

# Deep Meditation

Pathway to Personal Freedom

Yogani

From The AYP Enlightenment Series

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“Be still, and know that I am God...”

*Psalm 46:10*



## Introduction

*The Advanced Yoga Practices Enlightenment Series* is an endeavor to present the most effective methods of yoga in a series of easy-to-read books that anyone can use to gain practical results immediately and over the long term. For centuries, these powerful practices have been taught in secret, mainly in an effort to preserve them. Now we find ourselves in the *information age*, and able to preserve knowledge for present and future generations like never before. The question remains: “How far can we go in effectively transmitting spiritual methods in writing?”

Since its beginnings in 2003, the writings of *Advanced Yoga Practices* have been an experiment to see just how much can be conveyed, with much more detail included on practices than in the spiritual writings of the past. Can books provide us the specific means necessary to tread the path to enlightenment, or do we have to surrender at the feet of a *guru* to find our salvation? Well, clearly we must surrender to something, even if it is to our own innate potential to live a freer and happier life. If we are able to do that, and maintain a daily practice, then books like this one can come alive and instruct us in the

ways of human spiritual transformation. If the reader is ready and the book is worthy, amazing things can happen.

While one person's name is given as the author of this book, it is actually a distillation of the efforts of thousands of practitioners over thousands of years. This is one person's attempt to simplify and make practical the spiritual methods that many have demonstrated throughout history. All who have gone before have my deepest gratitude, as do the many I am privileged to be in touch with in the present who continue to practice with dedication and good results.

The subject of this volume, *Deep Meditation*, has special significance in the overall list of yoga practices. No other practice can do more to bring us personal freedom in our daily life. The cultivation of our eternal and unshakable inner silence through daily deep meditation has such far-reaching effects that this practice alone is capable of expanding our experience of life to be unending happiness and creativity. That is why I call deep meditation the *heart of yoga*.

I hope you will find this book to be a useful resource as you travel along your chosen path.

Practice wisely, and enjoy!

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## Chapter 1 – “Who Am I?”

The most important question we can ask in this life is, “Who am I?” Right after that in importance is the question, “What am I doing here?” Human beings have been asking these two questions since the first thoughts arose in our ancient ancestors. And we are still asking them.

Since the beginning, thousands of years ago, much effort has gone into understanding these basic questions about our humanity and to realizing their implications experientially. “Practices” have been the way by which the experiential component has been cultivated. Chief among practices has been something called “meditation.”

Meditation has meant different things to different people. In English dictionaries only a few decades ago, meditation was defined simply as “to think,” or “to ponder.” Nowadays, there is a deeper understanding, and you can find meditation defined as, “a specific way of thinking that leads to mental, emotional and physical balance.” Those with a spiritual bent like to take it a step further, saying that meditation leads us to a direct realization of who we are and what we are doing here. How can this be?

An effective method of meditation leads us to an experience of profound stillness, an inner silence that defies description. It is an emptiness that is full with peace, creativity and happiness. It is the natural condition of our mind beyond the processes of our thinking. We cannot help but get the feeling when we are in this state that this is who we really are. It feels so much like home. It feels so good. It is not only a mental experience. With effective meditation, every cell in our body is brought to a state of profound living stillness. Many of the symptoms of this stillness, this inner silence in our body, are measurable – the whole metabolism slows down along with the mind.

The truly dramatic thing about meditation is not that we can sit down with a mental procedure and have a profound experience of stillness, peace and happiness while meditating. It is much more than that kind of transitory experience, which might be viewed as an escape. Meditation, practiced on a regular basis, cultivates our nervous system to sustain the inner silence experienced while meditating increasingly throughout our daily activity, while we are fully engaged in the world. Not only do we get a glimpse of our “true self” during meditation, but we are also

cultivating it as a full time experience in our life. This has huge implications for the quality of our life, with practical benefits reaching into every aspect of our self-perception, relationships and career. While the procedure of meditation can be very pleasurable, the real reason we do it is for the long term benefits in our life. Meditation is a powerful path that leads to personal freedom. Ultimately, meditation answers the two perennial questions:

Who am I? – I am the silent awareness standing behind all this.

What am I doing here? – I am here to grow into full awareness of my true nature, which is peace, creativity and happiness.

