familiar way of doing things. Sometimes we even begin to believe that the habit is part of who we are. Obviously, habits are not who we are because they can come and go.

Taking control of the mind is not only possible, but is preferable and necessary. Once we acknowledge and accept this, it is just a matter of practice and proficiency. Life will give us opportunities to see when our mind is being used properly and when it is not. If we pay attention to when and why we feel happy or upset, we will understand how we got there. The more we practice controlling the mind, the more confidence and proficiency we will develop. The steps to controlling the mind are: 1) Believing that the mind can be controlled; 2) Understanding the functions of the mind, which allows us to go beyond indecision and gives us the knowledge and freedom for the third step, which is: 3) The implementing of self-control and discipline.

We also need a healthy view of the ego. There is a good part of the ego, the part that says, "I will." A healthy ego helps us to attain, to be a better person, to be open, loving, and caring towards others and towards our self. The unhealthy part of the ego is what says, "It must be my way. My way is the only true reality." The healthy part of the ego is what allows for growth and development of human beings and the human spirit. The healthy person will get started and make one change at a time.

When the mind is calm, challenges in life don't look overwhelming, they look attainable. When the mind is calm, we can see whether our feelings are coming from a mood or attitude or from an actual event. By identifying the source of the feelings, we can change them.

When it comes to our relationships, the most important one we will ever have is with our self. We need to appreciate our self. The measure of our relationship with our self is in our happiness and joy regardless of where we are or what we are doing in life. Taking control of the mind is a necessary step in the journey to a healthy relationship with our self.

*Meditation gives us something that nothing else can,  
which is awareness and direct knowledge of our self.*

## meditation

*M*editation helps us be aware of the wholistic self. Through developing concentration and calming down the breath, we can calm down the conscious thoughts. Once we calm the conscious mind, we can become aware of the subconscious thoughts. Calming down even further, we can become aware of the superconscious mind.

To be in control of our destiny, we use discipline to control and direct our mind. Quietening the mind does not mean to empty it. To quiet the mind means to focus and concentrate it on what we choose. There are many types of meditation. There are meditations on mantras (words) and yantras (images); meditation on theologies, on objects, and on holy ones. However, there are really only three subject matters of meditation. The first of these subjects is the “freedom from.” This is freedom from our mental conflicts, freedom from stress, freedom from all that bothers us in our conscious awareness. It is freedom from the diseases or the eight meannesses of the human condition (hatred, fear, grief, shame, condemnation, race prejudice, narrowness of thinking, and pride of pedigree or tribe). These lie within both the conscious and subconscious mind. Meditation on the conscious mind is about what we want to resolve,

create, think, and do, or what we want to go beyond. In order to have meditation on the inner subconscious mind, we have to quiet the conscious mind.

The second subject matter of meditation involves our enslavements to our personal beliefs or the ideologies that we have chosen. This includes fears and issues that may have come from childhood. These issues may have distorted our view. Something may have happened in the past that prejudiced us in a certain way. By quieting the conscious mind, we get to the subconscious mind and can begin to work on these samskaras (beliefs) that are standing in the way of our enjoyment of life. As an example, we may be aware that we have a sliver in our hand, but that awareness doesn't heal the hand. When we discover an unresolved issue in the subconscious, our awareness of it doesn't heal the wound. We have to address it by letting go of it or resolving (healing) it.

The third subject of meditation is the greatest of all. It is the exploration of our wholistic life and the "freedom into" our nature. It is how to live in love, joy, harmony, happiness, and freedom. This will happen when we are *free from* our conflicts and issues. The process of developing a relationship with our self is not going to be instant. However, when we make consistent and steady efforts, it can be an ever-expanding enjoyment of life. Coming to our self will be a continuous evolution and revolution.

How do we meditate? The simplest way is to work with our nature. We have already established that the most important nutrient is breath, because of the oxygenation and detoxification that occur with the breath. It is also one of the basic rhythms we have in our body. Thus, it is natural to base meditation on the breath. We use a mantra<sup>3</sup>, which is a word or sound that helps us to concentrate, and link it to our breath. The mantra to begin with is the *So Hum*.

*So Hum* is the actual sound of the inhalation and the exhalation. When we breathe in gently, deeply, and diaphragmatically through the nostrils, we will discover the sound of the inhalation is *So*. As we exhale gently and completely, the sound will be *Hum*. This mantra means "I am this, I am that." The sound of our breath exists. We are the sum total of our awareness on the inhalation and exhalation. The mantra then comes to mean "I am this, I am that. I am aware of this about my self, and I am aware of that about my self. I am aware of this about life, and I am aware of that about life."

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<sup>3</sup> Mantra is a Sanskrit word, which literally means "instrument of thought."

Concentrating on the breath and the *So Hum*, we are able to get in touch with more complete, quieter breathing. It helps us get in touch and stay focused on one of the most basic rhythms in the body, which is the breath. We listen and mentally repeat the sound of the mantra. *So* on the inhalation and *Hum* on the exhalation. We pay attention to more than just the sound of *So Hum*. We pay attention to what we are feeling and what we are experiencing. Can we feel the energy, calmness, and joy?

It is the conscious mind that will hear the truck going by, or the noise in the kitchen. It is the conscious mind that will think about work or things to do. If these are nonessential to our happiness or survival, we can let them go during the time we have set aside for meditation. By calming down and focusing on the breath, we can let go of the nonessential conscious stuff. Once this happens, we will become aware of more subtle thoughts, feelings, and ideas from the subconscious. At this point, we have two choices. We can continue to calm the mind further to have even more subtle experiences, or we can evaluate the issues in the subconscious for a while. We can evaluate the subconscious thoughts for the entire meditation time, or we can just make note of the thoughts so we can work on them later.

“Freedom from” is a term that has to be understood. It is not suppression or repression. “Freedom from” means something no longer affects or impacts our life. We no longer believe something to be true. “Freedom from” means there has been a resolution or ending to the issue or thoughts. We need to become aware of what is in the subconscious because it is part of our mind, and it is the mind that tells us who we are. Every thought coming in does not distract us from peace; rather it is something that is telling us something about our self. It may give insight into our ideas, thoughts, philosophies, fears, insecurities, shame, hatred, or narrowness of thinking. These things must be addressed either in meditation or outside of meditation. If they seem nonessential at the moment, we can choose to continue meditating on the breath and the *So Hum* mantra so we can become quiet and experience freedom into our nature.



## BEGINNING TO MEDITATE

The first step of meditation is pranayama, or breath control. Without regulation of the breath, there can be no regulation of the mind. If there is no regulation of the mind, there can be no meditation.

The first step of meditation should be the simple inhalation and exhalation of the 1–12 pranayama technique. This is inhaling to the count of 12 and then exhaling to the count of 12, trying to regulate or make the breath even. It is a deep, calm, even breath. This should be done until the breath is quite relaxed and rhythmic.

Then we start meditating with the *So Hum* technique. As we inhale, we listen to the sound of our breath. The sound of the inhalation is “*So*.” As we exhale, we listen to the sound of our breath. The sound of the exhalation is “*Hum*.” We are listening to the sound of the breath while mentally saying *So* on the inhalation and *Hum* on the exhalation. We are focusing on the breath. We pay attention to all the thoughts and distractions that come. We are not letting them keep us from focusing, but neither are we ignoring them. These thoughts or distractions are telling us something about our days, something about us. We can choose to either evaluate them or not during meditation. We are just paying attention.

The deeper we dive into the *So Hum*, the deeper our meditations will be. We will begin to transcend the mind and areas of mental activity. Once we begin to do that, it is time to go to the *Om* technique. Instead of using the *So Hum* mantra, you now use the *Om* mantra.<sup>4</sup> When we attune to the *Om*, we will be attuning to all life, and we will then begin to feel our self expanding out beyond our limited identities. We will experience our self expanding out into the rest of life. This meditation of deep, even 1–12 breathing, the *So Hum* technique and the *Om* technique should be done on a daily basis. One of your meditations each day should be this basic meditation.

Meditation is simple. In each meditation, you should dive into your self and come away feeling energized. You should feel calmer and more relaxed while doing the deep breathing. You may feel energized while you are doing the breathing techniques. You should have more self-awareness while doing the *So Hum* mantra. You should feel more

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<sup>4</sup> *OM* is the vibratory sound heard throughout creation. It is the sound of creation.

expanded into the rest of life, with the *Om* mantra. With each meditation, you should feel all these things. If you aren't feeling them in each meditation, it means you are not concentrating.

I know most people have active schedules, but preparing yourself for meditation is simple. When it is getting close to meditation time, you begin to put the rest of the stuff away. You use non-attachment and say, "I'll get back to that after my meditation. This does not need to be dealt with for the next half-hour." You don't have to spend a long time in the preparation for meditation. Take a few minutes before you sit down to clear the mind of all the things and activities you have been doing and will be doing afterwards. Take a little time to begin to get perspective on why you are meditating and what you hope to gain. Then sit down to meditate. Do the 1–12 deep breathing. Do the *So Hum* mantra and then do the *Om* mantra. If this meditation is done on a consistent basis, self-realization will come to you because you will have made the effort to discover and realize your self. You will be using some of the most powerful meditation techniques available to humanity.

In the beginning, it is better to have two half-hour meditations than to have one hour-long meditation. It is recommended that you have one meditation at the beginning of your day and the second one at the end of your day. If you only have an hour a day, then it is best to take a half-hour in the morning and a half-hour in the evening.

The timing of your meditations is important. You need to be alert for your meditation. Meditating right before bed is not a good time because most people aren't alert at that time. Meditating immediately after getting out of bed is also not a good time because most people aren't alert upon waking. Each person needs to find the proper time. It may take you from ten minutes to an hour after you get out of bed to feel alert. If you get up early and want to meditate before you go to work, increase your 1–12 deep breathing. This will bring alertness. Find the time of day that is best suited for you and try to make it consistent. Don't become too rigid in your schedule or structure, but be consistent in your scheduled meditation time.

Your place of meditation should be inspirational. It should give you the feeling that you will be able to attain something. Don't go off in a dark closet and close the door because it is the only peaceful place in the house. There is nothing inspirational about a

cluttered closet. Find a time when you can sit somewhere that is comfortable and open. If this is your bedroom, that is fine. If this is your living room, that is fine. If this is your back porch, that is fine. It should be a space in which you feel comfortable and open to life. Find a place that is well ventilated with clean air. Keep the air as fresh and clean as you can.

As for posture, you must be comfortable. If you are comfortable sitting cross-legged, do so. If not, find a good chair in which your spine can be kept comfortably erect for a half-hour or an hour meditation. Do not get sloppy in your posture. The main pranic (energy) channels flow from the base of the spine to the crown. If the spine is not kept erect, then these energy channels cannot flow freely. It is important to have proper posture.

You need discipline, because your experience with your wholistic self comes in meditation. It doesn't come after the end of a lifetime. It comes in a focused and one-pointed meditation. This is when you will expand into your larger self. Sit down to each meditation with the focus that meditation will bring you more self-awareness, more harmonization. Be disciplined and one-pointed in your meditations. This discipline and one-pointedness will help in all areas of your life. A disciplined, consistent effort in meditation will bring knowledge of our wholistic nature. By taking the knowledge we gain in meditation and incorporating it into our daily life, we will be harmonizing with our wholistic nature.

## MEDITATION

Meditation is the process of calming the mind, breath, and ego for the purpose of realizing one's wholistic nature. Meditation is a very simple and gentle process and should be practiced with a gentle yet firm discipline. Concentration leads to a quieter and deeper meditation. When we continue to get quieter still, we will reach the superconscious. Here we will notice that the *So Hum* has grown very soft until eventually we will hear the sound of existence, which is the *Om* sound. It is the sound of silence. There is a sound throughout existence that is humming at all times. We use the *So Hum* mantra to emulate the sound we hear. We can do it on the inhalation and

exhalation, or just on the exhalation. The *So Hum* is most closely associated with the *Om* mantra, which is the sound of existence. As the mind gets calmer and quieter, we switch to the *Om*. If the mind doesn't get that quiet, we may stay with the *So Hum*. When the mind won't get quiet, it means we should pay attention to what is keeping us from calming down. The 30-minutes we have set aside for meditation is just a slice of our life. Thoughts that are there will be the same thoughts that were there yesterday and will be with us tomorrow, so they need to be addressed. When you work on something in meditation, always do so gently.

With consistent deep breathing, concentration, and meditation, we will be able to get to the part of our nature that is full of joy. When we are doing this daily, it becomes easier to deal with everything in the subconscious. As we remove the fears, phobias, and insecurities, we will have greater freedom from the issues that keep us from living within our nature. This freedom from all of the issues that cause us conflict, will lead us to freedom into the enjoyment of everyday life. We will be freed into love, play, joy, and into a life that we choose to live. Our relationships will be healthy and enjoyable. This is done day-by-day. Meditation and breathing may seem to have magical results, but it is our efforts that will bring the results.

*If we make consistent and steady efforts, we can have  
an ever-expanding enjoyment of life; coming to our self  
will be a continuous evolution and revolution.*

## Wholistic awareness

The process of living within our wholistic nature must be our own unique experience with life. Some people believe in reincarnation, which is the theory of the past. Some people believe in resurrection, which is the theory of the future. In the East, reincarnation is a main interest. In the West, resurrection is a main interest. Yet, realistically, we are all living now. We all have a past and we will have a future. Our understanding of our past and our future is our choice and is based on awareness, not beliefs. The process of wholistic living allows us to expand our awareness of who we are, where we came from, and who God is. This process can only be done if we are willing to get to know our true and eternal Self.

All the major religions, in one form or another have also said, “Be ye still and know that I am God.” What this means is that if we calm down the mind, breath, and ego, we will realize that we are created in the image of God. We are of the same God-stuff, God Consciousness. Whether the inward journey is called the process of enlightenment, salvation, or realization, it is the process we must each undertake in order to experience who we truly are.

Most people believe they are infinite and eternal, yet they fear death. We must realize that the knowledge of our wholistic self needs to be experienced and not just be something we hear about and believe in. Meditation is the process that allows us to have this direct experience.

Meditation allows us to calm the mind, breath, and ego so that we can experience our self as Satyam (eternal love), Shivam (eternal harmony) and Sundaram (eternal beauty). In the stillness of meditation, there remains awareness and a consciousness. “Be ye still and know that I am God.” The process of meditation is the key to realizing our wholistic nature. In the beginning, reading the words, hearing the words, and believing the words will encourage us towards meditation, but it is only in the active process of meditation that we will have the actual experience of our wholistic self as consciousness beyond the form.

In meditation we will gain insights and knowledge. When we come out of meditation, we then take that knowledge and information and utilize it for the enjoyment of our everyday life. The sages and seers of all times and traditions have also said that there is only a oneness. The holy ones are saying that God is the sum total of everything manifested and unmanifested. This includes everything from the unmanifested (pure Consciousness without form), to the first form (Christ Consciousness) to the holy stream, to the soul, to the causal realms and the causal bodies, to the astral realms and astral bodies, to the physical universe and the physical bodies. The sum total of all this is what we call God. Not only are we created in the image of God, but we are all also a unique aspect of God. This makes us part of the manifested and unmanifested “whole”.

Spirituality, divinity, and realization of our wholistic nature must include life at the physical rather than just the pursuit of the unmanifested God. The physical life is legitimate. The physical body is legitimate. The four primal instincts of food, sleep, procreation, and self-preservation are all divine qualities. They are not evil or bad. They are divine qualities that are limited to the physical reality and should be seen as vehicles that help to preserve life on earth. They allow us to live a healthy life on earth and are for our enjoyment. We should not become slaves to these four primal instincts. We shouldn't feel that we *need* food, sleep, sex and self-preservation in order to be happy or

fulfilled. These instincts are there for us to maintain the physical body, which is the vehicle the soul is using while on earth.

The physical body is the vehicle we use to experience life on earth. Birth and death will come to all of us. At death, we won't be taking our physical body, diamonds, gold, lovers, children, or parents with us. We will leave with our awareness. One of my favorite poems is:

*with  
the delirious intensity.  
of losing control  
i have danced  
on the mountain tops  
insanely high  
and crawled across  
the desert floor  
dangerously low  
desiring  
more mountains  
and deserts*

This symbolizes my passion for living, and the experiences I have. Some of the most powerful experiences I have had have been mystical or have included the mystical. The joy and intoxication from the first vision I had of a holy one lasted for days. The intoxication and bliss of my first experience of the absolute God Consciousness lasted for over a week. The bliss and joy of experiencing my daughter and sons being born lasted for many days. I cannot say that one of these various experiences was more beautiful and more divine than the others. The experiences are the mountain tops and the desert floors. There were the experiences of intoxication, and there was the tremendous pain I felt at the loss of loved ones. I learned to let the pain go. I realized I was infinite and eternal, and that there is only one life whether on earth or in the heavens. I realized that whether manifested or unmanifested, we exist and are alive. I realized that all I had to do was continue experiencing life. Once you have this realization, then it is a matter of finding the love, joy, and harmony. It is important to have that passion for going out and living our life.

What I have discovered is that there is only one thing that frees us into the enjoyment of life. That one thing is the realization that we are created in the image of God, that we are infinite and eternal Satyam (love). If we don't realize that we are infinite and eternal, we will continue to believe that our joy, our happiness, and security come from food, sleep, procreation, and self-preservation. We will believe that we need gold, relationships, fame, respect, and many things that are outside of our self in order to have a complete life. If we don't realize that we are infinite and eternal Satyam, we will either have the fear of losing loved ones, or the fear of not having someone to love.

What can free us into enjoyment of life is the knowledge that we are infinite and eternal Satyam consciousness. Once we have that knowledge, we are free to experience the mountain tops and deserts floors. We don't withdraw from life or renounce life. We include more life. It isn't about renouncing relationships. It is about including relationships, jobs, hobbies, interests, and love. It is about living life wholistically. Ironically, it takes knowledge of our unmanifested nature to free us into the enjoyment of life, our manifested nature. Without knowledge of our unmanifested nature we will be too afraid to live because of our fear of dying.

The journey to ecstasy is in the process of the inhalation and the exhalation. It is two-fold: First we must work on the realization of our eternal self (ecstasy). We have only one life, one consciousness, which takes on many forms either on earth or in the heavens. Secondly, we also work on the exhalation, or Satyam (love), Shivam (harmony), Sundaram (beauty and joy) Consciousness in form. We go about the enjoyment of that life, whether on earth or in the heavens. This process of Self-realization is a process that we must do ourselves. It isn't enough to hear that we are infinite and eternal. We must have the experience of this knowledge ourselves.



*We are a whole being of body, mind, and spirit, and we need to nurture the whole. The relationship we develop with our self is the beginning of our relationship with the whole of life.*

## The basic meditation

The basic meditation and meditation techniques are very simple. They are not complex or even religious. They are not Hindu, Judaic, Egyptian, or Buddhist. They are not Eastern or Western. The meditation techniques are based on the nature of the physical body and the breath. The following meditation is a complete basic meditation.

### POSTURE

The first step of the basic meditation is to sit upright with good posture. This is physically comfortable. It allows the energy channels in the body to flow freely. It allows the breath to flow freely. To sit in a place that is quiet, comfortable, and that has fresh air is beneficial to both the body and the mind. There is nothing magical or mystical about sitting upright in a quiet place with good ventilation. You don't have to even sit in a yoga position. Many people around the world are raised without furniture, so it is natural for them to sit cross-legged. They don't call it "yoga," but rather call it just sitting. In the western world most

people are raised with furniture and are used to sitting in chairs. You can sit cross-legged or in a comfortable chair that allows you to sit with a straight spine.

## BREATHING

The next basic step of meditation is to breathe a few deep diaphragmatic breaths. In breathing deeply and filling the upper and lower lungs, you are getting more oxygen and this brings more alertness. In the full exhalation you are getting rid of more carbon dioxide, which brings more alertness. Proper breathing is very practical. There are two basic breathing practices:

### 1–12 PRANAYAMA

Inhale a full diaphragmatic breath through both nostrils while counting from one to twelve, and then exhale fully to the same count. The mental counting should be calm and even. The count need not be to the full twelve, but does need to be the same count for both the inhalation and the exhalation. (Example: Inhale to 12 then exhale to 12, or inhale to 6 then exhale to 6.)

