

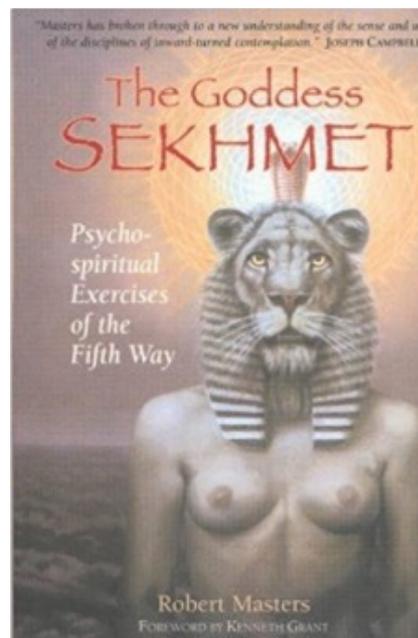
ENTERING THE SILENCE

By Robert Masters

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All major systems of meditation, and other ways of growth and self-actualization, recognize the very great importance of quieting the mind – of bringing an end to the customary inner noise, the babble and chatter and chaotic flow of ideas and images from the unconscious which reduces so much of waking life to a dismal parody of true awareness – of real waking states and genuine autonomy.

The necessity is clear, but the task is very, very difficult – for many, impossible. Those who have struggled to “empty the mind”, to enter into and remain in a silence free of images, ideas and sensations, know just how difficult this is. However, it may be that there are methods and techniques not known to, or adequately used by, most teachers. We will explore that possibility here in this lesson.



There are a pair of simple but important facts – research findings – in which this lesson is grounded. These are that the occurrence of verbal ideation requires at least minute collaboration – movement – of the apparatus of speech, while for the person to experience images, there must be at least some slight tension and movement, however minuscule, of the eyes. IF the vocal apparatus and the eyes are sufficiently relaxed to inhibit their movement, then neither verbal ideation nor imagistic thinking can occur.

With these preliminaries, you now will attempt to determine what extent you will be able to enter silence, quiet the inner noise and chatter, by achieving a profound relaxation – including a relaxation of parts of the body not ordinarily included in any relaxation procedures. In fact, those knowledgeable in meditative techniques now may learn something valuable about ways in which these methods are deficient.

And now, lie on your back, with your eyes opened or closed as you prefer, and sense your body very closely, starting with your toes.

Beginning with your toes, scan your body for tension, releasing the tension from any part where you find it. If you have difficulty releasing tension from, say, the toes, then it should be helpful to flex the toes, make them even more tense, and then let go of that induced tension, and of the other tension with it. Tense and let go, tense and let go. Do the same with any other muscles where you have trouble releasing the tension you experience. Do that until you are just as relaxed as possible. Scan your body up to your chest. Then go back down to your hands and your arms and back up to your shoulders. Finally relax the neck, face and head. As you do this, note where you encounter the tension and where you are able to get rid of all of it, most of it, some of it, little or none of it, so you will remember all that later.

Observe whether you notice any tension in your buttocks. IF there is usually an indentation of the side of the buttocks, then you have tension there whether you know it or not. Tense the buttocks and release them, bouncing yourself up and down. Contract and let go, contract and let go – that will bounce your body up and down. You do it most effectively by rapidly clenching and unclenching the muscles of the buttocks, without any help from the legs. Do it as quickly and lightly as possible, and then stop without becoming fatigued.

As you go through the entire relaxation process – now or on other occasions – verbalize what it is you want of your body so that you develop a capacity to talk to your body, and your body will respond. Over a period of time it will learn to make better and better responses. Couple the suggestion that some particular muscles are going to release with the actual experience of releasing

those muscles. For example say “Buttocks release” at the same time you experience the release. Similarly say to yourself, “hips release”, “pelvis release”, “ankles release”, “knees release”, “chest release”, “shoulders release” and so on. And say, “Toes and feet lengthening and loosening”, “fingers and hands lengthening and loosening”. Or “Neck free”, “Back lengthening and widening”. Give yourself many of these verbal suggestions, and later on you will find you have reached a condition where your body will respond to those suggestions or orders. As you learn to respond, the muscles will stop contracting and will lengthen, becoming longer as you talk to them. And the joints will release, as when you suggest to yourself, “Shoulder joints releasing” and “elbows,” and “wrists”, “hip joints,” “knees” and “ankles releasing,” and so on.

