

# Spiritual Discipline Program



Daily Meditation and Prayer

November 2011



## What is Meditation and Prayer?

Our daily lives are filled with a number of activities. From the time we wake up, the entire day is constantly spent in doing. Whether it is working on a project, attending meetings, doing homework, taking care of the family, or running errands, there is hardly enough time for us to recuperate from our busy schedules and connect back to the Source, which is Swami Himself.

**Meditation and Prayer** are some of the ways we can keep ourselves centered on Swami amidst our hectic lives. Meditation need not be merely sitting silently for minutes. For many, playing a musical instrument is a form of meditation. For others, it may be writing a poem, or taking a nature walk, or serving others. Swami says the ultimate goal of meditation is merging with God.

***“Real meditation is getting absorbed in God as the only thought, the only goal. God only, only God. Think God, breathe God, love God”***

***(Conversations with Sai).***



# Similarities and Differences between Meditation and Prayer

**Prayer alone makes life happy, harmonious and worth living in this universe. - Baba**

Prayer can be summed up as anything that helps us to remember God. We pray to God when we need help or His guidance. We pray to God to express gratitude. We call on Swami throughout the day knowingly or unknowingly. Meditation can be thought of as a constant state of prayer. It's a state when we realize we are not separate from Swami. Swami says, **"There are two roads to fulfillment: prayer and meditation. Prayer makes you a supplicant at the feet of God. Meditation (dhyana) induces God to come down to you and inspires you to raise yourselves to Him; it tends to make you come together, not place one in a lower level and the other on a higher."** - *Sathya Sai Speaks V, 'Lamps Lit from the Same Flame'*

So what is the best form of prayer? Swami explains very beautifully. **"Three types of activity reach God and earn His Grace: (1) activity not prompted by personal desire, (2) activity emanating from unselfish Love and (3) prayer arising from pure hearts. These are the items to which the Lord pays heed. They reach God direct. The rest are the concern of deities who preside over their disposal. Therefore, prayers have to be unselfish, saturated with Love, and free from the taint of attachment to the gift that the prayer would bring."** – *Sathya Sai Vahini*