Since the beginning, human beings have wondered not only about the true nature of themselves, but also about the nature of the world and cosmos around them. So many mysteries! For thousands of years we have been slowly cracking the codes of *Mother Nature*. Modern applied science provides the most visible evidence of our progress in understanding the workings of our universe. Where we used to ride on horses, now we ride in automobiles, trains and airplanes. Where we used to communicate via messengers on foot, flag-waving

and smoke signals, now we send billions of invisible bits of information across the surface of the earth and through the vacuum of outer space. Where we used to experience diseases that periodically threatened the very survival of civilization, now we are able to preempt or quickly cure most illnesses with our rapidly expanding knowledge of bioscience and genetics. It has taken a huge accumulation of knowledge over the centuries to accomplish these things.

In the theoretical science of quantum physics, we have come to the brink of defining the omnipresence and unlimited potential of consciousness itself. It is here that our experience of inner silence rising in meditation intersects with the view that all things are, in fact, the manifestation of one thing – an unbounded field of consciousness. It is only a small step we take in postulating that the unifying essence of all is none other than the living stillness we experience during and after our meditation practice.

This is the ultimate answer to the question, “Who am I?” – I am the essence of everything, and everything that is manifest is the essence of me.

What are the qualities of this so-called unbounded field of consciousness that is behind

everything we see? We can find out by practicing meditation. As we experience more of our inner nature through daily meditation, we find that our desires and conduct gradually rise to a higher level than they were before. Our longings become more attuned with an inner unfoldment. No longer do we doubt what we are here for. We come to know that we have come here to live the truth within us in every aspect of our life. No longer do we struggle with moral issues or how we should conduct ourselves in our affairs. We come to know that right action comes from an inner perspective. Love and compassion gradually become the foundation of all that we do. Our actions automatically become harmonizing and unifying in their influence in our life and in the lives of those around us. All of this comes from the practice of effective meditation.

Fortunately, nothing that has been said here so far has to be taken on faith. “Talk is cheap,” you know, and results are what will make the difference. Not philosophical arguments. You have heard it all before, yes? We have covered these basics to lay out a rough framework. So now we can move on to something you can get your teeth into, and you can

fill in the rest of the picture with your own experience. That is the best approach.

The rest of this book is about the practice of meditation – a highly effective form we call *deep meditation*. With the information that is to follow, you can easily find out what the truth is about meditation, about yourself, and about everything else that is going on around you.

If we follow the simple daily procedure for deep meditation, we will come to know who we are and what we are doing here.

Let's take a closer look...

## **Chapter 2 – Deep Meditation**

The mind is a machine – a thought machine. It produces thoughts all day and throughout much of the night. We experience these endless thoughts in our awareness. The mind itself is not awareness. It is only a machine. We are the awareness. This points to an interesting possibility. If we can bring the thought machine, the mind, to rest, what will we experience? It will be our awareness, our self, minus the incessant activity of the mind. This is what meditation is for, and the consequences of this are far-reaching.

### **How to Meditate**

Deep meditation is a mental procedure that utilizes the nature of the mind to systematically bring the mind to rest. If the mind is given the opportunity, it will go to rest with no effort. That is how the mind works. Indeed, effort is opposed to the natural process of deep meditation. The mind always seeks the path of least resistance to express itself. Most of the time this is by making more and more thoughts. But it is also possible to create a situation in the mind that turns the path of least resistance into one leading to fewer and fewer thoughts. And, very soon, no



thoughts at all. This is done by using a particular thought in a particular way. The thought is called a *mantra*.

For our practice of deep meditation, we will use the thought – *I AM*. This will be our mantra.

It is for the sound that we will use *I AM*, not for the meaning of it. The meaning has an obvious significance in English, and *I AM* has a religious meaning in the English Bible as well. But we will not use *I AM* for the meaning – only for the sound. We can also spell it *AYAM*. No meaning there, is there? Only the sound. That is what we want. If your first language is not English, you may spell the sound phonetically in your own language if you wish. No matter how we spell it, it will be the same sound. The power of the sound ...*I AM*... is great when thought inside. But only if we use a particular procedure. Knowing this procedure is the key to successful meditation. It is very simple. So simple that we will devote many pages here to discussing how to keep it simple, because we all have a tendency to make things more complicated. Maintaining simplicity is the key to right meditation.

