

# Meditation and Alchemy

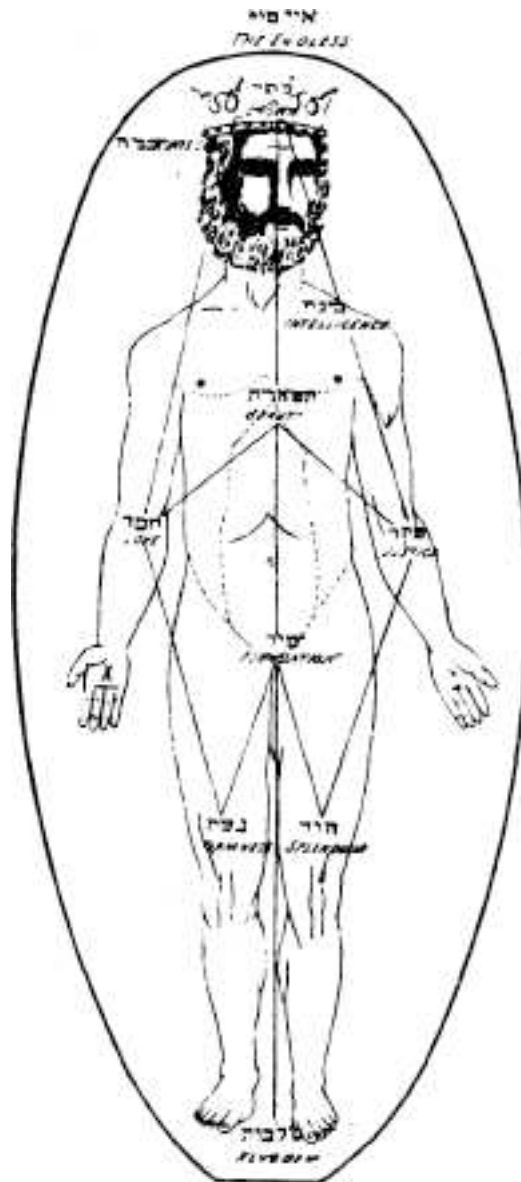
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**T**he Psalmist said: "My meditation on him will be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord" (Ps. 104-34) and "Give ear to my words oh Lord, consider my meditations" (Ps 5-1). We even find the idea of meditation in the very first book of the Bible where we read: "And Isaac went out into the field to meditate" (Gen. 24-63). In the New Testament Jesus gives advice along these lines as: "But thou, when thou prayest enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to the Father which is in secret and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt. 6-6) This admonition was adumbrated centuries before in the Old Testament, Psalms 46-10, "Be still. And know that I AM God." The ancient Hebrew canonical text, the Zohar, refers to two kinds of prayer. Those that are words of the mouth and "the Prayer of Silence," those that are the secret meditations of the heart. The Prayer of Silence is said to be a silent, unexpressed and inexpressible type of Prayer which conceals the Mystery of Perfect Union in the Divine Essence. Further, that the Prayer of Silence is actually spoken by the Divine Voice within us. (Zohar Pt. I, fol 169a) Meditation, or Dhyana Yoga, is spoken of extensively in both the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. In the former (VI, 9-14) we find very precise instructions on how to meditate. The idea should be clear now that meditation is a very old practice and once was, or still is, espoused by the leading world religions.



[Figure: The Tree of Life (ten Sephiroth) from Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah*.]

It is the purpose of this article to show that not only is there a connection between all western tradition disciplines but that meditation should be a sine qua non in ANY spiritual pursuit, alchemy or otherwise. The American prophet, Edgar Cayce in his readings often talked of the importance of meditation. For example; "For ye must learn to meditate just as ye have learned to walk, talk." (281-41) Again, "Through meditation may the greater help be gained." (287-2) In the "Secret of the Golden Flower," Translated by Wilhelm we read: "Children take heed! If for a day you do not practice meditation, the light streams out, who knows wither. If you only meditate for a quarter of an hour, by it you can do away with ten thousand aeons and a thousand births. All methods end in quietness. This marvelous magic

cannot be fathomed." In his book *Raja Yoga*, the great master of Yoga, Vivekenanda said: "The meditative state is the highest state of existence."

