

**THE**

***"HERE & NOW"***

**MEDITATION**

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## THE HERE & NOW MEDITATION

**The purpose** of this booklet is to provide a small key, especially to inexperienced practitioners of meditation. This key is a simple technique which enables us to liberate ourselves from suffering. For the purpose of serving the general population, we will use only simple terms and concepts so that this document can be beneficial to all. Due to the limited scope of this booklet, we will not be discussing points of view of any particular religion or school of thought here, nor will we discuss whether something is right or wrong. Rather, we will be discussing only the capability of a meditation method to decrease suffering quickly and easily.

Meditation does not mean sitting cross-legged for hours on end or performing something difficult, industrious or sophisticated. Nor is meditation only for monks or serious cultivators. Anyone can meditate easily.

**Why do people meditate?** To find inner peace? To end mental anguish and suffering? To improve one's heart and behavior? To develop wisdom? To realize the Truth? To heal? To evolve spiritually? To attain enlightenment? Whether the goal is as simple as getting rid of mental anguish and physical illnesses, or as sophisticated as attaining enlightenment, this booklet will be the first step toward meeting those goals.

In studying various meditation methods, one cannot help but recognize the wisdom of our forefathers in identifying the true root of suffering. It is this wisdom that has prompted them to develop numerous meditation methods, aiming almost solely at dealing with human suffering. That "root" is our "mind" which ceaselessly jumps everywhere, continuously chattering, restless and relentless even in our sleep:

- It is busily repeating troublesome thoughts from **the past**.
- It immerses in worries, fears, and dreams of **the future**.
- It torments us with **opinions** and **views** invented by human societies, resulting in control and imprisonment of the individual, both mentally and psychologically.
- It wholeheartedly judges, analyzes, insults, argues, and builds images and emotions of violence, hatred, jealousy, etc.
- It is also the culprit that brings illnesses and pain to the physical body due to the continuous transmission of its damaging, chaotic thoughts to the cells.

So how do meditation techniques deal with this "mind"? Upon closer examination, the very first goal of most meditation techniques seems to be "tying down" that "mind," both preventing it from darting every which way as well as dissolving those run-away negative thoughts and their damaging effects. The common saying in Eastern meditation is: "Keep the mind where the body is."

For more than five thousand years, with numerous techniques of meditation, mankind has been more than industrious. It has accumulated a vast wealth of invaluable knowledge in the field of meditation. Generally speaking, most meditation methods are taking the "mind" to the point of stopping, complete stillness, absence of thoughts, awareness of thought movement, or prevention of arising thoughts.

The "Here & Now" meditation method takes students to the initial "*quietness*" much more quickly and easily compared with other methods. However, this "Here & Now" tends to complement rather than replace other techniques. This is why it can help students shorten steps in other meditative cultivation.

This “Here & Now” key, because of its extreme simplicity and apparent similarity to many *basic* meditation methods, some meditation masters readily dismissed it to be “child’s play.” Fortunately, a number of more open-minded and aware masters recognized the true value of this “**key**,” otherwise it would have been forever lost. How does the “Here & Now” technique differ from all of its precedents? Though the goal remains the same, the way in which the “Here & Now” deals with that “mind” is completely the **opposite** of all other prior methods. As a matter of fact, it does not even border the slightest *struggle* with that “mind.” In order to easily understand its key points, it is necessary to first look at the steps taken in this “Here & Now” method before getting into its analysis.

## “HERE & NOW” MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

*This meditation technique may be practiced at any time, any place and in any posture. However, make sure you are as comfortable and relaxed as possible. (Neither the lotus posture nor mudra hand signs are required.) Please note that different levels are designed for the sole purpose of practical training and not meant to indicate levels of spiritual achievement.*

### **Attention:**

**For those who have practiced with the Chakras System:**  
*Because the goals of the “Here & Now” method are the profound Stillness and the complete absence of thought, you need to relax all the muscles on the forehead and around the eyes, avoid concentrating where the Third Eye chakra (Chakra 6) is when practicing the “Here & Now” meditation.*

**For those who are experienced with other disciplines, especially the ones that use various energies:** *Having been used to feeling movements of energies and frequencies within your body or “seeing” different visions during your meditation, many of you have asked that why with the “Here & Now” meditation, you “saw” or “felt” nothing. The goal of the “Here & Now” is to achieve a **complete absence** of the “mind”, meaning if you were practicing the technique correctly, it would include the absence of one’s **desire** or **expectation** of “seeing” or “feeling” anything. Also, traditional meditation emphasizes complete **wakefulness**. The “Here & Now” method emphasizes **complete in-action** which includes non-struggling to stay alert. The ideal is the state of **half-awake, half-asleep** (*minh minh, yểu yểu*), between the two states of sleep and awake in the first stage of meditation. (In the second stage, if your goals are **contemplation** and/or using the **True wisdom mind**, just open and focus your eyes fully, sustaining this **stillness** along with **complete wakefulness**.)*

## LEVEL ONE TECHNIQUE

**Step One:** Inhale slowly through your nose. As you slowly exhale through the mouth, feel as if a wave is sweeping from head to toe to relax your entire body. You can either keep your eyes open and gazing or closed, but they are neither focusing nor concentrating on anything.

