

Meditation
Definitions, Quotes, Reflections
Compiled by Philip G. McLemore

- Awakening to the Spirit. (Eknath Easwaran)
- A spiritual journey that takes our awareness to the level of our soul. (Deepak Chopra)
- The practice of conscious awareness of the presence of God within. Let your spiritual practice be God-Communion. (Lahiri Mahasaya)
- Restoring our consciousness in God. (Paramahansa Yogananda)

- Spirituality...is the consciousness of victory over self and of communion with the Infinite.
- In our worship there are two elements: One is the spiritual communion arising from our own meditation; the other, instruction from others...Of the two, the more profitable...is the meditation. Meditation is one of the most secret, most sacred doors through which we pass into the presence of the Lord. (David O. McKay)

- The life force is the link between matter and Spirit. Flowing outward it reveals the spuriously alluring world of the senses; reversed inward it pulls the consciousness to the eternally satisfying bliss of God. The meditating devotee sits between these two worlds, striving to enter the kingdom of God. (Yogananda)

- The highest form of prayer is meditative contemplation that culminates in the realization of one's divine nature and the presence and nature of God. A more intimate way to pray is in God rather than to God.
- Regularly meditate to clarify your awareness and bring forth your innate, divine qualities.
- Meditation practice removes our awareness from limiting conditions, enabling us to acknowledge and experience ourselves as spiritual beings independent of relative circumstances...All binding attachments, addictions, dependencies, and conditions which were once obstacles to creative living--including self-defeating attitudes, behaviors, and relationships--disappear with awakening. (Roy Eugene Davis)

- Don't look for solutions to problems in meditation. Rest in that state beyond problems. Divine guidance will emerge from that consciousness. (Ellen Grace O'Brian)

- You need not go to heaven to see God; nor need you speak aloud, as if God were far away; nor need you cry for wings like a dove to fly to Him. Only be in silence, and you will come upon God within yourself.
- All difficulties in prayer come from praying as if God were absent. (St Teresa of Avila)

- A method and process designed to take one through and beyond the slavery of conditioned perceptions, thoughts, emotions, and behaviors into the experience of pure Spirit. Bathed and nourished in Spirit, one is transformed as the Divine qualities deep in one's soul unfold and permeate every aspect of one's being, activities, and relationships. Then the power and ability to make choices in harmony with the nature of God becomes the normal and natural state of being. (Phil McLemore)

- Even as Jesus...every man, by the right method of deep meditation, can learn consciously to lift the soul from body consciousness into the presence of God...The prodigal soul is taken back from its wanderings in matter to its ever-blessed spiritual home in God. (Yogananda)

- Meditation is different from reflective reasoning. Reasoning is satisfied if it merely achieves a clear conception of things, whereas meditation seeks a direct perception of them. Reasoning is a function of the head, while meditation is a function of the heart, the abode of God. Rational conviction alone can never put an end to doubt and has no power to transform us...In prayer we commune with the Divine, but in meditation we achieve union with It...Meditation liberates us from the bondage of the mind and body, and lifts us up into the vast expanse of the Infinite Self. By raising the blaze of consciousness within us, it burns all that is dross and false in us...Meditation is not just one of many spiritual practices; it is the consummation of all spiritual practices, irrespective of the seeker's philosophy and creed. (Adiswarananda)

Instructions for a Basic and Intermediate Mantra Meditation Practice

1. Find a clean, quiet place. Early morning is best, but do it when you can, prior to eating a meal.
2. Twenty minutes is an ideal time for a substantive meditation. If that is too long, start with ten and work up to twenty. Later you will naturally want to extend the time. Try and meditate longer once a week.
3. Choose a sitting posture in which you can hold your back straight but relaxed, comfortable, and not rigid. Make sure your hips are slightly higher than your knees. If needed, use a cushion to support your lower back.
4. Establish a sense of connection, unity, and harmony with your inner and outer body. Take a minute to touch/rub your head/face, arms, chest, belly, upper thighs, kidneys. Next use a directed flow of awareness and breath/energy to touch, balance, and harmonize your entire “inner” body. Offer a short, devotional prayer that expresses your intent to commune with and in God.
5. Place your hands, palms up, on your thighs close to your hips. Your “mental posture” should be a detachment from body, mind, and emotion, and a sense of praying and meditating IN God’s presence and embrace. Position your tongue where the upper palate meets the teeth. Eyes closed.
6. Settle into low belly, diaphragmatic breathing—belly expands as you inhale and recedes as you exhale. Observe the breath and unify your awareness with its movement. Let your body determine the cadence of the breathing. Simply flow with it. Once this pattern is stable, inwardly gaze toward the “Spiritual Eye” without any eye strain.
7. Begin repeating the first half of your mantra as your body inhales and the second half as it exhales. This is profoundly relaxing to the body and calming to the mind. Don’t let the cadence of the mantra determine the breathing, let the mantra “follow” the breath. With a little practice the breathing and the repetition of the mantra will become one movement. If there is a pause after exhalation, rest your awareness in that deep silence but not long enough to be gasping for breath. Mantra suggestions: 1. “Be Still” It carries the full meaning of Psm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God.” 2. “Ah Hum” This mantra means I Am Divine. 3. Hamsa, pronounced “Hum Suh”, means Swan in Sanskrit and also means I am Divine along with its twin “So Hum”. 4. “Abba” or “Abba Om” are wonderful. It really helps to have a mantra that easily divides in two.
8. If thoughts distract you, gently and without distress return to the mantra. The intrusion of these thoughts can be frustrating at first but after a few weeks of consistent practice your thoughts will calm down along with your nervous system and blood pressure. This is the discipline of establishing concentration and one-pointed attention. Once established, meditation will flow naturally, along with an unfolding spiritual awareness that opens one to God’s transforming love and grace. If you need more “control” to keep the mind from wandering, you can imagine the mantra moving in and out of the spiritual eye as you breathe or simply treat the movement of thought as background noise and disregard it. Don’t try to resist thoughts.
9. At some point, the breath/mantra action will become more subtle. Now just listen to the mantra reverberating in consciousness rather than generating it. The next phase is to let the breath/mantra action become even more subtle and allow it to fade as it leads you into a superconscious state of pure awareness that is healing and transformative. Even before this occurs, you will experience many physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual benefits. Each person develops at a different pace. Be patient, sometimes it takes months of practice for inner purification to take place so you can awaken into pure, spiritual perception. Sometimes skillful practice leads you deep into spiritual awareness; sometimes it seems to flow as an act of grace without much effort. If that occurs, stop your practice and abide in that deeper state.
10. Meditate without expectation or the need for a specific outcome, otherwise your mind stays active, and it will be difficult to transcend it into spiritual perception. Be patient and let this process unfold at its own pace.
11. To time yourself, use a gentle alarm or meditation app like Insight Timer, with a gentle, low tone.
12. Have the intent to extend the peace and divine presence of your meditation into your daily activities.