



Why do we meditate?

by Kim Nataraja

Meditation with its one-pointed focus, whether on the breath, on movement or in our case on a mantra, is a scientifically proven way to relaxation both of mind and body.

Purely by paying attention on our word, our breathing and heart rate slow down by themselves and calm the fidgety body. As our breath becomes slower, so do our thoughts. The breath is the bridge between the body and the mind.

John Main said: "Your breathing should be calm and regular. Allow every muscle in your body to relax. And then, put the mind in tune with the body. The real task of meditation is to achieve the harmony of body, mind and spirit."

Then by just accepting the restless nature of our mind and lovingly and faithfully repeating our word, despite everything, thoughts and images slowly fade into the background.

It is perfectly possible to use meditation purely for its health benefits as a body and mind altering relaxation technique and stop there. It is wonderful to stop the endlessly chattering mind and release stress and tension. It will feel great to have 'time out' from the concerns, anxieties, hopes and fears that generally beset us, to stop the drain of energy of a mind going round and round in circles. But that would be a missed opportunity; there is much more to meditation than its physiological effects on the body. The effects on the body and the mind are nevertheless an important first step on the road to transformation, to clarity of vision and total awareness.

When we achieve this peace and harmony by stilling the mind and the body and we keep paying full attention to our mantra, we can become aware of the peaceful, harmonious silence that dwells in our hearts. "Nothing describes God as well as Silence", said Meister Eckhart, the 14th century German mystic. Meditation is therefore a spiritual discipline, a voyage of discovery to the centre of our true being, where Christ dwells and at the same time a voyage of discovery into the presence of God. Once having discovered this it will permeate our life and influence all our actions.

"The all-important aim in Christian meditation is to allow God's mysterious and silent presence within us to become more and more not only a reality, but the reality in our lives; to let it become that reality which gives meaning to everything we do, everything we are."