**Step Two:** Tell the mind, “The body is here,” *knowing* the mind’s arrival at the heart area.

Let go of yourself and relax with the mind **unthinking** and **unfocused**. Especially relax all the muscles around the eyes and forehead whether the eyes are open or closed. Every so often, vaguely know that the mind is sitting at the heart area.

Remain in that **unthinking** and **unfocused** state for a minimum of one minute, maximum 30 minutes. You can close your eyes if you are meditating longer than one minute. New practitioners should not meditate longer than 30 minutes at first.

If the mind starts wandering away, just quietly remind it, "The body is here," have it settled again at the previous location, and then immediately let go and relax your body and mind again.

**Step Three:** Take a slow deep breath. As you slowly exhale, open and focus your eyes fully. Stretch your body if desired as you end the meditation session. (If you wish to continue the session with some methods of contemplation, after fully re-focusing, sustain the stillness while in the state of complete wakefulness. This practice can be performed for as long as desired. This is a way to develop the Wisdom Mind. )

This meditation may be practiced as often as desired. We suggest that during the span of your waking hours, do at least three sessions of one minute each and one longer session (as long as possible.) If your mind is the type that's actively darting between places of different time and space, you should try to practice more often and for longer times.

With continued practice, gradually one will be able to sustain this state of union of mind and body even while carrying on other daily activities (See *Level Two instruction*). It is believed that the most enlightened sages stay in this state continuously. **Our main goal is to always live in the present, in control of our mind, and to maintain stillness and equanimity amidst life tribulations. Thus, after you have learned to achieve the profound stillness, during the course of your day, remind yourself as often as possible to take a deep breath, telling yourself "The body is here," and entering this stillness for 30 seconds. Afterwards, as you return to your regular activities, keep the "mind" at the heart area for as long as possible.**

Only after you have practiced this Level One well enough that you are able to experience the "Here & Now" state of being on command and can sustain that profound quietness for a reasonable amount of time, should you go on to Level Two instruction. Remember that rushing may hinder successes.

## **SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF "HERE & NOW" MEDITATION**

1. **UNRESTRAINED:** While other meditation methods use the mind to restrain itself, the "Here & Now," after the initial direction given to the mind to sit quietly and rest at an appointed location, **the practitioners let go completely, being in the state of inaction, unfocused, unwatchful, un-restraining and un-contemplative.**

2. **MOVEMENT versus STILLNESS:** In comparison with the contemplative or "awareness" types of meditation, i.e. "watch" or "be aware" of one's thoughts, movement or breathing, the "Here & Now"

does the opposite. Instead of watching the mind or body in **action**, the “Here & Now” is vaguely aware occasionally of the **profound stillness** of the mind sitting quietly at a designated place. (See Level Two instruction).

**3. TIME:** If practiced correctly according to the instructions, this profound stillness can be experienced quickly (within a few minutes to a few days). In fact, the practitioners can even sustain this stillness well into their daily activities. This will enable one to control and neutralize suffering, painful emotions and violence within oneself whenever necessary.

**4. MASS TRANSMISSION:** This “Here & Now” method is simple and easy, requiring very little time and education, no finance, and no instructor. The practice is so simple that anyone can do it on one’s own. Once mastered, one can even show others how to practice it with just a moment.

**5. EFFECTIVENESS:** If the initial goal of meditation is achieving that **profound stillness**, then the “Here & Now” is indeed a very effective method; most practitioners can experience that stillness within a few sessions. (Due to the limited scope of this booklet, we are unable to discuss other more sophisticated and deeper goals of the “Here & Now” meditation here.)

**6. COMPATIBILITY:** This “Here & Now” key also helps bring about clarity to both mind and spirit. With this clarity, one is able to choose with ease a suitable cultivation discipline or to cultivate independently without joining a particular tradition. This key is of a neutral and complementary nature making it compatible with all other spiritual traditions and religions. So in the event we have already found peace in our chosen tradition or belief system, this key

can help us advance rapidly in that very tradition.

*You cannot hope to realize world peace if you have not achieved inner peace for yourself.* Not only will this “Here & Now” key provide this inner peace, but it will also help you develop compassion and equanimity, keeping you centered and unaffected amidst life’s tribulations.

