

Week 3: Meditation and Open-Eyed Practices

Dear Ones,

Please listen to the call one more time this week.

Daily Meditation Practice

Continuing our daily Meditation on the Breath and HamSa mantra flowing through the Heart and Ajna chakras.

This week, we'll continue with the meditation protocol that we have been doing for the past couple of weeks, but with these additional suggestions:

- As the breath flows in, feel the sensuousness of the breath over the nasal passages, and also be aware of engaging the diaphragm during the early part of the inhalation, even as the inhalation “lands” in the heart, and the exhalation rises to the center of the head, to the Ajna.
- Accompany the breath with *Ham* (on the inhalation), *Sa* (on the exhalation). Again, if you have a personal mantra that you have been using, it's fine to practice with that. However, it should be a mantra that is enlivened, that you received from a lineage that cultivates the mantra, and that signifies the highest level of sacred energy. In other words, it should be a mantra that is either associated with the level of consciousness known as Ishwara, no matter what name gives to it.
- Feel the resonance of the mantra as it flows with the breath. As the inhalation draws the breath into the heart, feel the touch of the mantra's vibratory resonance in your inner body. Feel the mantra flowing and resonating with the breath as it flows to the Ajna.

Working with Thoughts

Continue to practice with one of the two thought-strategies we offered last week—a) Drop It (or simply noticing the thought and conscientiously letting it go) or b) Seeing all thoughts as energy (Shakti) and letting them dissolve.

Working with Emotions, Moods, and Charged Thoughts through Mindful Noticing It

In meditation, when emotions arise or when a thought has particular “charge” to it, see if you can practice witnessing it and simply acknowledging its emotional quality. As in “Anger arising.” “Dullness arising.” “Worry arising.” Some moods or emotions will catch you, and you’ll find yourself identifying with them. When you get “caught” by a feeling or a sticky idea, notice the state of mind that arises. As soon as you become aware that you’ve been caught, label the sticky mood or thought as Shakti, and see what happens.

Open-Eyed Practices

Here are a few open-eyed practices to work with, related to our discussion last night. All of them are based on sutra I:32:

तत्प्रतिषेधार्थमेकतत्त्वाभ्यासः ॥३२॥

tatpratiṣedhārthamekatattvābhyāsaḥ ॥ 32॥

“Meditation on one single reality is the way to overcome obstacles.”

Meditation on a Single Principle

Meditation on a Single Principle (*ekatattva*) is meditation on the presence of grace in the universe and in yourself. It can be practiced in several ways, and I’d suggest you try each of them. Some of you will find your own ways of tuning into grace. However, the time-honored method, which is also the easiest for most people, is mantra repetition. Mantra practice is simple, which means that you can resort to it anytime. So, the first practice for this week is:

Mantra Japa, or steady repetition of mantra, with awareness that the mantra holds the energy of the One Principle, the highest truth, Ishwara, and that its resonance connects you to the power and protection and wisdom and love of that level of reality. Be aware of the mantra as a form of the highest truth. See if you can do several rounds of mantra *japa* during the day.

Using a *japa* mala (rosary beads) count your repetitions up to 108. Or simply set a timer and silently repeat the mantra for a certain amount of time (15 minutes at a time is good). Some suggestions for creatively working with a mantra:

- You can alternate silent repetition with out loud repetition.
- You can also sing it or chant it. See if you can let the mantra fill your mind.

- You can imagine the mantra being written in your heart in letters of light or imagine the mantra as a liquid pouring into your heart.
- You can go for a walk and “name” whatever you see with the mantra,
- You can walk around your house touching things (especially when you’re cleaning or cooking) and feel that your touch infuses them with mantra.

Here is a **meditation from the non-dual tantric tradition on *EkaTattva*, the One Principle**:

As you move through your day, hold the idea, “Whatever I see, hear, taste and touch, and whatever passes through my body and mind—all this is arising within one consciousness, which is my Self. Wherever my mind goes, wherever my gaze lingers, all that is part of the divine fabric of the world.” This, of course, includes the challenging and annoying and scary aspects of your daily experience. Notice which aspects of your world you tend to exclude from the divine fabric and make a point of including them.

Journal about the experience of this.

Offer your actions to the divine or imagine that everything you say and do is in itself service to divine Presence, to the web of life, which is itself a form of the divine.

Ask periodically, “How can I find sacred presence in this situation?” Where is grace now? Can I open to presence of grace? To the sense that I am being held by the universe, by God/Goddess, by love?” Or ask, “How would my attitude shift if I were to see all this as the play of Shakti, as the play of Ishwara?”

Notice and journal about how it feels when you do any of these practices.