

Understanding and Practicing The Teachings of *Swami Rama* of the Himalayas

In 1995 Swami Rama said that he wanted an ongoing, year-round Residential Program to be developed at his ashram in Rishikesh, India. Over the ensuing months a program was developed, which drew primarily upon five of the books he had written:

- The Art of Joyful Living
- Meditation and Its Practice
- Path of Fire and Light, Volume 2
- Choosing a Path
- Enlightenment Without God (Mankukya Upanishad)

The program included four daily meditations and daily practical training, and was designed to rotate through the lessons on the books on a 30-day cycle. It was structured so that visitors to the ashram could join in at any time, since individual travel schedules varied widely. This allowed both a structure to the program and flexibility for the participants.

The first of the programs was started on October 15, 1996. The last discussions of the program were on the afternoon of November 13, 1996. Coincidentally, Swami Rama left his body that very evening. The program was conducted a total of six times during 1996 and 1997. Due to management changes after Swami Rama left the body, it was no longer possible to conduct the Residential Program beyond those dates, with the last program being October 1997.

Coming out of the experiences of those programs, the attached materials were created as individual handouts, mostly being written during spring and summer of 1997. During December 1997 the handouts were compiled into a single bound booklet, with 1000 copies being printed for free distribution. This booklet was later used for training in lieu of the Residential Program, which was no longer available. The material in this booklet is rather dense, having drawn very concise, pointed quotes from Swami Rama's books. It is best discussed orally, though many have found it useful to just read through the material.

It is a great joy that I have been able to be used as a guide serving people in the Residential Programs, and in later ways, and to prepare these materials on Swami Rama's teachings for others. I hope that all readers of this material will continue to benefit from it. It is now being made available online at SwamiJ.com, and can be downloaded free.

In loving service,

Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati

Understanding and Practicing The Teachings of *Swami Rama* of the Himalayas

*For thousands of years,
the science of meditation has been practiced and studied
by aspirants who sought to make their lives
more serene, creative, and fulfilling.*

*Meditation will give you the capacity to improve your health,
your relationships, and the skillfulness of all your activities.*

*This is because meditation can give you something that
no other technique can accomplish—it introduces you to yourself on all levels,
and finally leads you to the center of consciousness within,
from where consciousness flows.*

—from the Preface to *Meditation and Its Practice*

Practice is divided into three main stages:

1. Initial: At this stage, the student thinks that he is practicing, but actually he is preparing himself for the practice. His so-called practice consists of collecting the necessary means and resources to begin and to stay on the path.

2. Intermediate: At this stage, a student is fully equipped with all the resources he needs to practice. His time and energy are not involved in collecting means and learning methods, rather he spends his time in practice.

3. Last stage—achievement: At this stage, a student experiences the Truth. He may have only a momentary glimpse of the Truth, but at least it is a direct experience, which helps him understand the greatness of the Truth. Now, sadhana consists of trying to maintain that state. As his practice matures, he becomes an adept; then he need not try, for the experience of non-dual Reality is maintained effortlessly and spontaneously.

—*A Call to Humanity*, pp. 22-23

You really do not need to know many things,
but you definitely need to practice what you know.

—*The Art of Joyful Living*, pp. 47

*The sun, the moon, the stars,
and all the lights that you can imagine in the entire external world
are but fragments
of that one great Light that is within you.*

*It is the light of knowledge, the light of discrimination,
the light of understanding, the light of life,
the light of sharing and love,
the light of Being that you are.
“Thou art that.”*

*The light within is like a ripple in the vast ocean of bliss—
that which we call Brahman, the Absolute, Infinity, the Highest.*

You yourself are that ripple; you are a wave.

*You should always have confidence
that the light of life really is within you.*

*Physics corroborates this philosophy;
it also says that life is like a particle, like a wave.
It repeats the ancient philosophy that tells us that
life is a wave
born from the ocean of bliss,
playing in it,
and subsiding again into it.*

—Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, p. 1

The simple method to enlightenment is to first know yourself.

There was once a swami who used to teach students every day.

One of the students listened attentively
and heard the swami speaking about *vairagya*, the philosophy of non-attachment,
and the student took off for a forest dwelling and there, he was enlightened.

After dwelling there for twelve years, he wondered what had happened
and what had been the fate of his friends, with whom he used to learn.

So he returned to that place,
and everyone was still sitting there exactly like before,
and the swami was still lecturing.

What a waste of time!

The point is that you don't need much external information;
you already have true knowledge within.
You need to learn how to apply the knowledge that you have.

You are taught: "Be good, be nice, be gentle, be loving."
You have all been taught that, but you should learn
to practice, understand, and to apply that knowledge to yourself.

You need to understand how you function,
and the process that results in your actions.

There is only one real book to study and learn from—
the greatest of all books—
and that is the very manuscript that you, yourself, are.

Above all else, remember this one thing:
It is easy to meet that Infinity within you—
to attain that awareness, you just have to be silent and quiet.

The best and deepest of the teachings
is not communicated through books, speech or actions, but through silence.
That special teaching is understood only when you are silent.

I am telling you to face this reality: the path to enlightenment and unfoldment
is not really so austere, abstruse, or difficult—it's actually very easy.
The easiest way to make progress is just to "know thyself"—
to accept and understand yourself on all levels.

—*Swami Rama*

Introduction

This guide has been developed to help aspirants in understanding and practicing meditation as taught by the Himalayan masters through Swami Rama. Though you should find it comprehensive, it is not a replacement for thoroughly studying the original texts, nor is it a substitute for direct training.

You should find this guide helpful to you, whether as a self-study aid or as a tool for explaining concepts and practices to others. It should be useful in one-to-one training, facilitated or informal study groups, in classrooms, or to enhance talks or lectures.

You may wish to photocopy individual pages or the entire guide. You may prefer to print out originals on your computer, which may then be photocopied or printed. In any case, please enjoy, learn, and grow from using these materials.

Most importantly, as Swami Rama has often said to students of meditation, you need to “practice, ... practice, ... practice.”

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Threefold purpose of meditation:

- First, to calm the conscious mind
- Second, to teach us how not to be disturbed by the flood of images arising from the subconscious mind
- Third, to go beyond the conscious and subconscious mind to the highest state of samadhi

—*Freedom from the Bondage of Karma*, p. 27

Six things you will need to learn in order to meditate:

- How to relax the body
- How to sit in a comfort, steady posture for meditation
- How to make your breathing process serene
- How to witness the objects in the train of the mind
- How to inspect the quality of thoughts and learn to promote or strengthen those which are positive and helpful in your growth
- How not to allow yourself to become disturbed in any situation, whether you judge it to be either bad or good

—*Meditation and Its Practice*, pp. 13-14

Five steps of a meditation session:

- First Step: Preparing for a Meditation Session
- Second Step: Relax and Stretch the Muscles
- Third Step: Relaxation Practices to Prepare for Meditation
- Fourth Step: Calming the Mind and Nervous System with Breathing Practices
- Fifth Step: Sitting in Meditation

—*Meditation and Its Practice*, pp. 18-22

A Program for Progress in Meditation

In Chapter 6, “A Program for Progress in Meditation” of *Meditation and Its Practice*, Swami Rama succinctly describes the inward journey, along with some approximate time frames.

For the first month (or two):

- Sit at the same time every day, allowing this to become a habit. Learn to ignore shakes, perspiration, numbness, or twitching. To start, 15-20 minutes is sufficient.
- Attain a still, comfortable posture, with head, neck and trunk aligned. For the first month you may use a wall for support, but after that sit independently of support.
- Survey the body as explained in “Exercise 1,” pp. 81-82, using attention and breath.
- Practice breath awareness, observing your breathing to see if you notice any problems with the four irregularities of jerkiness, shallowness, noise or extended pauses.
- Pray to the Lord of Life within that your meditation will continue to become better and will create the motivation to again sit in meditation, so that you await your meditation time with great desire.
- Learn the functioning of the four functions of mind (manas, buddhi, ahamkara, chitta) and learn to coordinate them. To establish coordination, watch the mind’s functioning through actions and speech, and at the same time, observe the thinking process within.

For the second month:

- After doing your stretching and limbering exercises, then do your breathing exercises (diaphragmatic breathing, two-to-one breathing, complete breath, kapalabhati, bhasrika, nadi shodhana).
- Even Breathing and Alternate Nostril Breathing are very healthy preparatory practices, but during meditation itself, the only exercise recommended is Breath Awareness.
- During the second month, add the practice of focusing the mind on the breath moving from the base of the spine to the crown of the head, and back, as explained in “Exercise 2,” pp. 87-88.
- Learn to open blocked nostrils by paying attention to the flow of breath at that nostril.

Two to three more months:

- Add the Sushumna Awakening practice of focusing the mind on the breath as it is felt between the two nostrils. Both nostrils flowing freely is a sign of sushumna awakening. Once this can be maintained for five minutes, the student has crossed a great barrier, and the mind has attained some one-pointedness.

Three to four more months:

- Another three to four months of regular meditative practice will allow you enough time to learn to deal with the conscious aspect of the mind.
- Learn to let go of the habitual thoughts arising in the conscious mind, by which the conscious mind is trained to form a new habit and the personality is transformed.
- Then, the next step is to learn to witness the thoughts going on in your mental train, practicing and learning to remain undisturbed, unaffected, and uninvolved.

Beyond a total of seven to nine months:

- Deal with the latent, dormant levels of mind which normally remain unknown.
- Learn to examine all your fears; begin the process of contemplation with analysis.
- Gradually, you will acquire the power to inspect your own thinking process, while remaining undisturbed. Such a mind attains clarity and is then prepared to attain samadhi.

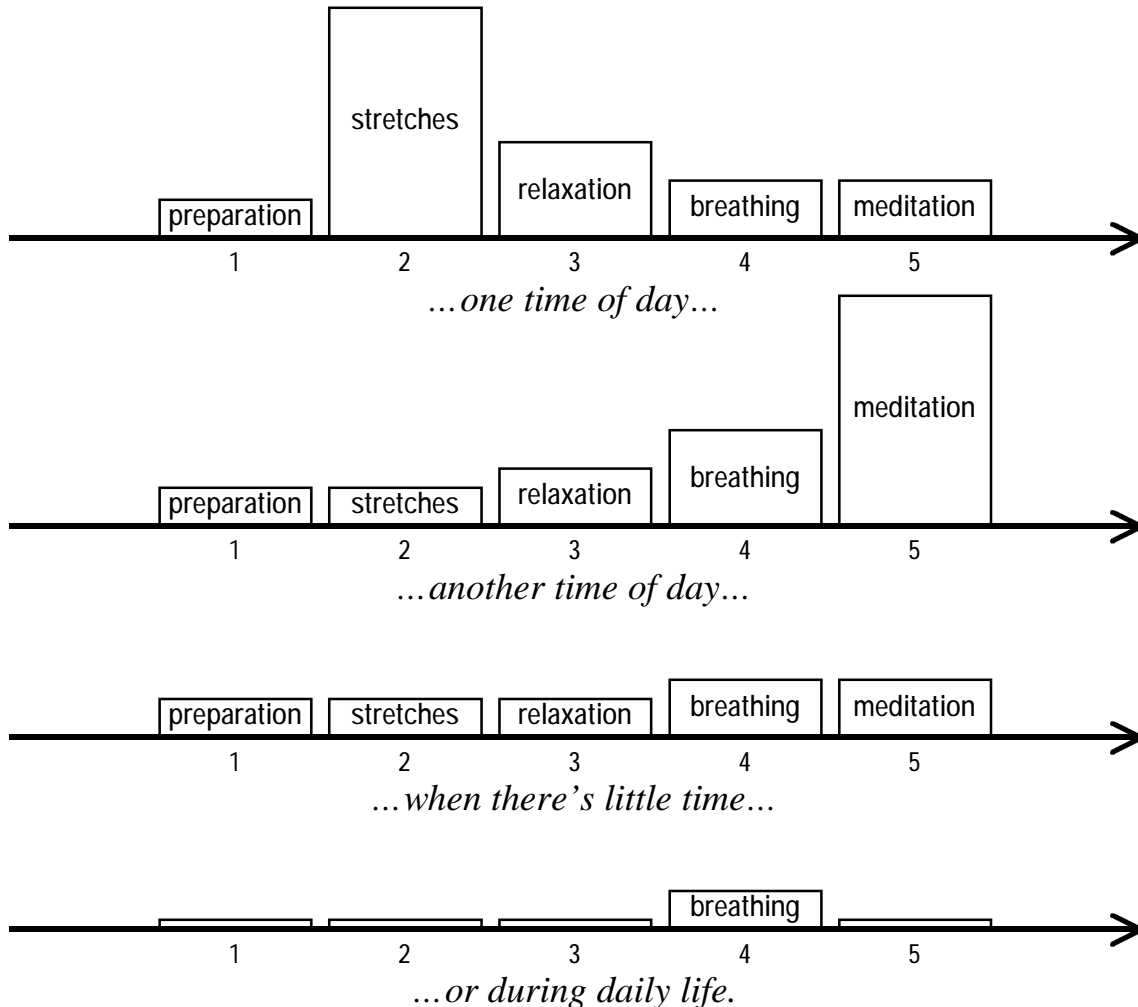
Some other places where aspects of the inward journey are summarized are: *Meditation and Its Practice*, pp. 13-14, 18-22, 79-94; *Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 99-136, 200-201; *Lectures on Yoga*, pp. 138-141; *Wisdom of the Ancient Sages*, pp. 127-128; *Book of Wisdom*, pp. 31-34; *Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama*, pp. 37-39; *Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama*, pp. 154-156 or *Science of Breath*, pp. 128-129; *A Practical Guide to Holistic Health*, p. 91; *Freedom From the Bondage of Karma*, p. 74; *Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 193-194, 238-241.

Flexibility in the Practice Sequence

Meditation can be done at any time of night or day, but traditionally, the “best” times, when the circumstances are most conducive to meditation, are early mornings or late evenings, when the environment begins to “quiet down” and you are not likely to be interrupted by others.

At first, try to select one or two¹ brief periods (5-15) minutes when you can meditate without inconveniencing others, being disturbed, ignoring your duties or feeling rushed or preoccupied by other tasks.

Your emphasis in practice may be different...



If you rise a little earlier in the morning or meditate just prior to bed at night, you may find it easiest to adjust your routine. Some people seem to be “naturally” freshest and more alert in the morning or in the evening. That may be your own best time to meditate.

However, your schedule and your personal responsibilities may also have a great impact on when you meditate.