## ABOUT THE “HERE & NOW” METHOD

Normally, if you were to focus your attention on something, your thinking mind would be the one directing this action. In fact, this thinking mind leads and directs nearly all of our daily actions and thoughts. It doesn’t know how to be quiet and peaceful. The very first goal of many meditations is to **quiet** or **still** this chattering thinking mind. Ironically, many other meditation techniques use “**it**” to manipulate “**itself**” into quietness by having it leading the whole procedure. Many also resort to the “mindful” method (use this thinking mind — again — to stay aware of the senses, thoughts and actions, i.e. aware that one is eating, chewing, walking, thinking certain thoughts, etc.). The “Here & Now” technique is doing the opposite by not “wrestling” with that mind. At the beginner level, the thinking mind is sitting at a designated place, unthinking and unfocused. At higher levels, the **higher Self**, together with the **True mind** (which is the *mind from stillness*), carries out normal daily activities while keeping constant awareness on the inner stillness.

What is “Here & Now”? It means literally “*here*” and “*now*.” It results from keeping the “mind where the body is” and from the absence of thoughts. That mind stands still, unthinking, not darting to the past nor jumping to the future. “Mind” and “body” become One. It is “*the place*” where your

physical body is, combined with “*the moment*” between past and future. It’s believed that this union holds many of life’s secrets.

One of the causes of illness and premature aging is explained as follows. The inherent “Here & Now” life force within each cell preserves and rejuvenates it, functioning with a tendency toward health. But this force is constantly being hindered by chaotic information from the thinking mind. This provides breeding ground for illness and premature aging.

It is believed that illnesses and difficulties of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies are derived largely from the information of the past, anticipated future, and other locations. For example, one may still suffer recurring muscle pain from an old car accident even though the muscles and nerves have been healed. Or one can surgically remove cancer cells but find the new cells again behaving in the same cancerous way as before. This is because we do not use a way to block or sever the path that brings information of past injuries or cancer to the new cells. It is the “void” within this “Here & Now” moment that is the body’s way of cutting off the old informational path and preventing such information from reaching the new, healthy cells.

The “Here & Now” is also the moment in which the thinking mind is completely tamed, blank, at peace and in equanimity. A mere thirty seconds to 5 minutes of this “present moment” can restore and rescue numerous functions within the human body and its psyche.

Most of us rarely realize that this thinking mind is not necessarily the same as the true “I” within us. Don’t we sometimes say we don’t want to think about certain things but the mind just keeps talking about them? Or sometimes we find ourselves arguing with that mind. Who or what is this true “I” inside us?

Please note that in the “Here & Now” meditation, “someone” gently points out a specific place for the **thinking mind** to go sit at and be quiet. This is the first time the thinking mind receives a conscious directive from the true “I” inside. The “boss” finally speaks and takes over the lead. This is the most crucial trait of this “Here & Now” key. This “*someone*” from inside you, suddenly stirred from its slumber, tells the thinking mind to sit still at a specific place and be quiet. That “I,” or the higher Self, holds great wisdom and potential. Though inherently kind, gentle, and compassionate, it is most powerful once fully awakened. It has many names: higher Self, Buddha-Self, God-Self, Soul, Spirit, etc. So what happens when the thinking mind obeys the order and sits still, happily, unthinking and peaceful?

When “body,” “mind,” and “heart” become aligned, they connect to other energy sources. In this moment of the **utmost absence** of thoughts is where healing takes place, where clarity and peace fill the mind and heart ever so gently. In this “**void**,” meaning an absolute absence of thoughts, absence of the need to know through our regular mind, in that union, the mind can be placed at any ailing, painful area of the physical body for the purpose of spontaneous healing.

## CHANGING OUR PERSPECTIVES

Again, please keep in mind that lessening our own suffering is the main goal of this booklet. So besides doing the “Here & Now” techniques, it is also necessary to change our perspectives toward events in our life in such a way that would enable us to overcome suffering effectively.

The following selected perspectives and ways of thinking are based on one sole merit: their ability to liberate us from suffering. Thus, any thought which is still

holding us in the bondage of suffering will not be used in this booklet, no matter how well established it may be in the traditional value system. This means we will not be discussing whether something is right or wrong, good or bad; you just simply use what resonates with you and liberates you, then discard it whenever your suffering has ended or when you find it no longer to your liking. When you read the passages below, just ignore parts that you find disagreeable or not liberating to you. If they do not resonate with you, they are not meant for you, so don't concern yourself with them. In the event you wish to choose any part below to apply to your situation, just repeat once to yourself the main point of that part, **then put it out of your mind** and immediately enter the "Here & Now" meditation, the deeper the stillness, the better.

## **1 NAGGING OF THE MIND**

"One day, my Mother scolded me unjustly. It hurt and made me cry. Afterwards, every time I related the story to someone, I felt the same pain and cried again. In fact, when no one was around for me to tell, I recalled and "relived" the original event, its words and feelings and ended up crying as if it was happening. After two weeks, I have managed to relive the pain and cried a grand total of 18 times! If this thought pattern remains with me for the rest of my life, who knows how many more times this pain and crying would be repeated. In reality, my mother scolded me only once."