One of the early German qabalists was Eleazar of Worms (1165-1238). He was the spiritual leader of a group of qabalists that were ecstatics in nature. They heavily 'were into' meditation and contemplation. Another well known qabalist was Abraham ben Samuel, better known as Abulafia. Born in Spain in 1240, Abulafia wrote extensively on the qabalah. In his writings, he laid down rules for body posture to be followed by the student as he meditated on the Sephiroth of the Tree of Life. He also prescribed a precise breathing discipline to be followed. Such disciplines are, of course, also at the heart of every Yoga system and various others as well. Interestingly, the Sephiroth, particularly those of the middle pillar, seem to correspond nicely with the psychic centers known as cakras or chakras. The Sephira Malkuth corresponds with the Muladhara cakra and Kether with the Sahasrara. Kether, the receptacle of downpouring light and the Sahasrara cakra, the end of the journey for the rising Kundalini whence enlightenment is received. It might be argued that Yesod, being associated with the reproductive organs, is a better correspondence for the Muladhara and that Malkuth might correspond with the Kundalini. It could lead to some interesting discoveries to follow this out.

The Kundalini, of course, is that energy sleeping at the base of the spine. It is likened to a serpent coiled three and one-half times. The idea of Yogic exercises is to awaken the slumbering Kundalini and cause it to ascend the spinal column or middle pillar. As it passes through the various cakras, or Sephiroth these psychic centers are awakened and add to the spiritual growth of the practitioner.

Not too long ago, there lived a husband and wife who were spiritual teachers. They were, in addition, alchemists and, according to a little booklet entitled "*They Made the Philosopher's Stone*," they tell a marvelous account of how in fact they produced that Opus Magnum, the Stone. The Ingalese' books were many and covered diverse topics dealing with the occult arts, qabalah, alchemy and the like. In one of these, "The History and Power of the Mind" Richard Ingalese had much to say

about meditation. The right kind and the wrong kind. Ordinary and "philosophical" meditation. Amongst other things he wrote: "You go into meditation for the purpose of receiving knowledge from the highest source of knowledge."

There are a few who have not heard of Albertus Magnus. This noted alchemist wrote on minerals and metals and in one of his tracts "De Adhaerendo Deo" we find a most insightful exposition of what might be called the mechanics of what meditation is. He wrote:

"When St. John says that God is a spirit and that he must be worshiped in Spirit, he means that the mind must be cleared of all images. 'When thou prayest, shut the doors.' That is, the doors of thy senses... keep them barred and bolted against all phantasms and images. Nothing pleases God more than a mind free from all distractions and occupations. Such a mind is, in a manner, transformed into God for it can think of nothing and understand nothing... except God, other creatures and itself it only sees in God. He who penetrates into himself, and so transcends himself, ascends truly to God. He whom I love and desire is above all that is sensible and all that is intelligible... sense and imagination cannot bring us to Him, but only the desire of a pure heart. This brings us into the darkness of the mind, whereby we can ascend to the contemplation of even the mysteries of the Trinity. Do not think about the world or thy friends, nor about the past, present or future; but consider thyself to be outside the world and alone with God, as if thy soul were already separated from the body, and no longer have any interest in peace or war, or the state of the world. Leave the body and fix thy gaze on the uncreated Light. Let nothing come between thee and God."

What Albertus Magnus is saying, of course, is that God is not corporeal and therefore cannot be communicated with via corporeal means. Yet, there IS a link to facilitate communication between man and God. This link is Mind. Through mind, man and God may interconnect, Unite. It is in this spiritual meeting ground of the mind that the manifestation of the Divine may blend with the essence of the mundane. The process for this is meditation.

Basil Valentine was a Benedictine Monk and an alchemist. In his book the "*Triumphal Chariot of Antimony*" he speaks of correct and incorrect meditation. One of the five pre-requisites he poses for success in alchemy is contemplation. Contemplation is a higher form of meditation. Valentine discovered incredible curative powers in a mineral-metal substance known as antimony. A substance that was known to be poisonous. He used various preparations of this substance to cure both physical and spiritual disorders of his brother monks. And where did the information come from that Valentine possessed on how to treat the substance to wring from it curative powers? While the precise answer was never directly given, Valentine indicates the information did come to him from God. It is not a difficult conclusion to reach that his revelations occurred during this contemplative state he suggests.