Meditation and Its Practice, pp. 17-22

¹ Just as one eats morning, noon, afternoon and night, so also will one have to meditate four times a day if one wants to realize truth quickly. When one meditates one will develop divine virtues, and a spiritual path is constructed in the mind. If one does not practice regularly and becomes lax, the spiritual path will be washed away by a flood of impure thoughts. Regularity in meditation is of paramount importance. *Lectures on Yoga*, p. 159

Preparation for Choosing a Path

The book *Choosing a Path* has six chapters which each cover a separate path of yoga. These are: jnana yoga (the path of knowledge), bhakti yoga (the path of devotion), karma yoga (the path of action and selfless service), raja yoga (the path of discipline and meditation), laya yoga (the path of fusion), and kundalini yoga (the path of the primal force, including sections on awakening kundalini through hatha yoga or tantra). However, Chapter 1 of *Choosing a Path* is entitled “Preparation for Choosing a Path.” This chapter outlines elements of preparation which are common to all of the paths of yoga which are described in the book.

jnana yoga	bhakti yoga	karma yoga	raja yoga	laya yoga	kundalini yoga
é	é	é	é	é	é
p r e p a r a t i o n f o r c h o o s i n g a p a t h					

Regardless of which path, or blending of paths is most fitting for each individual person, the recommendations in Chapter 1 form a suggested foundation for all aspirants, and include:

- Learn the philosophical and psychological foundations of the various paths. (p. 3)
- Build your own practical philosophy of life. (p. 3)
- Examine your fears, to find that they are based on imagination. (p. 3-4)
- Understand the importance of attaining clarity of mind. (p. 4)
- Realize that you are a citizen of two worlds: that within and that outside. (pp. 5-7)
- Learn to discriminate which desires are helpful and which are not helpful. (p. 6)
- Learn about your body and the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, space. (pp. 7-8)
- Know the five cognitive senses (hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling), and the five active senses (speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, eliminating). (pp. 7-8)
- Study the two caretakers of life, inhalation and exhalation. (p. 9)
- Study, understand and train the mind—the greatest friend and foe. (pp. 9-12)
- Learn about the inner being, *antahkarana*. (p. 11)
- Attain a purified, free, and one-pointed mind for inner study. (p. 13-17)
- Know the needs, motivations, and desires moving you to action. (p. 15)
- Train your mind to go inward and examine itself. (p. 16)
- Have a strong, burning desire to know yourself from within. (p. 16)
- Understand the states of waking, dreaming, sleeping, and *turiya*. (p. 18)
- Don't create problems or obstacles for yourself or others; then there will be enough time, and the mind will have enough ability to study the inner life. (p. 23)
- First have a commitment toward the purpose of life; *then* choose a path. (p. 25)

As you study the many books of Swami Rama, you will find that much of the teachings are actually devoted to giving practical advice and practices on how to fulfill the above suggestions, which go along with each of the paths of yoga.

In the closing of this chapter on preparation for choosing a path, Swami Rama states, “The gist of my advice is that one should learn to discipline oneself. Discipline means guiding one’s energy properly in three directions: mind, action, and speech. Discipline does not mean arresting oneself, repressing oneself, suppressing oneself, or torturing oneself. It means learning to guide the energies that one has and learning to be positive in life. Negativity does not help. It is like slow poison. But positive thinking is like nectar, and it definitely helps.

“It is important for all seekers and aspirants to choose a definite path and practice it. Without practice nothing can be attained. Blessed are those who are on the path. One day they will reach their goal and attain freedom from all pains and miseries.”

The Four Functions of Mind

One simply has to become aware of this fact, that the mind is in direct control of the senses, breath, and body. It is the mind that influences the senses and causes them to function in the external world. It is the mind that desires to perceive the world through the senses and to conceptualize and categorize those sense perceptions.

All sadhanas (spiritual practices), techniques, and disciplines are actually means to train the mind. And the foremost part of the training is to make the mind aware that Reality lies beyond itself, and that is the immortality of the soul.

The mind is the finest instrument that we possess. If it is understood well, the mind can be helpful in our sadhana; however, if the mind is not well-ordered and disciplined, it can distract and dissipate all our potentials.

There are four distinct functions of mind:
manas, buddhi, ahamkara, and chitta.

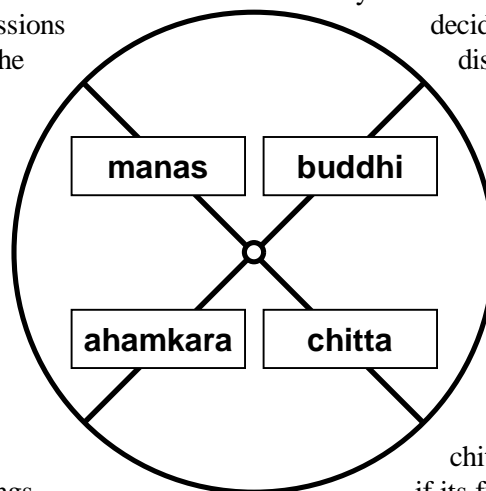
These four should be understood
and their functioning should be coordinated.

Manas is the lower mind, through which the mind interacts with the external world and takes in sensory impressions and data. *Manas* also has the tendency to doubt and question, which can cause great difficulties if this tendency becomes excessive.

Ahamkara is the sense of "I-ness," the individual ego, which feels itself to be a distinct, separate entity. It provides identity to our functioning, but *ahamkara* creates our feelings of separation, pain, and alienation as well.

Buddhi is the higher aspect of mind, the doorway to inner wisdom. It has the capacity to decide, judge, and make cognitive discriminations and differentiations. It can determine the wiser of two courses of action, if it functions clearly and if *manas* will accept its guidance.

Chitta is the memory bank, which stores impressions and experiences, and while it can be very useful, *chitta* can also cause difficulties if its functioning is not coordinated with the others.



To establish coordination among the various modifications of mind,
one has to learn to:

- 1) watch the mind's functioning *through* actions and speech, and
- 2) at the same time, observe the thinking process *within*.

Meditation and Its Practice, pp. 82-84

The external frame of a wheel moves because of the spokes, yet the center hub remains steady. Your hub is within and the external wheel is outside, and yet if there are no spokes the wheel will not move.

Reality is your center hub, but to know that inner cause of all your movements, you first have to know the nature of these faculties which make you move.

You have to know yourself by first understanding your internal states; you cannot know the center hub unless you know the wheel.

Free thinking will come when you fully understand all the faculties of mind and the modifications of your mind, when you understand each part of the whole wheel of the mind separately.

When you fully understand these functions, you will know how to work with yourself.

(The Art of Joyful Living, pp. 2-3, 26, 54, 79, 166, 172)

The Nature of the Aspects of the your self

Senses

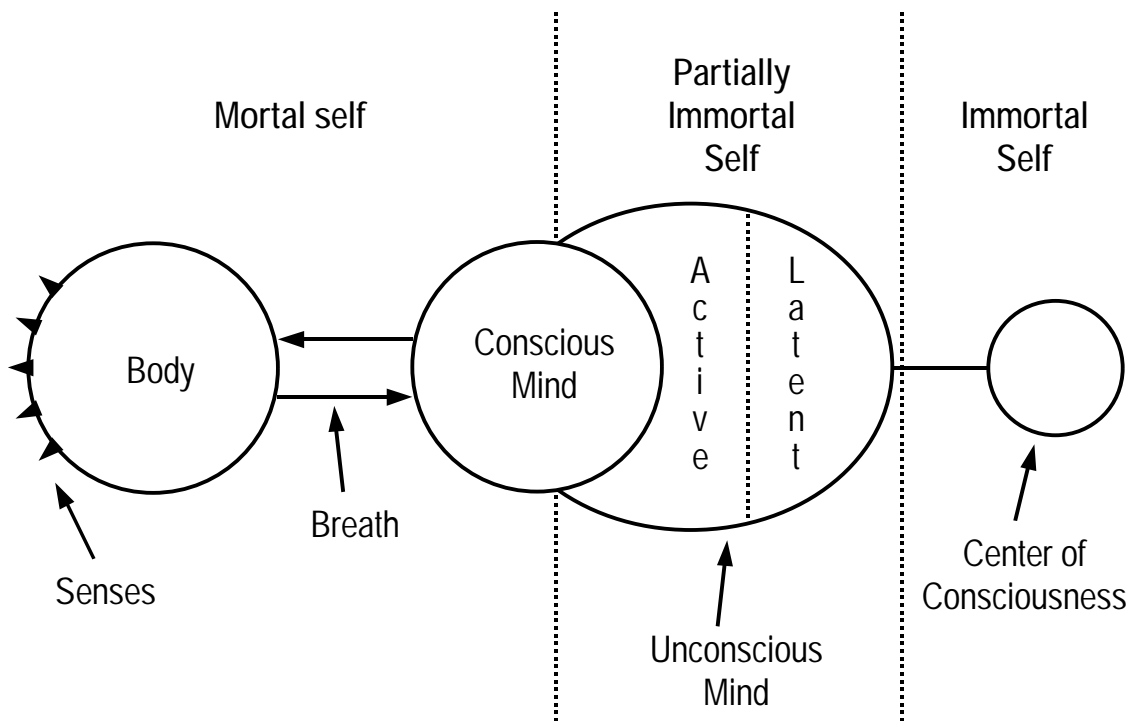
We are sensing beings, with ten senses: five senses of cognition—hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling—and five senses of action—speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, and eliminating. These ten senses function because they are employed by the mind to express oneself in the external world.

Body

We have a body, and it is a compound of five elements, or *tattvas*—earth, water, fire, air, and space. We think, and then we act; the body moves according to our thinking and feeling. So we are not only physical beings, we are thinking beings too. Among the faculties of mind, four are very important: *buddhi*, the intellect; *manas*, the sensory-motor mind; *ahankara*, the ego, and *chitta*, the bed of memory through which consciousness flows directly from its source.

Breath

Between the body and the mind there is a link, breath, and without that link, the body and mind cannot exist or function together. There is a force more subtle than breath which is called *prana*.



Conscious Mind

The first layer of a human being is the body, the second is *prana* or vital energy, the third is the mind. There are two compartments of thinking: one is called the conscious mind, and the other is called the unconscious mind. Only a small part of us, the conscious mind is being trained by our so-called educational system, so we have to train ourselves.

Unconscious Mind

The unconscious mind is a vast reservoir into which we continually pour all the things we do—all our memories of the past, all our imaginings of the future, and everything we are doing in the present. Anything we have sensed, imagined, or thought makes an impression in the storehouse of the unconscious mind. We suffer because we do not know how to utilize the energy, the resources, that are already within us. We all have the resources, but don't know how to use them to attain the purpose of life.

Center of Consciousness

There is a center of consciousness, the Self, which is the source from which all consciousness flows.

Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama, pp. 111-121

The Sources of Actions, Speech, and Thoughts

Actions and Speech

Actions and speech involve the use of the five cognitive senses of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling, and the five active senses of speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, and eliminating.

The mind functions through these ten senses. Whenever an event takes place that relates to an impression in your mind, then the impression or samskara becomes active. The conscious mind is actually controlled by the unconscious, and that's why we human beings cannot easily make progress. All actions leave an impression in your unconscious mind; those impressions become your samskaras and control your life. (*The Art of Joyful Living*, p. 107)

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Thoughts

No action can ever be performed unless you think or want it on some level of mind. Your personality has been woven by your habit patterns, and your habit patterns are your repetitive actions. If you really examine yourself closely you will realize that your habits *are* your personality. The real motivation for each action is your thought.

All your actions are controlled by your thoughts, and all your thoughts are controlled by your emotions. By comparison with your emotions, thought has little power. (*The Art of Joyful Living*, pp. 29, 197)

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Emotions¹

Egoism, or *ahamkara*, is one of the two primary emotions (along with desire, kama). Egoism increases when desires are either fulfilled or not fulfilled. Because of ahamkara, you are an individual, but then ahamkara also separates you from the whole. This "I" refers to yourself and not others, and becomes the center of your life.

To understand the origin of ahamkara, you will have to understand the four functions of mind. You are like a wheel, which needs both spokes and a hub to rotate. The hub is the still Center of Consciousness and the spokes are the four functions of mind, one of which is ahamkara (ahamkara, manas, buddhi, and chitta).

Intelligence has no power before bhava, the power of emotion. But intelligence, if properly handled, can channel emotional power so that we can use it positively. Learning to use bhava properly is essential to successful living. If you can use that emotional power, you can attain the highest state of ecstasy in a second's time.

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If *kama* is not fulfilled, then you become frustrated and angry, which is called *krodha*. Anger results from unfulfilled desires that you have not learned how to arrange, to pacify, or to understand. It means that there is a desire that needs to be understood and resolved. Jealousy, *matsarya*, comes when one doesn't have something that he wants and someone else does.

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If your desire *is* achieved and kama is fulfilled, then pride, or *muda* results. When you attain what you long for, then you become attached to it; this attachment is called *moha*. Moha is the sense, "This is mine!" When you are attached to something, you become greedy, which is called *lobha*. Once you are attached to something, you can never have enough.

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Kama, desire, is one of the two primary emotions (along with ahamkara), and is the mother of all other desires. It gives rise to both the desire to satisfy the senses, and the beneficial desire to help others selflessly. Kama is the prime desire, and from it arise all the other desires. It is kama which motivates you to do anything and everything.

Kama is blind desire; it has no sense of discrimination, judgment or understanding. It motivates you to do something simply to fulfill that desire—because it exists.

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Samskaras

There are many layers and levels of samskaras, the impressions of your actions and desires, asleep in your unconscious. These samskaras become active every now and then, and then they motivate and control your mind and your emotions. To make progress, your samskaras need to be purified. (*The Art of Joyful Living*, p. 106-107)

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Four Primitive Fountains

(Food, Sleep, Sex, Self-preservation)

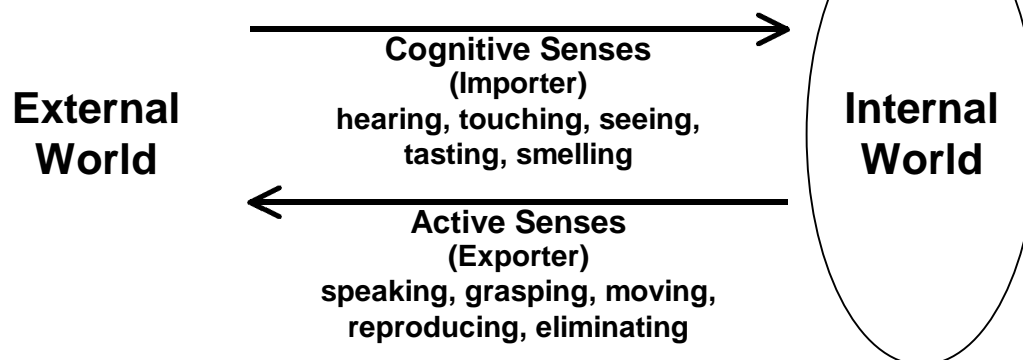
All the strains of your negative emotions arise in some fashion from the primitive fountains. You need to understand these primitive fountains and their effect on you. In order to do that, you need to learn to observe your mind and to counsel with yourself. Then, you can be free of the burden and unhappiness created by your own desires. (*The Art of Joyful Living*, p. 104-105)

¹ See *The Art of Joyful Living*, pp. 19, 29, 67-86, 96-98, 105, 107; *Choosing a Path*, pp. 120-130; *A Practical Guide to Holistic Health*, pp. 97-108; *Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama*, pp. 67-69

The Ten Senses

There is only one power in you that works both within and outside, and this is manas, which is one of the four functions of mind. Manas can work inside, and it can also work outside yourself. To do that, it employs the ten senses.