### 1–4–2 PRANAYAMA

This practice balances the right and left nostrils, balances the ida and pingala (left and right energy channels in the pranic or spirit body). To begin, you close the right nostril with your finger and breathe in the left nostril to the count of 4. You retain, or hold, that breath to the count of 16. You then close the left nostril with your finger and exhale through the right nostril to a count of 8. Next, with the left nostril still closed, you breathe in the right nostril to the count of 4, retain for 16, then exhale through the left nostril to the count of 8. This is one set of 1–4–2 pranayama breathing. If the 4–16–8 count is not comfortable, you can use the count of 3–12–6. It is important, however, to keep the count in some ratio of 1–4–2 such as 4–16–8, 3–12–6 etc. This will balance the ida and pingala energy channels, the left and right brain, and the left and right

nostrils. When we are most alert, both nostrils are equally open. Otherwise, throughout the day one nostril will be more open than the other. Normally one nostril will be more open for two hours and then the other nostril will be more open for the next two hours, and so on. With the 1–4–2 technique, we concentrate on balancing the breath and opening both nostrils equally. We begin to balance the left and right brain, and the ida and pingala. We bring more oxygen to our meditation and thus are more alert. Again, this is all very practical, powerful, and should never be done for more than 30 minutes in a sitting.

## MANTRAS

Next, we come to the mantras. The basic meditation technique will consist of the 1–12 pranayama technique, the 1–4–2 breathing technique, the *Hrim* mantra, the *So Hum* mantra, and the *Om* mantra.

### HRIM

The *Hrim* (**Huh**-reem) mantra is also breath related. It is done audibly. The *Hrim* mantra means, “I invoke the indwelling energy.” When we do the *Hrim* mantra, we are invoking our indwelling energy, which allows us to focus on our inner nature, our true self, that of our pure consciousness. *Hrim* is a Sanskrit word. The Sanskrit language vibrates the cerebral-spinal system and the corresponding chakras. To do this mantra, you take a full diaphragmatic breath through the nose with your mouth closed. Then you exhale through your mouth as you say, “**Huh**-reeemmm”, ending with the “mmm” sound. This is a simple, yet powerful mantra.

### SO HUM

The *So Hum* mantra is also breath related, but is done silently, mentally. *So Hum* means, “I am this/I am that.” It is also the sound of our breath. As we inhale, our breath sounds like “*So*”. When we exhale, the breath sounds like “*Hum*”. When we do this mantra, we mentally focus and say “*So*” as we inhale, and mentally focus and say “*Hum*” as we exhale. “I am this/ I am that”. We are affirming that we are a unique aspect of God, and we are one with God.

## OM

Then we do the *Om* mantra. The *Om* mantra is the most sacred of all because *Om* is the sound that can be heard everywhere in existence. The *Om* sound can be heard at the physical, astral, causal, and pure consciousness levels. This is the first Word, the purest sound. We end our meditation time with the *Om* mantra because we are trying to harmonize and experience our oneness with all of life, nature, and consciousness, the merging of the small self into the large Self.

The six steps to basic meditation are:

1. Proper posture
2. 1–12 pranayama technique: 12 sets
3. 1–4–2 pranayama technique: 12 sets
4. *Hrim* mantra: 12 audible *Hrim*s
5. *So Hum* mantra: 10 minutes
6. *Om* mantra: 10 minutes

This will take approximately 30-40 minutes. It is a very simple, yet powerful meditation technique.

## BALANCE

Through this basic meditation technique, we try to find balance in our life by balancing the ida and pingala, and the left and right brain. It is very important to find this balance because until we bring balance into our life, we cannot realize our wholistic self. We need to balance the left brain/right brain, or the male and female qualities within us in order to live a balanced life. To balance the male and female qualities within us is to balance our mind and heart. If we do not have the male/female balance in our life, we cannot balance our compassion and love (our female qualities) with the harmony, truth, and nature of things (our male qualities). This can be very difficult to do in everyday life, which is why we begin to work towards this balance through the meditation techniques.

We begin with the 1–4–2 pranayama technique in which we work towards balancing the ida and pingala, and the male/female qualities, both symbolically and realistically. We begin with our 30-minute meditation to find this balance, then we work towards bringing this balance to the rest of our day.

## ENERGIZING AND RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

This exercise will both energize and relax the muscles of the body. The combination of more

energy and less tension will immediately reduce stress.

Begin by standing upright with the feet 12-inches apart and the arms hanging at your side. Take a deep diaphragmatic breath and exhale fully. As you begin to take another deep diaphragmatic breath, begin the gentle isometric tensing of the body from the feet up to the head. The tensing of the entire body will take place during this one deep diaphragmatic breath. When you reach the neck and face, you will hold the tension for five seconds, and then exhale as you relax each body part from the head to the feet.

Always use gentle tensing of the muscles, working towards moderate tensing. Never tense muscle fully or intensely, as this will cause stress, or even injury, to the body.

### EXERCISE

1. Deep diaphragmatic inhalation then exhale fully
2. Begin deep diaphragmatic inhalation as you gently tense:
  1. Feet
  2. Calves
  3. Thighs
  4. Buttocks and hips
  5. Abdomen
  6. Lower back
  7. Chest
  8. Arms
  9. Upper back
  10. Neck and face
- ***THEN*** —
3. Full Exhalation as you relax:
  10. Neck and face
  9. Upper back
  8. Arms
  7. Chest
  6. Lower back
  5. Abdomen
  4. Buttocks and hips
  3. Thighs
  2. Calves
  1. Feet

**Hold five seconds then begin full exhalation/relaxation**

4. After completing the tensing and relaxing, take a full deep inhalation and exhale completely. Do six to twelve repetitions of this exercise.

The tensing of body parts 1–10 are done on a single inhalation, held for five seconds, and then the body parts are relaxed in reverse order of 10–1 on a single exhalation. As you get used to the exercise, you may build up to holding the tension for ten seconds instead of five seconds. This would give an even count to the exercise: Inhalation to the count of 10, retention for a count of 10, and exhalation for a count of 10. Always do at least one regular deep inhalation and exhalation between sets of tensing and relaxing.

## THE INWARD JOURNEY

Now we are beginning to bring our focus to the inward journey. With the *Hrim* mantra, we are invoking the indwelling energy. We are affirming our true nature. We are affirming our nature, faith, belief, and practice. After the *Hrim* mantra, we move to the *So Hum* mantra. When we do the *So Hum* mantra, we will find that our mind will come up with ideas and thoughts. When this happens, gently bring the mind back to the mantra. These ideas and thoughts will be telling us about what we think about, what we do, what is going on in our mind. The time to evaluate these thoughts is outside of meditation. During our meditation time we just try to be calm and still. The calmer we are, the subtler our thoughts will be, and the more we will discover about our self.

Meditation is a process of self-discovery. We are not just trying to discover more about our unmanifested nature, we are also trying to discover more about what kind of things we think and feel, what kind of things we are interested in, who we are as a personality, as a spirit, and as a soul. The *So Hum* mantra is where this process begins. “I am this/I am that.” Everything we are experiencing is telling us something about who we are, what we do and don’t like, and about our relative identity. Then we end our meditation with the *Om* mantra. We make the effort to experience the oneness. If you want, you can begin by doing a few audible *Oms*, but then do them silently, mentally.

Although these steps are the basic meditation, they are more than that. They are a micro sample of the inward journey. They are a whole lifestyle. The 1–4–2 pranayama technique balances the ida and pingala (pranic energy channels), the left brain and right brain, and the male and female qualities within us. It helps us to find balance in life. It is great to have compassion, kindness, and consideration, but if we don't balance that with knowledge and discipline, we will just be an emotional wreck identifying with all the pain. We won't be able to accomplish anything in life. We begin our day by affirming the balance of the ida and pingala, the inhalation and exhalation, the male and female.

At the next step, when we invoke the *Hrim*, we are affirming that we are created in the image of God. We are affirming that the small spirit is in harmony with the large Spirit by nature, and that we can know this when we get beyond our ideas and samskaras<sup>5</sup>, and experience the harmony. Affirming that we are created in the image of God is a good way to start the day.

The next step is *So Hum*, “I am this/I am that.” We are making the effort to know who we truly are physically, as a personality, who we are beyond the body, who we were before we were born, who we will be after we leave this body. “I am this/I am that.” We are trying to rejoin the small spirit with the large Spirit. The true definition of “religion” is “rejoining.” On the inhalation it is *So*, “I am the physical body, the breath, the mind, the soul, the pure consciousness. On the exhalation it is *Hum*, “I am the pure consciousness, the holy stream, the causal, the astral, and physical manifestation. I am in harmony, *Om Shivam*.” These are the seeds we are planting to experience during the day.

The next step is the *Om*. We are affirming, “There is only the oneness, a pure consciousness. I am trying to identify and harmonize with my wholistic self, that of the oneness.” This meditation is how I started each day. I was affirming what each step represented during this 30-minute meditation. Then I made the effort to have that experience throughout my days and nights.

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<sup>5</sup> Samskara: a mindset, a view of reality that is incomplete.

*We need to raise the level of our aspirations. When we get up in the morning, we must simply say we want to see beauty, we want more laughter, we want to feel a little more love and joy.*

## the journey toward ecstasy

To live within our wholistic nature should be the goal of all those seeking happiness. The realization of our nature will come in our meditations. We will get the experience of our self as absolute consciousness, without form and without beginning and end. This experience can only happen in stillness or quietness. This is why the ancient scriptures say, “Be ye still and know that I am God.”

After we calm down the mind, breath, and ego, we will be able to experience our self as pure consciousness that is beyond all form. When we have this experience, we will realize that we are infinite and eternal. When we have the experience of being infinite and eternal, we will realize that we are created wholistically. We will realize that our nature and the nature of God are one and the same, that of omnipresent love. In this state of pure consciousness, without beginning or end, we will experience ecstasy, our nature of pure Satyam (eternal love). This is the ecstasy the soul is calling out for.

This process of Self-realization can only take place in the quiet of meditation. This is why all the ancient scriptures teach the process of meditation. They encourage people to realize their wholistic self through meditation, through calming the mind, breath, and ego. The impact of this realization on our life changes us forever. Until this realization, we believed in the idea of separateness—the belief that our happiness, joy,



and fulfillment are in association with a person or thing. This is the idea of separateness or incompleteness.

The experience of our self as pure consciousness beyond all form and dualism, beyond interactions and activities, frees us from this idea of incompleteness. It frees us into the idea of oneness. It liberates us into our wholistic self. The goal of meditation is to have this experience. Our effort towards this goal is referred to as the inward journey.

The realization of our wholistic self will not come from our self-evaluation, but from calming the mind, breath, and ego in meditation. We then must seek more balance in our life. With the techniques, we balanced the left brain and the right brain, or the male and female qualities. Now we must balance the inhalation and exhalation—the inward journey and the outward exploration. We balance the inner realization that our nature is *Satyam* (eternal love), *Shivam* (eternal harmony) and *Sundaram* (eternal beauty), with the learning of how to live and experience this realization in our everyday outer life.

The process of meditation helps us get to the revelations and insights, but now we must take that knowledge and put it to use in our everyday living. To do this, we must understand that there needs to be a balance between the inhalation and exhalation. We can start with the breath itself. If we pay attention, we will realize that a deep diaphragmatic breath will give us more oxygen and allows us to get rid of more carbon dioxide. This, in itself, will bring a change to our energy level.

Proper breathing is the first step in balancing the inward journey with the outward exploration of wholistic living. We balance the length of the deep diaphragmatic breath with the length of the full exhalation. We breathe in to the same count that we breath out. This helps us to seek balance in our life. We will be calmer and have less stress. Our left brain and right brain will be more in communication. When we are stressed, frustrated, angry and insecure we will be breathing very shallowly and rapidly. When we are happy and joy-filled, we will be breathing more calmly and fully. Taking deep full diaphragmatic breaths will bring about more calmness in our life. The calmer we are, the more perspective we will have. This allows us to make better choices. Now, not only are we more joyful, but we are also adding more joy to society.

Taking control of our breath is the first step in finding the balance in our life. The meditation techniques will help us do this in meditation. However, during the rest of our

day we breathe by habit. The autonomic nervous system causes us to breathe, but the length and depth of the breath is a habit we have formed. If we simply change that habit, we can change the amount of stress and frustration we experience in our daily life. This simple change of habit will be a great benefit to our self and to society.

Diaphragmatic breathing will bring better health and a longer life. There are all kinds of benefits we will gain just by taking control of our breathing habits. This is done outside of meditation. We work on making the changes while we are at work, at play, at home. We keep bringing our awareness back to our breath. This also allows us to take the insights and revelations we get in meditation and put them into practice in our daily living.

Bringing balance to our life also means gaining knowledge into who we are and what we are. If we are created wholistically, we are a soul, pure consciousness. We have this experience in meditation, but we must also remember this during our active time outside of meditation. We must remember that even though we can enjoy activities, it is not only the activity that is bringing us the fulfillment, happiness, or love that we may feel, but it is also our nature. We can keep this in mind as we begin to explore and experience the oneness of divinity. We are love (Satyam), harmony (Shivam) and beauty (Sundaram) and this is what we are experiencing and sharing with the rest of life.

The balance that we are seeking allows us to live within our nature. The inhalation is where we have the experience of our self as pure, eternal, consciousness, and love. The exhalation is the going out to explore, interact and experience our self as pure, eternal, consciousness, and love (*Om Satyam*) amidst our activities. We experience it while we are interacting and living in harmony with the divine will (*Om Shivam*). We experience it while we are appreciating, enjoying, learning, growing, and interacting (*Om Sundaram*). The balance the of the ida and pingala (pranic energy channels) is easier to do in our meditation time with breathing techniques. It is more difficult to balance the inward journey and the outward journey because it takes effort to truly go beyond the maya sheath (the idea of separateness) and begin to live within the oneness in mukti (freedom), but this is the goal. The process of balancing the inward journey and the outward journey starts with a conscious willful choice and effort of balancing the breath.

The goal of meditation is to experience our self as consciousness, *Om Satyam*, without beginning or end. The goal of life, or the goal of the soul, is to experience our self as *Om Satyam*, while we are both active and quiet. It is about the inhalation (meditation, the inward journey) and the exhalation (the enjoyment of life, the outward journey). Both are necessary. The process is about finding our self and our own balance in our infinite and eternal life, whether here on earth, in the heavens, in the Christ Consciousness or in the absolute God Consciousness. Meditation is the tool that allows us to experience our self as infinite and eternal ecstasy, *Om Satyam*. This experience will free us into the enjoyment and celebration of the rest of life.

The meditation techniques will help us to balance the inhalation and the exhalation. Meditation will help us experience and realize our self as infinite and eternal Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram; experience all of life, all of existence, all of God as Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. In the beginning we realize that we are a soul created in the image of God. Then we evolve into the realization that we are actually an individual wave of the divine ocean.

*The saints, sages, and prophets of all traditions have said that we are created in the image of God. They talk about finding the balance between the inner and the outer life; to do what is beneficial for the individual and the international community.*

## Advanced MEDITATION

The purpose of mantra meditation is to calm the mind, breath, and ego so the experience of the mantra (quality of the mantra) can happen. After doing the pranayama technique, choose a mantra corresponding with the part of your nature you would like to experience. Mentally repeat the mantra, allowing it to flow with the breath. If the mind wanders from the mantra, gently but firmly bring it back to the mantra. In the beginning, you will notice that the mind frequently wanders from the mantra. It isn't important how many times the mind wanders. What is important is how many times we gently bring it back to the mantra with discipline and determination.

As focus remains on the mantra, the mind will naturally grow calmer and will wander less. When the mind is calm and the mantra remains steady, soften the mental repetition to a mere mental whisper. The mind, breath, and ego will grow even calmer. The mantra and breath will be intricately linked as one goes deeper into the mantra. As you continue this, the mental whisper of the mantra will naturally fade and you will begin to "feel" or experience the mantra. Going deeper still, you will begin to immerse into the mantra. For example, if you are using the mantra *Om Shanti* (eternal peace), you will first begin to feel or experience the absolute peace, and then immerse into and become your nature of absolute peace. This experience of your true nature is the goal of mantra meditation.

It is indeed very rare for someone to immerse into his or her true nature when they first begin to meditate. Meditation is a process of going deeper and deeper within to

experience our true self. Every time we sit quietly to meditate with sincere effort and discipline, we will go deeper and deeper with each meditation. Even if we are unable to recognize any advancement in the beginning, the process of Self-realization will happen, and with consistent daily effort we will attain the goal. Once the goal is attained, we will find that there is no limit to our higher Self and meditation becomes a joyful, blissful, and loving journey into our self, into life, into God.

## CHAKRA MEDITATION

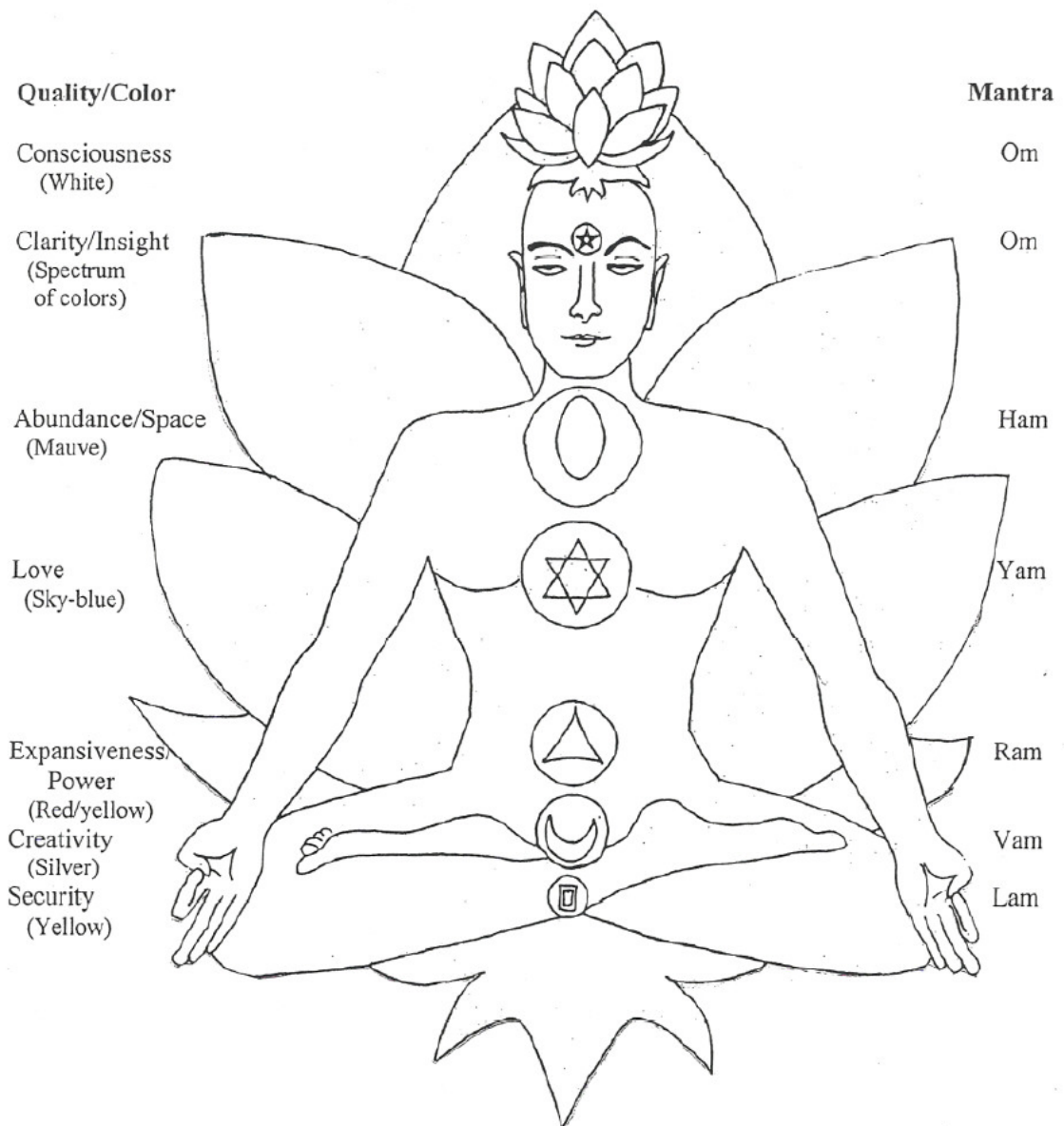
There is a column of energy, of light, that runs up and down the spine. Located within the spine are seven energy centers or chakras. Using the Chakra Meditation, one can experience and integrate the seven energy centers. The Chakra Meditation begins at the first chakra and ascends to the seventh. It is important that the spine is straight so the energy can flow freely. We begin on an inhalation mentally saying the mantra “**Lam**,” and then exhale mentally saying “**Om**.” Each inhalation will be the individual chakra mantra (see chart below) and each exhalation will be “**Om**,” for a total of seven inhalations and exhalations. A full set of the Chakra Meditation would be: “**Lam/Om**,” then “**Vam/Om**,” then “**Ram/Om**,” then “**Yam/Om**,” then “**Ham/Om**,” then “**Om/Om**,” and for the seventh chakra just inhale quietly and then do “**Om**” on the exhalation. Repeat each set six to twelve times. As you do each mantra, concentrate on that energy center and you will begin to experience the mantra or chakra.