Let us look once more at the Qabalah and its connection with meditation. We find Leo Schaya, a respected writer on the subject, indicating that Chokmah, the second Sefhira on the Tree of Life, has a second meaning in addition to the well known one of wisdom. This second meaning, in phonetic Hebrew, is Mahshabah, which is translated as either "thought" or more aptly, "meditation."

The Tree is usually represented as a uni-planar, flat lineal figure. However, qabalistic studies reveal the Tree to be operative in four planes or the "Four Worlds" as they are called. These worlds, Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah and Assiah, actually represent levels of consciousness. The meditations on the paths of the Tree are designed to "change" these levels of consciousness. Aleister Crowley even defined "Magick" as the ability to cause changes in consciousness, by Will. Denning and Phillips discuss this aspect in their book *The Magical Philosophy*, which is the third in a series of five books dealing with magic, etc. In the appendix of this volume are to be found a series of exercises called "Path Workings." These are easily discerned to be meditative practices. The end of the exercises is to integrate the various worlds or levels of consciousness.

Note that the word Yoga means to join or to unite. From "yoke." Unite what? Why these levels of consciousness. To integrate them. Alain Danielou declares Yoga to be THE method of re-integration, in his

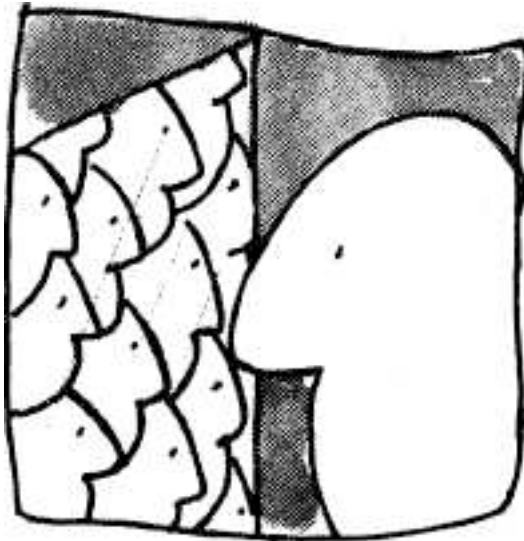
book of the same name. Concerning changes of consciousness, Paul Brunton in *The Secret Path* had this to say: "You cannot show my intellect that God, the Absolute, the Spirit, call it what you may, exists, but you can show this to me, by changing my consciousness (i.e., raising the level of consciousness) until it can participate in the consciousness of God within me."

Carl Jung, the great Swiss psychologist and student of alchemy, was also a proponent of meditation as a means of integration of these levels of consciousness. In Ralph Metzner's *Maps of Consciousness*, we read: "The work of alchemy consisted in integrating and transmuting these (the four) elements, these levels of consciousness. They need to be integrated because in the normal condition of man they are in a state of conflict and confusion." This state of confusion that Metzner speaks of could well be what the ancient alchemists meant when they referred to "chaos" or "nigredo," the blackness. Metzner further went on to identify this disorganized state of mind as being that condition Gurdjieff has in mind when he talked of the individual being besieged by "many I's."

J.F.C. Fuller, a one-time disciple of the Golden Dawn and a some-time biographer of Aleister Crowley, wrote a book on Yoga. In it he wrote: "The key to deliverance is meditation which opens the lock of concentration; then the door of attainment swings open and the aspirant enters a higher dimension of consciousness--the super-conscious world."

The integration process, of these various worlds, can be perhaps equated to those alchemical states known as solution and coagulation. *Solve et Coagula*. It must be borne in mind that there ARE two aspects to alchemy, the practical and the spiritual. Terms that apply to one aspect may well apply, in a different sense, to the other aspect. C.C. Zain points this out in his book on *Spiritual Alchemy* and A.E. Waite, that prolific translator of arcane texts, also makes a case for this. However, Waite may simply have vacillated from a stand on practical alchemy to one on spiritual alchemy. Paracelsus also had some thoughts on this subject and is quoted by Carl Jung in "*Alchemical Studies*" (Vol. XIII of his collected works) as follows: "The impure animate body must be purified through the separation of the elements." Sounds like Metzner!

Paracelsus went on to say: "This is done by your meditating on it."



[Figure: "Gurdjieff... talked of the individual being besieged by 'many I's.'"]