While you are working on establishing that capacity of talking to your body so that it will do what you suggest it will do, you must refrain from making any movements. Once you begin to work with suggestions alone, you must not

consciously move to carry out the suggestion – let your body-minds response occur involuntarily. There may be few limits to how far you can go in creating a capacity of your body to respond to such suggestions. WE Know that by such means you can gain control of blood flow, skin temperature and even heartbeat. Still more profound responses are possible, with some possibilities for self regulation and self healing exceeding anything presently achieved by any known methods, however sophisticated.

And now as you lie on your back, inhale fairly deeply and then retain the air. That inflates more - your chest or your abdomen? As you hold your breath, push the air back and forth between your chest and belly in a kind of seesaw movement. Move it back and forth as many times as you can while holding your breath without discomfort. When you need to exhale, do so with a hiss. Put your tongue between your teeth and hiss as you exhale. Do it several times – inhale, push the air back and forth between your chest and belly then exhale with a hiss. Feel your shoulders and your back settling to the floor as you hiss. Continue repeating these movements. The hissing helps your body relax, it lets you settle more closely to the floor.

Now continue with the relaxation process, moving on up to your shoulders, and relax them until you are ready to start working on your neck, releasing tensions from your neck. Remember, the instructions to the joints are to release, the instructions to the muscles are to lengthen and release. Be sure not to hold your breath as you continue to relax more and more. It is difficult to relax effectively if at the same time you hold your breath.

Now as you focus your awareness on your neck and your head, give yourself the suggestion, “neck free, neck free,” “jaw releasing,” “face releasing,” “back lengthening and widening.”

Try to notice whether the tension in the neck increases or decreases when you inhale or when you exhale. Is it more relaxed when you inhale? Notice whether your impression about this remains constant over a number of sets of inhalations-exhalations. Do you become more tense in the neck as you seek an answer to that question? Distinguish between any tension resulting from trying too hard to pay attention to yourself and alterations of tension as you breathe which are due just to the breathing. Suggest to yourself, “neck free,” neck free,” and note if you can detect a response from the body.

Now continue and relax the rest – the face and head. Check the jaw again and observe whether there is any tension in the jaw. Thrust the lower jaw forward several times so that the lower teeth go outside the upper lip. The open our

mouth wide, and the jaw is more free. How about the tongue? How does your tongue lie? When you are sitting up, the tongue, if relaxed, will lie flat on the floor of your mouth. When you lie down, the relaxed tongue is still close to the floor of your mouth, although it may not be touching it. Stick out your tongue as far as you can, straight in front of you. Do not wiggle it, just stick it out and hold it there a minute. Then bring it back into your mouth and allow it to relax. Do that several times, holding it tense a minute, and then giving it time to relax inside your mouth. Also push a few times with your tongue against the roof of your mouth, then stop pushing and allow the tongue to relax. As the tension goes out of the tongue, do you also note that some tension goes out of the throat, perhaps out of the face as well?

Try pushing your tongue against the roof of your mouth, then letting go a few more times. You can also push against the floor of the mouth with the tongue, and then let go – let the tension just go out. Now stick the tongue out stiffly before bringing it back in. Continue sticking your tongue out, taking time to allow your tongue to relax before you stick it out again. Relax as well the other muscles you may sense as involved in that activity: the neck muscles, the facial muscles, the muscles around the mouth especially. Give them all a chance to relax. There are also muscles in the back of the neck that tense up when you stick your tongue way out. Try to feel them, and let go of every bit of the tension. How does your tongue lie now? Does it feel wider now?

Let the tongue, the neck, the mouth and the face go limp and loose and forget about them for a while. With your eyes closed, observe whether you can feel clearly the weight of your eyeballs. Now, for a little while, imagine that you are watching a ping pong game. You're somewhere near the middle of the table and you are watching the ball being hit back and forth from one end of the table to the other. Be certain you breathe freely as you watch. Then instead of ping-pong, watch a tennis game. You are looking over a much greater area as the ball travels back and forth. Be very conscious of the movement of your eyeballs for a while. Let them move as they wish while watching the game, but be conscious of the movement.

Stop watching the tennis game and look up towards your toes. Then look up towards the top of your head. Down and up, down and up, and do it a number of times. Then stop that and, still with your eyes closed, think that you are looking at the ceiling and that you can turn your eyes around in your head and look down at the floor. Look at the ceiling, and then just look at the inside of your eyelids. Look at the ceiling, and then at the eyelids. Then turn your eyes around in your head so that you can look through the back of your head at the floor.

Imagine doing that, and breathe freely all the while – all the while being very conscious of your eyes, of what your eyes are doing and how they feel as they carry out these various tasks, there various exercises.

Now envision an automobile driving along a road. Notice whether you can see the automobile moving along the road, and note how it is moving across your field of vision – is it from left to right, or from right to left or some other way? Stop looking at that.

