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02. INTRODUCTION (Why This Guide and Contents)

- The decision to write this short practical guide on meditation was initiated after going through a considerable amount of content and still not fully grasping it.
- After reading multiple books, numerous online articles, and watching numerous videos, it became apparent that the contents were often very similar.
- Following lessons and practical sessions with professional guides did not yield much evolution, as the information shared was largely the same.
- In the end, it all boils down to this: sit down quietly without moving, empty the mind, and focus on the breath.
- This does not sound very logical; if the mind is empty, how can it focus on anything, given that the mind is used to applying focus?
- Only after years of continuous and prolonged daily practice did some aspects, never mentioned before, become noticeable and clear.

- These aspects are the central content of this short practical guide and gave rise to the title: Secrets of Meditation.
- Furthermore, the content sections are presented in a logical progression from theory to practice, hence the second part of the title.
- Hopefully, this practical content and style become easy to follow and help enlighten the path to a meditative state of mind.

03. WHAT MEDITATION IS NOT (Before Explaining What It Is)

- Not easy
- Not doing nothing
- Not sitting still without moving
- Not emptying the mind and thinking of nothing
- Not thinking or letting the mind wander about the past and future
- Not reflecting or analyzing a situation and feeling emotions about it
- Not a solution for everything

04. WHAT IS MEDITATION (In Short)

- Is hard and intense
- Is a practice to be actively exercised in sessions
- Is control over the body and mind
- Is uninterrupted, prolonged concentration on a chosen object
- Is presence in the current moment, the present, here and now
- Is a process to restrain the mind by removing distractions
- Is a path to enlightenment and unity

05. THEORY (How to Practice Meditation)

- Meditation is challenging because, during the initial stages, the mind has to be used to control itself.
- The goal is to maintain a continuous flow of cognition on a chosen object for as long as possible.
- By controlling the breath, the first and most common object of concentration is used, which is the breath itself.
- Therefore, visualization and imagination play an important role during meditation practice before uninterrupted concentration is mastered.
- Visualizing anything that can be imagined about the chosen object helps maintain focus and concentration.
- However, distractions will inevitably occur, and upon realization of the distraction, focus should return to the chosen object.
- This process of concentration and distractions repeats multiple times in loop cycles.
- This loop cycle of trying to concentrate and re-concentrate on the chosen object is called meditation practice.

- When concentration is achieved for a prolonged and uninterrupted period, it can be considered and called meditation.
- Meditation practice is done in sessions, which are repeated possibly multiple times daily and vary according to availability.
- Each session is different, as it depends on the current state of mind; however, with effort and determination, progress is noticed.
- The state of mind before practice starts should be: there is nothing else at this moment, apart from myself, here, with the object of focus.
- Once meditation is mastered, it is possible to achieve contemplation with absorption; however, this is beyond the topic of meditation.
- During absorptive contemplation, the experience excludes the mind and merges with the chosen object, bypassing the mind.

06. ENERGY CENTRES (The So-Called Chakras)

- There are hundreds of energy centres spread throughout the whole body.
- However, the seven largest and most important ones are along the spine and head.
- These seven energy centres are located inside the spine or head and not at skin level.
- Their names are indicative of the height along the spine or head where they are located.
- Each energy centre is represented by a visual light colour that helps during visualization.
- The colours correspond in the same order as the rainbow colours, from the first (red, at the bottom) to the seventh (violet, at the top).
- The first is the root centre, located at the very bottom of the spine, almost in contact with the floor when seated, represented by the colour red.
- The second is the sacral centre, located at the height of the sexual organs, represented by the colour orange.
- The third is the solar plexus centre, located at the navel height (belly button), represented by the colour yellow.