# Why should we Meditate on daily basis?

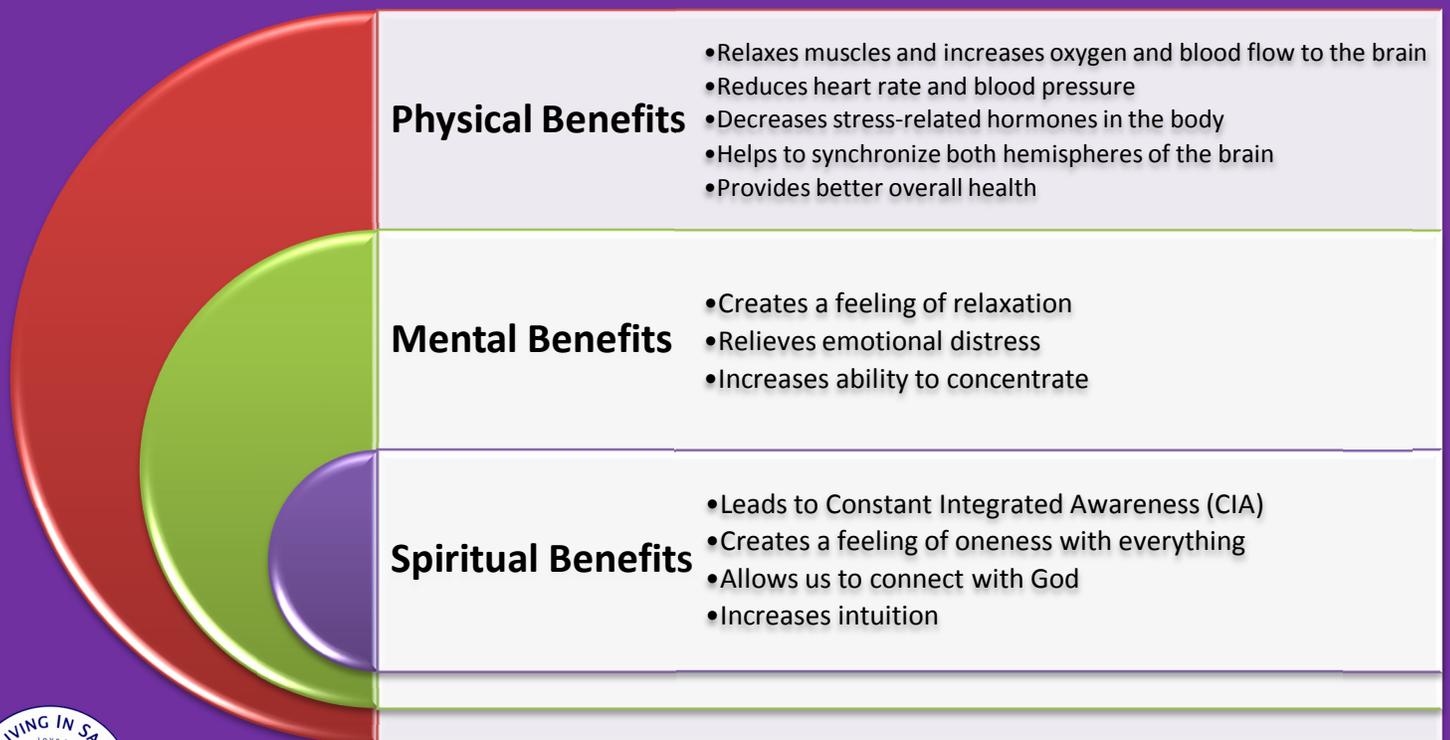


Swami says, “Through meditation, people reach the divine experience of realizing the Atma within themselves. Through meditation, spiritual aspirants are able to cast off sheaths of ignorance, layer after layer. They withdraw their sense perceptions from contact with worldly objective experiences. The process that aims at this holy consummation deserves to be called meditation.”

- *Dhyana Vahini P. 17*

There are many benefits of regular meditation ranging from physical to spiritual. Many of the physical and mental benefits have been proven by scientists for many years.

## Benefits of Regular Meditation



# Three Stages to Meditation

Source: Summer Showers in Brindavan, 1979 P. 113, and other divine discourses

**Concentration** is gearing all the senses into action. Whatever activities we perform, they are done with concentration. Concentration is below the senses.

**Contemplation** is the stage when there is no body-identification. This stage lies between concentration and meditation.

**Meditation** is the stage when the three aspects – the one who is doing the meditation, the object of meditation and the act or process of meditation merge in to one. All that may change has fallen away, and Tat Twam Asi (That Thou Art) is the state that exists. It is entirely above the senses.

**Swami sums up the stages of meditation beautifully:**

“There is a small example for this. There is a rose plant and in it you have the leaves, thorns, branches and the flowers themselves. In this context, the ability to distinguish between thorns, leaves, branches and flowers can be termed as concentration. After looking at all these things, we can identify the flower. Once you are able to locate the flower and concentrate on it, then you can pluck it out without touching the thorns. Once you have plucked the flower, there is no relation whatsoever between the flower, on the one hand thorns, leaves and branches, on the other. The separation of the flower from these other parts of the tree is called contemplation. You will take this flower and offer it to God. After you have offered the flower to God, the tree, the branches, your hand and even the flower do not exist at all. This offering, where others have disappeared and God alone exists, is called meditation.”

- Summer Showers in Brindavan 1973 P. 275

Meditation is one activity in which we can reap many benefits from following a structured method of practicing the discipline. Swami advises that following a few rules will keep us disciplined enough to regularly practice meditation, especially when we are still in the beginning stages.

“Until the goal of meditation is achieved, the well-established discipline of sitting postures (asanas) has to be followed. The curriculum has to be adhered to till then. After attainment of the goal – that is, after the mind (manas) and the intellect (buddhi) have been conquered and brought under control – one can be immersed in meditation wherever one finds oneself: on the bed, in the chair, on a rock, or in a cart.” – *Dhyana Vahini P. 16*

How to Meditate?



## Here are a few tips on the proper ways of Meditation as prescribed by Swami.

(For the purpose of the newsletter, the Light or Jyothi Meditation is used as the meditation technique as this is the technique given by Swami as one of the easiest to practice. The reader may wish to substitute any meditation technique he or she is most comfortable with.)

This section is derived from a series of divine discourses and also meditation workshops conducted by Sai devotees.



### o **Preparation** (Source: *Dhyana Vahini P. 8-9*)

#### o **Picking the Right Place:**

- o Select a silent corner which is dimly lit and where you will not be disturbed. Preferably away from any cell phones or doorbell.

#### o **Picking the Right Time:**

- o Meditation should be practiced preferably at the same time every day. This will help form a habit which will automatically put us into a meditative state when the time approaches
- o The best time to meditate according to Swami is before sunrise – between 3AM and 6AM (Brahmamuhurta). At this time, the atmosphere is calm and serene. The body is fresh and the mind is alert but not over-active.
- o However if you cannot wake up that early, then any time of the day is fine as long as you will not be disturbed

#### o **Sitting Posture:**

- o Adopt any sitting posture in which you can sit steadily for some length of time without having to move the body.
- o If sitting on the floor, be sure to sit cross-legged. Also, remember to place a mat or a cushion below
- o The most important thing to remember is that your spine and head should be straight. This helps the Divine energy to flow freely through the body.
- o You may place your hands in the chin mudra (index finger and thumb connected) or dhyana mudra (hands on the lap, one on top of the other)
- o Be comfortable and relaxed. See that there is no stiffness anywhere
- o Relaxation is the key to meditation