Here is the procedure of deep meditation: While sitting comfortably with eyes closed, we'll just relax.

We will notice thoughts, streams of thoughts. That is fine. We just let them go by without minding them. After about a minute, we gently introduce the mantra, ...*I AM*...

We think the mantra in a repetition very easily inside. The speed of repetition may vary, and we do not mind it. We do not intone the mantra out loud. We do not deliberately locate the mantra in any particular part of the body. Whenever we realize we are not thinking the mantra inside anymore, we come back to it easily. This may happen many times in a sitting, or only once or twice. It doesn't matter. We follow this procedure of easily coming back to the mantra when we realize we are off it for the predetermined time of our meditation session. That's it. Very simple.

Typically, the way we will find ourselves off the mantra will be in a stream of other thoughts. This is normal. The mind is a thought machine, remember? Making thoughts is what it does. But, if we are meditating, as soon as we realize we are off into a stream of thoughts, no matter how mundane or profound, we just easily go back to the mantra. Like that. We don't make a struggle of it. The idea is not that we have to be on the mantra all the time. That is

not the objective. The objective is to easily go back to it when we realize we are off it. We just favor the mantra with our attention when we notice we are not thinking it. If we are back into a stream of other thoughts five seconds later, we don't try and force the thoughts out. Thoughts are a normal part of the deep meditation process. We just ease back to the mantra again. We favor it. Deep meditation is a *going toward*, not a *pushing away from*. We do that every single time with the mantra when we realize we are off it – just easily favoring it. It is a gentle persuasion. No struggle. No fuss. No iron willpower or mental heroics are necessary for this practice. All such efforts are away from the simplicity of deep meditation and will reduce its effectiveness.

As we do this simple process of deep meditation, we will at some point notice a change in the character of our inner experience. The mantra may become very refined and fuzzy. This is normal. It is perfectly all right to think the mantra in a very refined and fuzzy way if this is the easiest. It should always be easy – never a struggle. Other times, we may lose track of where we are for a while, having no mantra, or stream of thoughts either. This is fine too. When we realize we have been off somewhere, we just ease

back to the mantra again. If we have been very settled with the mantra being barely recognizable, we can go back to that fuzzy level of it, if it is the easiest. As the mantra refines, we are riding it inward with our attention to progressively deeper levels of inner silence in the mind. So it is normal for the mantra to become very faint and fuzzy. We cannot force this to happen. It will happen naturally as our nervous system goes through its many cycles of *inner purification* stimulated by deep meditation. When the mantra refines, we just go with it. And when the mantra does not refine, we just be with it at whatever level is easy. No struggle. There is no objective to attain, except to continue the simple procedure we are describing here.

### **When and Where to Meditate**

How long and how often do we meditate? For most people, twenty minutes is the best duration for a meditation session. It is done twice per day, once before the morning meal and day's activity, and then again before the evening meal and evening's activity.

Try to avoid meditating right after eating or right before bed. Before meal and activity is the ideal time. It will be most effective and refreshing then. Deep

meditation is a preparation for activity, and our results over time will be best if we are active between our meditation sessions. Also, meditation is not a substitute for sleep. The ideal situation is a good balance between meditation, daily activity and normal sleep at night. If we do this, our inner experience will grow naturally over time, and our outer life will become enriched by our growing inner silence.

A word on how to sit in meditation: The first priority is comfort. It is not desirable to sit in a way that distracts us from the easy procedure of meditation. So sitting in a comfortable chair with back support is a good way to meditate. Later on, or if we are already familiar, there can be an advantage to sitting with legs crossed, also with back support. But always with comfort and least distraction being the priority. If, for whatever reason, crossed legs are not feasible for us, we will do just fine meditating in our comfortable chair. There will be no loss of the benefits.

Due to commitments we may have, the ideal routine of meditation sessions will not always be possible. That is okay. Do the best you can and do not stress over it. Due to circumstances beyond our

control, sometimes the only time we will have to meditate will be right after a meal, or even later in the evening near bedtime. If meditating at these times causes a little disruption in our system, we will know it soon enough and make the necessary adjustments. The main thing is that we do our best to do two meditations every day, even if it is only a short session between our commitments. Later on, we will look at the options we have to make adjustments to address varying outer circumstances, as well as inner experiences that can come up.