Dave Edwards in his fine book *Dare To Make Magic* posed an interesting question. He said that yes, it certainly was necessary to perform magic so that one may raise his (her) level of consciousness. Then he asked, "Why should we want to raise our level of consciousness?" The foregoing, a recurrent theme of the early mystical writer, Plotinus, seems to answer the questions nicely. We need to raise our levels of consciousness (and integrate them) in order to perceive the workings of a higher order. We cannot observe the workings of the machinery of the universe whilst still stationed at Malkuth. The veils of Paroketh must be rent and the abyss crossed ere we fathom the mysteries concealed by the black veils of Binah. In other words, to become more spiritual, we need to pull away from the mundane toward the spiritual realms. As we progress through the spheres, our vision becomes less clouded and our understanding increases.

The way to become attuned to vibrations of a higher order is to volitionally try and merge with them. One way of doing this is, of course, meditation. Therefore, it would be well to view meditation as a discipline quite eclectic and not posited on the east or west exclusively. It is a part of qabalah and alchemy. Charles Ponce in his book, *The Kabbalah*, reached a startling conclusion on a venerable old tome of alchemy, the Aesch Mezareph. He says, "(It is) an ancient alchemical treatise and it is unclear whether it is the product of Hebrew or Christian

Kabbalism(!) It sets out the system of the Sephiroth in alchemical terms but was probably intended more as a meditational instrument than as a textbook of alchemy."

I think the point should be made by now that the ancient qabalists and alchemists not only advocated meditation, but they practiced it. While their rationale may certainly have differed, the end result, in the main, was enlightenment. Consider what a blessing this could be as we pore over the obscure and misleading words of the ancients. If the good Lord would shed some light on these writings, why we might be able to utilize them for good purposes. Well then, we have a fine recommendation from the very writers of these works on how to overcome that dilemma. Meditate.

Resting our case that meditation should be part of the daily practice of every alchemical student, let us see just what meditation is. And isn't. The very word may conjure up a vision of loin-clothed yogis, eyes closed, legs wrapped about the back of the neck and off in a trance.

Actually this IS a possible form of meditation and it DOES have eastern roots as well as western roots. Today the eastern "Flavor" is dominant as we have a plethora of teachers, Gurus and masters of all sorts "pushing" meditation. Yet, there is an air of unattachment about it all. The Maharishi mahesh Yogi himself declares his "Transcendental Meditation" to be non-secular with no "isms" attached. A private researcher, Dr. Hugh Drummond is quoted in the March 1976 issue of Mother Jones magazine as saying, "The physiological benefits (more on the physiological benefits later) of meditation are pretty well established and appear to be independent of any particular method, ideology or cosmology." And so it is.

Meditation is the language of the heart. The Prayer of Silence. The outward prayer may be forced, embellished or even fake. The inner prayer cannot. No human can hear this and make a judgement, or be fooled. It is between you and that which IS--The Creator. This idea is so beautifully expressed by a Sufi poet and mystic, Jalal Ud Din Rumi who lived from 1207 to 1273. He was the spearhead of the Sufi movement as we know it today. In his mystical writings was the following beautiful



passage, which while not necessarily referring to meditation per se, captures an essence. This prose is as follows:

"A voice came from God to Moses...  
I am not purified by their praises,  
'Tis they who become pure and shining thereby.  
I regard not the outside and the words,  
I regard the inside and the state of the heart.  
I look at the heart if it be humble,

Though the words may be the reverse of humble.  
Because the heart is substance and the words accidents.  
Accidents are only a means, substance is the final cause.  
A burning heart is what I want; consort with burning.  
Kindle in thy heart the flame of love."

In more practical terms, meditation is a method of withdrawing from the outer to the inner. It is a way of stilling the mind. It is a state of active-passivity if you will. That is, while stilling the mind, one is actively "waiting," anticipating. An observed with expectancy, hushed expectancy. It is in the very real sense of the word, a communion. A meeting in the mind of the mundane and the Divine. In this place does enlightenment dawn. In this hushed stillness can we hear the voice of the One that pervades all. It is when we block out the outer distractions and noises that we hear what we yearn to hear. Our beloved. Our maker.