- The fourth is the heart centre, located at the height of the heart, in the middle of the chest, represented by the colour green.
- The fifth is the throat centre, located at the height of the throat and neck, represented by the colour blue.
- The sixth is the third eye centre, located at the height of the forehead, represented by the colour purple.
- The seventh is the crown centre, located at the height of the scalp, at the top of the head, almost outside the body, represented by the colour violet (or white).
- During practice, breath is used together with visualization techniques to help the mind unclog the energy centres, one by one.

07. CLOTHING (How to Dress)

- It is important to wear comfortable and suitable clothing.
- Comfortable clothing allows for uninterrupted and prolonged practice.
- Ideally, wear loose attire, such as pyjamas or a robe.
- Avoid elastics or anything too tight.
- Avoid any type of shoes; socks are fine.
- Avoid caps or hats, ties, and belts.
- Avoid glasses, pulse watches, bracelets, rings, earrings, or accessories in general.

08. LOCATION (Where to Practice)

- Choose a quiet place with as few interruptions and distractions as possible; turn off mobile phones.
- Initially, practice indoors; after gaining some experience, outdoor practice is also possible.
- Select a location protected from too bright light, with a temperature that is neither too warm nor too cold; avoid cold wind currents.
- Ideally, use the same spot whenever possible to facilitate the creation of a routine.

09. DURATION (How Long to Practice)

- Reserve time to engage in proper practice when nothing else is necessary or requiring attention.
- Session duration usually depends on the time available, as well as the state of mind and posture.
- Start with a 5-minute session, incorporating a simple breath control exercise.
- Extend to 15 minutes by including a body scan, focusing on different parts of the body while controlling the breath.
- Extend to 30 minutes by adding focus on the energy centres instead of a body scan, while controlling the breath.
- Extend to 45 minutes by choosing something enlightening and elevated to focus on after unclogging the energy centres with visualization.
- A session duration of 60 minutes is not uncommon nowadays, although historically, sessions could last for days, weeks, or even months.
- If anxiety arises during the practice to hurry and finalize the session for other tasks, this is not meditation.

- The best tip is to be present, focus on the current moment, practice concentration, and forget about time; this is meditation.

10. TIMING (When to Practice)

- Ideally, make it the first activity in the morning, right after waking up.
- Begin with one session in the morning before breakfast.
- Extend to one more session in the evening before sleep.
- Alternatively, choose any other convenient time, always ensuring there are fewer or no distractions.
- Later on, extend to as many sessions as desired depending on availability.
- Ideally, practice at the same time consistently, if possible, to facilitate the creation of a routine.

11. POSTURE (How to Sit and Position the Body)

- It is essential to find a comfortable posture.
- Essentially, the posture should be comfortable, relaxed, yet steady and present.
- A comfortable posture allows for uninterrupted and prolonged practice.
- The most important aspect is to maintain a straight spine, including the lower back, back, neck, and head.
- During extended inhalation, check that the spine is steady and properly straight.
- Position the nose and chin neither too high nor too low; imagine a puppet hanging by its ears.
- The most common posture is a seated position, although standing or lying down is not uncommon, keeping the spine straight at all times.
- The use of a chair is also common, as long as both feet touch the ground, the spine remains straight, and there is no leaning on back support.
- Keep the legs relaxed, ideally in the famous lotus position; however, half-lotus or simply

crossed legs are also suitable, gradually progressing towards the lotus position.

- Allow the hands to rest relaxed over the lap, with palms up above each other and thumbs slightly touching.
- Alternatively, the hands can rest relaxed over the knees with palms up, while the middle finger slightly touches the thumb.
- Ideally, keep the eyes slightly open; however, it is possible to begin with closed eyes to avoid distractions and open them along the session gradually.
- Keep the eyes relaxed, avoid moving or focusing on anything, with the gaze pointing down in the nose direction.
- Keep the mouth closed, relaxed, with the jaw and tongue resting.
- In case of pain or discomfort, try to concentrate and relax the affected body part; if it does not help, adjust the posture.
- Anything can be adjusted during the session, especially the legs; find balance and recentre until the optimal posture is mastered.
- Do not feel pressured to remain still or unchanged; adjust and adapt until a steady comfort is achieved.