Before we go on, you should try a meditation. Find a comfortable place to sit where you are not likely to be interrupted and do a short meditation, say ten minutes, and see how it goes. It is a toe in the water. Make sure to take a couple of minutes at the end sitting easily without doing the procedure of meditation. Then open your eyes slowly. Then read on here.

As you will see, the simple procedure of deep meditation and it's resulting experiences will raise some questions. We will cover many of them here.

So, now we will move into the practical aspects of deep meditation – your own experiences and initial symptoms of the growth of your own inner silence.

## Questions On Your First Meditation

A first meditation is very special. No matter what the experience, our first deep meditation using the *I AM* mantra marks the beginning of new openings of our latent potential. If we continue with our daily meditation practice over months and years, these openings will expand more and more, until our experience of life becomes transformed to permanent peace, creativity and joy.

But, in the beginning, it is all new, and there are many questions that can come up about the process of meditation and the experiences we have. Here are some questions that are often asked after a first meditation:

*Is something supposed to happen? Not much did.*

No, nothing in particular is supposed to happen. Nothing except following the easy procedure of meditation. That is, easily thinking the mantra and easily picking it back up when we realize we are off into a stream of thoughts.

Experientially, we can have a meditation that is nothing more than that – mantra, thoughts, back to mantra, more thoughts and so on, over and over again. What is not always obvious is that each time

we “lose” the mantra, we have gone through a natural shift in our attention. During that shift, there is a space, or gap, between thinking the mantra and then finding ourselves in a stream of thoughts. In that space, we have touched our inner silence, our pure awareness, our inner self. It might not feel that we have touched anything. Yet, the stream of thoughts we experience afterward is a clear sign that we have gone in with the mantra and are coming back out with the habit of the mind to generate thoughts. This cycle of thinking the mantra, losing it, and coming out into a stream of thoughts is a process of purification in the mind and nervous system. It is very powerful, and will ultimately yield a constant experience of inner silence in our meditation and, more importantly, in our daily activity.

It is the twice-daily process of meditation that will produce the results, and our experiences both inside and outside meditation will vary over time. It is the practice that will open us up from within, not any particular experience we might have along the way. For this reason, we sometimes refer to our experiences in meditation as *scenery*. Even uninteresting experiences (not much happening) are the scenery of the mind. When we are driving a car, it



is the destination we are moving toward, regardless of the scenery we may pass on the way. The scenery will change as we travel along, and we will be moving closer to our destination with the passage of time. If we are busy driving, or talking with someone who is riding with us, we may not see the scenery out the window, but we will still be moving along toward our destination just the same. Seemingly uneventful meditations are like that. If we are involved in doing the practice, we will be moving swiftly along, whether we are having a lot of noticeable experiences or not.

So if your first meditation seemed a bit uneventful, take heart! Good things are happening when we follow the procedure. The best indication of progress in meditation is in how we feel afterward when we get up and go out into our daily activity. If your first meditation was uneventful, see how you feel in the hours after. Is there some relaxation, some inner calm as you go about your daily activities? That is the real test of meditation.

*I felt at one with the blissful cosmos. Was I?*

Interestingly, we are always at one with the blissful cosmos. We are all expressions of *That*. The

only reason we do not experience this in every moment is because impurities in our nervous system block our perception of the true nature of life. These impurities are gradually dissolved in deep meditation, and then we begin to see the truth of who we are. In our very first meditation we may have a clear experience of our unbounded blissful nature. That is who we are!

What should we do when we have an experience like this in our meditation? The answer is very simple – when we realize we are off into such an experience (no matter how cosmic or glorious) and no longer on the mantra, we easily pick up the mantra again.

Keep in mind that we are involved in a process of purification that will likely take many years of daily meditation practice. Our nervous system is the storehouse of eons of impurities and obstructions created by past actions. Our nervous system is also the window through which we can see our true nature and the true nature of all things. As we are cleaning our window bit by bit in deep meditation, the view gradually becomes more clear.