"How" to do it is easy enough. There are actually several "types" of meditative practices. How they differ is only in technique. One such method is that of Transcendental Meditation. Here, one is given a mantra in an initiatory ceremony. The mantra is a word or a phrase, usually in Sanskrit. The TM-er will sit quietly and allow his or her personal mantra, for such it is, to "come". It wells up from the inner being and "sounds" in the body. The "repetition" of the Mantra helps block out the distracting influences and has an influence of its own. That is, the mantra is especially selected for the practitioner by someone well-versed in this technique. Thus the mantra will have a particularly beneficial "resonant" effect on the practitioner. Almost like tuning a circuit to its natural frequency.

This is one use of a mantra. Another way is not so much as an "aid" but as a preamble. The recitation of particular mantra prior to meditation (as opposed to during meditation ala TM) will set the mood as it were. Every Indian child is taught a "universal" mantra known as the "Gayatri" mantra. This mantra is supposedly the "highest" mantra there is. Interestingly, Gayatri is Devi Gayatri or a feminine aspect of Deity. Mother Gayatri. Further, She is a solar deity and would correspond to Tiphareth on the Tree of Life. At this sphere we also find the Christ consciousness. So, on a Hebrew glyph, we find the Eastern concept of a feminine God equated to the Christian concept of the aspect of God which corresponds to the Egyptian slain God Osiris and there we go! Let me add that I have personally found the practice of meditation preceded by the Gayatri mantra an efficacious method. I can recommend it from my experience with it. But by all means try your particular likes first. They will all result, one day, in what Patanjali said was the breakthrough of the duality of devotion into the unity of self and God.

R. Straughn in his book *Meditation Techniques of the Kabbalists, Vedantins and Taoists* writes: The object of meditation then, is to lead you back to your proper identity, to your proper role. That of an uninvolved seer (se-er) and Willer of events. In Jane Roberts book *The Nature of Personality*, this idea is dilated upon to some length. That we are the authors of the play, the director, the stage setters and the audience. Then we forget it all by playing all the roles of all the characters simultaneously.

Straughn also has a provocative little item in the same book. He provides information on Dhumo Breathing, a technique espoused by Lama Govinda and mentioned in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. Basically, this technique is used to raise the body heat, amongst other things. Straughn makes the following statement in his exposition oh the Dhumo: "The ambitious student, armed with what has been given here, should try to work out the correspondences between the breathing exercises and the sublimation of the procreative agent with the literature on alchemy, for they both deal with the same subject. A fact missed by those who, believing Yoga to deal basically with asanas and meditation, fail to grasp it alchemical aspect... the sublimation of the procreative

agent: Mercury."

Meditation is really a very simple practice. It is one thing that can be done in the privacy of a room, whilst alone in a forest and, for those more adept at the subject, in a crowd unbeknownst to those present. However, many are too prone to complicate that which is simple. Father Elias, a member of the Carmelite Order in Haifa Israel, described it thusly: "In the first phase of meditation, we are alone in the dark room of the universe. We may think about God, we may talk about Him but He remains a distant object in our minds. In the second phase of meditation, all of a sudden God makes His presence felt in the darkness. He begins to illuminate our souls. He makes us aware of His presence, analagous to the awareness we have of the objects around us. Love has entered a new phase. It is love between Two. We become aware that God loves US!" In *Practice of the Presence*, Joel Goldsmith refers to meditation as "...an invitation for God to speak to us." Roy Eugene Davis, in his *An Easy Guide to Meditation*, reinforces R. Straughn's thoughts by saying, "...we appear (in meditation) to be at the center of it all, as the witness or the observer."

The practitioner of meditation will one day observe an interesting phenomenon. He will look forward to, nay yearn, for the moment of meditation. For some, it is the only time for a little "peace and quiet." Yet, it is more than that, much more. And even though, at the onset, meditation may seem a chore, it will soon become a much desired practice. The Irish mystic, George Russell, writing under the pen name of "AE", eloquently expressed this feeling in his beautiful and lyric book, *The Candle of Vision*. Referring to meditation he said, "The dark caverns of the brain begin to grow luminous. We are creating our own light. By heat of will and aspiration we are transmuting what is gross in the subtle aethers through which the mind works. As the dark bar of metal begins to glow, at first redly, and then at white heat, or as ice melts and is alternately fluid, vapor, gas and at last, radiant energy, so do these aethers become purified and alchemically changed into luminous essences, and they make a new vesture for the soul, and link us to a mid world, or heavenward, where they too have their own home. How quick the mind is now! How vivid is the imagination! We are lifted above the tumult of the body. The heat of the blood disappears below us. We draw

nigher to ourselves. The heart longs for the hour of meditation and hurries to it; and, when it comes, we rise within ourselves as a diver under the sea arises to breathe the air, to see the light. We have invoked God and we are answered according to the promise of old." Russell was indeed a mystic but I bet he had an athanor hidden away in the closet!

