

Meditation with Seed Thought

Daily meditation is a fundamental part of our practice as disciples if we truly wish to make progress on the spiritual path. Although there are many types of meditation, what they all have in common is the goal of controlling the three lower personality vehicles in order to reach the ultimate goal of stabilizing our awareness at the highest level of consciousness possible. Being able to maintain this heightened consciousness at will allows us to tap into resources that reveal our true Self and help us become who we really are, and it will eventually provide unimpeded, reliable contact with the Soul – our true Master on this spiritual journey.

The meditation practice that we use in the School for Esoteric Studies is meditation with seed thought. This form is highly suitable as a method for developing the mental body and expanding our ability to communicate in both the objective and subjective worlds. In this type of meditation we use an aspirational passage from our studies and focus the mind on it as we attempt to penetrate into the world of meaning, the “soul” of the seed thought. The benefits of this type of meditation are twofold.

First, we learn how to control the mental body, which is our point of access to the Soul. By selecting an aspirational seed thought and concentrating on its words and inner meaning, we put the mind on a vibrational level that is more receptive to Soul energies. We are also giving the mind something to focus on, forcing it to slow down. This focus makes it easier to filter out extraneous thoughts and channel the energy of the “monkey mind” away from its continuous, automatic and mindless chatter and toward a more elevating task. In this way we strengthen our ability to concentrate and to think more clearly and one-pointedly. As we gain facility with this technique, we discover the importance of consciously choosing our thoughts rather than allowing automatic thoughtforms to control us. This practice of consciously choosing our thoughts will also help us to consciously choose and control our emotions.

Second, as we take the seed thought deep into our consciousness and work with its implications, we are training the mind to look beyond the surface of things and discover the world of meaning. As the deeper meanings of the seed thought begin to surface, they have the power to gradually and subtly transform our habitual mental attitudes into a more positive state of mind. This leads to increased self-understanding, to the ability to be in the present and detached from our usual preoccupations with the past and the future, and to the transformation of our personality by Soul qualities such as patience, tolerance, acceptance and compassion. We also learn how to bring down abstract thoughtforms into a concrete form, to express what may seem to be inexpressible, to create practical thoughtforms and manifest them on the physical plane.

The key to success in this type of meditation is to *actively* engage the mental body and not allow it to become passive or lazy. In an active process we use the mind as a tool to analyze the seed thought, looking for connections to deeper meanings, utilizing analogies, and considering practical applications. It is also an active engagement with the Soul, in which we communicate with the Soul as actively as we would in a conversation with a friend.

As we seek deeper meanings behind a particular seed thought, the mind will naturally come up with many superficial observations in the beginning, but we can't let the mind rest there. The mental body needs to grapple with deep thoughts in order to develop strength and flexibility; otherwise it will be content with platitudes and fixed ideas and will not develop the ability to think things through. People who do not think things through for themselves are apt to accept passively the information that comes to them via their circle of family and friends and from the media.

To give the mental body a good workout, the suggestion is to work with a seed thought daily over the course of a few weeks (preferably in the morning when our minds are at their freshest and not in the evening, which might disrupt our sleep cycle). During the first few days of work with the seed thought, while it is still

fresh and new, we may find it easy to maintain an active dialog, but then the work begins as we attempt to dig ever deeper. Every day we approach the seed thought anew, and we are a subtly different person from one day to the next. Some days it will seem like we are trudging through a desert at night, but then on other days we will discover a lighted oasis of new insights.

We may also observe that at times we approach the seed thought with the emotional body, rather than the mental body. We “feel our way” into the seed thought and respond to its emotional appeal. This is a normal experience when we are just beginning to learn how to meditate with a seed thought, and the emotional body can certainly help to evoke thoughts from our mental body. Nevertheless, we must persist with the mental approach, and this perseverance through the difficult times not only strengthens our mental muscles and our will power, it can also be a test of our willingness to do what it takes to build our connection to the Soul. The Soul won’t do the work for us. It will only meet us halfway. One suggestion for getting through the dry spells is to simply hold the seed thought in the light of the Soul and wait for the Soul to release its wisdom.

As with any organic process, our daily meditation goes through various levels, and we develop a rhythm similar to breathing in and breathing out. Thus there will be a stage in which we are *actively creating* thoughtforms, and this will be followed by a stage in which we are *actively receptive*. This means that we are alert and aware of our firm alignment with the Soul; we have reached a high point of conscious identification with the meaning of the seed thought, and we are in a state of conscious and dynamic invocation.

In this stage – receptive meditation – we use the will to maintain our connection with Soul, and our attitude is one of openness and willingness to receive whatever may come through. What comes through, however, will not necessarily be in the form of clear words or ideas. It may be received in the form of a subtle energy, and the effects of this energy may not become evident immediately. The insights may percolate through later in the day or manifest in symbolic form in our dreams. We can picture the process of invocation and evocation as though we were receiving a compressed transmission that may not be “readable” until later when the brain has had a chance to process it and “unfold” the message.

True meditation is a conscious active interplay between the mental body and the Soul in which we lose all sense of self and become the Soul, and we think and act *as* the Soul as we meet the challenges of daily life.