The Art of Joyful Living, p. 80



Eight "rungs" of yoga¹

Yamas

Ahimsa

Satya

Asteya

Brahmacharya

aparigraha

Niyamas

Saucha

Santosha

Tapas

Svadhya

Ishvara

pranidhana

Asana

Pranayama

Pratyahara

Dharana

Dhyana

Samadhi

In order to attain samadhi, the yogi takes a vow of celibacy. The word celibacy does not mean mere suppression of the sexual urge. *Brahmacharya* means walking in Brahman, the absolute Reality or pure Consciousness, being conscious of Brahman all the time. *Brahma* means shakti, the primal force within, and *charya* means how to direct. A brahmachari is able to master and direct his energies toward the attainment of the highest state of consciousness. Brahmacharya is not limited to the control of the sexual urge but also involves the control of mind, action, and speech. All one's energies should be directed toward Brahman consciousness so that the mind becomes one-pointed and turns inward. This inward flow of mental energy leads to the Self, the center of consciousness.

Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita, pp. 240-241

Literally, tapas means that which generates the Divine fire. Heat arises within those who are full of spiritual fervor with the zeal of burning desire for attaining samadhi.

Through the training of the ten senses one learns to have command and control over one's expressions and sense perception. Then the outgoing tendencies of the senses and sense perceptions operate in such a way that mind doesn't lose its orderliness. The senses do disturb the mind if they are not orderly, but with the help of tapas, the senses are trained to function properly. Tapas helps the mind remain undisturbed and undistracted.

Choosing a Path, p. 127

Tapas includes using internal dialogue to train the senses, by saying to your mind, for example, "You have done such things before and regretted it." After such dialogues, the mind will not put those thoughts, inclinations, or desires in front of you, knowing that you have trained your senses. This brings sankalpa shakti, which is determination or will.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, pp. 107-108

Pratyahara literally means "learning to withdraw the senses voluntarily from the objects of the world." There is no literature available on pratyahara, but it is very important and should be properly understood and practiced, especially to attain samadhi.

The mind is in the habit of functioning along the ten avenues or senses. These senses distract and dissipate the energy of the mind. But the mind can function without the help of the senses. In such a state, the mind starts turning within.

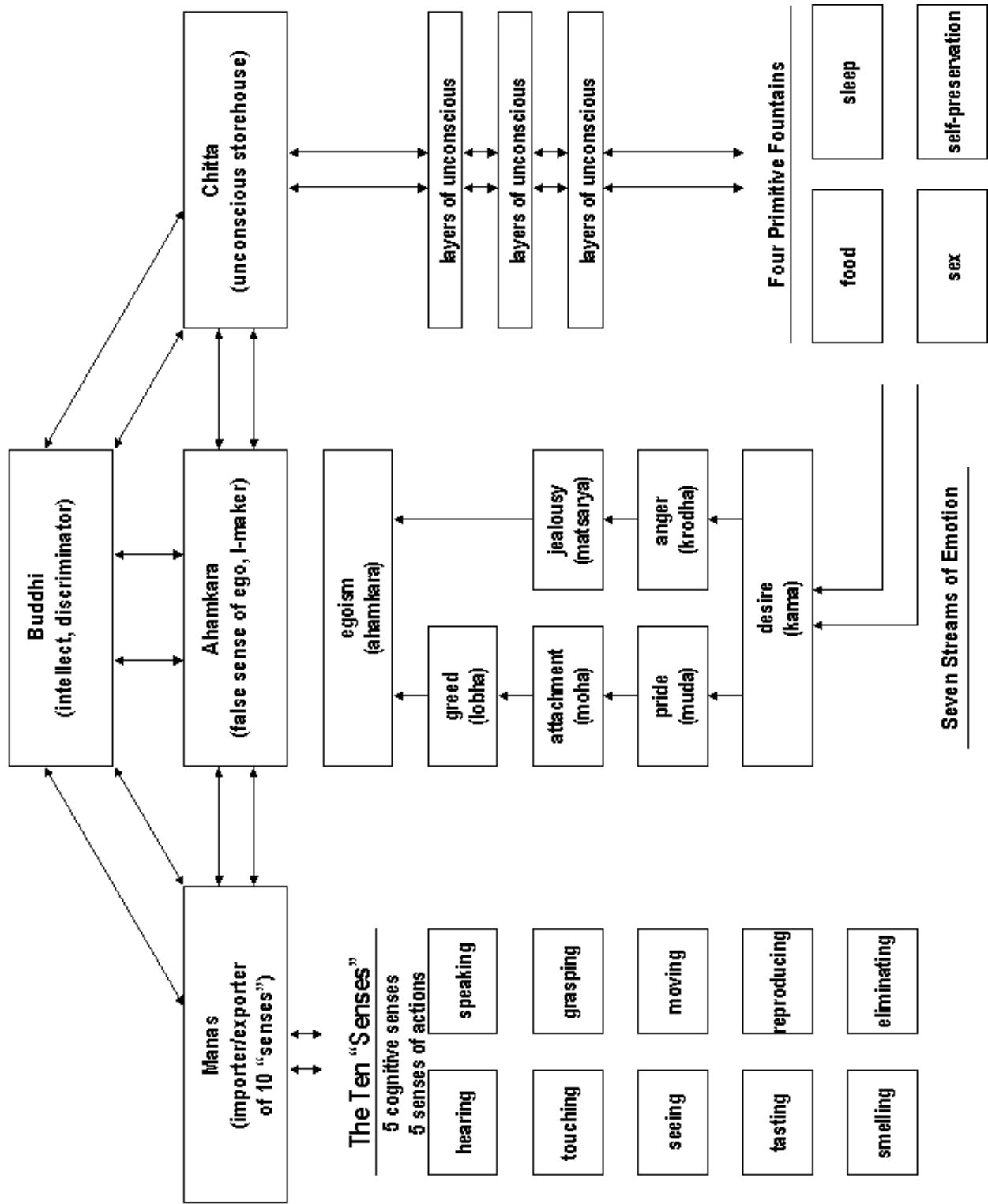
Learning to withdraw the senses from the objects of the world does not mean withdrawal from the world, but the student, before sitting in meditation, has to learn to withdraw the senses from the objects of sense perception before he steps into another stage called concentration. For practicing concentration, attention should be trained.

Practice of concentration makes the mind one-pointed and pratyahara makes the mind inward. This inward tendency and the one-pointedness help the student in doing meditation. In meditation, the mind starts flowing spontaneously and uninterruptedly, but this flow of concentrated mind is inward because of pratyahara.

Choosing a Path, pp. 137-138

¹ For descriptions of the eight rungs, see *Choosing a Path*, pp. 120-144, and *Lectures on Yoga*, pp. 1-163,

The Mind



Four States of Consciousness

The 3 levels of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep are one and the same with the 3 levels of consciousness—conscious, active unconscious, and latent unconscious. They are like a river, which also has 3 parts—a surface, a flowing undercurrent, and a bed. The fourth state is the enlightened state of turiya, the state beyond, which is aware of all of the other three.

(Different names are sometimes used for the same levels of consciousness.)

A	B	C	D	E
• waking	• surface of river ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	• conscious	• conscious	• conscious
, dreaming sleep	~, flow of river ~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~	, active unconscious	, subconscious	, unconscious
<i>f</i> deep sleep	oOoOoOoOoOo <i>f</i> rocks/bed	<i>f</i> latent unconscious	<i>f</i> unconscious	<i>f</i> subconscious

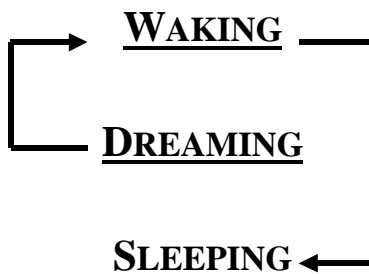
In the river of life all our actions, thoughts, and sensations are like pebbles which settle on the bed of the river, and we soon lose conscious awareness of them. These pebbles or sensations thrown into the river create very tiny bubbles in the depths of the river which come up and burst at the surface. All our samskaras reside in the latent bed of memory. Without focusing on the subtle traces of our mind stuff, that is, on the samskaras in their latent form rather than their manifestation at the surface, salvation is not possible.

All these bubbles actually *originate* in the *bed* of the river of the mind where disturbing pebbles are constantly settling. One often resists these disturbances and can become disgusted with himself on account of them. If the student is patient and determined he will cease to struggle with these thoughts and will start to study them. It is natural for all the hidden tendencies of our unconscious mind to come to the surface, and it is also natural for a student to be disturbed by them. Yet if the student remains aware of his goal, which lies beyond the unconscious mind, then he will learn to study these thought forms without discomfort. Past samskaras do create problems and disturbances for the student of meditation, but sincere effort, determination and one-pointedness can help him maintain awareness of his goal.

Constant and exclusive study of the thinking process at the *conscious* level is *not* a sound way to follow the path of meditation. It is self-study of the *unconscious* mind stuff which is important. Many strange thoughts rise to the surface during our thinking process and it is *not* possible for anyone to analyze and get rid of them at the *conscious* level, for these bubbles *form* deep in the unconscious mind.

Freedom from the Bondage of Karma, pp. 49-50

In meditation, the harmful and injurious dreams that strain and distract the mind and its energy can be analyzed and resolved. All conflicts that are at the root of dreams can also be resolved.
Enlightenment Without God, p. 91






The aspirant learns to analyze or resolve all his desires, thoughts, and feelings through the practice of yoga nidra. He learns to consciously place his mind in deep rest.
Enlightenment Without God, p. 61

Words and Objects

In the Kathopanishad, the King of Death describes the process by which the aspirant can realize the true Self. He says, "Merge the words into thoughts." By words he means the power of speech. The words that are uttered by us are the expressions of our thoughts. No word is uttered without a thought behind it. In fact, words and thoughts are one and the same, but thoughts are finer and subtler, while words are gross. Similarly, all the external objects of the world are closely linked to the images that are in our minds. External objects can be brought back to their finer state of thoughts, the mind can be merged into the intellect, and the power of discrimination merged into the ego. Finally, the ego is merged into the real Self, the Atman.

Life Here and Hereafter, pp. 110-111

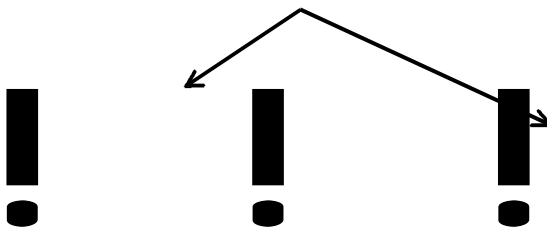
Three Aspects of an Object

	<p><i>First, is the physical object, the actual pencil with which you write.</i></p>
	<p><i>Second, is the mental object, the internal image of the pencil.</i></p>
	<p><i>Third, is the word with which you associate the object "pencil."</i></p>

We can approach the process of discrimination by introspection into the procession of symbols, ideas, images and fantasies in the mind. We see right away that the participants in this mental procession are not independent of one's life. Symbols are forms or representations of things within the imagination. These symbols have certain meanings for us. We color them ourselves, and we cannot trust them without correctly analyzing them. So there is right knowledge and there is wrong knowledge. Yoga science never asks us to follow anything blindly, but rather to discriminate and to analyze. Learning to discriminate between useful and harmful knowledge is an important facet in the process of introspection.

Freedom from the Bondage of Karma, p. 30

Some of the objects in the mind have been colored as "mine" or "not mine."



With buddhi, you can discriminate between what is "useful" and "not useful."



We come to realize that we are not the same as our thinking process and our minds. We learn to discriminate between the thinker and the thinking process. We tend to identify with the symbols, ideas, imaginings, fantasies and fancies, to feel that they are part of us, and yet we know that in some basic way they are of a different order of reality. We know that there is something in us, an identity which is distinct and separate from all of our mental objects.

Freedom from the Bondage of Karma, pp. 71-72

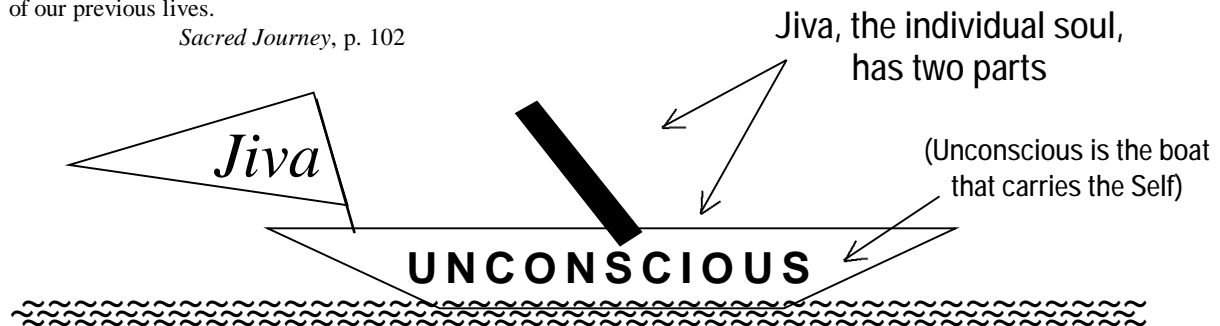
Jiva

When the soul or jiva departs, it is followed by the vital energy, prana. When the prana departs, all the other life supporting organs follow. The breathing system is the vehicle of prana. Physical death is a change, but it does not annihilate the subconscious mind and soul.