A different view on the subject, a "now" view, is offered by Edwin C. Steinbrecher in his book *Guide Meditation*. This technique is a departure from what we might call "classical" meditation. It involves the use of a Guide as found on what can be called the "astral" level. The idea is to seek out someone or something that has been through it all before and can help us along, put us in touch with the data we seek. Steinbrecher explains his technique this way: "Guide Meditation is the product of the mingling of a number of spiritual and philosophical streams; astrology, tarot, alchemy, analytical psychology, qabalah and the Western Tradition which encompasses the Graeco-Judaeo-Christian spiritual heritage of the West. The Guide Meditation is a transformative process concerned with assimilating the disparate energies which exist in the human unconscious into the unified wholeness that is the awakened, enlightened being inherent in each of us, thus ending the illusions which cause separation, guilt and judgment." J.J. van der Leeuw said exactly the same thing, only in different terms and using a different "method" in his book, *The Conquest of Illusion*.

It might be well at this juncture to clear up, as best we can, the misunderstanding that often arises between what is known as "concentration" and meditation. The two are totally different but the difference, while real, is subtle. In Concentration Ernest Wood writes: "Meditation is a complete flow of thought about an object which you have concentrated on." As an example, Wood postulates a flower. We concentrate on it thinking, as it were, of its color, petals, scent and letting in these related areas of thought. This is concentrating. Then the thoughts might go, "Come in little flower, into my lonely mind. And as you meditate with the flower, soon you will be worshiping the flower and saying: 'Wonderful flower, Holy flower, forgive me, forgive my contumely and my pride.' And the flower will forgive. And there will be love and ecstasy. That is meditation."

Patanjali put it succinctly: "Concentration is the binding of the mind to one place. Meditation is continued effort there." And Wood again, in a different book, *Mind and Memory Training*, states: "Concentration ends where meditation begins. Concentration involved contraction of the field of mental vision but meditation involves its expansion. Concentration is the unwavering focusing of the attention on any object to the exclusion of any other object. One starts by thinking about an object, the narrowing down the field so that one thinks of the object until finally the whole consciousness is filled with this object." Rammurti Mishra would add: "And we become the object." (Fundamentals of Yoga)

In his definitive work on the subject, *Concentration and Meditation*, Christmas Humphreys defined the purpose of meditation being to "dominate the lower separative self, to develop the mind's own higher faculties towards a vision of life's essential unity and to unite this dual process into one continuous spiritual unfolding." In *Yoga and Western Psychology* Geraldine Coster formulates a set of 'steps' for meditation. These are:

- (1) Sense of direction, or the will,
- (2) the instrument of thought, or the mind,
- (3) the object on which concentration is being attempted, and
- (4) inobtrusive ideas or distractions. She further, quantifies stages in the meditative process as being:
  - (a) selection of a subject;
  - (b) deliberation and;
  - (c) contemplation.

She indicates that this is an awareness of the object as thought. The mind being transformed into the object. These three stages correspond nicely to what Mishra defined as:

- (a) Conscious Mind;
- (b) Sub-conscious mind; and
- (c) Super-conscious mind.

These stages, dharana, dhyana and samadhi may also correspond to

there levels of the mind, known as alpha, delta and theta levels.

Let us briefly examine some of the more or less "mechanical" aspects of meditation. What type should be used? What paraphernalia, if any? As to the former, W.Y. Evans-Wentz sets out a number of aphorisms in Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines that apply well. These are (Listed under 'Ten Best Things'):

- (1) For one of little intellect, the best-meditation is complete concentration of the mind on a single object;
- (2) For one of ordinary intellect, the best meditation is unbroken concentration of the mind on the two dualistic concepts, phenomena/noumena and consciousness and;
- (3) For one of superior intellect, the best meditation is to remain in mental quiescence, the mind devoid of all thought processes, knowing that the meditator, the object of meditation, and the act of meditating constitute an inseparable entity." This is as good a starting place as any but seems a little rigid. The really best thing is to try ANYthing. You will soon get the hang of it. Just DO it.

