

## **A Silent Meditation for Summer**

Meditation is, for many people, the most critical part of any yoga practice. After all, the reason we do yoga is so we can meditate. Yoga enables us to sit straight, breathe deeply and focus inwards. For those who do yoga for its physical benefits, they should take a serious look at meditation. It doesn't have to involve complex positions, or concepts or strange-to-the-tongue mantras. It can offer both physical as well as mental and even spiritual benefits, no matter what your theological outlook.

If you are new to yoga and meditation, then some explanation may be necessary. Meditation is NOT a blanking or smothering of the mind into submission. We do try to quiet the mind, calm it and bring it under our conscious control.

You may think you are in control of your mind but, if you use your mind to think about it, our thoughts pop up from what seems like nowhere. How often has a random memory, from years ago, come to mind in the middle of totally unrelated conversation or circumstance? Our minds are like exotic radio or television receivers. Instead of precise tuners or channel selectors, our focus is wide and general, wandering and accurate only if we concentrate with effort.

Similarly, when we meditate we want to focus on our divine nature, our soul, our connection with the infinite. There are many tools in Kundalini Yoga to help us with that focus. This meditation is one. Yogi Bhajan gave it in December of 1995 at a Winter Solstice Celebration.

First sit in Easy Pose with the spine straight. (It's a lot easier to do if you have just completed an invigorating set of yoga.) The left hand, palm open, is placed on the sternum with the thumb pointing up towards the head. The rest of the fingers are horizontal, parallel to the floor. The right hand, similarly configured, is placed on top of the left. Both thumbs point towards the head while the elbows are relaxed against the rib cage.

By way of explanation this is called a mudra. It will occupy the physical body. Maintaining it requires attention to how we are oriented—is the spine slouching, are the hands moving from the parallel, and so forth. When the mind begins to wander, we can check our physical position and correct it as a way of bringing the mind back to the task of MEDITATION. There's no need to shout, just do it.

Next comes the breath. Inhale through the nose and exhale through the rolled tongue, that is curled in a "U" and protruding slightly past the lips. (This position is called Sitalee Pranayam.)

This breath, in addition to the mudra will aid in gently disciplining the body and mind to remain focused on the task of meditation. Sit silently, do it correctly. Be calm, quiet, silent, in silent meditation. Yogi Bhajan has said, "It will give you the deepest silence of the self. You will hear the silence. Silent meditation is one in which you can hear yourself. Otherwise it's not silent. If you extend to the point where you can hear your own heartbeat, you are done."

You can begin with three minutes but it is best to sit for at least 11 minutes if you can. Then, you can, at your own rate, work your way up to 22 or 31 minutes. The 31 minute goal is ideal. Then you can balance the various systems of the body and tune in to your ethereal levels.