The subtle powers of the five organs of action and of the five organs of sense perception, the pranas, the manas, and the buddhi constitute the subtle body. At the time of its rebirth, the soul is accompanied by the subtle body. The gross body dissolves at death, but the subtle body continues to exist.

The subconscious mind, which is the storehouse of merits and demerits, becomes the vehicle for the jiva, or the soul. All the samskaras of our many lives remain in the storehouse of our subconscious mind in a latent state like seeds. The relation between the subtle body and the gross body is akin to that of the seed and the plant. As the seed contains all the qualities of the plant in the seed germ, so the subconscious mind retains all the samskaras of our previous lives.

Sacred Journey, p. 102



It is not the mind that goes through the waking, dreaming, and sleeping states. The mind shares the experiences, but it is actually the jiva, the individual self, which is quite different from the ego, that experiences the waking, dreaming, and sleeping states.

The individual self uses a particular vehicle called the unconscious, which is the reservoir of all the past impressions of mind, action, and speech. As long as the self uses the unconscious as a vehicle, it is called jiva, but the moment the Self renounces the vehicle, it is called pure consciousness. Final liberation takes place when the jiva unites itself with the pure Self, which is the Self of all, exactly as a drop of water unites with and becomes one with the ocean.

No power can cut the eternal Atman into pieces and make a small fragment into a jiva. When we see a particular human being, his form and size, he appears to be separated from the whole, and we call him an individual. But that experience of separation occurs because the ego is not in the habit of acknowledging the whole. That makes one think that the individual soul is only a fragment of the whole. In reality it is not.

When the yogi fathoms all the boundaries from gross to subtle to subtlemost and crosses all the boundaries of individuality, he realizes that there is nothing but the real Self, which is the Self of all.

Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita,
pp. 92, 223, 398

Jiva, the individual soul suffers because the fire of kundalini at the base of the spine is dormant and covered with ashes, and thus remains in a sleeping state. Since the great spiritual fire within every human lies sleeping, the jiva, the individual soul, cannot utilize this higher spiritual energy, and because of this has become a brute.

Whenever the jiva learns of kundalini-shakti, it is a great help. With the help of this force, the jiva attains the highest state of consciousness called paramshiva.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, pp. 152-154

The unconscious mind is used as a vehicle for the individual self, but when the individual self drops all attachments to the unconscious mind, the individual self establishes itself in its essential nature and realizes that its self is the Self of all. Such a state of realization is called liberation, turiya, the very origin of pure consciousness.

Enlightenment Without God, p. 38

What will happen to us after death? Who experiences hell and heaven? It is that unique experience called the individual soul, the unconscious mind, that experiences them. The soul is pure; it is our essential nature; it is pure atman. You are inside a vehicle, the jiva that experiences pain and pleasure. The jiva is the union of atman and the unconscious mind.

The jiva is a vehicle full of memories, desires, and wishes. Atman, when linked to the unconscious mind, is called the jiva. Without the unconscious mind, you are pure atman. That is called moksha, or liberation. The moment you realize that this is your essential nature, that you are pure atman, you are free.

When this occurs you have not lost your identity; you still have your individual identity. You are a nucleus and this universe is your expansion. You are not merely a part of the universe. Atman is not a mere part of Brahman. It is not just a small spark. Atman cannot be diminished.

You are essentially atman, but you need expansion into para-atman. You need to realize this, and not merely through mental analysis. To realize this you have to practice, and to practice you have to understand what creates problems for you and what becomes obstacles in your life. Suffering is a result of ignorance. To know your final goal is to finally leave behind the world of suffering.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II,
pp. 40-42

Expansion and One-pointedness

These may appear to be opposites...this is wrong!

Expansion ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ è è è è **One-pointedness**

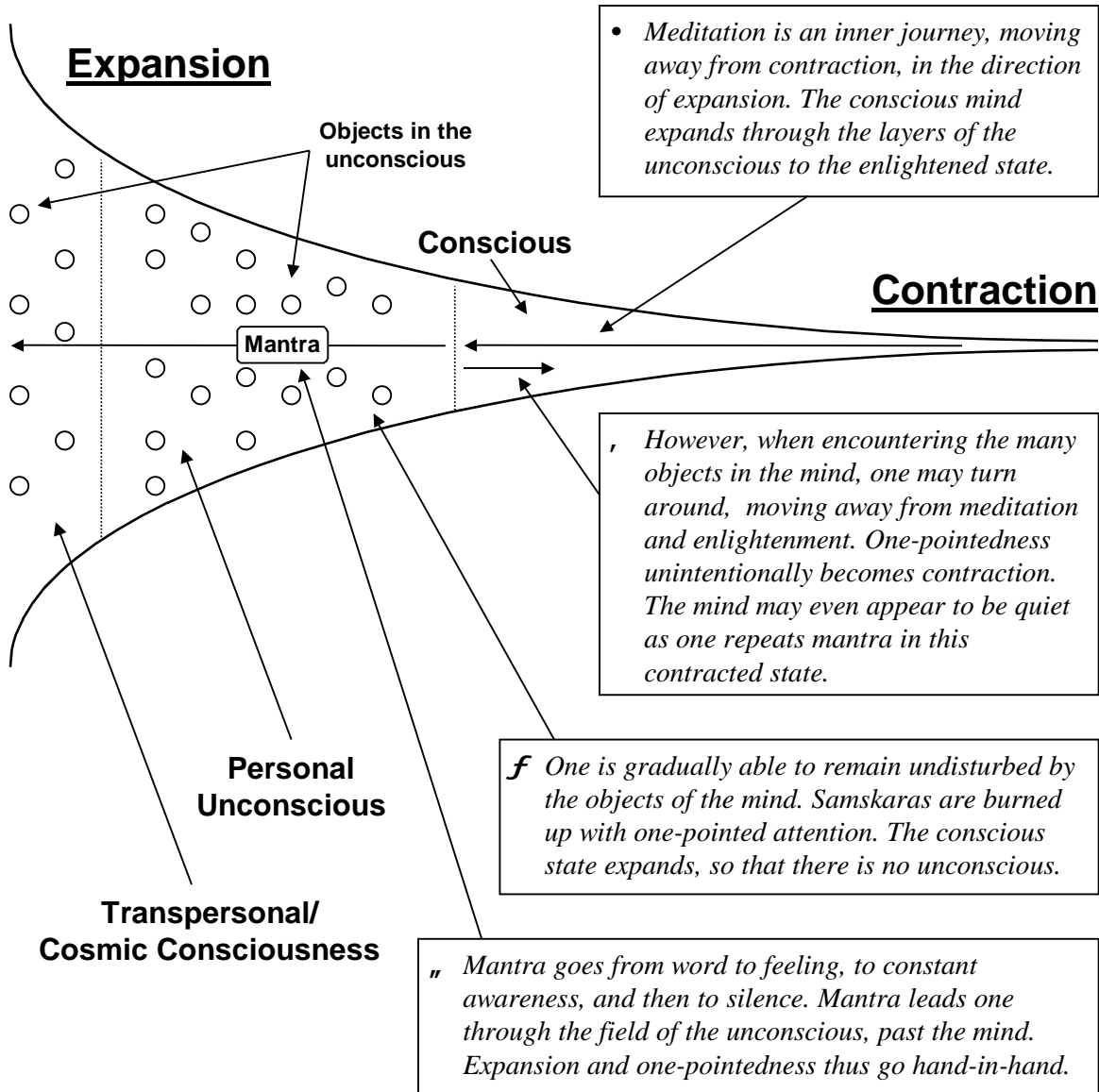
It is expansion and contraction which are opposites.¹

Expansion and one-pointedness go together!²

Expansion ☿ ☿ ☿ ☿ è è è è **Contraction**

&

One-pointedness



¹ Expansion and contraction are mentioned by Swami Rama throughout his books.

² "The waking state can be expanded, but even if you do not want to expand it, then you should still learn how to make your mind one-pointed through meditation on a focal point." (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, p. 63*)

Eight Steps of the Inward Journey

The inward journey is succinctly summarized in Chapters 6 through 8 of *Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*. Swami Rama writes, “Commit yourself to a serious study of this process for at least a year. You have spent many hours and many years in colleges and universities; the question is whether you are willing to devote one year to the real university of knowledge within. This should be your duty, and the time you devote to this study should be very exact.” (p. 144)

You have the capacity and strength to expand your conscious mind with the help of a method that is called “interior research,” the internal journey.

The following self-transformation program, including yoga nidra practice, will definitely help you if you follow it conscientiously and systematically.

1. **Regular practice:** Practice sitting in meditation at the same time every day to create additional patterns, new grooves or habits in the mind.
2. **Internal dialogue:** Learn to have “internal dialogue” with yourself within your mind, making a friend of your own mind.
3. **Posture:** Develop a still, steady, yet comfortable posture for meditation.
4. **Breath:** Develop a pattern of serene breath.
5. **Determination:** The next step is cultivating sankalpa, or determination; that is, establishing your willpower. Before you do something, you have to determine that you will do it, that you have to do it, and that you can do it. That is determination.
6. **Letting go:** Learn to let go of any distracting thought that comes into your mind. It should not remain there. You should not brood on any particular thought, no matter how wonderful or bad it is.
7. **Introspection:** The seventh step is a process of inspecting your thoughts, called introspection, which means seeing which thoughts are worthwhile to cultivate. The yoga manuals talk about two types of thoughts, *klista* and *aklista*. The first is helpful and the latter is harmful and injurious. Helpful thoughts are those that inspire you or encourage your effort. Injurious thoughts involve thinking, for example, that you are good-for-nothing or inferior. These are negative thoughts. You need to inspect your thoughts to determine which help you and which should be eliminated.
8. **Witnessing:** After introspection, the next step is to learn another wonderful process, called “witnessing.” When you have learned to witness the things of the world, when you are not identifying with the things of the world, then you have become a seer.

Some other places where aspects of the inward journey are summarized are: *Meditation and Its Practice*, pp. 13-14, 18-22, 79-94; *Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 99-136, 200-201; *Lectures on Yoga*, pp. 138-141; *Wisdom of the Ancient Sages*, pp. 127-128; *Book of Wisdom*, pp. 31-34; *Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama*, pp. 37-39; *Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama*, pp. 154-156 or *Science of Breath*, pp. 128-129; *A Practical Guide to Holistic Health*, p. 91; *Freedom From the Bondage of Karma*, p. 74; *Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita*, pp. 193-194, 238-241.

Internal Dialogue

Uncontrolled thoughts lead to the asylum, but controlled internal dialogue leads to an understanding of the nature of the mind and helps in the path of meditation and contemplation.

In a monastery novices do not begin with meditation. First students are taught to purify their minds. Modern man is too impatient and wants to master the art of meditation immediately.

Learn to have a dialogue between the observer and that which is being observed. Follow the imagination in this dialogue, analyze and observe the train of mental objects, and slowly control will be gained over these things. We rise above them, and they disappear from the domain of mind.

Freedom from the Bondage of Karma, pp. 9, 73

*“Good morning, mind!
Let’s have a nice chat,
you and I....”*

One’s conscience already knows what is right and wrong, good and bad, helpful and unhelpful. One simply has to tune into his inner conscience, which guides him all the time. That is called seeking counsel within before performing action. In practicing not doing that which is not to be done, one will find that he is being guided from within. Then he can dialogue with his conscience, which is not polluted by the fickleness and feebleness of the mind. Experimenting in this way leads one to understand that the real counselor is within each person.

The first and foremost duty of a true and selfless teacher is to introduce his student to that inner guide which leads one during the waking, dreaming, and sleeping states. When one takes time from his busy life and learns to sit calmly in a quiet place, the inner counselor begins counseling. It would be helpful if therapists and psychologists, as well as priests and spiritual teachers, would learn to listen to the inner counselor and then introduce that inner guide to their clients and students.

Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita, p. 98

The dialogue between the student and the teacher is called “upanishad.” You can also enter into such a dialogue with your own inner Self, if you become a real student, and if you are committed, and have decided that you want to receive knowledge from within.

The Art of Joyful Living, p. 168

If you learn to have an internal dialogue you will become comfortable with yourself. Fears of the outside world, of others, and of circumstances, will disappear.

With any close friend you are interested in their life and you are sensitive to their emotions. You listen to them. Be gentle with yourself, as you would be with any good friend. Don’t condemn yourself or be judgmental.

Sacred Journey, p. 35

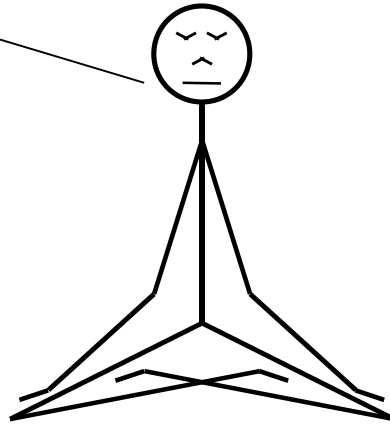
If you do not want to meditate, then do not meditate. You should not have a fight with your mind; you should have a gentle dialogue with your mind. You will learn many things when you enter into self-dialogue.

You do not begin with meditation itself. First you learn to set a regular meditation time, and then to have a dialogue with yourself. If you have a dialogue with yourself for a few minutes or a few hours before you do meditation, then your meditation will be good. If you do not do that, then you use your meditation time for self-dialogue, and then the “meditation” is not really meditation.

Be a close friend to your mind, a very close friend. Let the mind whisper those inner secrets to you, and put all things in front of your mind.

You need to make the mind your friend because it is either a great friend or a great foe. That which is an enemy can be converted into a great friend.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II,
pp. 79, 102, 103, 106, 107, 110



Today you cannot face yourself; you don’t want to know yourself because you are afraid. Once you know how to have this kind of dialogue with yourself, it will help you enormously.

First, you need to understand what you are doing wrong. Next, you need to create new grooves, so that your mind does not automatically flow in its old grooves, but instead begins to flow in the new grooves.

Learn to counsel yourself and have a self-dialogue. Learn to mentally talk to yourself. Sit down and have a dialogue with yourself; ask yourself why you are doing an action. Many times you will say to yourself, “I don’t want to do this, but I have been doing it, so now it’s a routine,” and then you’ll understand the process of habit formation.

With all your idealization of sadhana and gurus and teachers, you have neglected one thing: you need to know something practical. You need to know a practical method of gaining freedom from those weaknesses that you have formed in your childhood, which have become part of your life, and are difficult for you to resolve.

In this kind of training, books can’t help you; nothing external will help you. You need to consider why you often do not do what you really want to do. Put these questions to yourself and you’ll find the answers.