"In their younger days, her husband had an affair with someone, but afterwards, he regretted it and became a good, faithful and most loving husband. However, she kept recalling the old story and felt hurt all over, crying again all through the 40 years of marriage. After his death, each time she visited his grave, the mind kept on reminding her of the old affair... People often see her sitting beside the grave

blaming and crying as when he was still alive..."

## **2 "MUST" AND "SHOULD"**

"A husband **MUST** be so and so, children **MUST...**, I **MUST...**, you **MUST...**, they **MUST...**, we **MUST...**, God **MUST ...** so and so..." "In fact, you **SHOULD...**, I **SHOULD...** she **SHOULD...** have done it this way."

"In the span of one single day, I purposely counted how many times my mind came up with the words **MUST** and **SHOULD**, and discovered the exact extent of how much I still hold myself and others in bondage. I questioned whether these **ideas, opinions, and point of views** were truly mine or whether they were stuffed into my head by others and then I in turn imposed and instilled them upon my offspring. Unconsciously, this created further bondage for generations to come. The main goal here is to liberate me from suffering, hence, any **opinion** which binds me and/or others and *creates suffering* needs to be re-examined whether its further use is warranted."

"Master, that brother keeps telling me all day unjustly that I **MUST** this, **SHOULD** that... When you forbade me to argue, explain or defend myself, I feel very bothered. My mind keeps on arguing, defending... Master, pray tell me your reason for preventing me from explaining to my brother?"

The master smiles gently: "It's to give you a chance to be aware of the turbulence in your mind. Your very relentless need and desire to defend yourself **IS** a form of violence within. When your brother uses words of **MUST** and **SHOULD**, especially with a subtle meaning that something is wrong with you, it is indeed an even bigger violation because your brother is unconsciously struggling or attacking you. You can find inner peace only when you no

longer feel that dire need to explain, defend, argue or wonder..."

### **3 WANTS or NEEDS:**

When I WANT something that I can't have, or when I WANT others to do or not do something but my wishes are unmet, I suffer as my mind keeps complaining about those "unfulfilled" wishes. Once, I was told to ask myself this: "Do I WANT it, or do I NEED it?" If the answer is NEED, then ask further: "If you are without it, does it kill you? If it kills you to be without it, then it is NEED. If it doesn't kill you, it's WANT. So to liberate myself from suffering, I could very well not WANT it anymore!"

### **4 THE PAST AND THE FUTURE**

"There was a woman who had suffered starvation and poverty in the past and thus is very frightened of them. Then one day, when she was seated before a lavish meal, she recalled the impoverished ordeal and this then triggered the fear of a possibility that the situation might return any time in the future... These thoughts kept bothering her while the food got cold, and then when she tried to eat, she found the food so unpalatable..."

"I was the type that was willing to sacrifice and put off everything of the present to build a future for myself and my family. Then when I achieved that "future," I looked back and regretted as I realized that the childhood of my children had long past, the youth of my spouse had been lost and my health was no longer vibrant enough to enjoy an active, passionate and meaningful family life. The forgotten "present" has long become the past..."

"My mother always suffers about something already happened in the past. My father never ceases to worry about something that has not happened yet in the future. They seem to have forgotten about living the

present. Perhaps my mother would no longer suffer if she could somehow go back to... the past to change something there. And my father perhaps will suffer less if only he understands that his worrying does not remotely influence or change anything that might possibly happen or not happen in the future. In actuality, whether he worries or not, the outcomes would still be the same because the act of worrying itself does not influence anything but **the person worrying.**"

### **5 BELIEVING IN KARMA**

"I believe in Karma (cause and effect), thus when someone causes my financial losses, instead of suffering and wallowing, I consider it to be such a relief as I have just paid off an old debt from a previous life. It makes my heart feel happy and light as the debt load is getting lighter. Toward those who hurt me or treat me badly, I apply the same attitude..."

### **6 HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS**

"I don't believe in Karma. I believe that this world is a gigantic stage where each person is both an actor and scriptwriter for his own role. Before birth, we choose our role and request others to play important opposite roles such as parents, spouses, children, enemies, loved ones, etc. The main objectives on this stage are to "experience" and evolve spiritually; one learns forgiveness, compassion, unconditional love, bondage and freedom, suffering and happiness, etc. Therefore, I sincerely thank everyone, whether their roles in my life were loving or hateful, good or bad. I also afford respect to those who hold lesser and weaker positions in my life such as my children, students, or younger siblings, etc. because I know that they certainly are not truly anything less than I."