| <u>CHAKRA</u>                | <u>MANTRA</u> | <u>LOCATION</u> | <u>QUALITY</u>      |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Sahasrara    | <b>Om</b>     | Crown           | Consciousness       |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Ajna         | <b>Om</b>     | Spiritual eye   | Clarity/insight     |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Vishuddha    | <b>Ham</b>    | Throat area     | Abundance/space     |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Anahata      | <b>Yam</b>    | Heart area      | Love                |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Manipura     | <b>Ram</b>    | Navel area      | Expansiveness/power |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Swadhisthana | <b>Vam</b>    | Pelvis area     | Creativity          |
| 1 <sup>ST</sup> Muladhara    | <b>Lam</b>    | Base of spine   | Security            |

### The Chakras

Name      Mantra      Petals      Sense      Element      Time      Qualities

|                              |            |              |                       |       |         |   |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|-----------------------|-------|---------|---|
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Sahasrara    | <b>Om</b>  | one thousand | consciousness of self |       |         | Pure consciousness. Individual self and cosmic Self merge. Shiva and Shakti are one.  |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Ajna         | <b>Om</b>  | two          | mind/thought          |       |         | Inner vision, intuitive knowledge. Balance ida and pingala and attain sushumna, utilizing both reason and intuition for balance of inner and outer life.  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Vishuddha    | <b>Ham</b> | sixteen      | hearing               | space | 4 min.  | Receptivity and creativity. Devotion, surrender, trust, willingness to be open and explore wholistic life.  |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Anahata      | <b>Yam</b> | twelve       | touch                 | air   | 8 min.  | Unconditional love. Seeks to nurture and serve. Love and empathy and compassion. Passes beyond isolation and begins to feel a connection to others and the whole.   |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Manipura     | <b>Ram</b> | ten          | sight                 | fire  | 12 min. | Issues of power and competition, of aggression and passivity. Integration leads to assertiveness, cooperation and dynamic energy.   |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Swadhisthana | <b>Vam</b> | six          | taste                 | water | 16 min. | Sensuality and sexuality. Sexual gratification, feelings of lust or repression. Polarity of male/female relationship. Integration: sense of harmony and controlled expression of sensuality, sexuality.                             |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Muladhara    | <b>Lam</b> | four         | smell                 | earth | 20 min. | Instinct for individual survival until one masters insecurity. Fear, even paranoia are emotions experienced by those who have not integrated this chakra. Feelings of stability, security by those who have integrated this chakra. |



**SEVEN ENERGY CENTERS**

## SRI VIDYA TECHNIQUE

The Sri Vidya is a combination of five meditation techniques. All five steps can be done separately as individual techniques. The individual steps are developed to neutralize the inhalation and the exhalation. When the steps are combined, they become the Sri Vidya, a technique that brings the energy to the crown. It is the five physical senses that tell us everything is separate. The Sri Vidya is designed to bring our energy and consciousness inward, which allows us to transcend the senses and the idea of separateness. The Sri Vidya allows us to transcend into the superconscious state. The five techniques done together as the Sri Vidya are very powerful.

### **STEP 1: 1-4-2 TECHNIQUE**

The first step is the 1-4-2 pranayama technique, which was described in detail previously (pg. 34). Briefly, you close your right nostril and inhale through your left nostril to a count of four, retain the breath to a count of sixteen, then exhale through your right nostril to a count of eight. Switch nostrils and repeat. If you are unable to comfortably do this technique to a count of 4-16-8, try it to a count of 3-12-6. The important thing is to keep the inhalation, retention, and exhalation in a multiple of 1-4-2.

### **STEP 2: AMEN TECHNIQUE**

The second step of the Sri Vidya is very powerful for two reasons: firstly, because it neutralizes the breath, and secondly, because it is built on the *Aum*, which is very powerful and very sacred. It is called the Amen Technique because it sometimes seems to break up into two different parts. The inhalation and the exhalation will make it sound more like and “Amen” than “Aum.” The technique itself is supposed to be done with one continuous “Aum,” but sometimes you may notice a pause in your breath on the exhalation.

This technique begins by mentally saying “Ahh” as you exhale. Then there is a minimal pause before you inhale. The inhalation is the “Mmm” part of the Aum. One



mentally says “Ahh” on the exhalation and “Mmm” on the inhalation. Once in awhile, the pause will be long and if this occurs, you should go right into the “Mmm” during the pause.

While doing the “Ahh” on the exhalation, you may visualize white light or energy going from the medulla oblongata (at the base of your brain) down the spine to the first chakra. On the “Mmm,” visualize bringing the light or energy back up again. This may intensify your experience because it is the actual process that is taking place. You are offering the inhalation breath into the exhalation breath, and offering the exhalation breath into the inhalation breath. Normally, as you exhale you see yourself as expelling the breath into the air and getting rid of the carbon dioxide. By bringing the focus inward, into the spine, you are pulling energy through the medulla oblongata down the spine. You are “inhaling” prana (life force energy) during the exhalation. Then when you are inhaling air, you are running prana in the spine from the first chakra up to your medulla oblongata and to your spiritual eye (6<sup>th</sup> energy center). You are beginning to bring your attention and conscious awareness to the prana that keeps you alive rather than thinking in terms of air. During the Amen Technique, while mentally doing the “Ahh” and “Mmm,” keep visualizing light or energy going down and up your spine.

### **STEP 3: SEED MANTRAS OR CHAKRA MANTRAS**

The third step is the seed mantras. They are also known as the chakra mantras because each seed mantra correlates to a chakra: **Lam**—first chakra, **Vam**—second chakra, **Ram**—third chakra, **Yam**—fourth chakra, **Ham**—fifth chakra, **Om**—sixth chakra, **Om**—seventh chakra. When doing the seed mantras with the Sri Vidya technique do all the mantras in one breath. As you inhale, go up the spine with “**Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham, Om, Om.**” As you exhale, continue with the “**Om.**” Doing this all in one inhalation makes a person more aware of the energy in the pranic system or within the chakras. Once again, the focus is internal.

### **STEP 4: AHH-EEE TECHNIQUE**

The fourth step is done audibly. Instead of inhaling through the nostrils, as with the Amen or Seed Mantra Techniques, on this step you inhale and exhale through your

mouth, with your throat. You open your mouth, inhale and try to bring the breath in so it makes an impact at your throat. As you inhale it makes an audible sound of “Ahh.” The inhalation actually does make that sound, but you also mentally say, “Ahh.” As you bring the breath in, you also visualize the energy moving from the first chakra to the medulla oblongata (base of brain), and then curving to the sixth center (between the eyebrows). As you exhale, you let the air out of your mouth with an audible “Eee,” and visualize the energy moving from the medulla oblongata to the first chakra.

It may take a little while to remember which direction you are moving the energy. Think in terms of offering the prana in the exact reverse of that which your air is flowing. When you are inhaling, the prana is coming up the spine, and when you are exhaling, the energy is going down the spine. Also, the “Ahh” vibrates the first chakra and the “Eee” vibrates the spiritual eye, the sixth chakra. On the “Ahh,” you are vibrating the first chakra then willfully bringing the energy up to the spiritual eye and crown. Never visualize the energy projecting outside of your system, neither through your crown or the first chakra. The energy stays internal.

#### **STEP 5: AHH-EEE WITH SEED MANTRAS AND HEAD ROLLS**

The fifth step is a combination of Step 3 and Step 4. As you inhale with the audible “Ahh” and the energy is coming up, you bring it through the individual chakras by mentally saying the seed mantras—“**Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham, Om, Om.**” When you reach the end of your inhalation and you are on the final “**Om,**” hold the “Mmm” part of the “**Om**” (as long as comfortably possible) while doing 4–6 gentle head swirls (starting on the left, then back, then right, then front), then exhale with the audible “Eee.” Now do a regular “Ahh-Eee” as in step 4. This will keep you from feeling like you are losing your breath. The fifth step is an “Ahh-Eee” with seed mantras and head rolls, followed by a regular “Ahh-Eee” (step four).

You can do the Sri Vidya in sets of 6, 12, or 24. It is best to start with a set of six. When you are more comfortable with the technique (several weeks or months), then you can increase it to twelve sets. If you find yourself getting dizzy, reduce the number of sets by half. Remember that this is a powerful meditation technique with each step building on the others. One should include this in their meditation schedule *only* if they

have time to do it on a *daily basis*. It generally takes 45–60 minutes to do the Sri Vidya properly. This is a very powerful and very sacred technique. It will bring results. It should be done with commitment and, most importantly, with consistency. If you cannot do it with consistency, then it would be best to do the Steps as individual and separate meditation techniques.

After you complete the Sri Vidya, you can either go to the *So Hum* or *Om* mantras, or you can just bathe in the bliss. You will be expanded. You may even go into the superconscious state.

### **SRI VIDYA (Set of six)**

Sit with the spine erect. Do a set of six “1–12 pranayama breaths” to calm and relax.

Step 1: Six — 1–4–2 pranayama sets

Step 2: Six — AMEN Technique

Step 3: Six — SEED MANTRA sets

Step 4: Six — AHH-EEE sets

Step 5: Six — AHH-EEE sets with SEED MANTRAS with Head Rolls

*When we accept responsibility for our happiness, we begin to open ourselves up to embrace and experience the beauty of life.*

## The eightfold path

The message of the holy ones to humanity has always been that we are created in the image of God. Throughout all times and traditions this has been the message that the holy ones have come to deliver. With the realization of this message, we become realized ones ourselves. The holy ones have also come with the message that not only are we created in the image of God, but that it is our responsibility to realize this, to accept it and to live within our divine nature. The yogic tradition has defined a process that we can work with on a daily basis to realize this knowledge: the Eightfold Path of Yoga. The goal of this path is to realize the oneness of all life.

The Eightfold Path is about making the effort to realize that our nature is *Om Satyam* (love), *Om Shivam* (harmony) and *Om Sundaram* (joy and beauty). This isn't a reward for good behavior. It isn't something that is attained after years of pain or work. This isn't something that is inherited after our death. It is our very nature that is within us at all times. *Om Satyam*, eternal love, is our very nature. *Om Shivam*, eternal harmony and consciousness or intelligence of divinity, is our very nature. It isn't something that has to be learned and studied. *Om Sundaram*, the true divine eternal beauty and joy, is our very nature.

Yoga is a defined process that allows us to realize and live within our wholistic self. Thousand of years ago Patanjali described the yogic process. I'm sure that before him, others had also taught the same system. Patanjali taught the Eightfold Path of Yoga. The steps are: *yama* (moral conduct), *niyama* (religious observances), *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (control of prana, life force), *pratyahara* (withdrawing of the senses), *dharana* (concentration), *dhyana* (meditation), and *samadhi* (superconscious experience). These are eight steps that allow us to live within our nature of love, harmony, beauty, and joy. These are not eight steps towards a destination. They are eight steps or ingredients, which allow us to fulfill our life. We need all eight steps. If each step was like an ounce of water, we would need all eight ounces to fill a glass. We can't just put one ounce in the glass, pour it out and put another ounce in. It takes the combination of all eight steps for us to live within our wholistic nature.

Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century seems more complex and complicated than it was thousands of years ago when Patanjali set out the Eightfold Path. At least we think it is. We have jobs that require travel, traffic jams, taxes, mortgages, mass communication. However, at all times humanity has had to provide for the human body, which needs care and maintenance. Whether we had to go out to hunt, fish, and forage for food, or go to a job to receive pay so we can go to the grocery store, effort has been necessary. Whether we had to chop wood and build a hut, or earn money for house payments, time and energy have been necessary to take care of our physical needs. At all times we have had to provide food, clothing, and shelter for ourselves, and for our families and friends.

Times are not more complicated. They are just different. In this modern time with international communications and satellites, one would expect that there would be more understanding of other customs, yet there is still conflict just as there was in ancient times between tribes. We live in the United States, which is a melting pot of people and social cultures and religious traditions from all over the world. This blending of customs and traditions is a little more difficult and requires more effort because many people draw security not from their true nature, but from being around others who believe as they do. If everyone around us is doing the same thing, we can feel we are doing the "right thing." We don't have to question ourselves. We don't have to make changes.

In the United States, with all the different cultures and religious traditions, we constantly have to do self-analysis, self-contemplation and this is a good thing since this is one of the *niyamas*. Being in the “melting pot” demands that we make more effort to cooperate and live in harmony. This is truly the only difference between the 21<sup>st</sup> century and earlier times. So realizing our wholistic nature is really not much different now than it was 100 or 1000 years ago. Realization of our true nature in modern times is no more difficult than those striving to realize their true nature in ancient times. The process is the same today in America as it was yesterday in India, as it was in ancient Egypt, as it is in the Middle East or China. In all times and in all cultures, the process is similar.

The Eightfold Path explains this process that allows us to realize we are created in the image of God and that our neighbors, family, children, and grandchildren are created in the image of God. The first step or ingredient in the Eightfold Path is the *yamas*. This is the moral conduct we must exercise in order to be in moral harmony with our divine nature.

**YAMA**            *Truthfulness*: Truthfulness and self-honesty. We have to be honest and honorable with our self and each other.

*Non-injury*: This is non-injury to others.

*Non-stealing*: Most of us don’t even think about stealing someone’s property. Yet, we will steal their reputation or good name. We will question and doubt their honorability and divine nature. This is how we steal their reputation and we are stealing their joy. We are stealing when we are quick to criticize. Non-stealing applies to more than just material objects. It applies to the happiness, joy, and life of others. All of these *yamas*, or moral conducts, should be exercised in thought, word, and deed. They must be practiced materially, mentally, and emotionally.

*Non-coveting*: We shouldn’t covet. This means we shouldn’t wish we had what someone else has. This isn’t the same as stealing. We covet when we see that someone has something and we want it, so we work to attain what they have. We may wish we had the respect and reputation or material objects that someone has, so we work to become like them. We might better understand what non-coveting means if we think of it in terms of non-competition. We aren’t trying to be the best, outdo, or outshine others.

*Continence:* This means self-restraint in our sexual desires or activities in thought, word, and deed. If we go on pursuing the sexual desire, we will become obsessed with it. If we are pursuing sexual desires, we are pursuing relationships, which are within the idea of incompleteness. When we become obsessed, we are making the idea of separateness the most important part of our life. Moderation is needed. The yamas, the moral conducts, are the first step or ingredient in the realization of our wholistic nature.

## NIYAMA

The second step is the *niyamas*, the religious observances, which are: 1) reverence for all life; 2) contentment in all situations; 3) self-discipline; 4) self-analysis; 5) love and devotion for God and guru.

Both the yamas and niyamas are active processes of how we behave in thought, word and deed towards our self and others. We have taken our own personal realities of wants, and desires and how we will behave with ourselves, and towards those around us. Each day we practice and incorporate into our life these first two steps of moral conduct and religious observances.

## ASANA

The third step is *asana* or right posture. Right posture isn't just a matter of sitting upright. It is physical fitness, physical health. We must take care of our bodies so that our bodies can take care of us. If we have pain, injury or poor skeletal structure, we cannot be comfortable sitting. If we cannot sit upright, the cerebral-spinal system will not be able to flow freely, the pranic channels within the body will not be able to flow freely. Asanas involve physical fitness, and health, and skeletal and muscular integrity. This is where we add Hatha Yoga to our life so we can begin toning and tuning our physical and pranic bodies.

## PRANAYAMA

The fourth step is *pranayama*, the knowledge and control of the subtle pranic channels in our body. This is where prana yoga and deep diaphragmatic breathing come in, where we begin to take control of our pranic channels. It is the knowledge and realization that the breath acts as a vehicle between the mind, body, and spirit.

The breath is a regulator. Deep diaphragmatic breaths will bring a calmer mind. Short shallow breathing will bring an active mind. We need to retrain our breathing habits so that we are doing diaphragmatic breathing during our active time and our rest time. Without this training our mind cannot help but be active and restless. When we take control of the breath, we are taking control of the prana. In some yogic traditions they say that if you know prana, you know God. They say that the Christ Consciousness, the Word, is prana, *Om Shivam*, the life force. Control of prana is not only a balance between body and mind, it is also the beginning of understanding and communion with God. Pranayama is a necessary step.

Hatha Yoga is not just physical exercise. It is balancing the sun and the moon, or the assertive and passive prana channels in our body. These are called the ida and pingala channels. When the ida and pingala are balanced, the sushumna (the central channel) can flow. When the central channel can flow, the kundalini can awaken, flow, and be led upward through all the chakras to the thousand-petal lotus at the crown. It is the crown chakra or center that can truly commune with the whole, or God.

Pranayama not only includes the deep breaths, but also includes re-education throughout the days and nights. It includes awareness of the pranic channels, the opening of the chakras and leading of the kundalini energy to the thousand-petal lotus. This is also called the union of the small spirit with the large Spirit.

## PRATYAHARA

The fifth step, *pratyahara*, is the withdrawal of the senses. This is the beginning of the inward journey. Attention begins to be withdrawn from external objects, from our desires, and from our belief that happiness and fulfillment come from having things outside of our self. We begin to believe or affirm that we are created in the image



of God. The fifth step brings about the affirmations of *I am Om*, *I am Om Satyam* (eternal love), *I am Om Shivam* (eternal virtue), *I am Om Sundaram* (eternal beauty). We begin to withdraw our ideas from “I will be happy with a certain amount of money. I will be happy if I have a lover or relationship. I will be happy if my children are happy. I will be happy and secure if I have a nice house that I can afford and that won’t fall apart.” These are all ideas of incompleteness that we need to withdraw from. True happiness and fulfillment will not come from external objects of interest or affection. It comes from within.

We use the affirmations to affirm our true nature: *I am Om Satyam*, *I am Om Shivam*, *I am Om Sundaram*. It is a process that we practice throughout the days and nights, not just for a few minutes before meditation. We aren’t just saying a few mantras; we are beginning to re-educate our whole view of life. With the re-education and identification with the idea that we are wholistic, we are beginning to identify with “we are created in the image of God.” We begin to realize that our divine nature is *Om Satyam*, *Om Shivam*, *Om Sundaram*. We begin to understand that our nature is *Sat* (eternal), *Tat* (consciousness) and *Aum* (holy stream, holy spirit). We begin to understand that happiness is not attained from things, but that we *are* happiness, that it is our nature.