The Art of Joyful Living, pp. 96, 138, 167

Beginning to counsel yourself

How do you begin to counsel yourself? You cannot see an external counselor or therapist every day to solve your problems. First, you should learn to observe and understand something about yourself. One important question is, “Is my first thought good or bad—is it clear or clouded?” You need to learn for yourself, is your first thought a guiding thought or not? Does your second thought guide you more clearly, and does your third thought lead you to confusion or to clarity? This is something you should learn about yourself by observing how your mind operates while self-counseling—to know when you should trust the advice of your mind. When you learn that, it is extremely helpful to you.

The Art of Joyful Living, p. 81

Internal dialogue as contemplation

Inner dialogue, a contemplative method, sometimes replaces meditation. Such dialogues strengthen the faculty of decisiveness and sharpen the buddhi (higher intellect), which can penetrate into the subtleties of the inner levels. The primary step of inner dialogue is a part of contemplation. It inspires the aspirant in his search for knowledge. Knowledge that does not reveal the object as it is, is not knowledge at all, and acquiring mere information is unfulfilling. Nonattachment and practice are the most effective tools in the quest for real knowledge. Contemplation is not a method of escaping from the realities of life; rather through the process of contemplation, one makes a strong mental resolution on which he builds his whole philosophy of life.

*“O mind, witness the world of objects, and observe the impermanence
of those objects you long to achieve, to embrace, and to save.
What difference is there in the objects of dreams and the objects of the waking state?
What reason is there for being attached to the unreal things of the world;
they are like experiences of the dreaming state.
They are constantly changing,
and you have no right to own them, for you can only use them.
O mind, listen to the sayings of the great sages and teachers;
follow in the footprints
of those who have already trod the path of light and enlightenment.
You will find that Truth is that which is unchangeable;
Absolute Reality is that which is beyond the conditioning of time, space and causation.”*

Enlightenment Without God, pp. 103-104

Remaining aware of the reality within

Practicing an internal dialogue can help one remain aware of the reality within while he is doing his actions in the world. One should sit down every morning and talk to himself. This will help him learn more about himself, and knowing about himself, he will not become egotistical. All the ancient scriptures are dialogues. Christ talked with His apostles; Moses talked with the wise men; Krishna talked with Arjuna—these are all dialogues. We should also learn to go through a mental dialogue of our own. You should have dialogue with yourself within your mind every day.

- A conscious process of inner dialogue can pacify one and wash off all his bad feelings.
- Dialogue is one of the finest therapies there is and prepares one for meditational therapy.
- Meditational therapy, if used and understood properly, is the highest of all the therapies and teaches one how to be still on all levels: how to have physical stillness, a calm and even breath, and a calm, conscious mind.
- Then by allowing the unconscious mind to come forward, one can go beyond it, and that inner reality comes to the conscious field and expands.

A Practical Guide to Holistic Health, pp. 122-123

Sushumna Awakening

According to the yogic scriptures, there are 72,000 nadis, or energy channels. Among them, ida, pingala, and sushumna are the most important. As long as the mind is outward, only ida and pingala remain active. But when the mind is calm and tranquil, sushumna, the central channel, is awakened. The joy derived from the mind traveling through the sushumna channel is unique; it cannot be compared with any sensory pleasure. Because of that inner joy, the mind loses its taste for worldly pleasures.

Sushumna application is the most important factor in spiritual practice. The moment sushumna is awakened, the mind longs to enter the inner world. When the flow of ida and pingala is directed toward sushumna, and distractions are thereby removed, meditation flows by itself.

A Call to Humanity, p. 68

In the Kathopanishad, the King of Death says, "One who can enter sushumna at the time of death can attain Brahman, the highest goal of life. All other paths are paths of rebirth. Sushumna is the key point of liberation. From the sahasrara or crown chakra, he rises finally to the realm of the absolute Brahman."

Life Here and Hereafter, p. 109

Put a tape recorder by your nose and inhale and exhale. You will hear the sound "ham-sa," a mantra. This is your breath sound. It means "I am that." The breath is singing the sound, "I am that, I am that, I am that"; you are making a melody of that. The breath is constantly singing this perennial sound, so-ham.

How do we awaken kundalini-shakti? We awaken it in two stages: first by actually awakening it, and second by learning to lead it. To awaken kundalini there is a very small and succinct technique. To awaken the fire, you blow on it. The sound that arises with that blowing is the mantra so-ham, so-ham, so-ham.

*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II,
pp. 140-141, 156*

To begin the process of sushumna awakening, focus the mind on the breath as it is felt between the two nostrils. When both nostrils flow freely, that is called sandhya, the wedding of the sun and the moon, or between pingala and ida. Once this experience can be maintained for five minutes, the student has crossed a great barrier, and the mind has attained some one-pointedness. Then the mind becomes focused inward.

Meditation and Its Practice, pp. 90-91

When students of meditation learn to apply sushumna, then they really start practicing meditation, and meditation becomes a joyful experience.

Choosing a Path, pp. 164-165

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When you attempt sushumna application, ask your mind to focus at the nose bridge. Let your thoughts come and do not be afraid. The whole unconscious mind will become active and bring forward many hidden and forgotten things. Let distracting thoughts come forward, and then allow them to go. You have to go through that process of release in meditation therapy. This is a very good process. After a while, a time will come when no thought patterns disturb you, and you can watch your thoughts. Then, you can witness your whole life. If a disturbing thought comes, you allow it to go away.

The first step in sushumna application is learning to change the flow of breath with your mental ability. There are many mechanical methods by which you can do this, but they are not actually helpful; they are not really recommended. To really accomplish this process, you must learn to create a relaxed focus on the right or left nostril. If the nostril is blocked, but not due to some condition like sinusitis, then when the mind focuses on it, that nostril will become active because of the focus of the mind.

When you have learned to change the flow of the nostrils with your mind, then after some time, a time comes when both nostrils begin flowing evenly. This may take some months or perhaps a year, depending on your capacity and the burning desire within you. When the nostrils flow evenly, the mind cannot worry, because it is disconnected from the senses. Mind does not know how to worry then. It attains a state of joy called sukhamana, the joyous mind. That state of mind is conducive to deep meditation. This is an accurate and effective procedure for you to follow, and it is important not to rush or be impatient.

The science of breath actually ends with sushumna application.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, pp. 121-122

For meditation, the finest of all breathing exercises is sushumna application. When you learn how to apply sushumna, there is no way for your mind to go anywhere but into the inner journey. According to the ancient yoga manuals and the science of yoga, there are three important points in the inward journey. The cream of the yoga science is to learn first to apply sushumna; next to awaken kundalini and lead her to the highest dimension; and then to attain the knowledge of the Absolute. This is the entire purpose of the yoga system.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, p. 122

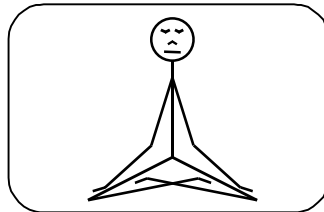
Introspection

The meditator really becomes an internal explorer and investigator, who is studying the internal reactions and processes of the mind, on both the conscious and unconscious levels. The meditator is an interior researcher. Meditation helps you to fully know and understand all the capacities of the mind—memory, concentration, emotion, reasoning, and intuition. Those who meditate begin to understand how to coordinate, balance, and enhance all these capabilities, using them to their fullest potential. Then they go beyond the usual states of mind and consciousness.

Meditation and Its Practice, pp. 54-55

To research the inner world, one needs a burning desire to know his inner potentials and states.

Choosing a Path, pp. 16



Thousands of thoughts remain awaiting to be entertained. The purpose of sadhana is to attend to those thoughts in a systematic manner so that they do not create unrest in the inner world.

Slowly one begins discriminating between helpful thoughts and those unhelpful thoughts. This introspective (inspecting within) method leads one to the next step: witnessing. While one is learning, he must be patient.

Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita, pp. 78, 98-99

The process of inspecting your thoughts, called introspection, means seeing which thoughts are worthwhile to cultivate. The yoga manuals talk about two types of thoughts, klista and aklista. The first is helpful and the latter is harmful and injurious. You need to inspect your thoughts to determine which help you and which should be eliminated.

To be an interior researcher you first need to understand the four states of consciousness: the waking state, the dreaming state, the state of deep sleep, and the state beyond. Once you understand the first three states, then you definitely understand that there is something beyond.

If you do not have determination first, do not inspect your thoughts, because otherwise your thoughts will control you. Then you will see how easily you are distracted. Your mind will create many fantasies and images, one after another.

Your thoughts are people. They are not mere thoughts; they are people within you. You are a world in yourself. You are a universe, and all your thoughts are people. Just as people are born and die, so too, thoughts are born and die.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, pp. 59, 100, 133-136

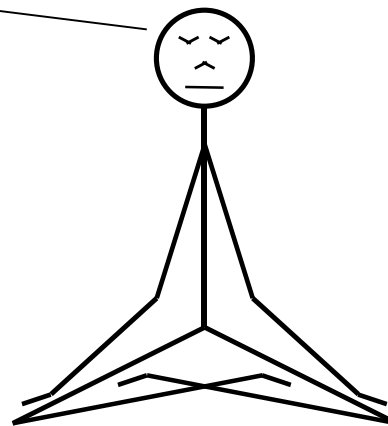
20.12.97 SRintrospect

Learn to introspect, which means “inspection within.” To do this, sit down and observe what you are thinking. You actually already know; you really know all your weaknesses, and actually you are busy hiding them.

To burn your samskaras, you sit in deep meditation, build your determination, and tell your mind and your samskaras, “At this time my mind is *only* for meditation. I have to meditate and learn to go beyond this mire of delusion and confusion created by my mind.” Then, you allow all the impressions to come forward and you don’t get involved with them. That method is called “inspection within,” or introspection.

When you want to study the mind, how do you actually do it? You don’t have any external device or instrument to use to study the mind, so you have to train one of the aspects of your mind to study the totality of the mind. You have to train a part of the mind, so that all the functions of the mind can be studied through the use of that one part.

The Art of Joyful Living, pp. 108, 156, 197-198



By gaining control over the thinking *process* we can gain control over the impressions stored in the mind and eventually over our entire karma. Through introspection, inspection within, one can discover the nature and origin of his thought. Through introspection we can learn to understand and see clearly our habits and their origins. Through introspection we can change our habits and thus change our character and personality.

We need to inspect our thinking process. We must recall that what is going on in our minds is produced by us. We should inspect it and recognize it as our own product. Each person’s thinking is his own creation. We begin by learning to inspect and analyze our own minds. Through analysis, through introspection we learn to discriminate between the thinker and the thinking process. The first step to control and liberation is self-observation.

The first stage of meditation is to clear the mind. It is essential to observe the thinking process and witness the contents of the mind. To establish ourselves in our own basic nature we need to know how to cleanse the mind.

Freedom from the Bondage of Karma, pp. 28-30, 69-74

Fear on the Inner Journey

When you attempt sushumna application, ask your mind to focus at the nose bridge. Let your thoughts come and do not be afraid. The whole unconscious mind will become active and bring forward many hidden and forgotten things. When this happens, people often get upset, thinking that the meditation is disturbing them. But it is not the meditation that causes the disturbance, it is what you have bottled up. You have to go through that process of release in meditation therapy. This is a very good process. Let the distracting thoughts come forward, and then allow them to go. A time will come when no thought patterns disturb you, and you can watch your thoughts. Then, you can witness your whole life.

Do not be afraid to meditate. Be confident that you will not become lost—you are within yourself.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, pp. 76, 122-123

When both nostrils flow freely, that is called sandhya, the wedding of the sun and the moon, or between pingala and ida. This is a delightful moment, in which neither worry, fear nor other negative thoughts can distract the mind.

When there is fear in meditation, the problem often occurs in those who have avoided knowing and becoming aware of their subtle thoughts, desires, suppressions, and repressions, as well as those who want to escape from self awareness, not wanting to analyze or understand their thinking processes. Actually, a student is always safe during his or her meditation periods, because the closer that one is to the Reality and awareness, the safer one becomes. Sincere effort and practicing one's meditation consistently, at a regular time will, with firm determination, help the student to eventually overcome such hurdles and obstacles that arise in one's own mind.

To fear and try to escape from examining one's own thought processes is a serious mistake for a student to make. You should examine all your fears, and then you will find that fears are imaginary and irrational.

Meditation is the highest of all therapies, provided it is systematically practiced. Gradually, one learns to deal with one's own problems, fears, and habit patterns. Every human being has the capacity to advance and is fully equipped to deal even with gigantic problems, provided one follows his or her path with firm determination and sincerity.

Meditation and Its Practice, pp. 90, 93, 100-101, 104

Taking their present condition for granted, most people refuse to explore the possibility of other states of existence. Afraid to explore the unknown and unseen, they emphasize only the existence of the manifest aspect of the Truth.

We must not be afraid to ask questions and find answers. We must not be afraid to discard illusion and embrace the Truth.

A Call to Humanity, pp. 11, 46

If you don't want to know yourself or don't care to know yourself, then no one can force you. But as you grow you will come to a point where you will want to know your deeper Self, and then you become committed to the idea that you will know yourself in this lifetime.

If you learn to have an internal dialogue, you'll never be afraid of yourself, and you'll also never be afraid of anyone else. Today you cannot face yourself; you don't want to know yourself because you are afraid. Once you know how to have that kind of dialogue with yourself, it will help you enormously.

As you examine your fears, you will learn that all your fears are somehow false and based on misunderstandings. There is no truth or reality to your fears. You are afraid to examine your fears, but you should learn to examine each fear, one by one, and to encounter them and then be free of their control.

This process is very important.

Start observing your own mind. Do not try to escape; do not be afraid of your thinking. If anything comes into your mind, and if you do not accept it within the mind, then it is not yours. Even your realization that a thought does not belong to you involves the thought of someone else. What is that thought that is your own thought? No thought is really yours.

Try to consider a single thought that is purely yours. In all of your thoughts, there is either someone else involved or there is an image from outside.

The way to work with your intruding thoughts is to

let each thought come, whether it is good or bad.

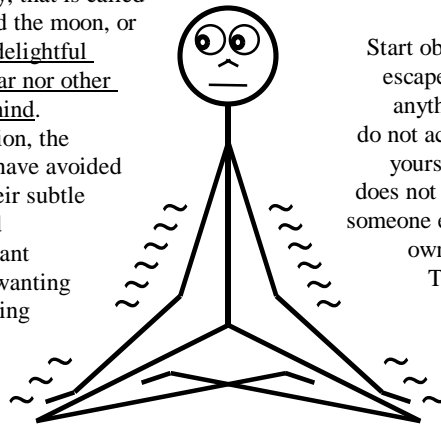
What happens to most people is that any thought that comes into their mind disturbs their whole being. They become afraid because some particular thought is coming into their mind. This may happen to you; thoughts that were hidden or unconscious are no longer hidden and come to your attention, and they disturb you because you react to them emotionally.