## **7 WHAT IS THIS LESSON?**

“I believe that all events that take place in my life are lessons designed to help me evolve spiritually. Therefore, each time I face a challenging or disappointing event, instead of allowing my mind to blame Heaven and Earth, I ask myself: What lesson can I learn from this situation?”

“I think all events happening in this world are “illusory and impermanent.” It seems that most of these lessons are aiming at waking me up and for me to understand the essence of illusion and impermanence. They help me abandon attachments to things that I once held with such firm grip and believed to be so important to my life. For example, if I am excessively concerned about money, the lessons would be financial failure and loss, one after another. If I am so obsessed, laden, and struggling with emotional, romantic or loving relationships with others, the lessons may be numerous relationship failures and losses of loved ones. These lessons will keep on repeating until I understand the subjects of my attachment as illusionary and impermanent. Then all the upheavals will automatically calm down, my heart will find inner peace, profound stillness and equanimity.”

## **8 JUDGMENT OF GOOD, BAD, HOLY, EVIL**

“Learning to differentiate between good and bad, holy and evil, means to avoid doing certain undesirable things myself, not to gain the ability to *recognize the bad and evil in others*. As long as the ability to pass judgment on others exists, so will the ability to pass judgment on the self; both abilities are forms of bondage that lead to suffering.”

“Passing judgment and accusing are habits that cause the most troubles to one’s mind. I tried to *live one whole day without allowing the mind to pass any judgment or make any accusation*. That’s when I realized that my mind judges and accuses all day....”

“My regular mind is incapable of understanding the mystery and wisdom of the Universe in order to know **the reason for** the existence of good and bad, holy and evil, nor could I simply accept the sole man-made definitions of them. This is why I would refrain from accusing or passing judgment on anyone.”

## **9 HAPPINESS AND SUFFERING**

A disciple asked his master: “Why does everyone hurt me and make me suffer--no one brings me happiness?” The old master replied: “No one is capable of causing our suffering or bringing us happiness. We are the only ones who are capable of doing such things to ourselves.” The disciple frowned: “It’s clear how badly that person treats me. How can that NOT be causing my suffering?” The master slowly wrote in the sand: “It’s not **what happens** to us but rather **how we react** to what happens. Maybe you should ask your mind again.”

## **10 CHANGING OTHER PEOPLE**

A woman asked her psychologist for ways to change her husband. The psychologist sadly replied: “I am sorry, Madam. I do not have this ability. Here I can only show people how to “*change themselves*.” Many women thought after they marry, they will gradually change their husbands. Many men believe similarly about their wives. I don’t think I have ever seen anyone who is capable of truly changing another person.”

## **11 CHANGING PLACES**

“Last night on the news, I watched a prisoner waiting on death row. They said he had committed many horrendous crimes. I just wondered: “If I were born and raised in the exact environment as his, would I have been able to avoid committing similar crimes? And if I am now in his shoes, how would I feel right now?”

## **12 FORGIVENESS**

“Master, I suffer so much because my parents are cruel, my wife left me, my brothers betrayed me, my friends ruined me... What should I do?” The master replied: “You sit down to meditate and forgive all of them.” A few days later, the student came back. “I have completed the task of forgiveness. It took a load off me, master. It’s over!” The master shook his head: “Not yet. Go home and meditate. Open your heart and love them.” The student scratched his head: “It was hard enough to forgive... Now you want me to... love them? Oh well, I guess I will do it.” A week later, the student returned, looking cheerful, boasting to the master that he had accomplished the task of loving those who had hurt him previously. The master nodded: “Good! Now you go back and meditate. Be appreciative and grateful to them. Without them playing their roles, you wouldn’t have had such opportunities to evolve spiritually.”

Again, the student came back, happily reported that he had learned to appreciate those people for giving him the chance to learn forgiveness. The master smiled: “Then you should go home and meditate again. They had *played their roles correctly and well*--why should there be a need for your forgiveness?”

## **13 SELF-PITYING**

“I have noticed this: Of all the kinds of thoughts that are capable of bringing pain, self-pitying thoughts can bring the strongest painful emotions. Thus, if I want to experience them, all I have to do is think along this line: “I am so unfortunate! I run into one misfortune after another! How could that person say such cruel words to hurt me, to make me feel so terrible? God is so unfair to me! My love life and my family life are in such disarray. I feel so sorry for myself for having to endure such cruelty, etc.”