We can enjoy and appreciate things, but we don’t attain happiness from them. This we learn in the fifth step, the withdrawal of the senses from the external. This doesn’t mean going off to live in a cave. It means we begin to change our beliefs. We don’t drop out of society, renounce our family, quit our jobs, or drop off the earth. We begin to expand into the inhalation (the inward journey) and exhalation (activity).

With the inward journey (inhalation) we discover that we are created in the image of God, then we begin to live within that image (exhalation). When we see our self as *Om Satyam* (eternal love), we don’t look to others for our happiness. Now we see, enjoy, and appreciate others as other aspects of God. Now we are living *Om Shivam* (eternal virtue and harmony). We are living in harmony by merging the individual will with the divine Will. It is the union of Shakti and Shiva, the small spirit merging with the large Spirit. This is all part of the fifth step.

There is a mistaken belief that the inward journey means going within and denying or renouncing the rest of life. The inward journey means going within and discovering that we are *Om Satyam*, and that the divine love we seek is within us and within all creation. It is recognizing the universality of divinity, that there is only one God that manifests as *Om Satyam* (eternal love) through the process of *Om Shivam* (harmonization with all life) into the enjoyment and appreciation of *Om Sundaram* (the divine beauty, joy and happiness). This is the true withdrawal, which means withdrawal from the idea of incompleteness, not withdrawal from society. This fifth step must be understood before we can get to the next step.

## DHARANA

The sixth step, *dharana*, is concentration, which is the ability to focus on one thing. Staring at a picture isn't what I mean by concentration. Concentration is the ability to focus on one thing and withdraw from the idea of incompleteness or duality into the oneness. It is the ability to philosophically accept the oneness of God, the oneness of Shiva and Shakti (the unmanifested and the manifested spirit). It is the ability to re-identify and re-educate our self by affirming the mantras. It is the ability to focus on the mantras, which are the divine waves.

*Om* is the most sacred mantra. *Om* is the Word, the first manifestation of God Consciousness. From pure unmanifested consciousness into the first manifested consciousness is the form or sound of *Om*. From this mantra or sound, come all other mantras. All manifestation comes through the first form, *Om*. In western terminology this is call "the first born", the Christ Consciousness or the Krishna Consciousness.

For concentration we use the mantras like *So Hum*, which is connected with the breath. If one listens to the sound of the inhalation, it will be *So*. The sound of the exhalation can be heard as *Hum*. One-pointed concentration on the *So Hum* will lead to the *Om*. We will reach a point with concentration on the *So Hum* where there will no longer be an inhalation and exhalation, where there will no longer be an idea of separateness. At this point, the *So Hum* will become *Om* and we will transcend the idea of separateness into the sabikalpa samadhi state, which is a breathless state where only the *Om* is heard. True concentration is when we are able to go beyond all thoughts, even

beyond the sound of *So Hum*. Now we have arrived at the seventh step, which is meditation.

## DHYANA

Meditation (*dhyana*), the seventh step, is the experience and realization of *Om*, the word of God, or the oneness. This state is where there are the revelations, insights and growth of living with our true Self of *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram*. Once we truly realize the oneness of God, of all life, then it doesn't matter whether we have an inhalation or exhalation. We don't have to be in *sabikalpa samadhi*. Now we are beginning to move into *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which is the eighth step.

## SAMADHI NIRVIKALPA

The eighth step is the realization of our wholistic Self. It is the realization of God. *Samadhi* is the union, the oneness, of the small spirit with the large Spirit. There is only consciousness, manifested or unmanifested, with breath or without breath, with form or without form. The very nature of consciousness is *Om Satyam*, the divine love. The process by which *Om Satyam* is made manifest is *Om Shivam*, the divine harmony, intelligence, Christ Consciousness. The experience of the *Om Shivam* is *Om Sundaram*, the divine eternal beauty, joy, bliss, and intoxication.

## THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

The Eightfold Path is a way of life, a way of realization, a process of *sadhana* (practices and disciplines). We should be practicing moral conduct. If we don't practice moral conduct, we will not be able to calm down and withdraw our senses and ideas because our mind will tell us we did something out of harmony. This is called the conscience. It lets us know when we are not exercising moral conduct. We know when we have been unkind or have injured someone, when we have done something we shouldn't have and we can't let go of it, like if we have a sliver in our hand—the pain and discomfort will remind us that there is something discordant in our body. When we have

not practiced moral conduct, our conscience will keep reminding us that there is something discordant in our mind and we will not be able to calm down. This will affect us on different levels.

If we do not practice moral conduct, we will develop disease or “dis-ease” in our physical body. Being uncomfortable, we will not be able to sit still. If we do not practice steps one (yamas), two (niyamas) and three (asanas), we will not be able to attain step four—control of prana. It takes an awareness of our subtler bodies, the astral or spirit body of pranic channels, in order to begin controlling the prana. Without the first three steps, we will not be calm enough to experience the fourth step. Physical movement will not allow us to feel the subtle pranic channels. The Eightfold Path requires the incorporation and utilization of all the steps in our daily efforts in order to realize and live in harmony with our wholistic self.

How do we practice the Eightfold Path and still enjoy living? The goal of yoga is to realize our wholistic self, and to appreciate and enjoy Shiva (unmanifested) and Shakti (manifested). It is to lead the individual spirit into the large Spirit. We then understand that the enjoyment and appreciation of life should be at the forefront of our spiritual practice. It isn't something we sacrifice or denounce for years or lifetimes until we are liberated. The enjoyment and appreciation of life is something we are learning to do in our daily lives. True practice of the Eightfold Path will bring more enjoyment each day because we are going beyond the ignorances (*samskaras*) that are keeping us imprisoned. We are gaining more awareness that we are infinite and eternal.

The eight meannesses of the human condition (hatred, condemnation, shame, fear, race prejudice, class prejudice, grief, and narrowness of thinking) come out of our belief that we are mortal with only a certain amount of time to live, thus we must protect our physical body at all costs. This causes us to live within the four primal fountains of food, sleep, procreation, and self-preservation. The eight meannesses of the human condition arise from these four primal instincts.

If we realize we are infinite and eternal and that our nature is of Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram, then the eight meannesses fall away. We no longer have fear because living in harmony, we no longer fear death; we know we will be alive beyond the body. We realize that we are infinite and eternal love, harmony, beauty, and joy. We don't

condemn others because we realize there is diversity, which comes from our divine nature and the divine nature of others. The realization of our true self takes away the meannesses of the human condition.

More importantly, realization of our true self frees us into our wholistic Self, that of God Consciousness, that of *Om Satyam, Om Shivam* and *Om Sundaram*. This freedom into life, into God, is truly a celebration. With this freedom we can appreciate and celebrate all life. The diversity of life no longer threatens us, but rather adds to our enjoyment, growth, and education.

The Eightfold Path has to be both the inhalation (inward journey), and the exhalation (outer journey), or what is beneficial for our self, and the international community. So, it is essentially an Eightfold Path inward to our self, and an Eightfold Path externally to the larger Self. Now it becomes the complete Eightfold Path. For the yamas, the moral conduct, we do not cause injury to ourselves, and this includes our thoughts. We don't think we, or others, are bad, worthless, and weak. We don't do things that injure others or the international community in thought, word, and deed. We make this a whole practice or sadhana. We take each of the yamas and niyamas and practice them towards our self and others. When I say "others", I am including the minerals, the plants, animals, humans, angels or devas, the holy ones. We balance and live in harmony—the individual self and the international community. This will bring us to the Royal Path.

## **THE ROYAL PATH**

The Royal Path is the utilizing and combining of the four main paths of: Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Meditation Yoga to attain moksha or liberation. Each of the paths corresponds to the physical, astral, causal, and soul. These four paths are:

Karma Yoga: The path of action, which leads to the attainment of knowledge through accepting responsibility of self, home, family, one's community, and the international community; through the experience of living and learning amongst society, and doing one's duties joyfully, skillfully, and selflessly.

Bhakti Yoga: The path of love and devotion, which leads to attainment of knowledge of divinity through the experience of love, beauty, compassion, and having reverence for all life. This path is one of awakening of the heart and going beyond the ego through love for others, and ultimately God.

Jnana Yoga: The path of harmony, which leads to the attainment of harmony of the soul and God through direct knowledge and understanding of the Divine Will or Christ/Krishna Consciousness. This path is one of being a student of life, and being in harmony with the wholistic life.

Meditation Yoga: The path of stillness, which leads to the attainment and realization of the oneness of life, through quieting the body, mind, breath, and ego. This path is one of utilizing and focusing on the *Om* vibration to attain stillness: “Be ye still and know that I am God.”

The Royal Path is the realization that we are created in the image of God. This realization comes with samadhi. Step seven (meditation) leads to samadhi or the realization of our oneness with God. The realization of our oneness with God leads us to living the Royal Path. The Royal Path premise is that we are created in the image of God, that we have the pure God Consciousness within, that we have the Christ Consciousness, the Holy Spirit, the soul, the causal body, the astral body and the physical body. We need to live in harmony with our whole self.

We need to nurture the physical body, the astral body, the causal body, and the soul. We do this by practicing the Eightfold Path. We do this by accepting that the nurturing of the astral body (the senses) is through the enjoyment and appreciating of love, beauty and harmony. This is necessary to nurture the astral body. The creativeness and appreciation of love, harmony, beauty, the arts, and music are part of nurturing the astral body or astral ideas. It is just as necessary for happiness as is a healthy physical body.

Art that is a protest, art that is angry or bitter is not nurturing our astral body. Art is the expression and appreciation of beauty and divinity, of *Om Satyam*, *Om Shivam*, *Om Sundaram*. This is what nurtures our astral body. If we take in the anger of others, it is like taking in bad physical nutrition that will make our body sick. If we take in ugliness, anger, hatred, and condemnation we will make our spirit body sick. If we take it in, listen

to it, believe it or live it, we will have a discordant astral body and we will not be happy or healthy.

The same goes for the causal body. If we have unhealthy or incomplete belief systems, we will have incomplete nutrition for the causal body and we will not be happy. We must expand our belief systems to a philosophy that agrees with the true nature of life—that of there is only God, only a oneness. Whether the oneness is manifested or unmanifested, it is still *Om Satyam* (eternal love). Whether a person is behaving with moral conduct or not, they are still created in the image of God. We have to understand that.

The process of realizing our wholistic nature and living within it first begins with our acceptance, experience, and exploration of our wholistic nature. We have to accept philosophically that we are created in the image of God. When we think only holy ones are created in the image of God, but others aren't, it is a discordant and incomplete idea, and we need to expand our beliefs. Then we work towards the realization of our wholistic nature by doing what is beneficial to our self and to the international community. We incorporate the moral codes of the yamas and niyamas into our daily thinking, actions or activities. We incorporate the right postures (asanas), physical health and fitness of the body into our daily lives. We incorporate the pranayama and the understanding of the pranic channels by doing the deep breathing and learning about how the breath links the body and mind. The breath is the regulator if we take control of it. We are made up of prana. Just as water, ice and steam are all H<sub>2</sub>O, the physical, astral, causal, and soul are all consciousness, whether unmanifested or manifested. We begin to experience, understand, and practice this.

We then begin to withdraw the belief that people and objects external to us are what bring us happiness and fulfillment. Now we begin to realize that our very nature is happiness, *Om Satyam*, *Om Shivam*, *Om Sundaram*, and we begin to share that with others. Our concentration and focus begins to be on the oneness, *Om Satyam*, in all the diversified forms. We first get the actual experience of this in meditation, then we begin to live it at all times in samadhi. We come to the realization that we are created in the image of God and we live that.

Obviously we want to do this twenty-four hours of the day. We want to do it throughout eternity. This is *mukti*, liberation. But first we must start at the beginning. Maybe we make a copy of the Eightfold Path and look at it each day. What does it mean to us? Intellectually we begin to re-educate ourselves. We begin to work on the moral conducts and religious observances. We think about them and practice them. Then we incorporate the activity of physical fitness and pranayama into our lives. We incorporate the withdrawal and changing of our beliefs. We begin to affirm that we are created in the image of God. We do affirmations. We withdraw our beliefs that objects and activities will bring us fulfillment, and we change that to the realization that *Om Satyam*, eternal love, brings fulfillment. We begin to concentrate, experience, and chant *Om Satyam* and *I am Om*. We begin to concentrate and focus throughout the day.

We begin to meditate and get revelations, insights, and experiences of our divine nature, and these will lead to the actual union, the direct experience of our oneness with God. We need to do this each day. Where to start? We start with believing, thinking about, making the effort to experience our true nature.

Steps six (concentration), seven (meditation) and eight (samadhi) are referred to as “yoga proper”. If we do not do steps one, two, and three, we will not be able to sit still for thirty-minutes to an hour to do meditation. We will be unable to sit erect and upright. Unless we can do step four, our breath will not be under control and we will not be able to calm down our mind. We won’t be able to withdraw our senses because the mind will be active. If we can’t withdraw our senses, we can’t concentrate. If we can’t concentrate, we can’t meditate.

When I talk about starting with a half-hour of meditation a day, I am talking about step six, concentration. So, before we can meditate, we must prepare to meditate. If we have daily physical activity or exercise, our body will be able to sit without being restless or uncomfortable. If we regularly have done our deep breathing, we will be able to breathe deeply as we are preparing for meditation. If we are able to do that, we can withdraw our senses and begin to meditate in the time we have set aside.

Preparing for meditation includes checking the doors, turning things off, including the phone. It includes evaluating our day and our schedules so we don’t think about those things when we sit to meditate. When we are working on our daily schedules and



events, we can't meditate. When we are still mentally working on these things, we have not fully withdrawn from the external, which is part of step five. So we take care of those things prior to sitting down to meditate. We get our day in order first, knowing we will be getting back to it after meditation. Having prepared, we can sit down and withdraw our senses, and now we can concentrate.

We pick our favorite chant, affirmation, or mantra. Even during our active times, we can chant or affirm our favorite divine mantras. *I am Om. Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram. Om Namo Ari Hantanam, Om Namo Siddhanam* ("I bow to the conquerors of their inner enemies, I bow to the realized souls"). We begin to concentrate and become one-pointed towards the reason we sat down to meditate. Why are we sitting to meditate? Because we believe we are created in the image of God. We believe that we are more than just a physical body. We believe that our very nature is God Consciousness. We believe the holy ones when they have said, "Be ye still and know that I am God." That is why we want to get focused. Using our favorite mantra, we come to actual meditation.

The first step of meditation is the 1-12 technique, which balances the inhalation and exhalation. This is the first mantra because we listen and hear the sound of our breath as we count. Next is the 1-4-2 pranayama breathing technique. The 1-4-2 balances the ida and pingala (two of the three main pranic channels). It brings in prana and allows us to take control of the pranic channels. We are paying attention and are trying to experience the inhalation/exhalation and the prana channels. We withdraw our senses even more for meditation. We are doing a microcosm of our whole day in our twelve repetitions of the 1-4-2.

After the 1-4-2 technique, we do the *Hrim* mantra. The *Hrim* mantra is also breath-related and is done audibly. The *Hrim* mantra means, "I invoke the indwelling energy." When we do the *Hrim* mantra, we are invoking our indwelling energy, which allows us to focus on our inner nature, our true self, that of our pure consciousness. *Hrim* is a Sanskrit word. The Sanskrit language vibrates the cerebral-spinal system and the corresponding chakras. This is a simple, yet powerful mantra.

Next, we do the *So Hum* mantra. We listen to the sound of our breath. We are withdrawing even more from the external. We are focusing on the inhalation and the

exhalation, the prana, the breath, the air. We begin to concentrate. We push aside any thoughts that come, and they will come because as we get calmer thoughts will surface. Just gently push them aside and pay attention to the mantra. The time to evaluate the thoughts that come will be when you are outside meditation. Pay attention to the *So Hum...I am this, I am that*.

We focus on calming down until we begin to experience a calmness, peace, *Shanti*. We experience love, appreciation, enjoyment. “I am this. I am that.” This is *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram*. “I am the inhalation and the exhalation, the individual and the international community. The international community is part of my larger Self, the union of Shiva and Shakti.” This is all part of the *So Hum*. It will begin to melt into the *Om*. “I am the Divine Consciousness, the Christ Consciousness.” Focusing on the *Om*, bathing in the *Om*, hearing, seeing, and experiencing the *Om*, Shiva (unmanifested) and Shakti (manifested) are now ever in union. Now we have samadhi, the union of the small spirit and the large Spirit. This is how we incorporate the Eightfold Path into our daily sadhana or practices.

We don't just continue to live our lives like we have always done until it is time to sit down to meditate. Meditation isn't about sitting down with pillows and cushions, taking some deep breaths, and using the next thirty-minutes to sort out what is in our mind to get a little calmness. We can't call that meditating for a half-hour. When I say we should have a minimum daily requirement of meditation for thirty-minutes, I am talking about step seven, not the preparation steps leading up to step seven. The others steps are what you should be doing throughout the entire day. When you then sit down to meditate, you have already done the preparation and are at step seven, meditation. If you have retrained yourself to do deep breathing during the day, you will have a calm mind. You will be able to withdraw your senses if you have the belief that you are created in the image of God. This will give you a reason to withdraw your mind from all your activities, wants, and desires. The Eightfold Path isn't something you practice for thirty-minutes a day. It is something we begin to practice more of each day. If we meditate for an hour or two a day, we can realize our nature in a short time.

The Eightfold Path is all eight ingredients in a wholistic life. You can't say that at this time you are at step five in your life, and that you will be moving to step seven.

When you have a samadhi experience, it doesn't mean that you no longer have to be moral. Having an experience with God and then being unkind to someone is not spirituality. It is falling back into old ways. It is pouring everything out of your glass. So you need to begin to fill it up again with your divine nature.

The process of meditation is a complete process. The process of: "Be ye still and know that I am God" has been defined by Patanjali as eight steps. If you do these eight practices, you will realize and live within your wholistic nature. You can't just buy a tape of someone doing *Oms* or go to a sense deprivation tank and expect to experience samadhi. These things exist and there may be experiences, but to truly become mukti, a master of your destiny, you must realize that you are created in the image of God. You must realize that you are by nature *Om Satyam*, by manifestation *Om Satyam* and *Om Shivam*, and by awareness *Om Satyam*, *Om Shivam*, *Om Sundaram*. It is our responsibility to realize that, live that, and share that. This is what brings the joy to living.

The message of the holy ones is that happiness and enjoyment come from the realization and harmonization with the small self and the large Self. It comes with realizing that we are wholistic. The Eightfold Path of Yoga is a process of how to attain that realization. The key is that each one must make our own effort. One person's realization doesn't help us unless it inspires us to make the effort. Someone eating good nutrition doesn't help us unless it inspires us to eat good nutrition.

To utilize the Eightfold Path, we must first be aware of it, begin to study it, and then incorporate it into our every day life. It is an active process. It is not enough to simply intellectualize it. Steps one and two involve both inner and outer activities: moral conduct and non-injury to our self and others in thought, word, and deed. All the steps involve both inner and outer practices. It is the inhalation, going within, and the exhalation, activity in the outer.

It is our divine inheritance to be living in the state of *Om Satyam*, *Om Shivam*, *Om Sundaram*. It will take our effort to do so because it is an active process. We must realize our nature and then live within our nature. The holy ones have given this message during all times and all traditions—we are created in the image of God and we can live within our nature.

*We must embrace being open to life. This gives us the freedom to share who and what we are with our family and friends.*

## The JOY OF MEDITATION

*Meditation* will give us something that nothing else can. It can give us what no friend, no amount of money, no beautiful or athletic body, and no activity can give us. Meditation can give us direct knowledge that we are pure Satyam (love) Consciousness, ecstasy. This means pure love-consciousness beyond any form or any activity. In the ancient scriptures it says, “Be ye still and know that I am God.” To do this, we calm down the mind, breath, and ego through the process of meditation, which will allow us to have the experience of being infinite and eternal. This infinite and eternal consciousness is the same God-stuff as the *Satyam* (love), *Shivam* (harmony/intelligence), and *Sundaram* (joy and beauty). In theology, this means we are created in the image of God. But it is the actual experience of this that frees us from the idea of separateness or incompleteness.