How about posture, clothing, incense and so on? The answer here is there is really no hard and fast "correct" set of rules. Whatever turns you on! If glowing candles or incense helps to create an atmosphere conducive to meditating, do it. Fresh flowers "feel right?" Go get some fresh flowers but remember this is a daily discipline and daily fresh flowers could be a little troublesome. As for clothing, the less clothing the better. Binding garments and such are really impediments and distractions. Up tight about nudity? Wear a robe or a blanket. What KIND of incense? Some say Sandalwood is conducive towards meditation. Can't prove it by me. I just like one that smells nice! Beads? Why not. Must they be Sandalwood or must they be rudraksha? Who says so? And posture. Well now, this IS an important point. The better the posture, the better will be the results. The "Lotus" posture is best. Why? Well if you consider the body to be a mass of electrical and nervous energies, the position of the parts of the body can make for good or poor "conduction" of these energies. They can also "shunt"

energy to where it is best utilized. Maybe not the best analogy but it should do.

If you cannot, for physical or other reasons sit in a Lotus posture, do a free Lotus. How about simply sitting cross-legged? Or even in a chair. Really, the asanas are good, but many of us are just not oriented or physically constructed for a full Lotus or "the Thunderer." The "God" position may be just what the doctor ordered! (i.e., sitting "normally" upright in a chair). The main thing is to keep the spine straight. The ancient Yogis postulated some reasons for various postures and "mudras" (finger positions or gestures). The idea of the Lotus position, or at least a cross-legged posture is that it is an aid to the inspiration of breath as a regulatory device. Maintaining equilibrium was to regulate the vital heat of the body while maintaining an erect spinal column regulated the nervous fluids pervading the body and bending (slightly forward) of the neck help regulate the breath's expiration. Finally, the pressing of the tongue against the roof of the mouth and focusing the gaze caused the vital forces to enter the median nerve, the Sushumna. In other words, the erect spinal column along with the latter discipline aided in raising the Kundalini.

As our final "look" at meditation and the western tradition, let us now bring this spiritual discipline, for such it is, into the laboratory. Perhaps, just as alchemy can be demonstrated, we can find actual physical evidence of benefits provided by meditation. First of all we can consider a mental aspect. Dr. F.I. Regardie in his book *Twelve Steps to Spiritual Enlightenment* indicates that the act of concentration leads to the development of the will and an enhancement of the image-building process. That is, the ability to visualize is improved, a function of great importance to anyone treading the path of the magician. That this is so is verified by Dr. Roberto Assagioli in his book *An Act of Will*. We find there a series of exercises designed to strengthen the will and we discern that they are, largely, concentration and meditative type exercises.

For further evidence we can cite several scientific studies that have been performed. It is true that the bulk of these did concern themselves with Transcendental type of Meditation, but meditation it is. In *SCIENCE Magazine*, the March, 1970 issue, a study conducted by Dr. Robert Keith

Wallace of the Dept. of Physiology, School of Medicine, Center for the Health Sciences in Los Angeles was featured. The summary of this study is as follows:

"Oxygen consumption, heart rate, skin resistance and electroencephalograph measurements were recorded before, during and after the practice of TM by subjects. There were significant changes between the control period and the meditation period in all measurements. During meditation, oxygen consumption and heart rate decreased, skin resistance increased and the electroencephalograph showed specific changes in certain frequencies. The results seem to distinguish the state produced by TM from commonly encountered states of consciousness and suggest that TM has practical applications."

Tests at the Harvard Medical Unit of Boston Memorial Hospital showed that oxygen consumption dropped sharply and carbon dioxide elimination also decreased sharply during meditation. In the April 1974 issue of "Psychology Today" we find that while using meditators in a study of blood pressure, Herbert Benson noted that 19 of his 20 volunteers had given up the use of drugs. According to their own testimony, changes in consciousness due to marijuana, LSD and heroin had become very distasteful since their introduction to meditation. Studies by the U.S. Army, the Greens at Menninger and countless other very rigid, very scientific studies show there ARE physical, measurable benefits to be gained by meditating. Even children benefit as shown by a study in the Eastchester, N.Y. public schools, conducted by F.G. Driscoll, supt. of schools. Tests showed that students who meditated were less anxious about taking tests, improved their grades and got along better with fellow students AND parents.

