

Third Handout & Homework for Journey to Joy

Farnaz Masumian

Contemplation

Another form of meditation is contemplation and reflection on the deeper meanings enshrined in the sacred literature of the world's religions.

Through contemplation, we are gradually awakened to our true nature and nobility as God's creatures. Furthermore, contemplation on the Word of God can lead to changes in our character, wisdom, peace of mind, and spiritual elation.

When contemplating on the Word, we seek insights. This takes time and consistent effort. Therefore, developing the habit of reading at least a short passage in the morning will put us in the proper state of mind before leaving home and interacting with others at work or elsewhere, and reading another passage in the evening will conclude our day with contemplation on yet another spiritual theme. To do your daily contemplation, visit the Cyber Temple (<https://www.cyber-temple.org/>) for 5-10 minutes. As you read each verse mindfully, see how it can be applied to your life.

Daily Accountability:

"Life's greatest achievement is the continual remaking of yourself so that at last you know how to live." -Winfred Rhodes, Treasury of Spiritual Wisdom, p.293

A complementary practice to meditation is the "daily accountability" exercise, which can be done at the end of the day through self-examination with the intent of spiritual growth—that is, to become more patient, more compassionate, more honest, more loving, and so on.

To do your daily accountability exercise, you can sit in your meditation place and take a few deep breaths to calm your mind. Then you can start by reviewing your day from the time you got up. You don't have to recall everything you have done; the major events and experiences will be enough.

As you remember each event, you can simply reflect on it to see if you can learn anything from each experience. As Roger Walsh says, the aim here "is to learn, not to blame; to grow in wisdom, not to fall into guilt; to appreciate our strength as much as to recognize our weaknesses...Regular self-reflection fosters good choices" (Essential Spirituality, by Dr. Roger Walsh).

How to Do the Mantra Meditation

To do the mantra meditation sit with your back straight and your eyes closed. Use prayer beads to help you concentrate on your mantra. Begin the practice by repeating the mantra you have chosen out loud for a while, followed by a period of whispering and finally ending with mental recitation of the mantra. Giving your mind such variety will prevent boredom and weariness. Saying the mantra aloud will help block the sounds and distractions you might face. The most potent part of the mantra meditation is to repeat the mantra *mentally* because it calls for a much focused concentration. Feel free to alternate, when necessary, especially when you encounter drowsiness (The Divine Art of Meditation, p. 76).

Mantra Writing or Likhita Japa

A supplementary form of mantra meditation is *likhita japa* or mantra writing. To do *likhita japa*, write your mantra with full concentration each day in silence using a special notebook set aside for this purpose. Pay close attention to your writing while you are simultaneously repeating your mantra in your mind. It is a good idea to decide ahead of time on the number of pages or lines and the time you are going to devote to your mantra writing daily. This will help you become more regular and disciplined in your practice.

Mantra Writing with Contemplation Practice

This approach offers a more effective way to practice Mantra meditation, as it combines two powerful techniques: mantra meditation and contemplation on sacred texts. To engage in this practice, visit the Cyber Temple and select a verse for contemplation. Write this verse in the center of your page. Then, as you write your mantra around the verse, simultaneously repeat the mantra in your mind. Refer to the Mantra Writing Sample provided to you for guidance in your practice."

Homework

Contemplation & Daily Accountability

- Visit the Cyber Temple (www.cyber-temple.org) for daily contemplation.
- Do the *daily accountability* practice at the end of the day. You can do this right before you write in your gratitude journals.

Mantra Meditation & More

- Practice Mantra Meditation 5-10 Minutes daily.
- Practice Mantra writing (or Mantra writing with contemplation) 5-10 Minutes daily.
- Keep a Faith Journal
- Do the Seven-Day Daily practice