



AWAKEN THE WORLD

Guided Meditations

#3 - PRANA



#3 – Prana

As with all of the Samadhi meditations there's no 'doing' in this meditation. There's nothing to figure out with the mind. But instead we will come to recognize what the mind is already doing, and to practice dropping its various unconscious activities as they become more conscious.

The purpose of meditation 1 & 2 in this series is to help you cultivate two specific skills needed for meditation. These skills are: single pointed concentration, and the ability to surrender to whatever arises without reaction. If in your meditation you're able to remain relatively equanimous and nonreactive to whatever arises for more prolonged periods you may naturally find yourself directly experiencing prana or inner energy which is the field of change underlying the mind and senses.

Samadhi is the transcending of opposites- the transcending of the duality of the mind Samadhi is the transcending of the duality of microcosm and macrocosm, of male and female, conscious and unconscious, self and not self, in-breath and out-breath, and of individual and God. The separation is an illusion created by a false identification with the egoic self or limited mind. The less the mind controls or mediates our experience the more we experience reality as it actually is.

The more your consciousness is disentangled from the mind and its preferences and redirected uninterruptedly towards the meditation object, the more the mind loses momentum and comes to stillness. The understanding of this process of redirection is not merely intellectual. It must be experienced. You realize or fully become that which you are, that which you always have been but which has been obscured through the entanglement of consciousness and thought. The mind does not know and cannot know the great mystery of our true nature, the mystery of what we are.

You can't imagine what Samadhi is with the limited egoic mind just as you can't describe to a blind person what color is. Your mind can't know. It can't manufacture it. The mind is simply a reducing valve or limiting filter. A tool for interacting with physical reality in a certain way. It is the very coming into being of mind that is the creation of physical reality. The mind's existence is not a problem. On the contrary the error or aberration of human perception is that we identify ourselves with it.

This illusion that we are the limited self is Maya. The yogic teachings say that to realize Samadhi one must observe the meditation object until it disappears- until you disappear into it or it into you. Subject-object duality collapses. Observe the expansion and contraction of all phenomena until all merges into one. No more breather and no more breath. No more observer and observed. This may take hours days weeks or years of single-pointed determined practice depending on where you are on your journey.

Samadhi is not about the determination of the mind to achieve some sort of goal. It's about higher will it's about determination to surrender the mind's activity completely- to let go of everything that's known. In quantum physics a photon or light particle behaves like a solid thing when it's observed, and it behaves like a wave when there's no observer. Similarly the breath is more wave-like as the observer starts to let go, as the observer begins to disappear.

Even if we feel like we're allowing the breath to flow naturally there may be deep unconscious aspects of the self that are exerting influence. For example there may be a contraction or restriction in the belly, or the heart may be closed blocking the pulsation of the breath in the chest area. You may be energetically holding on to a sense of self in the third eye area where your inner energy flows to.

The unconscious manipulation exerted by the self structure can manifest in many ways in the body and through practice we learned to make these unconscious elements conscious. When there is less self or ego controlling the breath then there is more prana or conscious energy flow. Prana or inner energy is your inner aliveness- what you experience when

the mind and senses are in an open state or a state of non-clinging; not discriminating any idea of this or that. It is counterproductive to try to make anything happen in meditation by using your mind.

Do not look for prana or energy inside of you because the activity of looking for something will keep the egoic self active. As we have said all along, simply let everything be as it is without resistance to whatever arises. Observe the control that the mind is already exercising. Penetrate into its unconscious activity. View all arising sensations as an invitation or doorway to this exploration. Meditation is nothing but a letting go of deeper and deeper aspects of the controlling self.

The mind does not actually die or disappear but becomes a servant to the true self that is beyond name and form. Not my will but divine will be done. To meditate is an act of love- to surrender the mind to the very heart of your being. Start by being okay with what is in this moment. Just sit. Sitting is just happening. There is a body sitting and breathing. Observe the natural breath. The breath simply is. Breathing is happening. Don't get involved, just let it happen.

This pulsation of expansion and contraction inside the body exists. It's as real as it gets in this moment. You can't deny its existence. Observe what is. Allow what is. Now with a wide or panoramic awareness simultaneously notice as many particular aspects of the breath as you can. Such as the rise and fall of the belly, the air going in and out of your nostrils or the air going in and out of your lungs. Notice if your breath is deep or shallow. Notice if your in-breath is long or your out-breath is long. Notice if your in-breath is short or your out-breath is short.

Notice the gap or pause after the in-breath. Notice the gap or pause after the out-breath. Note as many particular aspects of the natural breath as you can at once without letting the mind get involved. In the gaps between the in and out breath, notice where the impulse to breathe is coming from. Are you taking a breath or are you letting it happen. Are you breathing or are you being breathed. Don't hold the question in the mind or try to answer it. Find out what these words point towards within the framework of the body.

As your breath expands in and out be aware of the entire field of change, the contours and forms of the waves of breath as they arise and pass away. Like a wave forming and dissolving on the ocean, observe the wave, observe the ocean- without labeling, without discriminating one or the other. Your breath is literally reaching every cell in the body. Allow your awareness of the field of change to expand to include the entire body and even beyond. If you start to get lost observing the expanded breadth then go back to observing the narrow breath at any time.

Feel the field of change washing over the body, animating the body, passing through the body into the deepest recesses of your being, permeating your thoughts and sensations. As you observed the whole body breathing or being breathed, notice if there is any resistance anywhere in the body. Simply be aware of any resistance or egoic control. The letting go happens by itself simply by witnessing with equanimity whatever sensations arise. Just observe with equanimity. Do not judge any sensation as good or bad. Let everything be as it is. Don't try to control the meditation in any way with your mind.

Now as you observe, let go of any idea or preconception you have about what the breath is. let go of the label or idea of breath, so that there is no knowing what the breath is. No expectations. Simply observe and allow the phenomena of expansion and contraction itself at the most subtle level of awareness that you can. You are taking in more phenomena, becoming conscious of the sensory data being taken in by the body, which is prior to the filtering activity of the mind.

We want to keep our whole awareness fixed on one thing: the field of changing phenomena at the root level of awareness. You keep your awareness on sensation without preference without discriminating, without labeling and without perceiving any 'thing'. Do not miss any sensation or any subtlety within the field of change. Be aware of any new sensation or quality that arises, but do not look for anything in particular. Don't try to manufacture some phenomena with the mind.

Observe reality as it is. Penetrate deeper. Surrender deeper. Always be aware, always be surrendering. Your attention should be like an unbroken stream of oil being poured from a container onto the meditation object. The hindrances may arise. Penetrate them, permeate them, suffuse them with your consciousness. Keep your awareness sharp. The experience of the inner energy should be vivid and alive. Don't try to have a still mind because the act of trying creates movement Stay within the field of change. Just being, letting go of all doing, and stillness reveals itself.

With practice the sensations become a uniform phenomena, a uniform field of change, and they lose their individual characteristics. The one thing that does not change is the reality that everything is changing. Who is aware of that? Any pain any emotion any bliss or any phenomena is experienced as indistinguishable- simply as changing energy.

Prana is recognized as the constantly changing pulse of expansion and contraction of absolutely everything. The Sanskrit term for this constantly changing energy is Annica. Your ability to remain aware of Annica may come and go. The moment-by-moment capacity for observing change itself is changeable. Even if your equanimity comes and goes be equanimous with that. Be equanimous with what is.