Now look at someone riding a horse. Imagine that or better image it. How is the horse moving? – in what direction? And who is riding the horse, if anyone? Now stop and look at someone who is walking. See someone walking and observe closely, taking in as much detail as possible. Notice whether the figure is walking, and be aware of how your eyes move. Determine if you can both watch the figure walking and relax the eyes. Then stop looking at anything and relax the eyes further. Then just let them go completely loose, not looking at anything not doing anything, just resting the eyes – the loose, limp, relaxed eyes.

As you breathe freely, let the rest of your face be as relaxed as possible, looking at nothing, doing nothing, relaxing your eyes still more, and still more. Now, are the eyes relaxed more? Is your field of vision empty? Keep both your eyes and your neck and your face as relaxed as they can be, and then relax them still further. Observe the walking figure again. Are you able to see it without

moving your eyes, with your eyes perfectly motionless and perfectly at rest? If you can still see that figure, then try to stop any movement remaining in your eyes, just letting go. Relax the eyes completely, and observe whether that figure does not now disappear or fade away – if it hasn't already done so.

Continue to breathe freely and easily and continue to let the eyes be just as relaxed as possible. At the same time if there is any tension that has re-accumulated any place in your body that you are conscious of, now try to let go of that. Talk to that part of your body while you continue to relax and rest your eyes.

Now let your eyes be as relaxed as possible. Do not look at anything. Let the tongue and throat relax as much as possible. Think about singing some popular song that you like. Sing it, but sing it without singing aloud. Observe your tongue, and notice if you are aware of your tongue moving as you sing or of any movement in your throat or any changes in your neck. The idea is to try not to move your tongue as you sing and to remain relaxed in throat and neck. Try singing some hymn or other religious song that you knew as a child. Keep

observing your tongue as you do it. Then try singing the national anthem. Observe the reactions in your tongue, your throat, your neck, around your mouth – release all the tensions. Stop it a minute, and then try singing America. Observe what the tongue and mouth do. Notice if you can remember one of your earlier school songs. Not college, but earlier songs – high school, junior high, or elementary school – and sing that one. Finally, just sing something completely innocuous – a song you have no emotional involvement with – something you find pleasant, but innocuous.

Stop and let your tongue be still and relaxed as possible, and also the jaw, mouth and throat. Now, just for a minute, think back to whether there were songs to which you responded especially strongly – as was evidenced by the tension that came into your tongue while you thought about singing it. What were the feelings that went with it? And what was the song? Now stick your tongue out vigorously several times, holding it for a few seconds as you did before. Then each time bringing it back, relaxing it completely, giving it all the time it might need to relax, and your mouth and throat as well. Do it several times until the relaxation seems as complete as possible. And let the rest of your body be very limp as well. Let your eyes relax just as much as possible and your whole body become as relaxed as it can be, including the neck, the throat, the mouth, the face, the eyes, the tongue. And just do nothing at all, just nothing at all.

No images, no ideas, no daydreaming, nothing. Just nothing.

Anytime that you start to think, or your mind starts to wander, notice if there is any tension that you can get rid of, and try again to fall back into that doing nothing – paying special attention when need be to relaxing the throat, the tongue and the eyes. The breathing should be free, easy requiring no attention. And note whether now, as you do this lesson for the first time, you notice a diminishment in the flow of thought. Are you quieter in your mind than is your usual pattern? Do you notice that with that quiet comes a kind of serenity, a kind of peace? You may, for at least a little while, have disrupted completely the usual inner chatter and imagery. In most cases, perhaps, the inner noise will be diminished but not eliminated altogether. But it will be significantly reduced so that you get a glimpse of what the more complete inner quiet could be.

It is important to get the glimpse because when you do so, already you have disrupted the habitual way of functioning, weakened the tyranny of the unconscious, become a little more free, and more completely human – you have made a crack in the old pattern, and it is a crack that can now widen.

Practicing this exercise will, in time, help you to break the habitual flow through your head and mind of ideas and images. The more often you disrupt that flow – that chatter and noise, babble or cacophony, whatever it is, the easier it will be to achieve a normally quiet mind. This will, in turn, augment the work you are doing to relax muscles generally. You will find that as you are able to free your mind from that flow-through of ideas and images, you will also experience a corresponding decrease in emotions that come and go in you unbidden. You will be better able to self-regulate the flow of emotions.

And now, as you continue to lie there, observe again whether there remains some aftereffects of what you have just done. IS your mind still quieter than usual? If so, savor that quiet for a while, savor it a little while longer.