All the time you are afraid; fear is a major part of your life. In your entire life, your major motivation is fear, yet you never try to examine your fears. You should sit down and ask your mind what your fears are. If you do that, you'll discover that all your fears are imaginary—all are the result of your imagination.

The Art of Joyful Living,
pp. 15, 87-88, 121, 122, 201

Modern man is trying to kill his conscience. He relies on the feedback from others and is afraid of becoming aware of himself as he really is. One should never condemn himself for thinking a particular thought. No one is a criminal for having bad thoughts. He becomes a criminal when he identifies himself with those thoughts and starts acting according to them—but not before that. If one lets the thoughts pass away, they are gone.

A Practical Guide to Holistic Health, pp. 109-110



Experimenting

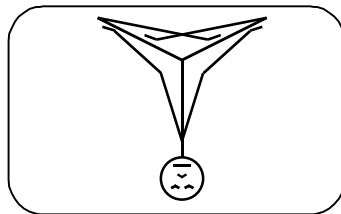
Most students either follow the instructions of their teacher blindly without understanding them, or they just try to understand the instructions intellectually but do not experiment with them and practice to assimilate them correctly. When a teacher imparts knowledge, he wants his student to use his free will, to be courageous, and to make experiments to experience and then to realize what is right for him.

One can develop a dialogue with his conscience, which is not polluted by the fickleness and feebleness of the mind. Experimenting in this way leads one to understand that the real counselor is within each person.

Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita,
pp. 98, 121-122, 457

Do experiments with yourself: how many times does your mind lie and how many times is it accurate? Establish a friendship with your mind on an equal basis, and do not listen to the mind's temptations. Listen to its suggestions, good ideas, and advice, and learn to observe what type of mind you have.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, pp. 108-109



It is shocking to realize that whatever we have learned so far is not ours. That is why it is not satisfying. Even if we have mastered an entire library, still it doesn't satisfy us. However, by experimenting with the knowledge that we have acquired from outside, we can move a step toward enlightenment.

Sacred Journey, pp. 96-97

Throughout your life you have done experiments on matter, mind, and energy, but you have not done enough experiments on the real Self within you. The easiest way to make progress is just to know thyself—to accept and understand yourself on all levels. Once you know the way, become aware of the goal, and have determination, then it's easy for you to understand yourself.

When a desire is fulfilled, you should observe whether it feeds your pride, and if it is not fulfilled, observe whether it feeds your anger. You have to watch yourself carefully for these two reactions. You need to learn to make inner experiments with your own emotions when you seek to work with yourself and go within. To the serious student, there is only one real book to study and learn from—the greatest of all books—and that is the very manuscript that you, yourself, are.

You should continue to do experiments with yourself, and every time you do one, you will find that you are growing and growing.

We all have homes, and our homes are meant for our inner spiritual experiments with ourselves.

The Art of Joyful Living, pp. 24, 56, 74, 103

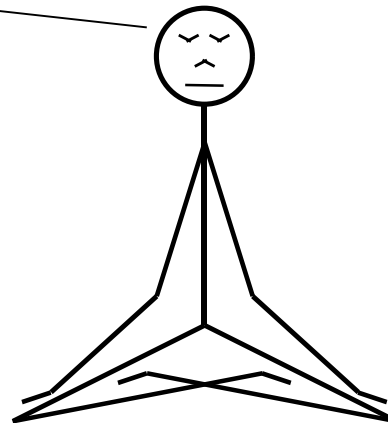
You need to make internal experiments with yourself: you need to train your buddhi to give a correct, clear judgment to your manas. You also have to train your manas to take the advice of buddhi.

If you sincerely want to develop personal strength and willpower, you should first learn to keep yourself open and be an observer of yourself until you observe that your willpower has become dynamic. Instead of making such dramatic resolutions, simply make yourself open to observing yourself and decide to experiment in observing yourself.

There are two different concepts; one is doing an experiment in the external way, and the other involves doing experiments within. That latter system, which leads you to the deeper levels of your being, is an entirely different system. In internal research, you don't have any external means to help you; you have to help yourself.

Within yourself, you have a lab for experimentation, and you can work with yourself. Don't accept the idea that you are bad or weak or incomplete. You are a human being. This imposition of the idea that you are bad or good is due to your habits.

The Art of Joyful Living,
pp. 82, 111, 193-194, 203-204



Discipline means self-learning. I am not talking about knowing; knowing is only a small part of learning. Learning means "to know, to experiment, to experience, and to come to certain conclusions and then be firm." Learning reduces conflict. Conflict comes when you cannot decide anything, when your buddhi cannot make decisions, when you do not know how the ego should be trained and used. That which bothers you is in your mind. That which is to be understood is your mind.

According to our lineage, there are two branches of teachers. One teaches the scriptures, observing austerities, and following the path of renunciation. The other branch is a branch of meditators and contemplators doing documentation experiments and scientifically collecting data on all levels of life—physical, energy level, level of sense perception, the way things are perceived on the mental level, and finally on a spiritual level.

Inspired Thoughts of Swami Rama, pp. 18-19, 254

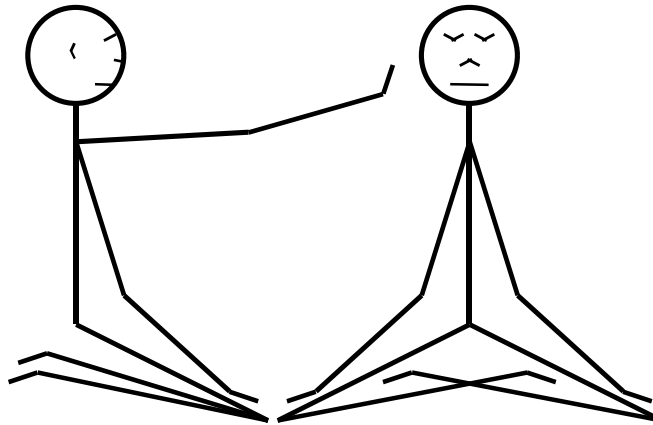
Guru

The student must do his practice, otherwise the teacher cannot do anything. The teacher's responsibility is fifty percent; the other fifty percent is the student's. Where you encounter obstacles then the teacher will help you, but if you don't do your part and you expect the teacher to do his duty, then there's nothing anyone can do.

The path to enlightenment and unfoldment is not really so austere, abstruse, or difficult—it's actually very easy. The easiest way to make progress is just to "know thyself"—to accept and understand yourself on all levels. To know yourself you don't need external crutches; you don't need gurus or teachers to know yourself. Once you know the way, become aware of the goal, and have determination, then it's easy for you to understand yourself. You have every right to understand and enlighten yourself.

If you are not becoming self-reliant, healthy, and happy, then leave your guru.

The Art of Joyful Living, pp. 18, 24, 198



One should not worry about who the guru is, or what the guru will do. The first concern is getting prepared, organizing life and thoughts in a spiritually healthy way. At the right time the master will be there.

Guru is not a person, but guru can be represented in a person. Guru is not a physical being. If a guru begins thinking this power is her or his power, then they are no longer a guide.

Sacred Journey, pp. 81-87

Gurus impart the best of their knowledge in silence. When you are in silence, they communicate with you through silence, and in silence. For the student whose mind is in tune, that teaching is the finest of teachings. This silent communication can happen no matter where you are physically, whether you are 10,000 miles away or very close. When you sincerely tread the path, you will meet one who can help you with all setbacks.

Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II,
pp. 16, 161-162

Guru is a sacred word that has been misused many times in the past and is completely vulgarized today. To declare that "I am a guru" is a false pronouncement; the modern "guru" is a spiritual joke.

The authentic guru-disciple relationship is the highest of all. The relationship between teacher and student also is worthy of reverence, but in no way can a teacher be called a guru.

The actual word that should be used for a guru is gurudeva, which means "that bright being who dispels the darkness of ignorance." The gurudeva represents a noble tradition through which flows pure love inseparably mingled with unalloyed knowledge.

A teacher is like a boat that is the essential means to help one cross the mire of delusion. A seeker should not delude himself and believe that by accepting someone as a guru or becoming a disciple, he does not have to practice, that he will become enlightened without any effort.

Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita, pp. 45, 49

Guru is frequently considered to be merely someone who is trained in philosophy, meditation, and hatha yoga, and is expected to share his knowledge with the students, training them in scriptures and various spiritual disciplines. While the student may become dependent on the teacher and have high expectations about what the teacher should do on behalf of the student, the guru is nonetheless viewed as a teacher only.

Guru is much more than a teacher. He or she represents the special energy that is guiding individuals toward their fulfillment as human beings, toward perfection. Grace is the impulse of that energy. The word "guru" is a compound of two words, "gu" and "ru." "Gu" means "darkness" and "ru" means light. That light which dispels the darkness of ignorance is called guru. The energy and the action of removing darkness are guru. Guru is not a person; it is a force driven by grace.

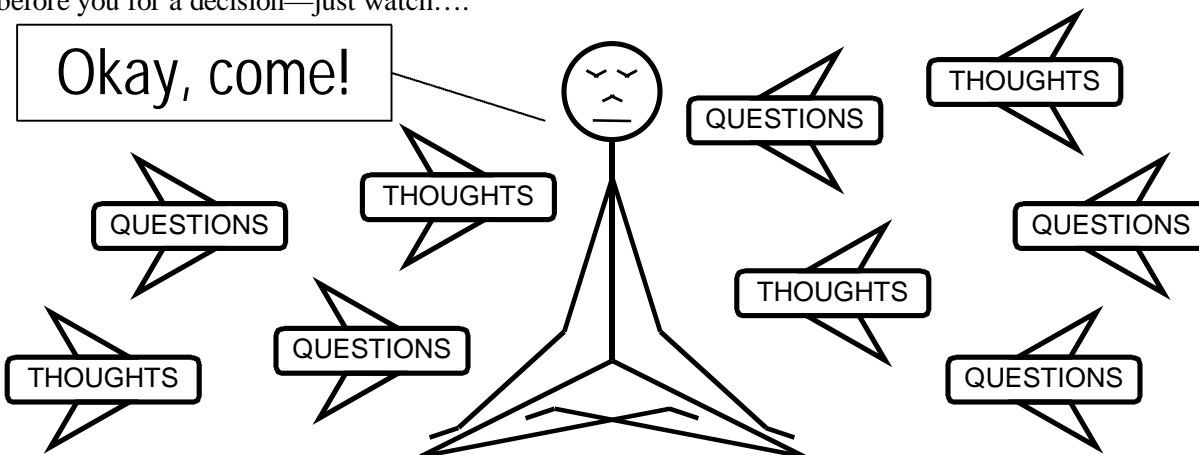
Living with the Himalayan Masters,
pp. 391-394

Thoughts and Questions

In meditation, you sit down quietly and repeat your mantra. During that period of meditation your mind remains one-pointed, but after that, your mind goes back again to its same previous grooves. This is not the full process of meditation; the full process of meditation is a whole life process.

“Meditation” means “to attend.” It means attention to the whole of life. It should not be a strenuous act; it should not be forced. Your whole life can be one of meditation....People often ask how they can do this. My method is to consider some question that is on my mind....I have questions concerning the welfare of my students, because that is my life’s work....For example, perhaps I think of someone is a very quiet person, and I want him to become a good teacher. Perhaps this question comes to me: “What shall I do with him? What shall I tell him?”

When such questions that are pending in my mind come to me, I say to them, “Okay, come.” What *you* do when such thoughts come, is to try to think of your mantra. This means that you try to use your mantra to avoid and escape from certain situations. Then, when you have done your mantra for a while, your mind again goes back to the same worry. That is not helpful; instead, let everything come before you for a decision—just watch....



Early in the morning, right after I get up, I go to the bathroom and prepare for meditation, and then I sit down....I ask my mind what I have to do, and then I set up a dialogue with myself....

Sit down quietly and ask yourself, “What do I want?” When you do this, you will find that there are two types of desires: the simple daily wants, and the higher desires. The two types of desires are mingled together....Do not let yourself suppress [the mundane thoughts] by reacting, “Oh, what I am thinking! I should not think like that!” That is not helpful: instead, let the thought come before you and become a sort of observer. Start observing your own mind. Do not try to escape; do not be afraid of your own thinking....The way to work with intruding thoughts is to let each thought come, whether it is good or bad. Simply decide that whatever comes, you will not be disturbed....

Before I practice meditation, I allow all such thoughts, both “good” and “bad,” to come into my mind and then go away, because they are only thoughts....

The first lesson in this practice is to simply allow the thoughts to arise. Then, secondly, bring back before yourself that which is important. You can do this; it does not require any advanced practice of meditation....

In my practice, when all the thoughts have gone through the mind, then I sit down and start to remember my mantra. Usually you try to remember your mantra from the very beginning, and there are those thoughts waiting for your consultation, but you do not pay attention to them. Then, the thoughts are coming and going in your mind and you are trying to repeat your mantra, and the more the thoughts come, the more you repeat your mantra, and the result is an internal battle. That is not helpful; you need not do that.

—*The Art of Joyful Living*, pp. 119-125

Use of Mantra

<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chanting mantra aloud • chanting mantra internally 	<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parrot-like repetition • repetition with feeling
<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeating mantra with conscious willpower • allowing mantra to arise and repeat itself 	<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intentionally repeating mantra fast • allowing mantra to come at its own speed
<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with mala (using the active senses) • without mala (<i>not</i> using the active senses) 	<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • counting mantras • <i>not</i> counting mantras
<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mantra as word/meaning • mantra as a feeling • mantra as constant awareness • mantra as soundless sound, silence 	<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>not</i> allowing mantra to “lead” you to silence • allowing mantra to “lead” you to silence
<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • internally “speaking” or “reciting” the mantra • internally “listening to” or “remembering” the mantra 	<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pushing away thoughts with mantra • allowing thoughts to go through the mind before remembering the mantra
<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach that “japa” means <i>reciting</i> mantra • approach that “japa” means <i>listening to</i> mantra 	<p>more external (gross)</p> <p>↕</p> <p>more internal (subtle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach that “ajapa” japa means automatic <i>repetition</i> of mantra • approach that “ajapa” japa means constant <i>awareness</i> of mantra

The subtle aspects of mantra

A mantra has four bodies or *koshas* (sheaths). First, as a word, it has a meaning; another more subtle form is its feeling; still more subtle is a deep, intense and constant awareness or presence, and the fourth or most subtle level of the mantra is soundless sound. Many students continue repeating or muttering their mantra throughout life, but they never attain a state of ajapa japa—the state of constant awareness without any effort. Such a student strengthens his awareness, but meditates on the gross level only.