**14 PAIN OF SEPARATION** “A person came into my life because she/he is meant to come, just as when one is leaving my life, it is meant to be. When my love had to marry someone else, I suddenly realized that the existence of love neither depends on one’s physical presence nor on any time and space. No one can stop me from loving that person in his/her absence, and vice versa. If I felt the pain of separation, that’s because I have misidentified physical absence with the end of a love. Or I suffered because I recalled someone’s presence in the past or I thought of his/her absence in our future. When my mind does not mention about such absence or long for such presence, I feel much less suffering.” “Relationships never really end. They only change in form. Separation by death only means that the relationship is still existing but now permeating both the seen and unseen worlds. Separation while alive only means that the relationship is now transcending distance, space or certain barriers. Even mental or emotional separation does not mean an end of a relationship; it just means the relationship has changed from a “loving” to “non-loving,” from a “talking” to “non-verbal communicative,” or from an “intense” to “unfeeling” one.” The human relationship is forever existing through the lifetimes, constantly changing in form.”

## **15 HAVING FAITH IN THE UNIVERSE**

“At first glance, the human society and the Universe may seem chaotic. Upon closer observation, it seems that all the chaos is following some kind of a definite order. An individual’s life course too may seem staggering and pulling aimlessly but with keener perception, one can see wondrous arrangement... When I realized that there exists a certain operating universal law that is more intelligent than I am, a kind of universal law that manifests the rhythm of all the ups and downs which quietly lead me

eventually to wherever I need to arrive at, I felt more secure and peaceful.”

## **16 THE MEASURE OF SUCCESS, MERITS AND MISFORTUNE**

“One day, someone asked me what are success and merits. I thought: I am what Success is. That means I am full of Merits. I had fought ceaselessly, sacrificing everything for my achievements of fame, wealth and status. Then when I lost everything, I believed I was Failure and had nothing but Misfortunes. The same person saw me again, now suffering, he asked: “People always say that fame, wealth, status, and talent are **perishable** or **impermanent**. So why do we make those perishables the measure, or the standard, of our life’s successes and failures, merits and misfortunes, and then we suffer because of that measure or standard?”

## **17 THE BONDAGE OF RELIGION**

Question: “I was born and raised in a Mormon family. As an adult I felt the spiritual needs to search further, beyond what I felt as the limits of my religion. My family got very upset about it so in the end I had to move out to ease the pressure for everyone. However, even though my body is beyond that religious boundary, my heart is still very troubled; I don’t feel free from it. What should I do?”

Answer: “Truth and Liberation are within our heart, invisible to others. The spiritual path is always very personal and quiet. You can use the “Here & Now” technique to find your Self without having to “break away” from any religion. Furthermore, remember that our being born and raised in a particular religion may not be a coincidence in the first place.”

## **18 THE BONDAGE OF ANOTHER’S OPINION**

“Master, when someone has a wrong or bad opinion about me, I feel so hurt. What must I do?”

“First of all, you must understand three things:

**One**, respect the freedom of opinion of others and of your own, keeping in mind that these two freedoms are not related to each other.

**Two**, you must know that in forming an opinion, one bases on the criteria, background, standards and points of view of **one’s own**. Thus, he couldn’t have concluded otherwise.

**Three**, there is no need to change his opinion. Nor there is **need** to defend yourself.”

The master paused and smiled. “After you have understood those three things, then you must enter the “stillness” to neutralize that hurtful feeling. Do you know why? Because mere understanding is done in the mind; true understanding has to be done in your **heart**.

However, be aware that criticism from others is never as severely **confining** and hurtful as your own inner criticism. Memories of weaknesses and mistakes of the past can torture you for the rest of your life. If examined with compassion, you would see that under such condition and environment, you could not have done things any differently. You must have compassion for yourself before you are capable of being compassionate toward others.”

Another master commented on the first’s answer: “This is good but it seems to avoid the main problem though. We are HURT because we wanted them to think **something else**, to have a different opinion. It is this WANT that causes our hurt—not their opinion in itself. And then we must ask—why did we want that? Why must we “need” that particular opinion? What does this attachment say about us?”

## **19 UNCONDITIONAL LOVE**

“I have a retarded child and this hurts me very much. Is this because in my past lives,

I had created so much bad karma that now I am being punished as such?"

"If you believed it to be of karmic law, why do you still feel hurt? However, because we are unable to fathom all the Universal mysteries and Heaven's will, we can't be certain that it is Karma. Sometimes, for quicker spiritual advancement or to provide us an opportunity to learn *Unconditional Love*, there are Saints and higher Beings who would choose to play the role of a retarded person. How do we know whether it is our punishment or blessing? *Unconditional Love* is to be able to love a retarded child who cannot speak pleasant words to us, who has no social status and achievements of which a parent can be proud. On earth, this is a very high spiritual lesson."

"How does one **love** a man or a woman unconditionally? Loving unconditionally is loving someone totally, including both his/her bad and good aspects. In fact, you love him/her without **needing** the person to belong to you, regardless of whether the person loves you or another person, whether he/she is with you or without you. You are able to watch that person living his/her life, being him/herself *without your needing to change anything* in that person. The essence of Love does not hurt; what causes pain and suffering is our **NEED**: *expecting, wishing and needing*. For example: "I love my husband because he is kind to me, always caring, tending to my needs, never does anything to upset me. Without him, I am certain I cannot live..." Is this **LOVE** or **NEED**? **Love** does not restrain; only **needs** and **power** restrain, confine and hurt."