The idea of incompleteness is the root cause of all suffering. It is the root cause of all pain and fear that humanity experiences. We believe that we are separate and incomplete, and therefore, cannot be happy unless we have money for security, a nice house, friends, lovers, family, unless we can have enough of whatever it is our mind comes up with. This idea of incompleteness, the cosmic ego, or what is referred to in the West as Satan or the great deceiver, is the root cause of all our suffering. Meditation is the one thing that can take us beyond this idea or veil. It allows us to experience our self

as pure consciousness. Meditation will give us the experience of knowing our true nature as *Om Satyam*, pure love. It gives us the experience of knowing we are *Om Shivam*, knowledge, and omnipresent harmony with all life. It gives us the experience of our *Om Sundaram* nature, that of joy, bliss, and beauty.

These three aspects of our nature, Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram, and the nature of all life (God), can be experienced. They can be experienced in a relationship, in music, in art, in a thousand different ways. However, when we experience it in meditation, beyond form or activity, we then know it is our very nature and not something that comes from, or because of, something external. When we have felt the love, harmony, joy, bliss, and beauty, we have a tendency to give credit for those experiences to activities or other people, yet those experiences are our true nature. The importance of meditation, the beauty and joy of meditation, is that it will bring us to our eternal nature.

Hazrat Inayat Khan said that we should seek God-realization and we will discover our self, but if we seek Self-realization, we may not discover God. This appeals to those who are religious. Lahiri Mahasaya, another great prophet, who lived at about the same time, said that he was going to teach Kriya Yoga (an advanced meditation technique), so those who had trouble believing in Divinity could discover their own divine nature. Hazrat Inayat Khan suggested seeking God, and thus discovering our Self. Lahiri Mahasaya suggested seeking our Self, and thus discovering God. Each person must find which tradition they prefer. Swami Rama said life is both the inward journey and the outward expression, and that we should touch and perfect both. This is wholistic living, and this is what the Royal Path offers. The Royal Path starts with the premise that we are going to touch and perfect both the inward journey (the inhalation) and the outward expression (the exhalation).

Meditation is the beginning of the inward journey. Meditation is quite simple. We start with a proper place, time, and posture. The proper place is anywhere that is quiet and well ventilated. The proper time is when we will not be distracted by other people or events. We pick a time when family and friends will not need our immediate attention. The proper posture is to sit in a position where we can keep the cerebral spinal system erect for 20–30 minutes to start with.

After we have prepared ourselves for meditation, we begin with the 1–12 technique. We inhale to the count of 12, and we exhale to the count of 12. We begin to take control of our breath. We begin to see our breath as that which calms down the mind, body, and spirit. The 1–12 technique is the beginning of the inward journey.

After we do twelve sets of the 1–12 technique, we do the 1–4–2 technique. We inhale to the count of 4, retain the breath to the count of 16, and exhale to the count of 8. We first inhale through the left nostril, retain, exhale through the right nostril, then inhale through the right nostril, retain and exhale through the left nostril. This is one 1–4–2 set. We do this twelve times. This inward technique balances the ida (left energy channel) and pingala (right energy channel). Once they are balanced, the sushumna (central energy channel) can flow. When the sushumna channel is open, we can awaken the kundalini, or the Shakti energy that is within all existence, including us.

We then move on to the *Hrim* technique. The *Hrim* mantra, which is done audibly, acts as a prayer. We are invoking the indwelling energy. We are consciously choosing to become aware of the harmony that Hazrat Inayat Khan and Lahiri Mahasaya talked about. The small self and the large Self are in harmony and ever in union. The *Hrim* mantra invokes the indwelling energy to allow us to experience the small spirit having union with the large Spirit. We do this mantra at least twelve times. The reason we use twelve repetitions of the techniques is because twelve is the number of times during an average day the ida and pingala switch. This means that the dominance of the left nostril and right nostril, and left brain and right brain switch every two hours during the day. We pass back and forth between the passive and assertive, the nurturing and creative aspects of our self, every two hours. By doing twelve repetitions of the various techniques, we are working in harmony with our nature. When we use the *Hrim* mantra, we are trying to become aware of the energy, or that part of us which is eternal, and raise it to the crown, to the absolute consciousness without form. We use this mantra to raise the Shakti energy to the Shiva consciousness.

Next, we do the *So Hum* mantra. The *So Hum* means, “I am this. I am that.” It is also an inward technique. “I am this.” We are trying to calm down and experience that pure Satyam consciousness that always has been, is now, and forever shall be. Whether we are trying to experience God, or experience our divine self, on the inhalation, we

focus inward on the *So Hum*. *So Hum*...I am this and I am that. The “I am this,” part is the divine energy or current that is eternal. “I am that,” is every thought, activity, and word that we have ever experienced. It is balancing the inward journey and the outward journey. As Swami Rama says, we need to be aware of and perfect both our inward journey and our outward journey. “I am this and I am that,” gives us knowledge of our self, our eternal self, temporary self, and personality.

Now we move to the *Om* mantra. The *Om* mantra is considered the most sacred of all because it is the sound or voice of the first manifestation, which is the Christ or Krishna Consciousness (*Om Shivam*). In the ancient scriptures, it says that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *Om*. The Word is from God, of God, and is God. *Om*, the Word, is the Satyam Consciousness without form made manifest into form. This manifestation has a sound, and the sound is *Om*. When we do the *Om* mantra, we try to immerse into it. In the beginning, we just mentally repeat the *Om* on the exhalation. On the inhalation, we are trying to be peaceful, quiet, and calm. If we find that we get distracted during the inhalation, we can do the “O” on the inhalation, and the “M” on the exhalation, which is similar to what we were previously doing with *So Hum*. We continue to practice this step until we can do the *Om* on the exhalation, and hear the sound of *Om* on the inhalation. We begin to listen to the voice or sound of *Om* on the inhalation. Then on the exhalation, or expression, or outward journey, we try to harmonize our mental *Om* with what we are hearing on the inward journey. We are seeking a balance between the inward and outward journeys. We must touch and perfect both. We begin to do this in meditation with the 1–12, 1–4–2, *Hrim*, *So Hum*, and *Om* techniques. This is a basic meditation, but it is also the basic inward journey.

When we add meditation to our life, we are not trying to escape from life, or renounce our responsibilities. We are renouncing the idea of incompleteness. This is what we are attempting to do. We aren’t renouncing careers, family, or the physical manifestation. We are renouncing the beliefs and ideas that we must have these things to feel complete or happy. We are renouncing the idea that we are a limited human being. We even need to balance our meditations with the inhalation and the exhalation. Each time we inhale, we should be trying to experience and feel our eternal nature of Satyam (love). As we exhale during meditation, we should be trying to experience Satyam and

express or vibrate that outwardly. We meditate for thirty or sixty–minutes and should continue to go deeper each day, week, and month. This is how we begin to purify our self. There will be things that we used to think we needed for our happiness that now we find have non-attached from or have outgrown them and can let them go. We can begin to see when we have felt frustrated because life didn't give us what we wanted, and we can let go of those frustrations also. We begin to see that it isn't life, obstacles, or other people that have stood in the way of our happiness or sense of fulfillment, rather it was our attachment to limited ideas and beliefs that stood in our way. If we go beyond these beliefs, we can begin to experience our self as more wholistic. We can begin to experience the joy and happiness that is our nature.

Many people have come to a point where they cannot happily deal with the rest of life. This has always been the case, but in today's society we call it co-dependency. In ancient times they called it "the opinion of the world." They used to have rules about right company, right conduct, and right conversation, all because people couldn't deal with the external life. Once we get past the idea that we need others, or the external life for completion, fulfillment, happiness, and love, then we can be secure, happy, and in love with our self.

## THE JOY OF MEDITATION

There is a story about a yogi who was sitting high up in a mountain cave by himself. A young boy knew about this yogi and for years worried that the yogi was lonely.

Finally, the youth, out of compassion, climbed the mountain to join the yogi. The boy greeted the yogi and said he had come to be with him so he wouldn't be alone anymore. The yogi said, "I will be leaving my inner friend now to join you." Most people don't understand what this means. It is about being distracted by the world. In our meditation, when we can calm down and have the peace and quiet, we can have the experience of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. We can begin to experience our wholistic nature and feel good. However, as soon as we begin to go out and interact with life, we get distracted and lose the feeling of our wholistic self that we experienced in meditation. Pretty soon we are focused back on only our material world of interests and desires. Then we once



again fall under the spell or illusion of the cosmic ego (maya sheath) and begin to suffer again. This is how we come to believe that happiness lies in excluding or renouncing the world.

This belief is reinforced by stories like the one about the yogi off by himself. There is a childish misinterpretation of this story, and also a more mature wholistic view of this story. The childish view is where we think we can only be happy if others don't do things that cause us conflict because it is beyond our capacity to deal with it. Children are happy until something happens which they aren't prepared for, and then they become unhappy. The adult way is to be aware that life happens, and we must see the harmony in the situations without losing our joy or happiness.

The joy, bliss, and intoxication we have when we make the connection with God the Absolute in the stillness of meditation, cannot be matched in any activity. There is nothing that will come close to the pure love, pure consciousness, and pure ecstasy of being in that state of God Consciousness. "Be ye still and know that I am God." This is what the yogi meant when he said he had to leave his inner friend to be with the boy. The inner friend is our divine and eternal nature.

As a yogi, we can experience both the inward journey and the outward journey, and find our balance between the inhalation and exhalation. On our inhalation, in our meditation time, we can have the pure experience of the ecstasy of *Om Satyam*, of God beyond beginning and end, which because we are created in the image of God, is also our nature. "Be ye still and know that I am God." When we exhale, when we come out of meditation, we must learn to experience the Satyam Consciousness in everything. We must learn to see the harmony in everything, including the temporary. If the ancient prophets, rishis, or sages can be believed, there is only one God, and there is perfection. That means everything that brings suffering to humanity is somehow within the one God and is part of the perfection. It is the lack of seeing or living this perfection that causes the suffering and conflict. This is what Swami Rama meant by the inward journey must be touched and perfected all the way to the absolute Satyam Consciousness, and the outward journey must be touched and perfected.

We must be able to live and enjoy the creation by seeing its harmony and perfection. Meditation alone will not bring us to this state. It takes our effort in

meditation to experience our self as the pure Satyam Consciousness. This should be the goal of every meditation. “I am this Satyam.” The goal of meditation is to experience our eternal, always have been, am now, and always will be nature of Satyam (love), then we exhale and strive to be in harmony (*Om Shivam*) with the experience of our nature while active. From our sattvic (higher, pure) nature, we do our activity ragasically (neutral, active) while avoiding tamasic (ego-centered) activity, all the while having the Sundaram, the joy and beauty of the cosmic play. We touch and perfect the inward journey and we touch and perfect the outward journey. This is how we find the balance in our life. This becomes our purpose in life. Without the fulfillment of this purpose, there will only be the feeling of incompleteness and suffering. We will still be infinite and eternal. We will still be created in the image of God because that doesn’t change. Yet, this knowledge will not be known to us if we are not aware of our nature.

The inward journey starts with meditation. What does the mukti (freedom) of meditation give us? There are eight meannesses of the human condition, which are: hatred, fear, grief, shame, condemnation, race prejudice, pride of pedigree, and narrowness of thinking. These all come about because we believe we are incomplete and need something to fulfill us and make us happy. These eight meannesses arise out of our ignorance, and attempting to protect or justify our beliefs in happiness. Most people are looking for love. The misunderstandings and conflicts arising from male/female relationships permeate the earth at this time. It affects almost everyone. If we don’t balance the ida and pingala, the inner male and female qualities within our self, and allow the sushumna to flow upward to pierce the thousand petalled lotus, hormones will effect us and we will believe that we need the opposite sex to complete us.

## FINDING BALANCE

The ida and pingala correlate with the left and right nostrils. The left nostril is predominately open for two hours then the right nostril is predominately open for the next two hours. They switch back and forth throughout the day. When these are balanced, the sushumna flows. The sushumna flows up to the sixth energy center, and with balance, the sushumna can begin to pierce the sixth energy center. When this happens, the kundalini

can rise, pass through the sixth center, and open the thousand-petalled lotus or the seventh center. This may seem symbolic, but it is also practical.

Unless we find the balance within our self, we will not be able to go beyond the belief that a male and female were meant to be together to complete each other. Therefore, the soul will call out for more and we will be driven to strive for completion, for union, not with the whole of life, but with a person in the form of a relationship. Until we can go beyond this idea of incompleteness or separateness with the inhalation, we will be driven to fulfill the desire for completeness within the external world on the outward journey. To touch and perfect the inhalation and to touch and perfect the exhalation does not mean that we do not have a sexual marriage relationship and children. It just means we are not driven to seek our happiness and fulfillment in only outward activities or people. We recognize that our relationship with others is another aspect of our outward journey.

The process of finding this balance is done with meditation. Meditation is coming to this state of stillness, this absolute state of Consciousness that always has been, is now, and forever shall be. This will give us something that nothing else can. It will give us direct experience that we are infinite and eternal. We will have experienced beyond every form that exists...the physical body, astral body, causal body, the soul, and even the Christ Consciousness. We have gone beyond all form and now we are in pure Consciousness without form which always has been, is now, and forever shall be. We now realize that we are infinite and eternal. The fear of death and annihilation is gone.

While we are in this state of pure consciousness without any form, we begin to be aware of what we are experiencing. What we are experiencing in this state is *Ecstasy*. This ecstasy is different from the intoxication, laughter, bliss, and happiness we are familiar with. It comes with experiencing the pure Satyam Consciousness and is beyond words. All the holy ones have said that God is love, pure and unconditional love. This state of pure love, *Satyam*, is what we will be experiencing.

This experience will free us from the belief or idea that we need something or someone else to allow us to feel this pure love. It will free us from the belief that we are incomplete and need someone else to love, or that we need someone to love us. We will realize that this Satyam Consciousness is the nature of God, and that it is also our nature

because we will be experiencing our self as pure Satyam. This will free us from fear, loneliness, and the idea of separateness. Now we will gain one more thing: freedom. As we exhale and come back from this state, we will recognize that what we were feeling without form, we also continue to feel in the Christ Consciousness. The only difference is that in the first form we have light, or a subtle form, added to it.

As we continue to manifest out, we realize we are still experiencing the Satyam Consciousness in the holy stream, or the Aum. If we pay attention, we will be able to see how a tiny golden net manifests and holds the consciousness of the unique soul. Now we recognize that our unique consciousness can also experience this pure ecstasy. As we continue to manifest and take on a causal body with a mind, we will recognize the fields of memories and individual ego, including time and space. We will begin to feel some division, but are still able to experience the bliss of our divine nature.

As we continue to exhale, we take on the astral body and the five senses. We can still feel the bliss and pure consciousness, only now we are experiencing it and including the different senses and ideas. This would be similar to light passing through a prism. The one light hits the prism and refracts out as many different colors. It is only one light, but now it can be appreciated as the diversity of life. Continuing to exhale, we manifest all the way to the physical body after our mystical experience in meditation. We can now feel the body with the five senses and our thoughts, but we still feel that subtle ecstasy of pure consciousness. It isn't as powerful or predominant because we have now added to our consciousness and awareness of other things, which can distract us from the pure Satyam.

What we have also taken from this experience is *Om Shivam*—"Let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We will realize that this divine ecstasy, or love, can be experienced while manifested. Now we realize that not only are we created in the image of God with Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, but everything around us, all of life, has the same building blocks of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. We begin to look for and see the glimpse of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram in everyone and everything. To touch and perfect the outward journey, we begin to look for the Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram in the diversity and temporary nature of life. We can appreciate an ice cube even though we know it is going to melt. We can appreciate the diversity of snowflakes, each one unique and

temporary. Under certain conditions the snowflake will exist in its unique crystalline form, but when the conditions change, the snowflake will cease to exist in that form. The temporary nature of a snowflake is truly part of the inhalation and the exhalation. However, the beauty and enjoyment of the snowflake is ours to be experienced, unless we become attached to it and want it to last forever. Then we will have lost our awareness of how the inhalation and exhalation work. We will have lost the *Om Shivam*, the harmony.

When we come back from our experience of the state of pure consciousness, we should have gained three things. Firstly, we should have the knowledge that we are infinite and eternal, which will remove our fears and doubt. Secondly, we will know that we are eternal Satyam, which removes the isolation, loneliness, and idea that we need someone to like us, appreciate us, respect us, or complete us. Thirdly, we see that everything created is *Om Satyam*. All we have to do is recognize it, or see it in someone else, and we will be the ones making the connection to more *Om Satyam*. When we see the beauty of the soul in another person, we can feel the love, the beauty, the connection. We don't even need the other person to know who we are. We don't need them to meet all our conditions and have a relationship with us. We simply appreciate other people, animals, plants, the saints and sages, the devas and angels, the children and adults.

If we pay attention, we begin to have the connection to all life with this *Om Satyam* experience we have had in the still state of meditation. The only thing that can give us this experience is the calming down of the mind, breath, and ego in meditation. This stillness in meditation will give us the experience of our infinite and eternal Satyam Consciousness. This is how meditation can free us into life. From there we can choose to be free into life and the enjoyment of life.

## SELF KNOWLEDGE

Obviously, it will be a process of learning and growing once we have our first *satori*-like<sup>6</sup> experience because we still have to work to go beyond our beliefs. We don't even know all our beliefs because they may be buried far down in our subconscious. They will show up someday in the form of a want or desire. "I believe I want to do this. How can I do

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<sup>6</sup> *Satori*: mystical experience

it? I don't see how I can do it at this time. I want to be a great athlete and play at a world class level, but how do I go about doing that?" We start by joining athletics and training our body and mind. It may take five years, or fifty years, or five incarnations, but if the goal is worth attaining, the journey is worth making. The same goes for music, or writing, or any activity in life. We may discover we want to do something, and this self-discovery is part of what life is about. Life is for learning, growing, and exploring. We just have to be careful to distinguish our desires from the desires of the world, society, or our friends and family. We need to make sure it is our life that we are living.

Meditation gives us insight, and we gain knowledge about our personality, our outward nature, the things we want to do in life while still being aware of our Satyam Consciousness. We have the inhalation, "I am this," and the exhalation, "I am that. What is it I want to do?" We aren't asking what society, parents, spouses, or friends want us to do. We are able to differentiate between what it is we want to do, and what others want us to do. Knowledge of our self comes with meditation, because the calmer we get, the deeper we can go into our own consciousness and see some of our subtler desires. We can calm down to see what caused us to have the desire, or how we wanted to unfold and fulfill our life.

Meditation is about self-awareness, self-knowledge, and knowledge of the whole (God). This is gained from going inward to experience our eternal *Om Satyam* nature, and going outward to explore and interact with the rest of life. We need to realize that if we are created in the image of God, then what we have been calling the external world, the outward journey, our desires, samskaras, and problems are also part of God. We must learn to harmonize and see the divine nature in everything. Problems arise because of our lack of awareness in seeing the nature or pattern of life, the *Om Shivam*, and the lack of awareness in seeing our own attachments. If we don't realize we are infinite and eternal, we will naturally be attached because we will believe we need someone or something else for our happiness and fulfillment.

This process of realization is not an instant process, even though it may have felt like it in meditation when we felt instantly transformed into the pure Satyam Consciousness. When we come out of that experience, we have the knowledge, but now it will take our effort to begin making the changes in our habits so we can live in

harmony with the whole. “Let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” It will take time and practice. This is what life should be about. We should be enthused about harmonizing with life and then life will become more enjoyable. We should be as excited and enthused about the inward journey and revelations as we are about our outward journey, challenges, and revelations. While it is a challenge to calm down the mind enough to pass into that superconscious state, it is just as challenging to retain that ecstasy, that Satyam-Shivam Consciousness when everyone around us is frustrated, angry, and trying to give excuses for not being in our nature. There will be challenges on both the inward and outward journeys, and we have eternity to learn and explore.