- It is okay to sneeze, cough, or clear the throat if it happens.
- Sitting on a firm, stable, and low (but not too soft) cushion or pillow can be helpful.
- Stretching the body before and after the session can also be beneficial.

12. BREATHING (How to Control the Breath)

- Breathing is done exclusively through the nostrils.
- Utilize breath control and regulation techniques, where exhalation is longer than inhalation and includes a short suspension.
- Control the breath at the throat, serving as a valve and producing a characteristic subtle sound.
- The goal is to have long and slow movements that evolve with practice, extending little by little with every cycle and session.
- During extended inhalation, straighten up the back, neck, and head until the lungs are totally full, all the way through.
- During suspension, for just a brief moment, relax the abdomen and navel area, the belly, and loosen the legs.
- Suspension is supposed to be brief and comfortable; the lungs should not crave air, and with practice, control is mastered.
- Exhalation is done as extended and slow as possible, consistent and almost imperceptible.
- During exhalation, the diaphragm muscle may get tired and sore; it helps to slightly inhale to

relax the muscle and continue the exhalation process.

- This technique to relax the diaphragm can be used repeatedly until the lungs are totally empty.
- At the end of the extended and slow exhalation, slightly lower the torso, like bowing forward, and exhale until the lungs are totally empty.
- If the lungs crave air and interrupt the flow, first try controlling it; if not possible, try a less extended cycle next.
- Once mastered, a breathing cycle, including inhalation, suspension, and exhalation, can take up to 3 minutes per single cycle.
- Those 3 minutes are divided into 40 seconds of inhalation, 20 seconds of suspension, and 120 seconds of exhalation, using the diaphragm technique.

13. VISUALIZATION (How to Guide the Mind into the Flow and Unclog Energy Centres)

- Visualization is done together with breathing, using breath as a guide to unclog energy centres; everything happens in the mind.
- Visualize the internal of the spine as an energy tube or pipe where energy can flow up and down when unclogged.
- Visualize the energy flowing up and down the energy tube while breathing in and out, during inhalation and exhalation.
- Visualize the seven energy centres along the spine: root, sacral, solar plexus, heart, throat, third eye, and crown, represented by colours.
- Visualize the energy centres being unclogged by each breath cycle, one by one, from the bottom up, so that the energy can flow freely inside the body.
- During inhalation, visualize the energy moving slowly up the tube, unclogging the energy centres along the way, one at a time.

- During breath suspension, visualize the energy concentrating and spinning in place, inside the spine at the position of the energy centre.
- During exhalation, visualize the energy concentrated in place, inside the spine, at the highest unclogged energy centre.
- With every breath cycle, visualize that the breath helps to clean the energy tube and unclog the next energy centre.
- Visualize that when the energy tube is clean, energy can flow freely from root to crown or any other energy centre.
- Visualize that while straightening the back, neck, and head, the energy can flow easily.
- Visualize the energy flowing via the magnetic field of the body, up through the spine from root to crown, and then down around the body from crown to root.

14. SENSATIONS (What the Body Senses During Practice)

- Sensations are not the goal of meditation; therefore, do not expect or search for them, although they can occur at any moment during deep practice.
- Sensations are closer to body feelings; they are not thoughts and emerge spontaneously and unconsciously.
- Sense body lightness, full-body relaxation, and calming, including head lightness.
- Sense alternation between warm and cold waves of energy through body extremities and limbs, accompanied by tingles.
- Sense heart pounding, chest pounding, or whole-body pulsing, accompanied by waves of energy flowing through the body.
- Sense a bright warm light coming from above, as if illumination is closer, noticeable even with eyes closed.
- Sense the whole body slightly tingling, accompanied by variations of warm and cold waves of energy spreading.