—*The Art of Joyful Living*, p. 231

Mantra should be repeated with meaning and feeling; parrot-like repetition is not of much use. Repeating mantra merely with the rosary [mala] and tongue is a very inferior sadhana. It won't do merely to complete a given count

—*Book of Wisdom*, p. 33

To go to the subtler aspect of mantra, then you, like the sages, must go to the silence. You go to the silence, you go to the silence, you go to the silence.

—*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 140, 164

My way of using the mantra is different from yours, because I do not want to fool around with the process. I sit down, and I observe my whole being listening to the mantra. I do not remember the mantra or repeat the mantra mentally, because then the mind repeats many things. Instead I make my whole being an ear to hear the mantra, and the mantra is coming from everywhere. This will not happen to you immediately in meditation, but when you have attained or accomplished something, then this will happen to you.

—*The Art of Joyful Living*, pp. 127-128

Clearing the clouded mind

The mind usually remains clouded, confused, and undisciplined in the *external* world, where everything seems to move and change. Because the mind itself is confused, even learning how to collect data correctly, or accurately perceive the external world, is a serious problem. For meditators, it becomes possible to collect the data and impressions *exactly as they are*. Such a person sees things *clearly*, while in contrast, the *clouded* mind remains distorted and dissipated.

—*Meditation and Its Practice*, pp. 91-92

When the senses are *untrained*, they will give you distorted input and that creates constant confusion within. If you have accepted that there is confusion in your mind, and if you understand that, then nothing will lead you astray. But if you *don't* have that understanding, and if you *enjoy* that confusion, then your mind will create chaos within. That confuses you even more, and there will be *no end* to your confusion.

—*The Art of Joyful Living*, p. 163

Purifying buddhi is the most important task

Saucha means cleanliness and purity, both of the body and the mind. Purity of the body is easily practiced, but purity of the mind needs a sincere, honest, and constant effort. And once purity of mind is attained, *then one is fully prepared* for the inner voyage. To achieve this state, one should cultivate constant awareness by being mindful all the time. To purify the buddhi, or the faculty of discrimination is the most important task.

When one remains always aware of one's thoughts and learns to discriminate between pure and impure thoughts, helpful and disturbing thoughts, he develops the sense of determination and strengthens his will, and thus does not allow the seeds of impure thoughts to grow within. When the faculty of discrimination is sharpened and a student knows that impure thoughts lead to greater bondage and create obstacles, he then strengthens the pure thoughts.

—*Choosing a Path*, p. 125

Scriptures, sages, and self-study

Svadhya is a study leading to the knowledge of Self-realization. This study is conducted on two dimensions and not simply by studying the sayings of the great sages, or the scriptures. The sayings of the great sages do inspire and support the student in the pursuit of his practices. But studying one's own thoughts, emotions, deeds, and actions is the real study. The scriptures and other books of spiritual value help the student, for many great sages and yogis who have trodden the path of enlightenment have imparted their direct experience, and such knowledge is very helpful, especially when the student faces obstacles on the path. Mere study of the scriptures is the sort of information that is really not knowledge, but only a part of knowing. We intellectually know many things, yet our ignorance is not dispelled.

By self-study, or studying within and without, we experience directly that which dispels the darkness of avidya, or ignorance. The great sages, the yogis, impart their practical experience, and this rational acceptance of spiritual truths leads the student to the higher state, the source of intuition. The finest source of all knowledge opens itself and then the true understanding of life and its purpose is understood. Only when one has carefully learned the study of his own internal states will the true knowledge of the Self begin to dawn.

—*Choosing a Path*, pp. 127-128

Advancing in Meditation

A time comes when meditation stirs the unconscious mind and brings forward hidden impressions. It *quickens* the method of analyzing, understanding, and surveying the unconscious.

—*Enlightenment Without God*, p. 92)

If you are emotional, use anahata chakra, the center between the two breasts. If you are intellectual, or think much, use ajna chakra, the breath chakra, between the two eyebrows. In no way, at this point, should you meditate on the crown chakra, or any lower chakra. If you meditate on the crown, on sahasrara chakra, you might hallucinate.

There is a tiny circle on the space between the two eyebrows. In the center of the circle, there is an unflinching, milky white flame steadily burning. Sound and light come from within. Either you should strengthen visualization or you should engage your mind in listening to the sound coming from within. Those who listen to the sound within begin to hear the anahata nada, the inner sound. When an aspirant is able to make his whole being into an ear, he hears the sound of anahata nada. Finally, you'll hear the sound like OM; your whole being vibrates from within, though your body is still. Your mind is being led by the mantra, toward the silence. When your mind is not following the subtle sound of the mantra, then it becomes aware of the illumination of ajna chakra.

Suddenly your mind enters into something like a tunnel, that leads you to the gateway of sahasrara chakra, the thousand-petaled lotus.

—*First Step Toward Advanced Meditation* (audio tape)

When the consciousness of the mantra is deepened, the mantra is able to guide the mind in the inner world. The student is then taught to be aware of the inner light that already burns without flickering. The light which is within us is the finest and best form upon which to meditate. The mind then begins to see clearly; it is no longer clouded. Then the light of consciousness and mantra become one, because at that stage the mantra is not actually remembered, but its meaning and feeling are revealed. When one develops the feeling of constant awareness of the mantra, it unites with the mainstream of consciousness where light and sound are inseparably mingled. In a higher stage sound and light are united, and in the highest state pure Consciousness alone exists.

—*Perennial Psychology of the Bhagavad Gita*, p. 246

Bindu means a point or a dot, and in bindu-bhedana the bindu is visualized at the ajna chakra as a tiny transparent pearl until the vision is clear. Then the visualized pearl-like bindu is moved to the sahasrara chakra. In this practice the bindu is regarded as the essence of the mind, and the mind is enriched by direct contact with the resulting superconscious state.

—*Lectures on Yoga*, p. 116

Summary of Practices

1. *Practice self-observation in daily life*

- Watch the mind's functioning through actions and speech, beginning with observation of gestures and body language.
- Observe the thinking process within, including the interaction of the four functions of mind, the ten senses, emotions, desires or expectations, and the four primitive fountains.

2. *Dialogue with your mind as a friend*

- Use internal dialogue for contemplation, self-counseling, and friendship.
- Dialogue before meditation—if you don't want to meditate, then dialogue.

3. *Meditate in silence*

Preparation

- Prepare the body physically—bathe or wash your face, hands, and feet.
- You will feel most comfortable if you empty the bowels and bladder.
- Have a regular time and place, and a good environment for meditation.

Stretches

- Simple stretches
- Joints and glands exercises
- Hatha postures (A comprehensive daily routine is in *Choosing a Path*, pp. 131-132)

Relaxation (*Meditation and Its Practice, Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*)

- Tension/release relaxation
- Complete relaxation in corpse posture
- 61-points

Breathing (*Meditation and Its Practice, Path of Fire and Light, Vols. I & II, Science of Breath*)

- Breath awareness—removal of irregularities
- Diaphragmatic breathing, even breathing
- Two-to-one breathing
- Complete breath
- Kapalabhati
- Bhastrika
- Nadi Shodhana

Meditation

- Breath along the spine
- Sushumna awakening—bridge of the nostrils
- Listen to mantra or *So Hum* mantra
- Space between breasts or eyebrows
- Go to the silence

4. *Complementary daily practices*

- Agnisara (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, Chapter 11*)
- Yoga nidra (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II, Chapter 11*)
- Memory exercise (*The Art of Joyful Living, Chapter 7*)

Yoga Nidra

In the state of samadhi you are fully conscious; you are free. Your consciousness is fully expanded. In deep sleep, you are very close to samadhi, but you are not conscious. Through yoga nidra you can have conscious sleep. Yoga nidra is a state between sleep and samadhi. It is a half-sleep and half-waking state. It is not a waking state, and it is not really a sleep state. It is a state where you can gain complete rest and a little bit of sleep, but remain fully awake.

Normally your mind does not have sufficient capacity because you have cultivated only a small part of it, but in yoga nidra your field goes beyond the waking, dreaming, and sleeping states. The mind is not in turiya itself, but it is between turiya, the fourth state, and sleep

Yoga nidra is the safest practice in the world. There is no method better than yoga nidra, which is yogic sleep.

—*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 179-198

The yogis use the state of yoga nidra to go into a deep state of voluntary sleep in order to simultaneously realize the three manifest states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and sleep. In this state, the clarity of mind is more profound than in the waking state.

The aspirant strengthens his practice of meditation and contemplation and learns to analyze and resolve all his desires, thoughts, and feelings through the practice of yoga nidra. He attains a state in which he consciously learns to place his mind in deep rest. The yogis use this state for sleep and meditation both. Except through meditation and yoga nidra, one cannot give rest to the totality of the mind.

Careful vigilance and observation lead the student to study the incoming thoughts from the unconscious mind. The yogis recall all their samskaras, watch them, examine, and even select and reject them according to their need. Those thought patterns that are disturbing are rejected by the yogis, and those that are helpful are strengthened. A deep study of these three states—waking, dreaming, and sleeping—reveals that, with the help and practice of yoga nidra, one can go beyond all the levels of the unconscious.

In yoga nidra, the corpse posture (shavasana) alone is recommended.

—*Enlightenment Without God*, pp. 55-65

Different methods of Yoga Nidra

You will want to carefully study the texts about yoga nidra and its practice. There are many fine and subtle points which can be missed if you read only casually.

- For yoga nidra itself, there is a three step sequence of attention on the eyebrow center, then the throat center (while visualizing the moon), and finally on the heart center, the space between the breasts. (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, p. 196)
- Practice the 61-points exercise (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 183-186); then do shithali karana (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 186-191, 196-198); then do yoga nidra as above.
- Another method is to do diaphragmatic breathing for twenty inhalations and exhalations; then feel as though you are inhaling by visualizing an incoming wave of the ocean and exhaling by emptying yourself with the wave going back to the ocean. After ten or fifteen breaths, do the 61-points exercise. Then learn to divest yourself of thoughts, feelings, and desires, but see that you do not touch the brink of sleep. (*Enlightenment Without God*, p. 64)

Shithali karana

Shithali karana is a deeper exercise than 61-points. Exhale from the crown of the head to the toes, and inhale from the toes to the crown ten times. Do the same with the ankles and knees. Then only five times to the perineum, navel, heart center, throat, bridge between the nostrils. Then from the space between the eyebrows to the bridge between the nostrils at least ten times. Then reverse the process, coming back to the toes. (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, 186-191)

61-points exercise

Lie in shavasana, the corpse posture, with a small pillow under your head. Begin with overall body awareness; then turn your awareness to your breath; then take your awareness through each of the parts of the body listed below (*Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 183-186).

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. center of the forehead | 17. left wrist joint | 33. center of the abdomen | 49. tip of left big toe |
| 2. throat center | 18. tip of left thumb | 34. right hip joint | 50. tip of left second toe |
| 3. right shoulder joint | 19. tip of left index finger | 35. right knee joint | 51. tip of left middle toe |
| 4. right elbow joint | 20. tip of left middle finger | 36. right ankle joint | 52. tip of left fourth toe |
| 5. right wrist joint | 21. tip of left ring finger | 37. tip of right big toe | 53. tip of left little toe |
| 6. tip of right thumb | 22. tip of left little finger | 38. tip of right second toe | 54. left ankle joint |
| 7. tip of right index finger | 23. left wrist joint | 39. tip of right middle toe | 55. left knee joint |
| 8. tip of right middle finger | 24. left elbow joint | 40. tip of right fourth toe | 56. left hip joint |
| 9. tip of right ring finger | 25. left shoulder joint | 41. tip of right little toe | 57. center of the abdomen |
| 10. tip of right little finger | 26. throat center | 42. right ankle joint | 58. navel center |
| 11. right wrist joint | 27. heart center | 43. right knee joint | 59. heart center |
| 12. right elbow joint | 28. right breast | 44. right hip joint | 60. throat center |
| 13. right shoulder joint | 29. heart center | 45. center of the abdomen | 61. center of the forehead |
| 14. throat center | 30. left breast | 46. left hip joint | |
| 15. left shoulder joint | 31. heart center | 47. left knee joint | |
| 16. left elbow joint | 32. navel center | 48. left ankle joint | |

Agnisara

You should know, understand, and do agnisara. It is a very unique and useful exercise that has the benefits of all the other exercises. If you cannot do any other physical exercise on a particular day, at least do this one exercise. It cures many diseases.

Agnisara is different from the stomach lift and it is important not to confuse it. Unlike the stomach lift, which focuses at the navel center, agnisara is an exercise for the lower abdomen and pelvic region. It is called “agnisara” because it energizes the entire solar system of the body. The solar system is the largest network in the human body and agnisara provides warmth to this entire system.

- To do agnisara, stand with your feet about six inches apart and rest the weight of your body through your arms on your knees, keeping the back relaxed.
- Then as you exhale, contract the muscles in the *lower* abdomen and pull them *in* and *up*.
- As you inhale, you gently *release* the muscles, *allowing* the lower abdomen to return to its natural position.

When you pull in the abdomen it helps you to expel all the waste gasses of the lungs. When you allow the abdomen to come out, it creates more space in your lungs for oxygen. You should make this exercise a habit.

To do agnisara correctly, coordinate it with your normal breathing. You exhale, pulling in and up and you inhale and release. Exhaling, you contract the lower abdominal muscles and the area just above the pelvis, drawing them inward and upward, more tightly; and then inhaling, you release. it is not a stomach lift; it involves the lower abdomen. This is the real agnisara.

The exercise starts with the pelvis and ends at the pelvis. If you can do agnisara 100 to 150 times a day, you do not need any other exercise. You will have so much energy you will feel like you are floating. It creates perfect digestion and terrific energy. You will become more efficient in any field. Begin the practice of agnisara with twenty-five repetitions and increase to beyond a hundred. This exercise should not be done by pregnant or menstruating women.

Nadi Shodhana

There are many variations of nadi shodhana, or alternate nostril breathing. To learn alternate nostril breathing is a simple process which is very effective for helping to calm the nervous system and prepare the mind for meditation. Start with method #1 below, first exhaling with the active (more “open”) nostril, then inhale with the passive nostril. After about two months, add the second and third methods until you are doing some of all three. Nadi shodhana is more thoroughly discussed in *Meditation and Its Practice*, pp. 70-77, 120-121.