Meditation gives us first, the knowledge that we are created in the image of God. Next, it gives us knowledge of how to live in harmony with all life. It gives us knowledge of how our personality, desires, our outward journey, and the desires of others are also part of our life. Meditation then gives us the knowledge that our life and desires are legitimate. Too many people are still caught in Aristotelian logic, which says there is either this or that, there is either the spiritual and formlessness, or there is the manifested and worldly. They have not embraced the wholeness of life and the wholeness of what their interests and enjoyment of life should be. This is the third thing meditation will give us, that as long as there is an inhalation, there will be an exhalation. As long as there is an exhalation, there will be an inhalation. It isn't that one is more legitimate than the other. Our desires for activity, our desires to do things in the creation are legitimate, and we should be enthused about them. We must just learn how to do them in a manner that brings us joy and happiness.

This third aspect of what meditation will bring us is also stated well by Swami Rama. When he was going to leave India to come to the West to teach he asked his guru if he should go teach the West about the ways, philosophies, and theologies of India. His guru told him to go and teach in the West that we must learn to embrace life and live our life selflessly, skillfully, and cheerfully. Selfless activity means we must keep in mind that everything we do must benefit the individual and the international community. If it benefits us and others, then it is selfless. It will be in harmony with the wholisticness of the *Om Shivam*. Skillful activity means we are doing it in a manner that is in harmony, and this will bring *Om Sundaram*, joy and delight. Obviously, cheerfulness means we are

doing it in harmony, which will bring even more joy and delight. If we are doing something for the benefit of the individual and the international community, it should bring about a bubbling up of joy. If we are doing it in harmony and skillfully, we should be able to appreciate the skill, just like we can appreciate the beauty of a skilled dancer, singer, musician or athlete. Something that is done skillfully is a delight and beautiful to see or listen to. It is also a delight to do things when we are skilled. If an activity is done in a manner that is beneficial and we are sharing it, it becomes beneficial to the international community, and it will naturally bring about joy and cheerfulness.

The balance in our life is also part of the third thing we gain from meditation—we get to see how our activities and desires go from a limited or self-centered state to a state of being beneficial for the individual and the international community. It takes only minor adjustments to do this. “Instead of doing this only for my own satisfaction, I will do it so it will also benefit others.” This is being selfless. But, to do that, it may take more effort and practice on our part to become skillful. Someone may enjoy singing, but if they want to share that, they may have to practice a little more to gain the skill to share it with others.

To be cheerful, we must choose that which is joyful, that which leads to joy and happiness, and we must give up the sadness, depression, and unhappiness. To be cheerful, we must be doing our activities in a rajasic or sattvic manner. We must give up the non-cheerful things that bring us sadness and suffering. It is that simple. We must give up our moods, attitudes, and the waiting for life to give to us, and instead we experience of our Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram nature. Part of attaining cheerfulness is non-attachment from our limitations.

Meditation is a delight because it brings us so much. It brings us to the doorway of so much, even to the doorway of the seven seals, the seven realms of divinity, the seven realms of God Consciousness. However, we must make the effort to open those seals so we can begin to explore them. Meditation truly frees us into our self so that our life is worth living each moment of the day. It allows us to find what we enjoy and what brings us harmony and love, Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. We let go of our fears, insecurities, ideas, and beliefs in the ideas of isolation or incompleteness. As Swami Rama says, we touch and perfect both—the inward journey and the outward journey.



There is an inhalation and an exhalation. It is not either one or the other. We work towards harmonizing our inward journey and our outward journey. Shiva and Shakti are ever in union and we must try to find that balance in each meditation and each day. We can be like Hazrat Inayat Khan and look for God in every situation. We look for the Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram in every situation, on both the exhalation and the inhalation. Or, we can be like Lahiri Mahasaya and be looking for our self (“Who am I beyond this temporariness?”) and discover the divinity in everyone and everything. We are wholistic and must make the effort to become aware of this. Then we live a wholistic life.

*If we will have an enthusiasm for learning, we will gain our self, our life, and the celebration of living.*

## SEVEN SACRED SECRETS

Today I am going to share seven secrets to God-realization, or what is referred to as the seven seals of God or divinity. They are secrets because just to hear about them does not bring you the experience. You have to go out, practice, and become these steps, stages, or fulfillments of your nature in order to have these experiences. That is why the holy ones can talk about them, yet they will still remain secret to those who have not had the experiences, but have only heard about them.

The sacred books talk about the seven seals, or secrets. These are not the seven chakras, which could be considered doorways to the seven planes of existence, or the seven aspects of divinity. These secrets will remain sealed until we open our self up to our wholistic nature.

### FIRST SECRET

The first secret or seal that one must embrace is the desire to experience God. The desire to experience God is truly a pure desire. It comes from the soul calling out for more. The soul wants to experience itself, or God. This is not the same as the desire for liberation, or the desire to be free from pain and suffering. This is the pure desire to experience God. This is the first secret or seal that one must embrace.

MANTRA: There is a mantra that one can begin to use to have this experience. That mantra is *Hrim, Hari Om, Om*, which means, “I invoke the indwelling God Consciousness. I invoke the God Consciousness within Life. I invoke the absolute God Consciousness.” The indwelling energy is the indwelling God Consciousness. *Hrim* is: “I am created in the image of God. I invoke that. I go inward to experience that.” This is the first step, the first mantra, the first education that we use when we begin to have this pure experience of God. *Hrim, Hari Om, Om*. We can shorten it to just *Hrim* to invoke this indwelling energy.

The holy ones of all times and traditions have stated that we are created in the image of God. If we accept the responsibility to make the effort, we can have the experience of this. *Hrim* will invoke the indwelling energy. To experience God as *Hrim, Hari Om, Om* is to see Divinity not only within our self, but also within all of existence. This is very important. This desire to experience God isn’t just an intellectual desire. The desire to experience God has to come from the heart or soul. It isn’t the desire to be done with pain or loneliness. It is a pure loving desire to embrace or experience God (Satyam) Consciousness.

**SECOND SECRET** The second secret is to find a competent teacher, or guide, or a *Satguru* if we are fortunate enough. Most will not be fortunate enough to study in the presence of a *Satguru*, so they must find a competent teacher or guide. The competent teacher is one who has realized their wholistic Self. The holy ones have left teachings and writings behind. The competent teacher or guide will guide us in the proper practices which will help us unlearn the idea of separateness, unlearn our beliefs, unlearn our dysfunctions that keep us imprisoned and suffering. As long as we stay imprisoned in our ideas of separateness or incompleteness, we will not attain our goal of God-realization.

The precepts or teachings of the *Satguru* or competent teacher should be that which helps us unlearn the idea of incompleteness. This part is very important because there are many teachers out there. With international communication, there are many teachers. There are Yoga centers all over the world. There are thousands of them. If you

look up “meditation” on the internet, you will find thousands of sites that offer teachings. The key is in finding one who is competent. One who is competent will help us go beyond the idea of incompleteness. A competent teacher will help us go beyond our beliefs, our samskaras, and our limitations. Then we need to follow the precepts and practices laid out by the realized souls. This is step two, the second seal.

MANTRA: The mantra for the second secret or seal is *Om Namō Ari Hantanam Om Namō Siddhanam*...“I bow to the conquerors of their inner enemies. I bow to the realized souls.” We have to acknowledge that there are people who went before us, that there are people who have conquered this idea of incompleteness, who have conquered their desires, who have conquered the mayac sheath, that have realized their oneness with God. This is what it takes to be a competent teacher. They must have realized their oneness with God. Their writings and precepts will include not only how to conquer the inner enemies, but also how to harmonize with our wholistic Self, or with God. These are two different aspects. One is going beyond the idea of incompleteness, and the other is embracing the wholeness. It is like learning how to go beyond our fears and dysfunctions and then learning the next phase of how to live as a healthy aspect of society, as a healthy aspect of the God Consciousness. One is Self-realization and one is God-realization. The competent teacher, or the Satguru, must be experienced in both areas, and be able to give guidance in how to go beyond our limitations and how to live in our wholistic nature.

### THIRD SECRET

The third seal is meditation, which is the direct experience with God. “Be ye still and know that I am God.” This is fully and completely possible for anyone who works on the first and second seal and gets to the third seal. Making the effort it takes is to practice the sacred scientific meditation techniques will calm down the body, mind, breath, and ego so we can be quiet. “Be ye still and know that I am God,” means to have the direct experience with God. This is the fulfillment of the first desire, which is to experience God directly. This is where most people that undertake the spiritual life stop. Now that they know God exists, and now that they have experienced God, they feel secure and happy, so they go back to explore

their desires in life or in the idea of separateness. This is the first major “settlement” where the majority of people stop. They will just settle for having the experience of knowing that God exists, and go about fulfilling the rest of their desires. Those that want more will continue on.

MANTRA: The mantra for the third step is the *So Hum*...“I am this. I am that.” They begin to see that they are created in the image of God. “I am this. I am that.” The *So Hum* mantra eventually turns into *Om Shanti Shanti Om*, and then just *Om*. They quiet down and have the experience that they are created in the image of God, that they are one with God. They have the direct experience of God. With enough of these experiences, they will move on to step four.

#### FOURTH SECRET

Step four, the fourth seal, is Self-realization. This is the fourth secret. It is the striving to live, to realize that we are created in the image of God, that we are wholistic; that we are God Consciousness, Christ Consciousness, the Holy Stream, the soul, the causal body, the astral body, and the physical body. We strive to have more experiences, and strive to realize our wholeness. We strive to have union with God. We strive to be in harmony with God. “Let Thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.” We strive to have this on a day-to-day basis, not just occasionally in meditation, but also in our activities. We strive to live our life this way. This becomes our goal and our desire. We begin to harmonize. We know we are infinite and eternal. We know we are created in the image of God. We know we are ever in union, that Shiva and Shakti are ever in union with God. We strive to live this.

MANTRA: The mantra for this stage is: *I am Om*. We strive to identify and harmonize with *Om*. We may have an experience of this while in meditation, or when we are working, or while we are active. *I am Om*. We get a glimpse of our wholistic Self. We are striving to take this glimpse, or experience of union with God, and expand it out to more and more of our reality, more and more of our day, more and more of our wholistic consciousness.

## FIFTH SECRET

The fifth step, or seal, is the enjoyment of everyday life. This is the stage in Self-realization where we are expanding and extending this harmony. We actually are enjoying life the majority of the time. We are living in harmony. The majority of the time we are living within our wholistic nature. It may not be all of the time, but we are on the open path. There are no real obstacles in our way any more. We are just working towards the purification to always be in the *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram* nature of the soul. We are working one-pointedly towards our goal.

Since we are working one-pointed towards our goal of *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram*, of God-realization, we are enjoying living. We enjoy doing the work. We enjoy the unfoldment of more love, more harmony, and more beauty. We enjoy our life. We enjoy going to work. We enjoy interacting with our friends. We enjoy our meditations. We look forward to more Divinity, more harmonization. This is the enjoyment of every day life. We are trying to experience oneness with God and we are moving towards a oneness with all life. We are beginning to realize that the unmanifested is incomplete without the manifested, and that the manifested is incomplete without the unmanifested. We are truly beginning to experience life with Shiva and Shakti being ever in union. It is enjoyable and dynamic.

MANTRA: The mantra for the fifth seal is: *Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om*. This is celebrating and rejoicing in God completely, both unmanifested and manifested. There is a saying that it is easy to be a saint in the mountains. It may seem that way at first, but it is possible to enjoy God wholistically, even while active. Utilizing the Royal Path to harmonize with all life is to rejoice in God completely.

## SIXTH SECRET

The sixth secret, or seal, correlates with the Christ Consciousness. This is about service, selflessness. Once we have learned to embrace God wholistically and can enjoy everyday living, then and only then, can we truly serve selflessly, because before

that we have needs and desires. As long as we have desires or needs, we aren't giving to life; we are wanting life to give to us. Once we reach the state of Christ Consciousness, once we reach the state of enjoying everyday life, we have nothing to distract us from the experience of our nature of Satyam, Shivam, and Sundaram, which is our absolute nature, is the nature of God, and is the nature of all life. Then service gets to be a state of living and sharing.

MANTRA: The mantra for this step is: *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram*. This is the very nature of the manifested and the unmanifested. It is just whether it is going to be a very subtle *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram*, or very gross *Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram*. Once we realize we are created in the image of God, once we realize we are in harmony with our very nature, then all we have left to do is be wholistic. That means serving, sharing, and giving to the rest of life. Since we no longer have any needs or desires from life for our completion (because we have gone beyond the idea of separateness), we can then give to life and it becomes *life giving unto life*. This is why it is considered selfless service. We give to life what life needs.

The mantra for this seal is: *Om Satyam* (eternal love), *Om Shivam* (eternal harmony), and *Om Sundaram* (eternal beauty and joy). It is very important to work on these mantras because the mantras and their meanings are what opens up the seals and allow it to go from the secrets that only the holy ones have, to becoming our own experiences. To have the experience of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, we must vibrate it out. We cannot vibrate Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram as long as we are still caught in the idea of separateness believing we need things to fulfill us. We must first go beyond the desires before we can have the experience.

## SEVENTH SECRET

The seventh seal is that of God-realization. This is the seventh secret. It is to be fully identified with God, with our wholeness, so that no matter what we think, say, do, or don't do, we are vibrating out the pure Satyam Consciousness, vibrating out the pure God Consciousness that permeates all existence. Whether we are on the earth, in the heavens, or wherever

we find our self, when we are identified with our wholeness, we have awareness of the formlessness or the pure God Consciousness that is without beginning, is now, and forever shall be, and we have the Christ Consciousness, the Holy Stream, the soul, the causal body and causal realm, the spirit body and the spirit realm (the heavens), and the physical body and the physical realm. We have an awareness and life within that wholisticness. We have unfolded into our whole pure nature of God Consciousness. We have harmonized— “Let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven”. We have made the effort through the seven steps to enlightenment, or the seven steps to our wholistic nature.

MANTRA: The mantra for the seventh step is *Om*. We either listen to it, or vibrate it out. Now we are one with God. We are living within our pure nature. Our very presence anywhere is a blessing to those who come into our presence. This is the way of great souls who come to Earth; their Divinity radiates out helping all the people they come in contact with. They help the whole earth, the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, the animal kingdom, the human kingdom, the deva kingdom, and the angel kingdom. They help all of existence because they have become the divine Light. The divine Light is being created in them. They are no longer just a reflection of, or in union with, the divine Light; they have become one with it. Their very act of being in manifestation has become a service. This is *Ananda Lahari Om*, a wave of bliss, joy, and love.

The act of giving and being in our nature brings an intoxication, bliss, and joy of being alive. To be in harmony with your nature is Sundaram—beauty and joy. The act of manifesting, serving, and being adds the divine nectar or intoxication, Shivam. The holy ones come in all forms and manners, yet they are all intoxicated in the God Consciousness, Satyam. The holy ones have reached the state where every aspect of life is part of the God Consciousness, Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram.

## WHOLISTIC LIVING

There is only one God, only one life. The seventh step is the reaching of this point in our realization. There is just life giving unto life. It is just God interacting in the cosmic play. It is very difficult for people to understand how the holy ones can be happy amongst all the



suffering, limitations, and conflicts that everyone else deals with every day. While most people are still viewing life through the idea of incompleteness, the holy ones see the oneness.

There are always growing pains. We outgrow things and for a while we may grieve for our attachments that we have let go of. Then we embrace something new. There will be new growing pains. Whether it is a new toy replacing an old toy, whether it is a child leaving the family to start their own family, or whether it is someone leaving the earth for the astral planes, whether it is two friends coming together and then going apart, there is a coming and going within the creation. Within the cosmic play, there is a beginning and an end to each pattern. This is part of the cosmic play, part of the Shiva and Shakti being ever in union. If we realize our oneness with God, then this all becomes delightful. It is all part of the enjoyment of everyday life. We enjoy life, the comings and the goings. We enjoy the whole pattern.

The law of karma is Shiva and Shakti ever in union. The Christ/Krishna Consciousness, the first Word, God made manifest, the Word vibrating all the way to the physical, this pattern is the law of karma. Most people have no concept of what this is. The law of karma is simply the law or harmony of motion. There are patterns and order to all life. It is this Word that allows us to learn and grow. Once we begin to recognize that there are patterns, we begin to see that there is a fulfillment of each thought, word, and deed. When you plant seeds, the consequences aren't that you get a plant or a tree, because if you throw seeds on the street, they aren't going to grow. The nature of growing seeds is in providing proper nutrition, proper soil, and proper watering. The nature of growth of the human being and human spirit is in proper nutrition, proper watering and proper soil, so to speak. The seven seals or secrets to wholistic living or God-realization are for those who want to live within their whole nature. They are secrets because we must experience them for ourselves.

We can't share the secrets. I can't give you the experience of the secrets. I can give you techniques, which can calm down your mind, breath, and ego temporarily so you can experience your wholistic nature, but I can't force you to have that experience, and I can't give it to you. I can open the doorway, but you have to walk through it. This

is where the seven steps to enlightenment can help you open these seals or doorways that have stood in your way of experiencing your absolute oneness with God.

You must make the effort to identify with the mantras, not just repeat the mantras or have an intellectual idea about what they mean. You must identify with these mantras: *Hrim Namaste*—invoking our wholistic nature of being created in the image of God. We must follow the precepts of the teachers in how to go beyond the idea of separateness. If we keep practicing, we will arrive at the experiences that we are seeking. If we don't make the effort, obviously we won't have the experiences.

In order to truly embrace our wholistic self, we must go through each one of these stages. We identify with the mantras, work through and make the effort to have the experiences at each level. These will remain mysteries until you embrace them. If you are making your own effort, you won't be dependant on the guide. The teachers should be guiding you towards your experiences of unfolding into your wholistic Self, into Self-realization, into the enjoyment of everyday life, and into God-realization. The process is very simple. We go beyond the idea of incompleteness and begin to live in mukti (freedom), free into our wholistic and eternal Self.

It is a two-fold process. Meditation is a key for going beyond the idea of incompleteness. Beyond the idea of separateness, we will experience our self as pure Consciousness, pure *Om Satyam*, without any form or activity. This is the experience of oneness, God, and our divine nature. This lets us know that we will exist beyond the physical body, beyond the astral body, beyond the soul. We will exist beyond any form, so any fears of death go away. That is the freedom *from* the idea of incompleteness. The rest of the time we must identify with our wholistic self. This is the freedom *into* life.

Beyond the forms and activity is just pure Satyam, pure love. There are no desires or incompleteness; no wants, pain, or suffering. There is just absolutely pure love, pure Satyam. That is what our absolute nature is. Once we realize our eternal Satyam nature during our experience with Consciousness in meditation, then we recognize that we no longer need the idea of separateness. Now we can go out into the cosmic play and enjoy everyday life. We can do this without being a beggar, a slave, without being afraid, without having hatred, fear, or shame, without having condemnation, grief, race prejudice, pride of pedigree, without having co-dependence,

anxiety, without fear of not being fulfilled. We realize we are created in the image of God.

If we want to be active, we set ourselves in motion. We feel reverence for all life, we experience love, and we identify with Satyam, and we share this vibration with everyone. We laugh and cry and bubble over with Satyam. When we want to explore something, we go out and share the Satyam (love), Shivam (harmony), Sundaram (beauty and joy) while we are exploring. The bliss of sharing that which is pure and selfless is intoxicating. It is the divine nectar, what was referred to in the ancient scriptures as “the nectar of the gods.”

The process of learning and sharing within God-realization is an eternal process. This becomes our life, our own alpha and omega.