- Sense strong tingling through the body and head, especially the brain area, spreading through the spine, followed by slight dizziness.
- Visualize one single fixed tiny dot of light in the middle of the visual field where energy flows around, and all visual forms derive from it.
- If eyes are closed, they might start to slightly open by themselves, unconsciously.
- The mouth might form a slight uncontrolled smile of gratitude, unconsciously.
- Sense a sudden silence, as if everything became quiet all at once, and calm reigns altogether.
- The body might adjust itself to find a more comfortable posture, re-centering, or repositioning the hands, unconsciously.
- Feel a sense of oneness with everything and everyone; after all, everything is how it should be and where it belongs.
- When the illumination state is closer or reached, the sun might shine through and come out for a moment, even on a rainy day.
- Once sensations arise, do not be afraid to lose yourself and let yourself flow with the energy, surfing the energy.

- Feel other dimensions of this universe spinning around yourself; sometimes, it also happens to visualize them in flashes.
- Ultimately, enjoy all sensations together, combined and stronger, as if rolling out of this reality.

15. PRACTICE (Hands-On Step-by-Step Practice)

- Meditation practice is personal and individual, not done in a group; it is for the self and not for others.
- Start with a little body stretching, especially arms, legs, back, and neck; this helps endure the posture.
- Sit down on a firm cushion and choose a comfortable crossed-legs position, relaxed and steady.
- Optionally, light up an incense, which is recommended and helps to relax.
- Optionally, close the eyes partially letting some light come through or fully to avoid distractions.
- Warm up both hands by quickly rubbing them against each other and then spreading the warmth around the body.
- Spread by rubbing hands through the face, warm up the head, arms, repeating for chest, abdomen, and legs.
- Place hands together, palm with palm in front of the chest, at heart height; this position represents union.

- Take a slow, deep inhalation while slowly raising both hands together until they are in front of the forehead.
- Hold the breath for a little while, keeping hands united in front of the forehead in the meantime.
- Exhale slowly while also slowly lowering hands, united together, returning to the initial position in front of the chest.
- At the end of exhalation, with hands still united, slowly bow two or three times while expelling all air from lungs.
- Repeat these steps two or three times, optionally raising united hands higher than the forehead, to the crown or all the way up.
- Separate the hands while stretching the back, chest, and arms, then choose a comfortable arms and hands position while exhaling all air.
- At this point, start the visualization process, with the intention to unclog the energy centres and energy flow.
- Take a slow deep inhalation while visualizing the energy flowing to the first energy centre, root, with the colour red.

- Suspend the breath for a while, not too much to crave for air; check body posture, straighten the back, relax and let loose the belly.
- Release the air as slowly as possible, controlling exhalation, always without a craving for air using diaphragm technique until the lungs are empty.
- Repeat this breath cycle two more times for the first energy centre, root, red, so three in total per energy centre.
- Repeat this breath cycle three times for each successive energy centre, so 21 breath cycles in total for the seven energy centres.
- After 21 breath cycles, the actual meditation practice with a focus object starts; choose a mental object of concentration.
- Focus on the chosen object and keep breathing all the way from the first, root, red, to the seventh, crown, violet energy centre.
- Try to stay concentrated for as long as possible on the chosen object without interruptions or distractions.
- Whenever distraction arises, recognize it and return focus to the chosen object of concentration; this is the actual practice.

- Constantly check on the posture and adjust or adapt if necessary; back, head, arms, or legs until a comfortable posture is mastered.
- At the end of the practice, repeat the initial steps raising and lowering united hands together, a couple of bows during the end of exhalation.
- The meditation practice is done; slowly move the body out of position, stretch and stand up, continue to have a great day.
- This practice can be repeated as many times as necessary, once mastered, also with possible variations.

16. CONCLUSION (Please take your own)

- Meditation might be challenging but not impossible.
- With dedication, meditation practice can be mastered.
- Meditation brings long term benefits when practice becomes a routine.