Consider a partly sunny day with many big clouds moving slowly across the sky. Sometimes our

view of the sun will be obstructed behind the clouds. Other times the sun will shine brightly on us between the clouds. With deep meditation, we are clearing our inner clouds. Gradually, there will be fewer and fewer clouds blocking our inner light. In time, we will succeed in dissolving all the clouds, so we will be bathed in our inner light throughout the day and night. That is what deep meditation is for, and that is why we always ease back to the mantra when we find that we have drifted off it. We can enjoy our cosmic bliss in meditation when it happens, just as we can enjoy the scenery as we are traveling along on our car journey. But the journey of meditation can only continue if we come back to the mantra, and we should always remember that.

*I felt some restlessness, some irritability. Why?*

There are many obstructions lodged deep in our nervous system. Meditation loosens and gradually releases these, usually without discomfort. But sometimes there can be a surge of unwinding within us, and there can be some restlessness or irritability along with that surge. It is neurobiological energy moving within us. As we continue with the simple

procedure of meditation, the surge and discomfort will pass.

It can also happen that we will feel a surge of pleasurable energy from the same cause – an unwinding of obstructions in our nervous system. In either case, we continue with the procedure of meditation, easily coming back to the mantra when we realize we are off it.

If our experiences in meditation become very strong, making it difficult to continue with comfort, there are things we can do to regulate the inner energy flow. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **The Possibilities**

The key to success in deep meditation is steadfast daily practice over the long term. As mentioned, it is not primarily for the experience within meditation that we are doing this. It is for a permanent positive change in the quality of our life. And we will find just that as the weeks, months and years of daily meditation practice go by.

The results can be subtle. Others may notice a change in us before we do. It is common for a family member or friend to comment, “What is going on?”

You are much less edgy lately. You haven't lost your temper in weeks.”

This is a symptom of inner silence creeping up in us. We begin to see the world from a deeper place within ourselves – a place that is not undone by the daily ups and downs of life. We become more *centered*. Even as life in and around us goes on much as it did before, we are somehow different. The stresses and strains of life begin to lose their grip on us. Besides the obvious mental and physical health benefits, this rise of inner silence is very liberating and frees us to express ourselves in ways that might not have been possible before.

Increased creativity is one of the benefits of rising inner silence. It is well known that great geniuses throughout history have received their inspirations when in states of mental relaxation. Their revelations often came from “out of nowhere.” Deep meditation in our daily life naturally leads us to a perpetually more relaxed mind, and to the greater levels of creativity that come with that condition. In that way, we can say that meditation will help us to become more intelligent, simply by giving us better access to the latent genius that lies within us all.

Steadfastness is another trait that comes with rising inner silence. Since we are swayed less by the ups and downs of life, we find ourselves in the position to stand firm in the face of adversity when it is necessary. So too do we become stronger in our moral convictions, and take a greater interest in matters of rightness and truth. With deep meditation, we find that we become morally stronger and, at the same time, more flexible in dealing with the many shades of life we encounter each day.

One of the primary characteristics of the natural morality which emerges from within us as part of our rising inner silence is the quality of *love*. So, while we are becoming more resilient, creative and strong, we are also becoming more caring and compassionate. Our ability to give expands, because we have more available within ourselves.

All of these qualities rise naturally by engaging in daily deep meditation, which purifies our nervous system so our latent divine nature can begin to express through us.

In addition to the many practical benefits deep meditation can bring us in daily life, we also can find ourselves opening in ways that reach far beyond anything we could have imagined. This brings us to

consider the possibility of *enlightenment*. In fact, if we take the benefits we have mentioned so far, and take them to their highest level of expression, we arrive at something quite remarkable. That something is none other than the condition of human spiritual transformation that has been described by saints and sages throughout history, beginning with the first spiritual writings thousands of years ago.

What is enlightenment? In its most basic form, it is abiding inner silence. It is directly and automatically experiencing who and what we are in every moment – while we are awake, while we are in dreaming sleep, and while we are in dreamless deep sleep. Always aware, always awake inside. That is the possibility that deep meditation puts before us.

From this basic form of enlightenment, we find additional possibilities as our unshakable inner silence expresses further within us, and outward into the surrounding environment. In this way are we able to bring much good into the world, simply by living our everyday life in a state of perpetual personal freedom.