

**WHY MEDITATE?** What happens in meditation? Meditation is not a religious group activity, it is a most personal inner experience. Meditation allows me to still my mind and gives me energies I draw on in my daily life. **When** I use my mantra while I meditate,\* an emotive state takes over. My mind is no longer at work. Shortly before I meditate I contemplate these two aspects of my life: The duality of my worldly and spiritual beings. **On** the one hand: I am aware of my fears and worries, my dreams, wishes and desires. Those issues define my persona, my ego. It is clear to me: For my peace of mind, I must detach from these worldly concerns. **On** the other hand: I enter a state where I am removed from my daily-life cares and fears. No more do I worry about my perceptions of the world. Now I am at ease and contented, as I still my mind and thus let go of my ego.

**This** is a curious state to be in - the terms love and bliss best describe it. I have visions (at my eye centre, the third eye, located behind and between the eyes) of weightlessness, lightness and light - of limitless, empty space. **But** these visions are not of anything tangible. Neither are they 'sensations' that I ponder. I'm just in a state of being, calm and peaceful; and I experience a sense of connectedness to what I identify as universal consciousness. **The** love, the connection to humanity, the feel for the true nature of things (as opposed to what I perceive with my ego) are the essence of my spirituality. Here I am at the core of my being - my self, my heart, my spirit, my soul.\*\* **Every** human at some time encounters such connectedness and love. The vernacular is: 'S/he lives on in my heart.' The term is used when a person travels, or has died. I merge into this state in my meditation.

*\* How does one meditate? Find a quiet spot (sit up or lie on your back, be comfortable\*\*), you may want to close your eyes, relax, guide your concentration to your third eye (situated behind and between your eyes), repeat a mantra (any word you are comfortable with, or try Aum) - don't contemplate your thoughts.*

*\*\*André Comte-Sponville, in his Book of Atheist Spirituality, relays his own mystical experience wonderfully; he invokes the phrase 'the oceanic feeling', 'a sense of indissoluble union with the great All - and of belonging to the universal;' just as a drop of water belongs to the ocean. Others describe the energy as 'immortal goods.'*

*Not to contemplate your thoughts is the goal of meditation, and it is a tough one to achieve. Whether you sit cross-legged like a Buddha, or you use a certain (possibly secret) mantra: To go past contemplation, to bypass mind, to go to a region beyond the material world, that's your goal - never mind how you get there.*

*\*\*\*Alternatively, the Lotus Posture is a sitting position (in Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism) to aid meditation. It is part of the Hindu yoga tradition and it is said the posture encourages proper breathing and fosters physical stability. Initially all yoga practices were developed to prepare the body for stillness in meditation.*

*Aum (also Om or Ohm) is a mystical syllable in the Indian religions, to be uttered with the reading of the Vedas, or used as a mantra.*



*Aum is derived from the Sanskrit word nu: to sound, praise - and is interpreted as: 'To make a humming or droning sound.'*