

A wooden chair is positioned on a sandy beach, partially submerged in shallow water. The background features a calm sea meeting a sky filled with soft, white clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The chair's reflection is visible in the water.

INTRODUCTION TO
MEDITATION

The still point of the turning world

“The ultimate end of the meditation is to reach this total immobility or the profound stillness and this is very deep. No meter could measure it, it is without end.”

WHY MEDITATE?

Scientific evidence about the physiological, mental and emotional benefits of meditation speaks for itself. Once limited to the clinical treatment of anxiety and stress, meditation is now applied to the fields of neuro-plasticity, emotional intelligence and elite sports.

The study of traditional meditation techniques has shown how sustained practice develops self-awareness, resilience, social intuition, sensitivity and attention-control; speeds up the brain's capacity for sensory processing, strengthens memory and improves the executive functions of the brain.

The research data supports the findings of ancient philosophy. Meditation has been prescribed by wisdom-teachers for millennia. Practical wisdom requires energy, and energy is restored in deep rest. Just as resting in bed at night is essential for one's physical well-being, so the profound rest available in meditation is essential for the well-being of the mind and the heart.

With the profound rest and total immobility of deep meditation, the human spirit flourishes. Efficiency increases. Mindfulness and compassion grow. Creativity flows.

“When one establishes the meditation, one gets to the source of all bliss, consciousness and truth. Then one realises one’s wholeness.”

“By going into meditation, one recharges oneself with finer energy and comes out with extra energy filled with consciousness and bliss.”

THE SCHOOL AND MEDITATION

The School has been training people in meditation for more than fifty years.

At that time, not much was known about the practice in the West, but this has changed. Although meditation has embedded itself in our culture, the variety of techniques available can be daunting for anyone seeking an authentic way forward.

The School received the meditation practice in the 1960’s. Instruction and guidance was given by the head of the Advaita Tradition in Northern India, Sri Santananda Saraswati, then the Shankaracharya of Jyotir Math. He continued to provide instruction and guidance until his death in 1997. The School’s responsibility from the beginning has been to make meditation available for whoever was seeking freedom, fullness of life or a deeper understanding of themselves.

Today, the School continues to offer the same simple practice it received over fifty years ago. It is an authentic and utterly simple practice, natural, easily learnt and can be practised within the demands of daily living.

“The system of meditation is not religious therefore does not clash with anything. It is designed for the spirit of man, which is not bound to any religion. It is universal, least ritualistic but traditional.”

THE SYSTEM OF MEDITATION

The School offers a system of mantra meditation which has been in use for millennia. Practice consists in the gentle repetition of a one-syllable sound to oneself and bringing the attention back to the sound again and again.

The practice starts with awareness until the physical body is still and upright. As the practice proceeds, the breathing naturally slows down, the senses withdraw and gradually the mind becomes deeply still. Then the mantra takes you to the still centre of yourself.

In its simplicity, the practice of meditation is nothing more than sitting and listening.

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All quotations on the practice of meditation are from conversations with Sri Santananda Saraswati (1913-1997).



"In meditation one goes deeper, and comes to a stage where there is almost nothing moving, but this is not to be equated with nothing, for it is the most potent of all that this universe knows. Such a person has reached unity and risen above duality. He or she is at rest, from where all actions may arise and be fulfilled."

COMMENCEMENT AND TRAINING

The meditation is given in a short, traditional ceremony designed to bring the mind and heart to rest. The ceremony is non-religious and is there to ensure the precise passage of the mantra from generation to generation and to support the significance of the event. It is carried out by a trained instructor, an experienced meditator who has undergone a period of careful preparation.

You will be asked to bring four things to the ceremony, each one symbolic: some flowers, some pieces of fruit, a piece of white cloth and a donation of money. The donation is not a fixed amount but depends on individual capacity. The donation symbolises the surrender of material things. It is an expression of value and is used to make meditation available to others. There is no fee for receiving the meditation.

Once you've commenced meditating, the School will support you in the practice with one-on-one sessions, small group sessions and meditation retreats if you wish. This support will be available for as long as you wish. In providing you with the meditation, the School undertakes the obligation of support for life.

“As we have the saying ‘Master one thing to master all, and to lose everything try to master all,’ so we need to attend to the most important factor of development, which is the meditation. This is the master key to all measures and full realisation.”

HOW TO PROCEED

The School offers meditation three times a year. You begin by registering for a ninety-minute information/ Q&A session. By the end of the meeting, you'll have all the information you need to decide whether or not to proceed.

If you wish to go ahead, two weeks later you'll attend a ninety-minute preparation session where the practical arrangements will be finalised and the support program outlined. The commencement ceremony will take place a week after this preparation session.

It is necessary to attend both preliminary sessions if you wish to proceed with the meditation.

Dates for these meetings are available on the web at

www.practicalphilosophy.org.au/meditation

 **SCHOOL OF PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY**

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