## **20 ALL IS "ONE"**

"People keep talking about "All is ONE" but how do I go about "experiencing" IT?" Please note that the "IT experience" is indescribable in human words, spoken or written, much less "showing" someone

"how" to reach that experience. The story below is NOT a description of IT but rather an attempt to outline a simple map in the language of the mind. The author has no illusion that it be a "formula" of any sort. Blessings and success to all.

## **Woman and Child**

Most people say she's Woman. Some says she's Child. She thinks she's both. Together "they" often go to the beach. The woman gazes into the deep water, longing for her lost continent of a distant past. The child builds a sand castle and giggles when the wind sneaks up and pecks her on the cheek. Once in awhile, the wind asks softly: "Who are you?" The child laughs: "I am Me, of course. Silly you!"

Then one day, the woman pauses and wonders who she really is. They say clothing does not make a person. So she takes off all her clothes. They say the physical form is not the true identity. So she slowly peels off pieces of her body... And after every bit of the physical matter falls off, the layers of her non-physical form fall off. Then to her surprise, there is nothing but emptiness, formless and void... The Child is fascinated. She starts to wiggle a bit and feels herself expanding, expanding and expanding... She wiggles again and finds herself pervading the entire Creation.

Something is very odd, yet so natural here. With coverings peeled off, all things appear as emptiness, formless and void just like her. In fact, the "emptinesses" are one and the same. Either everything is a part of her or she is in everything, or maybe both. As she loses her self, the entire physical Creation comes back into being within that Void. Now, she is the little ant that is being crushed under someone's shoe. She is the small boy who is flying a kite. She is the monk who is preaching to a large group of

people. She is the disfigured leper whose pus-filled wounds are being cleansed by an undistinguished nun, and she is also the nun at the same time. She is the man who is murdering a child and she is the father who is grieving over the child's coffin. She is that man who touches a woman... touches her deeply... then walks off without an explanation. She is also that same woman, fixing her gaze on the horizon at sunset for the next thousand years, silently grieving the loss of a moment of the past. She is all the mountains and rivers, and she is a small stone, deep in meditation for centuries on end. She is all those humans able to roam the different, both seen and unseen, universes... And she is all of those universes. She is a kitten lying next to the railroad track meowing weakly for help; her hind legs are severed by the passing train. She is the young girl standing at a street corner waiting for customers, and she is also the nun who is praying for the salvation of the human race...

Undifferentiating, unanalyzing and without judgment, she feels all the pain, sorrow, joy and sadness throughout.

All the pieces of the physical body start to gather themselves back into shape... Along come the non-physical layers, veil and all... The formless void joins in and, voila, the woman-child appears as before. She puts on a flimsy gown and stands on the balcony, being a woman. The blinking stars bear her witness; her body trembles as the wind caresses her skin... As she embraces life's passion, her self pervades into heavens, hells, and other differentiated high and low universes. Then she puts back on the ordinary clothes of the woman-child. In peace and equanimity, she again finds herself among the world of mortals and immortals, knowing that she belongs to them and they her...

She puts on the outfit of a master, pretending to disseminate wisdom to a group of students who she knows are none

other than her own self. Though they may or may not be aware of this, she knows they need nothing from her or anyone else. Those who have paranormal power look at her void and say they see gods and goddesses. She smiles lovingly... she knows they only see reflections of their own yearning and needs. They are a part of her, are they not?

So the woman and child go back to the beach. The woman again gazes into the deep water; the entire marine kingdom comes alive within her. The child again builds a sand castle and laughs when the wind sneaks up and pecks her on the cheek. And again, the wind asks softly: "Who are you?" Without looking up from the sand castle, the child smiles and whispers: "I am You."

## THE HERE & NOW SELF-HEALING TECHNIQUE

**Step One** and **Step Two** are the same as in Level One instruction, except you only need to stay in the "Here & Now" state for a minute or two, then you will go on to the next step.

**Step Three:** Tell the mind, "The body is here," *knowing* the mind's arrival at the **ailing or painful area**.

Let go of yourself and relax with the mind **unthinking** and **unfocused**. Especially relax all the muscles around the eyes and forehead whether the eyes are open or closed. Every so often, vaguely know that the mind is sitting at the area being healed.

Remain in that **unthinking** and **unfocused** state for a minimum of one minute, longer if illness is more serious.