## OPENING THE SEALS

These seven secrets or seals can be opened up and experienced by our right efforts. It doesn't take just any effort; it has to be the right effort. We have to be identified with that which is real, pure and eternal. This is what these seven mantras will help us do. These mantras are the seven qualities of our God Consciousness. They are the secrets. The mantras are the liberating vibrations that will help to open up each seal. It isn't about just repeating words. You have to begin to identify with the vibration. *Hrim, Hari Om, Om*—begin to identify with what it means to *invoke our indwelling divine nature* and then *see Divinity everywhere*. We have to begin to realize and feel what it means to invoke our indwelling energy.

*Om Namō Ari Hantanam Om Namō Siddhanam*—we have to begin to identify with those who have come before us and are sharing with us what they know. When we recognize and appreciate those who have come before us, it can be just as blissful as the giving.

Then it is *So Hum* or *Om Shanti Shanti Om*—“Be ye still and know that I am God.” At the end of the day, when you have been active and are so intoxicated that you can't take any more bliss, you just want peace. You go back and experience love in its

quiet, still form. “Be ye still and know that I am God. *Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.*” You can experience this. This mantra will open up this seal.

For Self-realization, it is, “*I am Om.*” We are beginning to identify with our wholeness. We are beginning to identify with God. We aren’t just identifying as a human being, but also as a spirit and a soul. We recognize that the body needs proper nutrition (proper food, proper breathing, proper hydration) to stay healthy. We recognize that the astral body needs proper nutrition of the appreciation of beauty, creativity, joy, upliftment, and positive thinking in order to nurture the astral body, the individual spirit and the spirit of humanity. The upliftment of humanity needs this virtuousness to nurture the causal body, the mind. We begin to see the oneness. We begin to recognize that Shiva and Shakti are ever in union.

We begin to recognize that, “*I am Om.* I am created in the image of God.” We begin to nurture the causal body with mantras and chants that are in harmony with wanting to see that Shiva and Shakti are ever in union. We want to nurture the soul with the experience of pure Satyam. This is where we begin to recognize that humanity is the limitation of God. The soul is an individual unique wave of divinity. However, the potential of the human wave is the ocean, the absolute God Consciousness. This is where we begin to recognize this. This is what the *I am Om* mantra means. We begin to identify or unfold into our nature.

Then it extends to more than just a meditation or satori experience. It becomes *Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om*—rejoicing in God completely. We begin to appreciate the miracle of the physical incarnation. We begin to appreciate and enjoy the creation. The idea of separateness becomes the idea of the cosmic play, rather than Satan, the great illusion or deceiver. It becomes the vehicle through which we can learn, appreciate, enjoy, and experience the divine nectar. This is what this mantra, *Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om* means.

*Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om* is about rejoicing in God completely, wholistically. It is the celebration of life, the celebration of birth, the celebration of marriage, the celebration of careers, the celebration of interactions, the celebration of life giving unto life, the celebration of birth and death, the celebration of the whole pattern, the celebration of the unique infinite spirit or soul, the celebration of God, of Shiva and

Shakti being ever in union. This is worth getting up in the morning to experience. At the end of this day of celebrating, you may want some peace from so much joy and laughter. Now we just want stillness, Satyam, Shanti. We should strive to make each day this way.

The identification with *Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om* is about more than just identifying with words that mean to celebrate life. To identify with this mantra is to celebrate life; it is about the singing and dancing. I ended one of my poems with: “*it is the love within life that makes the heart sing, and it is the beauty of life that allows the soul to dance.*” To dance is a celebration of life with singing, dancing, and beauty all around. Once we have this, it becomes our responsibility, by our very dharma itself, to share.

When I say share, I don’t mean just going and helping people with their issues, changing tires, or cleaning houses. Those may be vehicles we utilize, but what we are sharing is the celebration of the God Consciousness. We share our celebration of life and love. When we are feeling love, does it matter whether we are sitting holding hands or changing a tire? Does it matter whether we are talking to our lover or a total stranger? Does it matter whether we are with a small family of friends and relatives, or walking in a supermarket or state fair amongst strangers? Life giving unto life is what matters.

When you have love and are intoxicated and celebrating *Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om*, you simply want to share more *Om Satyam*, the divine love, or more *Om Shivam*, the divine harmony. You don’t want to cause conflict and pain. You actually want to be a remover of obstacles, pain, and conflict. This is all part of the *Om Shivam*. It isn’t about telling others what they should do; it is about removing obstacles.

The *Om Sundaram* is the celebration of love, freedom, beauty, Satyam, mukti, and ananda. This is what service is about. Service is when we have so much Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram that it just radiates out and affects everyone. Service is just the divine nectar flowing out to life.

We do more than just repeat these mantras—we identify with them, unfold into them because this is our nature. Once we have this, we pass into the seventh seal or secret. We have become so identified with the God Consciousness that we are actually manifesting more of the *Om Satyam*, *Om Shivam*, *Om Sundaram*. The more we manifest, the larger the Light becomes. Now we are affecting not only those that we come in

contact with, but also those in our community, in the heavens, and on the earth. We begin contributing to the upliftment of the human spirit through our enjoyment and celebration. We are contributing to the causal beings, to the soul itself, to the angels and devas. We are creating more Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, and we are sharing this with life because it is simply our nature.

Once we have come to our nature, we can't help but create more Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram. We are manifesting this whether we are sleeping, meditating, talking, or walking. We are manifesting, giving, and sharing no matter what we do. We are in a constant state of experiencing Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram, and that is what we are sharing. This is serving. This is worth striving for. Incarnations will come and go, the body will come and go, families will come and go, but once we reach this pure state of God Consciousness, we live forever with our awareness as part of the cosmic play. In order to attain this state of wholisticness, we must make the effort to work towards the realization of our wholistic self. Anything before all seven seals or secrets have been experienced is incomplete.

I wrote a poem about this many years ago: *"incomplete I stood amidst the fleeting subtleties of my completeness, candlelight flickering in the dark of the dancing night."* I desired to know God. I had appreciation for those who had gone before me. I desired to experience God, and I did. I desired to have more of that God-experience throughout the whole day. I desired not only Self-realization, but also I desired to experience God-realization. I kept making the effort. At some point I had to leave my enjoyment of everyday life, of living in the great north woods and writing poetry, and had to go out and begin to serve. I began to serve in a vibrational manner and also through sharing my poetry and my experiences. I began to share with people that it would be possible to experience their wholistic Self.

I am constantly seeking the balance of Shiva and Shakti that are ever in union. Each day I strive to find the balance. Each night I go back to *Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti*. When I wake up the next morning, I truly have something worth sharing. What is worth sharing is the Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram that is everyone's nature. This is what I try to share each day, with a little bit of "how to get there" for those that are interested.

The seven secrets will remain secrets until each one of us opens the seals and has those experiences ourselves. The holy ones have said that we are all created in the image of God, and that we can all realize that. It is our own responsibility to make that effort.

THE LIFE AND TIMES  
OF A  
MYSTIC AND A POET

*I remember  
the life and times  
of a mystic and a poet  
six white roses  
and the sky above  
lay upon that altar*

*there was music  
and there was wine  
dancers with only flowers  
in their hair*

*we are all pilgrims  
on our way to the holy land  
on our way  
to the holy land*

*I'm just another traveler  
who has set out on his journey  
I believe it was  
the ancient banks of the Nile  
from which I set sail*

*but there are some who say  
it is heaven I am from  
it's been such a long time  
I've been upon this ocean  
that I really don't remember*

*but I do remember  
to be a follower of love*

*Knowing our self, we will know that which is common to all of  
humanity, and that which is unique to the self. There is a  
universalness to humanity, but there is also a uniqueness*



*of each spirit.*

## A brief autobiography

*I* was born August 21, 1948 at 11:42 pm in the small town of Waseca, Minnesota, and raised in the even smaller southern farming community of Otisco, MN (population: 60). My life began to unfold mystically at an early age.

I have certain brief memories of before the age of three, but at the age of three, my life began to be transformed. I had contracted rheumatic fever and my father was taking me to the doctor. As he was stopping the car, I left my body and hovered about 25 feet above the car. I watched him parallel park the car, get out, come around to the passenger side, and lift my body out of the back seat. I watched him carry my body about a half-block to the doctor's office. The whole time, "I" was hovering about 25 feet above, observing this.

A number of things happened when I was out of the body. One thing is that I went from feeling the aches and pains of a disease and illness to feeling bliss, light, and intoxication of consciousness, or a lighter body. I identified, not with my physical body, but with my spirit body or soul, as my 3-year-old consciousness interpreted it. I also had communion with a larger Spirit, which my 3-year-old consciousness referred to as God. This "voice" or communion stated that I would not be coming home at this time because I had things to do. After this communion ended, I went back into my body, which was then in the doctor's office, being held by my father.

With this first mystical experience, a number of things were made evident and helped shape my life from that point on. The first thing was that I was not the physical body. I was a consciousness that had a physical body. Secondly, Earth, and/or my

physical body, were not home. This larger voice, or heaven, was my home. Thirdly, one can commune or communicate with God. Even at a young age, I realized that I was more than just the body; rather I was a soul that wears the body for its journey through life. This began to define my life from the age of three. This also began to define my language. I found that the religious or spiritual language was sometimes the only language that included that which is beyond the physical, the metaphysical, or the mystical.

The next marked experience happened during the summer when I was around 9 or 10-years-old. I was walking in the woods, which were about a mile from my home. This experience came as a vision with light, energy, and joy. I saw myself in a much older body giving a talk about spirituality and wholistic living, and mentioned to the people that they should read my books. This experience let me know I would be alive for a while, that I would be talking with people about wholistic living, and that I would be writing books.

I continued living my life in what I consider a normal childhood. I attended public schools, played with friends, and pursued my interests. However, around age fourteen, my interests began to turn towards spirituality, as well as towards athletics, socializing, music, dancing, and writing. At the age of fifteen, I remember having a conversation with my father, who told me that God had created us to work and fulfill our duty. I remember being shocked by this conversation, and being shocked by my response because it is like it almost leapt from my consciousness. I said, "No, God created me for happiness and joy." This idea, and a young boy's mind without full discernment of what that meant, did bring me some poor choices and some suffering, I might add.

The next powerful mystical experience happened when I was about 21-years-old. A girl walked into a room and she radiated like an angel, in a sense the light was just emanating from her. And soon, the light seemed to fill the whole room. I could feel the love, joy, and beauty with this experience. I interpreted this as being able to see the soul's radiance. It took me a while, but within several months, when I really made the effort, I could have this experience of seeing all the way to the soul with other people. This experience allowed me to see that everyone, myself, this girl, all other people, are all truly created in the Divine image. I felt the same joy, intoxication, and love that I

experienced at age three when I was out of my body and communing with this larger Spirit, and at age ten with the vision of myself talking. I was now able to see and have this experience with other people in everyday type interactions and experiences. I realized that experiencing everyone being created in the image of God was not something that was experienced only in the quiet of meditation, on the inward journey, but was also something you could actually see and experience on the outward journey. This was a turning point, or a milestone in my journey. This caused me to begin to look for the light or divinity everywhere, rather than just go along with my life waiting for it to come to me in a sunset here or a mystical experience there. This experience also stimulated my search for actual meditation techniques. I began research in theology, philosophy, and eastern and western religions in a much more sincere effort.

When I was about twenty-six, I was walking one night on a country road. As I was walking across a bridge over a small river, the whole night exploded into light. Everything became translucent and transparent. I could see through the trees, into the earth, through the bridge and the hillside. I could see leaf-like light floating and permeating everything. This prana, or manna, as I understood it at the time, was permeating the hillside, the trees, the earth, and my body. I began to experience what I called the Truth, or harmony, or the Christ Consciousness; the harmony and the oneness of life were being revealed. This experience went on for around 45 minutes.

This motivated me to begin a more consistent inward journey. Shortly after this I encountered a few holy ones who were on the planet (and some who were not) and their books. I encountered Gurudev Chitrabhanu, books by Parmahansa Yogananda, like *Autobiography of a Yogi*, and books by Swami Rama of the Himalayan Institute. I was able to get books by Gurudev Chitrabhanu and get meditation techniques. I made more effort because this experience at age 26 was very similar to the feelings of joy, intoxication, and freedom I had at age 21 with the experience of seeing the soul radiating out of the girl. It was similar to the feelings I had with the vision at age ten, and the out of body experience at age three. They were all very similar in feeling. My interpretation and depth of understanding was the main thing that was different.

After the experience at age 26, I began to sincerely pursue the spiritual practices of reading and meditating, and had many visions of different holy ones, including the ones on the suggested reading list.

When I talk about *The Life And Times Of A Mystic And A Poet*, I am talking about a lot of metaphysical, or beyond the body, beyond the earth-type experiences that were throughout my whole life. The “poet” is because I learned at a very early age that I would be, and desired to be, a writer. I wanted to share my experiences because between the age of three when I was still playing, and the age of nine or ten, I began to notice that people had suffering, fears, and anger. This was, in my child-like view, the main cause of suffering—this lack of knowledge that there was life beyond our own time and reality. These things became somewhat apparent to me in childhood, so striving to write about and express these things became a direction in my life, and part of the goal of this incarnation, to record the human experience from childhood through youth, middle ages, maturity, and on into the later years. I haven’t reached the later years yet, but hopefully I will, and I will continue to record my experiences.

My poetry is a journal of my wholistic experiences. Most of my poems started from the transcended or mystical experiences and reached down into the physical, the material, and then went back up again, like a wave. Even though my poetry doesn’t explain all this, to me it is like keys or records of my mystical life, my mystical experiences. When I mention my mystical experiences, they all had a common feeling of lightness, joy, bliss, energy, and energization that lasted several days. Poetry allows me to record and share with those who are interested. I’ve tried to find the universality of language in this expression. These first noticeable experiences were guiding directions in my life. They were mileposts or stimulants along the way.

To go back a few years, I am someone who has tried to be a follower of love. I went to public schools. I have delighted in both the worldly and the mystical delights. I went to high school having all these mystical experiences, but did not share them at the time. I tried to tell a few of my experiences when I was a child, but they threatened to have me locked up or de-demonized, so I felt this was not the conversation I wanted to have at that time in my life. This year’s retreat (in 2004) was about *The Life And Times Of A Mystic And A Poet*. I began to talk about my mystical experiences and my poetry.

In 1985, when I was asking different holy ones what should be done, what I should do, what I should work towards, I had Swami Rama, Hazrat Inayat Khan, and Babaji<sup>7</sup> all appear separately, but in the same meditation, and give me a different answer, seemingly contradictory. And this caused conflict, so I just said, “I can’t do this anymore. Only You Divine Mother, only You, only You will be my Satguru, my guide.” With this came the experience of Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram that I had experienced in each of the powerful experiences, only this time everything turned to white. Then the white turned into formlessness and out of the formlessness manifested this pure white rose. The intoxication that came with this was beyond description.

These experiences are not my total life, but they have certainly shaped how my life has unfolded. I have had many mystical experiences throughout my life, from early childhood on, which are not mentioned here, but are recorded in my poetry. Some experiences happened in concentration; and in later years, in meditation. Some experiences just happened when I was walking or sitting. I have tried to make a journal, understand, and express the universalness of the human experience or human spirit. I have recorded this journey from the perspective of someone who has had both material and mystical experiences throughout life. This is why I refer to my autobiography as *The Life And Times Of A Mystic And A Poet*. I have tried to record a more wholistic view. My poetry, whether starting from the mystical and including the physical, or starting from the physical and expanding out to include the mystical, is how I have tried to express the wholistic experiences.

I have had what I consider a normal human life. As I child, I played, got hurt, had diseases, got healed up, went out for athletics. I have had to work hard for some things, and have been disappointed in other things. I have the joy of falling in love, marriage, and being part of my children’s life. I have the hopes, dreams, and even the seeming contradictions of the human experience, which also includes my mystical experiences. My poetry is a journal of my experiences, a journey and expression of the human spirit.

The idea of incompleteness brings about all human suffering. It brings about all suffering of the human spirit. The soul will call out for more until there is a completion.

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<sup>7</sup> The head of the Self Realization Fellowship lineage of gurus in *Autobiography Of A Yogi* by Parmahansa Yogananda.

The completion of the soul is its union with the whole or God. While we are seeking this union, we have to understand the triune nature of life itself. We have to understand our purpose and goal, the things and work we want to do that will keep us growing, happy and healthy. Our journey, whether on earth or in the heavens, must have perspective and balance. This triune nature of person-to-self, person-to-God and nature, and person-to-other people has to be learned and taken into consideration. This is all part of the journey, the sharing, the inhalation and the exhalation. To truly delight in life we have to realize that we are *incomplete standing amongst the fleeting subtleties of our completeness*, and strive to make ourselves complete, strive to be wholistic. *candlelight flickering in the dark of the dancing night*. We must strive to make our self complete.

I wrote a poem in 2003 that ends with:

*it is the love  
within life  
that makes the heart sing  
and it is the  
beauty of life  
that allows  
the soul to dance*

This is talking about two different things. One is the finding of delight—the reason we wake up, falling in love, the beauty, the goals—the desires that make the heart sing. It is what brings about the happiness, joy, and enthusiasm. But, we must also find the love of life itself, the beauty of the cosmic wholeness, of the karma, of the triune nature and harmonize that. This allows us to delight in everyday life. We cannot delight in everyday life unless we have a more wholistic picture of life. I give talks on meditation; it helps me to share that there is more to life than the four primal instincts, more to life than the material world. If I share, not just my experiences to help inspire others, but also share the meditation techniques, the sacred sciences of how to calm down the mind, body, and breath so others can have their own experiences, then I am fulfilling that nine- or ten-year old vision. I am sharing and living within my dharma.

This brings me back to the poem *The Life And Times Of A Mystic And A Poet*.

*six white roses  
and the sky above*

*lay upon that altar*

Obviously, an altar is a place you go to worship. *six white roses and the sky above*, symbolized my love of beauty and my devotion to God. *white roses* is obviously the beauty, and *the sky above* symbolizes God.

*there was music  
and there was wine  
dancers with only flowers  
in their hair*

Music is a celebration of love. *there was wine*, this is the intoxication, the enthusiasm of being alive. *dancers with only flowers in their hair*, the beauty of the openness to life, the beauty of celebrating, dancing and seeing within the harmony of life. *flowers in their hair*, is about the physical beauty and also the thousand petalled lotus unfolding.

*we are all pilgrims  
on our way to the holy land  
on our way  
to the holy land*

We are all striving to feel complete and the only place we will feel complete is the holy land, or in our wholisticness.

When I was working on this autobiography, the only thing that satisfied me was this poem:

*well I have walked on golden mountains  
rose up to touch the sky  
and saw eternity  
who had been looking for me*

*i have sailed on a silver ship  
seven sacred oceans and a sea of fire  
as my only guide  
and the journey as my goal*

*i have laid myself down beside you  
in a field of tall grass  
and embraced the earth  
picked wildflowers  
like so many jewels in the sun*

*i have even walked up to heaven  
on a stairway of light  
it wasn't quite as thrilling  
as a chariot of fire  
but it got me there just the same*

*i have seen a smile in the morning  
that i could feel  
all the way to my soul  
and i want to wake up  
to a sunrise that touches my heart  
i want to be a part of each day*

*and i want to be in love  
for a long long time*

*i want to walk hand in hand  
in the evening sun  
and see the wind  
blow through your hair  
i want to feel that touch  
on my skin tonight  
and i want to feel it  
in my soul*

*and i want to be in love  
for a long long time*

*well i have seen the sky on fire  
and i have drank my share of wine  
i have kissed the newborn child  
and I've walked down to the river  
i have prayed in your temples  
and danced with the moon*



*all the way to the night*  
*even bathed in fire and light*  
*when i desperately needed you*

*i have seen a perfect rose*  
*and I've heard the perfect song*  
*and just like*  
*the singer and the song*  
*i want to be in love*  
*for a long long time*

*and I want to be in love*  
*for a long long time*

Now, we will talk about the mystical and the sacred, and the symbolism of this poem.

