

## Questions and answers about meditation

*The little space within the heart is as great as this vast universe.  
The heavens and the earth are there,  
And the sun, and the moon, and the stars;  
Fire and lightning and winds are there;  
For the whole universe is in Him and He dwells within our heart.  
- The Upanishads*

### **What is meditation?**

Meditation is our natural state. In the meditative state we are in harmony with our True Selves which generates an ongoing joyful dynamic flow in our lives. It arises from a deep connection with All That Is that diffuses beyond our meditation practice into our everyday world and feels harmonious, authentic, joyful, and peaceful. Separation, which is our usual state, is actually an inauthentic state.

### **Who can meditate?**

Everyone can benefit from the practice of meditation and everyone can learn. It stems from a willingness to see the Truth of our reality, and to embrace our soul's contract for this lifetime. Although meditation has been seen in the past as something that only holy people or monks do, it is possible for all people to incorporate this life affirming practice into their daily schedules. Peace is cultured within ourselves first, then in our families and within our closest relationships, then our communities, and beyond.

### **How should I feel during meditation?**

There is no particular way that you will feel during meditation. Often people think that they should feel peaceful from the very beginning of their meditation efforts. Sometimes you will feel peaceful, other times your body will feel very restless, other times calm and relaxed. Sometimes your mind will be very busy and you will feel that you are unable to 'get it under control'. Other times, you may have difficult emotions come up that could feel quite uncomfortable. Sometimes you will love your meditation practice and other times you will hate it! The underlying theme here is that meditation is fed by a desire for Truth whatever that might look like at this moment. As we will discover later we are developing the ability to allow everything to be as it is without controlling. So however we feel is how we feel. The most important is the willingness to discover the Truth about ourselves and our world by being aware. There are no successful or unsuccessful meditation sessions. It's best to let go of judging our efforts.

### **How often should I meditate?**

In order to be effective meditation should be practiced regularly. Generally it is advised to sit twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening for 25 minutes or more. That being said, in name of joyful living allow your practice evolve naturally and effortlessly.

### **Where should I meditate?**

Meditation can be done in any place where you won't be disturbed. Let your family know when you are about to start and turn off the phones if necessary.

In the evening turn off the lights to eliminate the effect of artificial lighting. Use a beeswax or other natural candle.

In the morning allow yourself to sit in the dawning light of the rising sun.

I like to meditate at a simple altar that I have created in my room on one of my night tables. It is covered with a cloth and on it there are stones and rocks, wood, small objects that children and loved ones have given me, pictures of spiritual teachers, a candle, a flower from my garden when possible, a small bowl of water, and other bowls which I have filled with various objects over time (rice, flower petals from a spiritual ceremony, lavender flowers, etc.), my mala beads (for counting mantras), etc. Create something that has meaning to you. I keep prayer books and inspirational books nearby to read before or after meditation.

### **How should I sit?**

It is helpful to sit rather than lie down because for most people lying down is a clear signal to go to sleep! You can sit in a chair, a couch, on a meditation cushion or directly on the floor (this isn't comfortable for most westerners).

### **Which form of meditation should I practice?**

There are many approaches that can be beneficial so it is most important to find an approach that resonates with you. It is normal for most people to feel that they aren't meditating properly at the beginning and this is where a teacher and guided-meditation CDs can be helpful. As we grow and our practice evolves we will be drawn to new techniques to help us to attain higher vibrations. With a steady regimentation of meditation we will have the clarity to know when to learn and incorporate new techniques. Some indicators that a technique is resonating with us are warmth in the brow and/or slight pressure on the top of the head, as well as sensations in the left side of the face (which is connected to the creativity of the right side of the brain).

Eventually we let go of all techniques ... they are simply pointing us in a certain direction.

### **Why do people resist meditation?**

If we are resisting meditation it is a good sign that it is needed. Sometimes our readiness to begin a regular practice can be sparked by another person. While it's true that sometimes people are not ready yet, many are fearful because they know that they will be connecting with emotions that have been suppressed and which need to be released.

Remember that it's easier to connect to and release the emotions now than to have to deal later with disease which often results from blocked emotional energy. It's difficult to have a positive experience with meditation if we are fearful of not knowing what to do or questioning whether we are meditating properly. In this case a teacher would be helpful. As always when we want our loved-ones, family and friends to meditate, it's best to lead by example. Others learn far more from our actions than our words