Method #1		Method #2		Method #3	
Active	Passive	Active	Passive	Active	Passive
Eê		Eê		Eê	
	Ié	Ié		Ié	
Eê			Eê	Eê	
	Ié		Ié	Ié	
Eê		Eê		Eê	
	Ié	Ié		Ié	
	Eê		Eê		Eê
Ié			Ié		Ié
	Eê	Eê		Eê	
Ié		Ié		Ié	
	Eê		Eê		Eê
Ié			Ié		Ié
E=exhale		E=exhale		E=exhale	
I=inhale		I=inhale		I=inhale	

Memory Exercise

Presently, your memory is blocked; when the passages between the conscious mind and the unconscious mind are blocked it is because you do not know how to handle the rush of thoughts and information coming into your conscious mind.

Begin by counting from one to a hundred without saying the numbers out loud, at the speed of one digit a second. Note the interruption and the kind of interruption that takes place—they tell you about your mental suppressions or procrastination. Consider the origins of these disturbances and in this way you will learn many things about yourself. Eventually extend up to a thousand and then back. When you can do that without interruption, you’ll find that your mind has become very sharp. There is no doubt about the effect of this exercise. The exercise itself doesn’t take much time—perhaps only ten or fifteen minutes. You should do such an exercise for at least two minutes every day.

A serious student must learn to train the mind. If you have not paid this price, and have not disciplined yourself in some way or another, you’ll never understand the importance of discipline. And if you allow the mind to roam and wander wherever it wants, you’ll never achieve much in your meditative training. You have to learn to direct that great force of the mind in a specific way. If you carefully observe the process, you will understand the use of either a geometrical figure or the digital counting system. If you cannot initially count and maintain concentration to a thousand, or if you have a problem with your memory, then begin with counting to one hundred.

Working to train and discipline the mind with such simple exercises can definitely improve memory and concentration, and these are important first steps in all training of the mind. A serious student must learn to train the mind.

The Art of Joyful Living, pp. 131-148

Observing yourself

“Meditation” means to “attend.” It means attention to the whole of life. It should not be a strenuous act; it should not be forced. Your whole life can be one of meditation. Instead of making dramatic resolutions, simply make yourself open to observing yourself and decide to experiment in observing yourself. Once purity of mind is attained, then one is fully prepared for the inner voyage. To achieve this state of purity of mind, one should cultivate constant awareness by being mindful all the time. To purify the buddhi, the faculty of discrimination, is the most important task.

Attention is the key point that leads you to concentration, then to meditation, and then to samadhi. Mindfulness means paying attention. You have to pay attention to the thing you are doing, and you have to learn to train your mind. This is a very preliminary step and you have to learn that first.

In doing practices of mindfulness, internal dialogue, and meditation, including introspection and witnessing, it is extremely useful to have a road-map. Otherwise, the mind can just toss and turn in a confused sort of “dialogue” while one is struggling to be “mindful.”

The concepts listed below are important working tools for your practice—they are not just background information. As you come to understand these concepts, you will enjoy knowing and using them, as you also come to know and be friends with your own mind.

You may want to photocopy this sheet and keep it with you in a pocket until you have learned the concepts. Use the principles often each day to observe your thoughts, words, and actions, as well as your gestures and body language. After you have learned them, mentally scan all of the items from time to time during the day as a means of cultivating mindfulness.

Choose one of the 40 items, and for a day (or a week) observe it in all aspects in the external and internal world. Notice how actions, speech, and thoughts are related, and how that one item also affects the others. Pay particular attention to how the four functions of mind are affected. Check off that item, and on the following day (or week), select another item from a different group and then observe that one item.

Yamas & niyamas

Yamas:

- Non-violence (ahimsa)
- Truthfulness (satya)
- Non-stealing (asteya)
- Continence (brahmacharya)
- Non-materialism (aparigraha)

Niyamas:

- Purity (saucha)
- Contentment (santosha)
- Training senses (tapas)
- Study (svadhyaya)
- Surrender (ishvara pranidhana)

Five elements

- Earth/solidity/form (prithivi)
- Water/flow/fluidity (apas)
- Fire/energy/power (agni, tejas)
- Air/lightness/airiness (vayu)
- Space/ether/existence/beingness (akasha)

Ten Senses

Five Cognitive:

- Hearing
- Touching
- Seeing
- Tasting
- Smelling

Five Active:

- Speaking
- Grasping
- Moving
- Reproducing
- Eliminating

Four functions of mind

- Manas
- Chitta
- Ahamkara
- Buddhi

Streams of emotion

The prime emotion:

- Desire/expectation (kama)

If desire *is* fulfilled:

- Pride (muda)
- Attachment (moha)
- Greed (lobha)

If desire is *not* fulfilled:

- Anger (krodha)
- Jealousy (matsarya)

If desire *is* or *is not* fulfilled:

- Egoism (ahamkara)

Four primitive fountains

- Food
- Sleep
- Sex
- Self-preservation

Daily Goals

In *The Art of Joyful Living* (pp. 128-129), Swami Rama suggests that one develop thirty goals for thirty days, and pick one for each day. These should be small points, but things you work on steadily. For example, you may decide that today you are not going to lie. That does not mean that you will redouble your lies tomorrow, but rather, that today your whole thinking process is about this: that you are not going to lie. You never claim that you will be able to speak the total Truth, but simply decide that you are not going to consciously lie.

If you adopt thirty points to work on for thirty days, you can just watch what you have accomplished in thirty days' time. The point is not, for instance, whether you have lied or not lied: it is that you have built your willpower. This is the real process of building willpower. After thirty days you will conclude, "Yes, I have done what I wanted to do." But do not choose big principles that you cannot fulfill—that is destructive. Instead, select little things.

Later, you may want to do this experiment of "thirty goals for thirty days" using a separate list of goals which you make up yourself, but for now, you will find the following to be a useful practice. You might want to write a few words or sentences each day about what you have observed. Start by using the number on the list which matches today's date. Check-off the goal at the end of the day.

1. Lovingly serve others today.
2. Observe *one* of the yamas (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence or Brahmacharya, non-materialism), directing your actions and speech, while observing your thoughts.
3. Allow your actions to come from conscious choice rather than as a result of habit.
4. Observe *one* of the niyamas (purity, contentment, training senses, self-study, surrender)
5. Observe all of your actions and ask yourself, "why am I doing this action?"
6. Observe *one* of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space), externally and internally.
7. Witness everything, external and internal.
8. Observe *one* of the five cognitive senses (hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling).
9. Be aware of your breath today, noticing its qualities and how it relates to thoughts and emotions.
10. Observe *one* of the five active senses (speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, eliminating).
11. Notice how fears can control you, and how fears are related to imagination.
12. Observe *one* of the four functions of mind (manas, chitta, ahamkara, buddhi).
13. Speak very little today—only what is accurate, purposeful, and non-hurting.
14. Observe your reactions when a desire, expectation, want, or need *is* or *is not* fulfilled.
15. Observe your gestures and body language, noticing how they reflect thoughts and emotions.
16. Observe *one* of the yamas (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence or Brahmacharya, non-materialism), directing your actions and speech, while observing your thoughts.
17. Practice one-pointedness, paying attention to whatever you are doing today.
18. Observe *one* of the niyamas (purity, contentment, training senses, self-study, surrender)
19. Resolve that today "I will love everyone and not hate anyone today."
20. Observe *one* of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, space), externally and internally.
21. Observe whether your "first thoughts" or "second thoughts" are good or bad, clear or clouded.
22. Observe *one* of the five cognitive senses (hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling).
23. Be aware of the principle of meditation in action.
24. Observe *one* of the five active senses (speaking, grasping, moving, reproducing, eliminating).
25. Be aware of how you adjust to changing circumstances around you.
26. Observe *one* of the four functions of mind (manas, chitta, ahamkara, buddhi).
27. Observe how you relate to other people.
28. Observe your reactions when a desire, expectation, want, or need *is* or *is not* fulfilled.
29. Notice which thoughts coming into your mind are "useful" or "not useful."
30. Choose one of the primitive fountains (food, sleep, sex, self-preservation) and observe how it affects your other desires, emotions, thoughts, speech, and actions.
31. Witness everything, external and internal (in months which have 31 days).

Daily Internal Dialogues

Internal dialogue step is a very important step, but is one that few students understand. To succeed in meditation you have to develop this important step. You do not begin with meditation itself. First you learn to set a regular meditation time, and then to have a dialogue with yourself. In this process you are coming in contact with your inner, internal states. You are learning about the subtle aspects of your mind, your own conscience, and at the same time you are also training yourself.

As you develop the practice of internal dialogue, you will dialogue about many subjects. You will not just have a single dialogue on a single topic—internal dialogue will become a normal way of relating to your own mind. However, to help you get started in this practice, you may find it useful to have a specific topic with which to start the dialogue. Start by using the number on the list which matches today's date. Remember, you are having a “dialogue” with your mind, a two-way communication, not just a “monologue,” merely talking in the presence of your mind—rather, the conscious, waking state “you” is having a “conversation” with your vast unconscious. Use the suggestions below to start the dialogue and then allow the “conversation” to expand naturally. Check-off the dialogue practice at the end of the day.

The subject of internal dialogue is well described in *Path of Fire and Light, Vol. II*, pp. 102-110.

1. Dialogue with yourself about mistakes you have made. Don't condemn yourself or be judgmental.
2. When sitting for meditation, *ask* your mind to go to, and to heal aching parts. When you attempt sushumna application, *ask* your mind to focus on the nose bridge.
3. *Ask* yourself, “what do I want?” Raise questions about the purpose of life.
4. Explain to your mind that it is too worldly and materialistic.
5. Train the senses by using dialogue; actually dialogue with the individual ten senses.
6. *Ask* yourself if you want to meditate, to explore, to know yourself, and to choose your habits.
7. *Ask* how you think, why you are emotional, and what the problems are with your mind.
8. Establish a relationship, a friendship with your mind; learn to love by being gentle with yourself.
9. *Ask* yourself, “what do I want?” This may relate to small things or to the purpose of life.
10. Tell the mind that it has become dissipated, and should tread the path of light, love, and devotion.
11. Self-counsel about negative emotions. When upset, *ask*, “why am I thinking like this?”
12. *Ask* your mind to open a blocked nostril for you. *Ask* your mind to flow with the breath.
13. Consider some problem and *ask* your mind “what are some solutions? what should I do?”
14. Dialogue with that whatever is being observed, including mental objects and thoughts.
15. *Ask* yourself, “what do I want?” Remind yourself of your real identity.
16. *Ask* yourself why you are doing certain actions. How do the actions reflect thoughts and emotions?
17. Say to your mind, “please be my friend.” How does your mind respond?
18. *Ask* your mind what you have to do. *Ask* why you sometimes do not do what you want to do.
19. When distracting thoughts come, remind yourself of your purpose; tell yourself that this thought or desire is distracting and will lead you to a fantasy.
20. *Ask* “does my ego get in my way or not?” Spend a few minutes simply being honest with yourself.
21. *Ask* yourself, “what do I want?” This may relate to small things or to the purpose of life.
22. *Ask* why you become emotionally disorganized, forget things, and do not attend to things properly.
23. When sitting for meditation, say to your mind, “mind, please go beyond the senses.”
24. While doing breathing practices *ask* your mind to “please flow with the breath.”
25. Make a contract with the mind to let the mind whisper those inner secrets to you, and put all things in front of your mind. Discuss this “contract” with your mind.
26. *Ask* the mind why it disturbs you in meditation. How can meditation be improved?
27. *Ask* yourself, “what do I want?” You will learn many things when you dialogue.
28. Consider some choices you face in life and *ask* buddhi, “should I do it or not?”
29. *Ask* “is my first thought good or bad—is it clear or clouded?” Your second or third thoughts?
30. *Ask* your mind what your fears are and what to do with them.
31. Say to your mind “please be my friend.” (in months with have 31 days)

*The final step of meditation is to remain in silence.
 This silence cannot be described; it is inexplicable.
 This silence opens the door of intuitive knowledge, and
 then the past, present, and future are revealed to the student.*

*Once upon a time, a student of meditation went to see a sage.
 The student began discussing philosophical concepts,
 such as God and the divine existence,
 but the sage didn't say anything.*

*The aspirant talked on and on about God
 and asked many probing questions,
 but still the sage kept still.*

*Finally, in frustration,
 the aspirant inquired why the sage wouldn't answer his questions.*

*Then the sage smiled and said gently,
 "I have been answering you, but you are not listening:
 God is silence."*

*In the course of my search and study
 in the Himalayas and the other parts of India,
 I met a fortunate few, who enjoyed such a deep state of silence
 and who also helped those who are prepared to meditate.*

*Beyond body, breath, and mind lies this silence.
 From Silence emanate peace, happiness, and bliss.*

*The meditator makes that silence his or her personal abode;
 that is the final goal of meditation.*

Om. Peace, Peace, Peace . . .

—Meditation and Its Practice, p. 94

We must not create a wall between our worldly and spiritual lives.

People disorganized in their worldly life search for spiritual wisdom in seclusion;
whereas, if organized properly, they can have all the means and resources
that are of utmost importance for spiritual enlightenment.

The purpose of human life is to make the best use
of the resources that nature or God has given us.

There are typically two kinds of people.

Some are involved in the world and are busy in their self-centered activities.

Others renounce their families and do not participate in worldly life at all.

There are very few people who use discrimination, work hard for their self-fulfillment,
and at the same time, contribute to the welfare of society.

People belonging to these two categories have an incomplete world view,
and therefore, strive for their limited goals.

In our modern age,

where the standard of living has been facilitated by science and technology,
we must learn to make the best use of our ample resources.

A lifestyle that is suitable for both worldly fulfillment
and spiritual enlightenment is the best.

Those who strive to attain personal enlightenment and help others light their lamps
are the true leaders of the human race.

Blessed are those who are useful for themselves as well as others.

They attain the highest goal of life here and now.

Right in this mortal world, they become immortal
and their wisdom guides humanity on the path of immortality.

Today's society is waiting for selfless, spiritually enlightened, well-balanced leaders
to guide them in how to live happily here and hereafter.

Such leaders or reformers will not come from outside our society.

They have to be born, raised, and trained right in our own society.

We are the ones to become our own guides, our own leaders,
and we are the ones to enlighten our own lives.

Get up, my friends, arise: attain knowledge,
and dedicate your life to the service of your fellow beings.

—*A Call to Humanity*, p. 110