We are all on a beautiful spiritual quest after Truth. The truth about nature and the truth about ourselves, why we are who we are. Whence we came, whither we go. At the same time we need to be concerned about the care and feeding of the bodies that house these egos, these souls. Now if indeed meditation not only provides the meeting place for Divine communication but in fact provide mental and physical benefits, it would seem that practicing meditation should become a part of our daily curriculum. The evidence is overwhelming from all sides. Those



who advocate physical enhancement through meditation prove it with their galvanic devices and electroencephalographs. Even the mental aspects of growth in will and visualization are a praxis that can be observed. And for spiritual growth? Countless millions will attest to a new serenity, a new peace of mind, to enlightenment and, at last, a merging into the vast and all pervading SOURCE. That which IS. God. Jehovah. Allah. Lord. Krishna. Brahm. The Solar Logos. Gayatri. By whatever name we use, we are enabled now to feel the fullness of the love of the Mother for the Child, to hear, to speak and be heard. Given this, shouldn't WE be meditating?

Turn inward for your voyage!  
For all your arts,  
You will not find the Stone  
In foreign parts.

--Angelus Silesius

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Meditating on Nintzel

Forum: As in most things that pass in time, I found my opinions on what meditation is, to be the opposite of Nintzel's in some areas of his essay on "Meditation and Alchemy" (Winter 1978). Of course I must admit that Nintzel did a great job listing many of the types of meditation that have been recorded in history.

To me, meditation means "to see what is beyond all postulations. Such a simple statement draws many conclusions from the readers of such. One may even try to conclude that "God loves us" is "what is." Nintzel's slant on meditation tends to fill one's mental screen with a comforting security. I have found no security that can fill the vacancy that my observations have left me with. My evaluation of "what is" brings sorrow into my perspective of the world and our relationship with it. The "God of Love" evades my eyes.

To transcend this world, logic dictates that the world must be seen as it really is, even if the worst of horrors are suspected. The world and everything else are only one way. To project qualities upon the world and ourselves that could be fantasy would be only to fool ourselves.

With hope and a developed discerning capacity, a person may be able to stumble upon an answer that would fill life's void.

I must admit that my own search has brought me to the present conclusions, just as I am sure that Nintzel's definitions of meditations have been a valid part of his search. I wish the best of luck to all of those who set out on the search. I hope that the Journal will become an arena of thought and that differences of opinion will grant the readers constructive insights into their own search.

• Don Seebach, Canton, Ohio

Forum: Hans Nintzel's article on meditation in the last issue of the TAT Journal reflected the ideas of a man who has obviously been involved in esoteric research on a wide scale. His eclectic presentation on meditation and alchemy was well done; however I felt inclined to offer an observation on a certain attitude that was reflected in his presentation.

Many people involved in spiritual disciplines seem to share the writer's view that we "are all on a beautiful spiritual quest after Truth". Well, unless my interpretation of the author's connotation of the word beautiful is completely distorted, I would have to extend the following counter proposition. Once we start on the spiritual search we are all on a discomfoting, in fact, frightening trip leading to total annihilation of that which we identify with as our 'personality'. If, as many spiritual teachers tell us, our so-called ego or personality is false, and assuming that most of us are tenaciously attached to our egos, then I am inclined to feel that the loosening or removal of such attachments would be a psychologically unnerving and painful experience.

What I'm suggesting is simply that I do not feel that certain styles of meditation (specifically Zen and most Tibetan Buddhist schools) necessarily create a "new peace of mind". On the contrary, they provide nagging reminders of our positions as imprisoned devotees of illusion - instead of deepening our sense of joy and serenity, they act as constant "thorns-in-our-sides" and reminders of our greased slide towards death and dust.

I do not mean to belittle the joyful or uplifting aspects of spiritual discipline, for the yearning to obtain liberation has probably touched the

deepest emotions in us all to a greater or lesser degree. And surely there is great energy and exhilaration in seeing that there is only one meaningful purpose in living - to work perseveringly towards the attainment of the fullest degree of spiritual maturity of which we are capable in our lifetime. The attitude that it is better to die than to live a life without trying to acquire truth, summarizes the sentiments of most spiritual giants. The philosophical system you choose to work (or dabble) with certainly determines the style or flavor of your effort.

- Dave Diaman, Moundsville, W. Va.