*well i've walked on golden mountains* is the earth, the yellow, the symbol of the first chakra, the material creation. *i've walked on golden mountains... rose up to touch the sky and saw eternity.* From the earth, from the material body, the devotion rose up to embrace God, to have that experience and to have or see the formlessness, and realize *who had been looking for me*, that it was my nature, was the grace of God. This happened at the age of three and at the age of nine. It happened every time I meditated and had that union with my wholistic self. It happened every time I was on a walk and was able to see the harmony. It was a wholistic experience, not just the beauty of the unmanifested; it was the whole experience.

*i have sailed on a silver ship*  
*seven sacred oceans and a sea of fire*  
*as my only guide*  
*and the journey as my goal*

*i have sailed on a silver ship*, silver is the color of the second chakra. *seven sacred oceans and a sea of fire*, the second chakra symbolizes the water, the fluid. *seven sacred oceans and a sea of fire as my only guide*—the passion and devotion as my only guide. I had that through my childhood until age 28 when I got the sacred sciences of

meditation. *and the journey as my goal.* This is the journey, the experience of being alive and mukti (freedom) to live and experience life.

*i have laid myself down beside you  
in a field of tall grass  
and embraced the earth  
picked wildflowers  
like so many jewels in the sun*

I have laid down in tall grass, that's simple. *beside you*, that is beside God, beside the earth, beside my beloved, beside a woman and *embraced the earth*. I truly felt like I melted into the earth. *picked wildflowers like so many jewels in the sun*. I have been in a field filled with wildflowers, the physical. *like so many jewels in the sun*—jewels symbolize the third chakra, the third ocean, the third sacred seal. To see the beauty of the causal, to see the beauty of divinity in a flower or a jewel or a soul *like a diamond's reflection in a sea of light*, to see it in your meditation, to see it when you are walking, or in a bouquet of flowers, is the pursuit of beauty and divinity. You pick wildflowers like so many jewels in the sun.

*i have even walked up to heaven  
on a stairway of light  
it wasn't quite as thrilling  
as a chariot of fire  
but it got me there just the same*

A chariot of fire is symbolic of the kundalini rising up; a chariot of fire is intensity. *i have walked up to heaven on a stairway of light*, one chakra at a time, one sacred seal at a time, doing chakra meditations. Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham, Om, Om. This is the yogic practice or process, not only the devotion or surrendering to light, but the methodical practical everyday effort to heaven. *i have even walked up to heaven on a stairway of light it wasn't quite as thrilling as a chariot of fire but it got me there just the same*. It is scientific, which is why they call it the sacred science of meditation. No matter who does it, if done properly, it will take you up that stairway.

*i have seen a smile in the morning  
that i could feel*

*all the way to my soul  
and i want to wake up  
to a sunrise that touches my heart  
i want to be a part of each day*

*i have seen a smile in the morning that i could feel all the way to my soul.* I have seen a girl smile at me in the morning when she just woke up that truly just opened things up. The girl and the smile just disappeared and only the Christ Consciousness was there. Once again, the soul, the divinity. I want you to understand, the girl was beautiful and naked, but it was the smile, not the rest of the body, that took me to heaven. *and i want to wake up to a sunrise that touches my heart i want to be a part of each day.* I want to wake up each morning to something that stimulates and enthuses me, that excites me. I want to be able to sing. I want it to be something that will touch my heart. This is a desire that I want. I don't wait for the grace of God to provide it, or for a girl, or friends to provide it. I don't wait for the Satgurus to provide it. *i want to wake up each morning to a sunrise that touches my heart.* I desire to look for the beauty, the new start, the new day, that resurrection, the ever-newness of beauty. *i want to be a part of each day.* I want to come to the moment, to live fully, wholistically.

*and i want to be in love  
for a long long time*

That line is self-evident. I want to be my nature of Satyam. I want to be in my nature of seeing the beauty. I want to be in my nature of like when the girl walked in the room when I was 21 where I could see the soul and the divinity, the Satyam, the harmony and beauty. If I make the effort to look and be open, I can *be in love for a long long time.* If I want to be in love for a long long time, that becomes my desire, my focus, and the purpose.

*i want to walk hand in hand  
in the evening sun  
and see the wind  
blow through your hair  
i want to feel that touch*

*on my skin tonight  
and i want to feel it  
in my soul*

*i want to walk hand in hand in the evening sun.* When you think of walking hand-in-hand, it is a youthful thing. Young children, young romantic lovers, high school kids walk hand-in-hand. They want to touch, to share, to be part of the other. *in the evening sun.* In the evening of my life, I still want to be in love. I still want to have the enthusiasm for people, for sharing, for touching in my last days as I had in my first days. I want and desire this. *to see the wind blow through your hair.* I want to experience the senses, the delight. *i want to feel that touch on my skin tonight.* I want to have the wholistic experience. I don't want to get old and just sit in a meditation chair saying, "Om Satyam, Om Shivam, Om Sundaram, Om Shanti." I want to live each day and experience each day wholistically. *to see the wind...to feel the touch.* We have done the fourth, fifth, sixth chakra...fourth chakra: *walked up to heaven*, fifth chakra: *seen a smile in the morning*—spatial perspective; sixth chakra: *and i want to be in love for a long long time*; seventh chakra: *i want to walk hand in hand.* I don't just want to be unmanifested. I don't want to be old and just waiting to get another incarnation. If you aren't enjoying today and aren't looking forward to tomorrow and the day after that, you must begin to change your life. If you can't embrace the next 24-hours, how can you look forward to eternity.

*i want to walk hand in hand.* I want the wholisticness and only with the thousand petalled lotus being open could you possibly want more time here on earth. Only then could you possibly enjoy *walking hand in hand in the evening sun.* *i want to feel that touch on my skin tonight and i want to feel it in my soul.* It isn't enough just to have the five senses and their delights, it has to be all the way to the heart, to the soul, to the transcendence. It has to be wholistic. *and i want to be in love for a long long time.*

*well i have seen the sky on fire  
and i have drank my share of wine*

*i have kissed the newborn child  
and i've walked down to the river*

*i have seen the sky on fire.* I have seen the sunsets, the sunrises, the northern lights where the whole night sky was on fire. I have seen the kundalini rising, and the heavens on fire as I rose up like the phoenix, embracing the sky, as I rose up through the heavens, through the fire, intensity, and passion for the idea of separateness, through this creation until I embraced the sky, the formlessness. *i have drank my share of wine.* I have had the intoxication of love, the intoxication of beauty, of athletics, of alcohol, the bliss of the mystical and the divine. *i have kissed the newborn child and i have walked down to the river.* I have been there for the birth of my children. I saw the whole room turn to light when they were born. I've watched them grow. *i've walked down to the river.* I walked down, immersed, and baptized my self in light, baptized my self in spirituality.

*i have prayed in your temples  
and danced with the moon  
all the way to the night*

I have prayed in the temples. I sat there and went into samadhi as the monks chanted their sacred chants. I've done it out dancing at night, sometimes with others and sometimes with just my self. *i have danced with the moon all the way to the night.*

*even bathed in fire and light  
when i desperately needed you*

*when i desperately needed you.* "Only You Divine Mother." *It is better to call out to Divine Mother in your aloneness than to seek shelter in someone else's arms.* We can use the mantras: *I am Om, I am Om Satyam, Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om,* or the seven mantras of the seven seals, to finally bathe in the passion, and intensity, and light of our nature, and the nature of God.

*i have seen a perfect rose  
and i've heard the perfect song*

*i have seen a perfect rose and i've heard the perfect song.* I've talked about the rose before, about seeing that perfect rose, that gift of being one-pointed towards our nature, towards God. *and i've heard the perfect song.* I hear the perfect sound all the time, the Om. I listen all the time, and bathe in it all the time.

*and just like  
the singer and the song  
i want to be in love  
for a long long time*

*and i want to be in love  
for a long long time*

The perfect singer singing the perfect song, is the unmanifested and the manifested. *and i want to be in love for a long long time. and i want to be in love for a long long time.*

Only your own knowledge and experience will free you. Like the poem says, *i have walked on golden mountains rose up to touch the sky and saw eternity who had been looking for me.* This is the grace of God. This is the way it is, and once we have discovered that within our self, we will realize that it was always there, waiting for us to unfold, glimpse it, or come to it. The soul calls out for more, and it rises up to the sky and sees eternity *who had been looking for me.* That is mukti, and then we are free into life, free into sailing the sacred oceans, the fields of tall grass, the stairways to light, the sunrises, free into the heart, mind, body, and soul of living.

*Namaste*

## APPENDIX

## MANTRAS

## VIBRATION OR MEANING

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Namaste</b>                           | I bow to the divine light within you           |
| <b>So Hum</b>                            | I am this/I am that                            |
| <b>Na Hum</b>                            | Not this/not that                              |
| <b>Hrim</b>                              | Invoking the indwelling energy                 |
| <b>Sat Tat Aum</b>                       | Eternal Conscious Joy                          |
| <b>Om and Aum</b>                        | God-Consciousness                              |
| <b>Om Satyam</b>                         | Eternal truth/love                             |
| <b>Om Shivam</b>                         | Eternal virtue/harmony                         |
| <b>Om Sundaram</b>                       | Eternal beauty                                 |
| <b>Om Shanti</b>                         | Eternal peace                                  |
| <b>Om Namō Ari Hantanam</b>              | I bow to the conquerors of their inner enemies |
| <b>Om Namō Siddhanam</b>                 | I bow to the realized souls                    |
| <b>Om Mani Padme Aum</b>                 | I am the jewel within the lotus                |
| <b>Hay Hari Sundara</b>                  | Oh God beautiful                               |
| <b>Satya Lahari Om</b>                   | I am a wave of love                            |
| <b>Shiva Lahari Om</b>                   | I am a wave of virtue                          |
| <b>Sundara Lahari Om</b>                 | I am a wave of beauty                          |
| <b>Ananda Lahari Om</b>                  | I am a wave of bliss                           |
| <b>Shivaya Namah Om</b>                  | I surrender to Shiva, to Aum; transformation   |
| <b>Om Shanti Shanti Om Shalom Shalom</b> | Celebrating the grace of God                   |
| <b>Om Shakti Ram Rama Shiva Om</b>       | Rejoicing in God holistically                  |



## GLOSSARY

**Ananda:** Bliss

**Astral:** Consciousness of senses

**Astral body:** Spirit body, host of senses and chakras; pranic body

**Aum:** Name given to God Consciousness in action; Holy stream; a mantra

**Avatar:** One who has been liberated and has chosen to incarnate and serve humanity

**Bhakti:** Love of, or for divinity

**Bhakti Yoga:** The path of love and devotion, leading to the attainment of knowledge of divinity through the experience of love, beauty, compassion, and reverence for all life. The path of awakening the heart and going beyond the ego through love for others, and ultimately God

**Causal:** Consciousness of ideas

**Causal body:** Subtlest of three bodies, host of the mind

**Chakra:** A force center or wheel in the pranic body. The seven chakra seed mantras are:  
Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam, Ham, Om, Om

**Chit:** Consciousness

**Christ Consciousness:** Tat; God Consciousness in the first form of manifestation

**Darshan:** The presence of a holy one's consciousness, holy sight

**Deva:** A realized one residing in astral or causal heavens

**Devotee:** One who is devoted to God

**Dharma:** Duty of one's soul; the harmonization of one's uniqueness within the universal God-consciousness

**Divine Mother:** God

**Eightfold Path:** A process of practices and disciplines, which leads to realization of our wholistic nature; *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*

**Four fountains:** The four primal instincts of eating, sleeping, procreation, and survival

**God Consciousness:** Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram without form

**Guru:** A stream of consciousness; the dispeller of darkness

**Holy one:** One who realizes his/her nature of Sat Tat Aum

**Hrim:** A mantra for invoking the indwelling energy

**Humility:** A willingness to learn

**Ida:** A cooling current; one of the three main energy channels in a pranic body

**Japa:** Repetition of a sacred sound

**Jnana:** Wisdom, knowledge

**Jnana Yoga:** The path of harmony, leading to the attainment of harmony of the soul and God through direct knowledge and understanding of the Divine Will or Christ/Krishna Consciousness. The path of being a student of life, in harmony with the wholistic life

**Karma:** Motion; action; law of motion

**Karma Yoga:** The path of action, leading to the attainment of knowledge through accepting responsibility of self, home, family, one's community, the international community; living and learning amongst society; doing one's duties joyfully, skillfully, and selflessly

**Kundalini:** Primal energy rising from the gross physical to the God Consciousness

**Liberation:** The realization of one's holistic nature of Sat Tat Aum

**Meditation Yoga:** The path of stillness, leading to attainment and realization of the oneness of life through quieting the body, mind, ego, and breath; utilizing and focusing on the *Om* vibration to attain stillness: "Be ye still and know that I am God."

**Medulla Oblongata:** The medulla oblongata is located at the base of the brain, where the brain and spinal cord meet. It contains the nerve centers that control breathing and circulation. On a subtler level, it is where the prana, the pure energy, enters the physical and astral bodies.

**Moksha:** Liberation

**Mukta:** A liberated soul

**Mukti:** Liberation; freedom into life

**Na Hum:** A mantra meaning "not this/not that"

**Nirvikalpa samadhi:** Samadhi without seed

**Non-attachment:** Process of letting go

**Om Satyam:** Divine eternal love; also a mantra

**Om Shanti:** Divine eternal peace, God Consciousness without form; also a mantra

**Om Shivam:** Divine eternal virtue; also a mantra

**Om Sundaram:** Divine eternal beauty; also a mantra

**Pingala:** A heating current; one of three main energy channels in the pranic body

**Prana:** Life force

**Pranayama:** Control of life force

**Pranic body:** Spirit body, host of senses and chakras

**Royal Path:** Combining Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Meditation Yoga

**Sabikalpa Samadhi:** Samadhi with seed, realization of one's wholistic nature

**Sadhana:** Spiritual practices and disciplines

**Samadhi:** Union with God

**Samskaras:** Mindsets; view of reality that is incomplete

**Sat:** Eternal

**Satguru:** One's personal, eternal guru, determined by similarity of soul vibration

**Satmuktananda:** Eternal, liberation, bliss

**Satyam:** Eternal God Consciousness as love; part of the threefold nature of God:  
Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram

**Self:** Includes the purity of our soul and the limitations of our personality

**Self-realization:** Realization of one's nature as Satyam Shivam Sundaram

**Shakti:** God manifested, the Omnipresent Power

**Shalom:** Grace of manifested God Consciousness

**Shiva:** God unmanifested in the creation

**Shivam:** Eternal God Consciousness as harmony, part of the threefold nature of  
God: Satyam Shivam Sundaram

**Siddhi:** Mystical power developed through practice

**So Hum:** The sound of the breath; a mantra meaning, "I am this/I am that"

**Sundaram:** Eternal God Consciousness as beauty and joy; part of the threefold nature of  
God: Satyam Shivam Sundaram

**Sushumna:** Largest of the three energy channels rising from the base of the spine to the  
Crown

**Tat:** God in manifestation; God Consciousness in form

**Upanishad:** Sitting close to God Consciousness

**Yoga:** Meaning "to yoke." It is the science of uniting the small spirit to the large Spirit

**Yogi:** One who practices yoga

**Yuga:** Age; cycle of approximately 24,000 years. This cycle is made up of Kali Yuga,  
Dwapara Yuga, Treta Yuga, and Satya Yuga

## RECOMMENDED READING — BOOKS

### PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA, SRI YUKTESWAR, DAYA MATA

*Autobiography of a Yogi*, Paramahansa Yogananda, Self Realization Fellowship, 1946  
*Man's Eternal Quest*, Paramahansa Yogananda, Self Realization Fellowship 1975  
*God Talks With Arjuna, The Bhagavad Gita-The Royal Science of God Realization*,  
Paramahansa Yogananda, Self Realization Fellowship, 1995  
*Journey to Self-Realization*, Paramahansa Yogananda, Self Realization Fellowship, 1997  
*The Holy Science*, Sri Yukteswar, Self Realization Fellowship, 1949  
*Only Love*, Daya Mata, Self Realization Fellowship, 1976  
*Finding The Joy Within You*, Daya Mata, Self Realization Fellowship, 1990

### SWAMI RAMA

*Living With The Himalayan Masters*, Swami Rama, Himalayan Institute, 1978  
*Book of Wisdom*, Swami Rama, Himalayan Institute, 1972  
*Inner Paths*, Swami Rama, Himalayan Institute, 1979  
*Wisdom of the Ancient Sages*, Swami Rama, Himalayan Institute, 1990

### GURUDEV SHREE CHITRABHANU

*Ten Days Journey Into The Self*, Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, Jain Meditation Center,  
1979  
*Philosophy of Soul and Matter*, Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, Jain Meditation Center,  
1977  
*Psychology of Enlightenment: Meditation On the Seven Energy Centers*, Gurudev Shree  
Chitrabhanu, Jain Meditation Center, 1974  
*Twelve Facets of Reality*, Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, Jain Meditation Center, 1980

### HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN, PIR VILAYAT INAYAT KHAN

*The Heart Of Sufism, Essential Writings of Hazrat Inayat Khan*, Shambala Press, 1999  
*Mastery* (first printed as *Mastery Through Accomplishment*), Hazrat Inayat Khan, Omega  
Publishing, 1993  
*Spiritual Dimensions of Psychology*, Hazrat Inayat Khan, Sufi Order, 1981  
*Awakening of the Human Spirit*, Hazrat Inayat Khan, Sufi Order 1982  
*The Call of the Dervish*, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Sufi Order, 1981  
*That Which Transpires Behind That Which Appears*, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan, Omega  
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**RAMANA MAHARSHI**

*Talks With Ramana Maharshi*, Inner Direction Publ. 2000  
*Be As You Are-The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Routledge Kegan Paul Publ.  
1985

**SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA**

*To Know Yourself*, Swami Satchidananda, Anchor Editions, 1978  
*The Living Gita*, Swami Satchidananda, Henry Holt & Co. Publ. 1988  
*Kailash Journal, Pilgrimage Into The Himalayas*, Swami Satchidananda, Integral Yoga  
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**RAMAKRISHNA, VIVEKANANDA**

*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Publ., 1958  
*Great Swan, Meetings with Ramakrishna*, Lex Hixon  
*Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga*, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Publ., 1955  
*Raja Yoga*, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Publ., 1956  
*Vedanta, Voice of Freedom*, Vivekananda, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Publ., 1986

**G. I. (GEORGE IVANOVITCH) GURJIEFF**

*Meetings With Remarkable Men*, G. I. Gurjieff, E. P. Dalton Publ. 1974  
*Views From The Real World, Conversations with G. I. Gurjieff*, Penguin Group, 1973

**OSHO (RAJNEESH)** Check with Osho International New York, NY.

*Journey To The Heart*, Osho, India  
*Unio Mystica*, Volumes 1-2, Osho, India, 1980  
*The Book of Secrets*, Volumes 1-5, Osho, India 1976

## RECOMMENDED READING — LOCATIONS

### Books by or about:

### Contact:

Paramahansa Yogananda  
Lahiri Mahasaya  
Sri Yukteswar  
Daya Mata

Self Realization Fellowship  
3880 San Rafael Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90065

Swami Rama

Himalayan Institute  
RR1, Box 400  
Honesdale, PA 18431

Gurudev Chitrabhanu

Jain Meditation Center  
244 Ansonia Station  
New York, New York 10023

Swami Satchidananda

Satchidananda Ashram, Yogaville  
RR1, Box 172  
Buckingham, Virginia 23921

Sai Baba

Satya Sai Book Center of America  
P.O. Box 278  
Tustin, CA 92681-0278

Hazrat Inayat Khan,  
Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

The Sufi Order  
P.O. Box 574  
Lebanon Springs, NY 12114

Ramakrishna,  
Vivekananda

Vedanta Press  
1946 Vedanta Place  
Hollywood, CA 90065

Donald Walters (Kriyananda)

Crystal Clarity Publishers  
14618 Tyler Foote Road  
Nevada City, CA 95959

Ramana Maharshi

Inner Directions Foundation  
P.O. Box 130070  
Carlsbad, CA 92013

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Check local bookstores or libraries

Osho

Osho International  
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New York, NY 10022