If the mind starts to wander away, just quietly remind it, "The body is here," have it settled again at the previous location, and then *immediately let go and relax your body and mind again.*

**Step Four:** Take a slow deep breath. As you slowly exhale, open and focus your eyes fully to end the healing session.

*(This healing method can ease pain noticeably and immediately. Many people have been healed even when they practiced only the meditation method without intentionally performing healing on themselves. The state of profound "quietness," or "void," is what's inducing the body to heal. You can perform healing on yourself with this healing method as often as necessary.)*

## LEVEL TWO TECHNIQUE

### **DEEPENING THE STATE OF STILLNESS:**

After doing Step One and Step Two of Level One for about 2 minutes, continue to know the mind is at the heart area, sustain the stillness state of the entire body, slowly open your eyes, gently gaze from side to side without moving your head, then slowly close your eyes and repeat Step Two. About two minutes later, repeat the above steps. Each time this is done, the state of stillness will be deepened. Normally, we suggest doing this three times maximum. (To practice Contemplation or to use the True Wisdom mind, sustain stillness while being in complete wakefulness with your eyes either open or closed and keep your mind alert.).

### **STILLNESS and BODY MOVEMENTS:**

After reaching the stillness, sustain the state of being and open your eyes. Focus and see normally while knowing that the mind

remains still at the heart area. While staying in touch with the stillness, move different parts of the body (toes, feet, shoulders, arms, neck, etc.). After these body movements are well performed without losing the inner stillness, you can practice listening but *without reaction on the part of the mind*, again keeping aware of the stillness.

Afterwards, you can practice walking, standing, working, carrying out chores, etc. while *maintaining the inner stillness.*

There are times in our human interactions that we really need such state of inner stillness. For instance, when we are confronted with negative events or with someone who is in the fighting mood, or when we need to compose ourselves, be calm and gentle; all we have to do is exercise **Step One** and **Step Two** for 30 seconds. Then just be aware of that inner stillness while interacting with others.

### **NEUTRALIZE EMOTIONS:**

When a thought stirs up certain negative emotions such as hurt, self-pity, anger --the kind of emotions we *do not wish to have--* we can immediately neutralize them by doing **Step One** and **Step Two** for 30 seconds to 1 minute.

## LEVEL THREE TECHNIQUE

**Level One's** instruction is comprised of the basic way to quiet the mind, enter the stillness, open the heart to compassion, and to perform the self-healing technique.

**Level Two's** instruction is about how to deepen the state of stillness, to sustain such state during everyday activities and to neutralize negative emotions.

**Level Three's** instruction below consists of ways to develop wisdom, to achieve profound inner stillness through the union of Body, Mind and Heart, and to use remorse, apology and the "void" to neutralize forces

from the past related to the causes of suffering and illnesses.

**1. CULTIVATING THE WISDOM MIND:**

Instead of the heart area, place the “mind” on the nose bridge, in between the eyes.

**2. UNITING HEART, MIND, AND BODY:**

Do the same as Level One and Level Two except you point the mind to both areas; on the nose bridge saying, “The body is here” and then on the heart area saying, “The heart is here.” You will find a deeper inner Stillness and a clearer mind. Maintain this state of Stillness and complete absence of thought for at least 30 minutes in order to neutralize the forces of suffering and illnesses in a *long-lasting* way, if not permanently.

**3. NEUTRALIZING FORCES OF THE PAST:**

Because it is difficult to permanently maintain the state of complete stillness for long-lasting prevention of the return of old information, it is necessary to have a way to neutralize forces of the past permanently. If you don’t believe in past life and karma (cause and effect), then just use the steps in Item 2 (above) of this Level Three instruction to neutralize forces of the past within this lifetime.

**4. NEUTRALIZING PAST KARMA:**

Some people believe that the sources of information are not necessarily contained within the span of only this life time, but rather they could be brought forth from many “previous lifetimes.” The “past” is not limited to any particular period; it is *all the time* prior to the present moment. For those who do believe in karmic forces and past life, please apply the following techniques.

In order to neutralize past life effects, it is necessary to view existing suffering (illnesses, painful circumstances of our human interactions and relationships, etc.) as results of some incorrect past actions on our part. Then in such case, one needs to sincerely feel remorseful (even though we may not remember or know of those past actions). Then we silently apologize to those who had suffered due to our past intentional or unintentional actions.

In our daily activities, there are times when we suffer from people who, without apparent causes, seem to persistently make life difficult for us, i.e. angrily arguing, fighting, taking our money, damaging our property, etc. We should **assume** that some time in the past, we had done the same things to them. At the same time, we should *put ourselves in their position in that past and open our heart so that we can understand their plight.* Then in deep *stillness* we sincerely *regret* and silently *apologize* to them. Immediately afterwards, practice the “Here & Now” meditation Level 3 (part 1 and 2 above for at least 30 minutes). The deeper the stillness and the more complete silence of the “mind,” the greater the results. This is one of the most effective methods for neutralizing karmic forces from the past.

May you always be in complete inner peace. Please direct all questions and communication via email to:

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