### o **Begin Meditation** (Source: *Sathya Sai Speaks X, 'Meditation'*)

- o Have a lamp or a candle before you with an open, steady, and straight flame.
- o **Chant** - Before beginning to meditate, chant a few mantras. This will help focus the mind on God and calm the mind down.
- o **Relax** - By means of a mental massage, relax the entire body. Relax the neck, shoulders, hands, chest, teeth, stomach, fingers, back, thighs, knees, calves, and feet. (Source: *Dhyana Vahini P. 9*)
- o **Meditate** - Guided Light Meditation given by Swami – *Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. X*
  - o Focus your mind on an object or a flame. Look on the flame steadily for some time, and closing your eyes try to feel the flame inside you between your eyebrows.
  - o Let it slide down into the lotus of your heart, illuminating the path. When it enters the heart, imagine that the petals of the lotus open out by one, bathing every thought, feeling, and emotion in the light and so removing darkness from them. There is no space for darkness to hide. The light of the flame becomes wider and brighter.
  - o Let it pervade your limbs. Now those limbs can never indulge in dark, suspicious, and wicked activities; they have become instruments of light and love.



- As the light reaches up to the tongue, falsehood vanishes from it. Let it rise up to the eyes and the ears and destroy all the dark desires that infest them and which lead you to perverse sights and childish conversation.
- Let your head be surcharged with light and all wicked thoughts will flee therefrom. Imagine that the light is in you more and more intensely.
- Let it shine all around you and let it spread from you in ever widening circles, taking in your loved ones, your kith and kin, your friends and companions, your enemies and rivals, strangers, all living beings, the entire world.
- **After meditation**
  - After the Meditation, sit silently for some time reflecting on what you felt during meditation. Did you feel calm and relaxed? Do you feel refreshed after the meditation?
  - Try not to get involved in strenuous activity immediately after meditation.

### Swami explains the immense benefits of regularly practicing the Light Meditation

**"Since the light illumines all the senses every day so deeply and so systematically, a time will soon come when you can no more relish dark and evil sights, yearn for dark and sinister tales, crave for base, harmful, deadening toxic food and drink, handle dirty demeaning things, approach places of ill-fame and injury, or frame evil designs against anyone at any time. Stay on in that thrill of witnessing the light everywhere."**

*-Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol X (Old edition, pages 348-350)*

## Meditation and Prayer Word Scramble

### Unscramble the words below:

1. connoctanrtei\_\_\_\_\_
2. ytoihj\_\_\_\_\_
3. abmmahuhrartu\_\_\_\_\_
4. smhuo\_\_\_\_\_
5. iomoelnatpnct\_\_\_\_\_
6. aseerswan\_\_\_\_\_
7. seennos\_\_\_\_\_
8. ntraalioex\_\_\_\_\_
9. tmetdioani\_\_\_\_\_



# Overcoming Challenges in Meditation

When we first begin to meditate regularly, we may come across many obstacles in our efforts. It is completely natural to experience these challenges while meditating. Below is a list of the most common challenges and ways to overcome them:

## o **Cannot focus the mind - Tips for focusing the mind**

- o Before starting the meditation, think of the *top 3 things that are running through the mind*. Then for each one, come to a resolution. For example, repeat "I have full faith that with every step I take, Swami is guiding me. Thank you Swami."
- o When the mind wanders, just think and repeat "come back to the present."
- o Breathe in and out deeply for 10 times. This fills the lungs with enough oxygen and regularizes the blood flow helping the mind to calm down.
- o If your thoughts wander, do not struggle with them. Gently bring your attention back to your breath
- o As you deepen your meditation, your breath will slow down and become more quiet, and go into an indistinguishable rhythm.

## o **Physical Pain – Tips for overcoming physical pain**

- o In the course of meditation, you may feel cramps or pain or an itch. Try not to move. Instead concentrate on the part of the body that is feeling uncomfortable, and mentally repeat "itch go away...itch go away ...itch go away..." over and over again until the itch or pain disappears. Alternatively, you could always address the issue.
- o Call on or imagine Swami's hands over the part of your body that is in pain. Ask Him to clear the pain. If you find that the pain is intolerable, you may change position of your body without disturbing the erect position of the body.

## o **Distraction**

Whatever the distractions, allow them to happen. Simply witness the distraction and let it go. If you become distracted, breathe in and out deeply for 10 times and resume your meditation.



## -YA Nature Day

Organize a YA nature day and go for a hike together. Find a quiet place and sit silently for some time. Try to connect with everything around you. Listen to all the different sounds of nature.



## -Lose the Caffeine and Meditate!

Instead of taking a sip of coffee during the day, take a 5 minute break. Relax the entire body from feet all the way to the head. Ask Swami to send His relaxing and cleansing energy to all parts of the body. This is a much better way to rejuvenate the body and mind to keep you going for the rest of the day.



## -11 – Second Meditation

Every 2 hours, be completely silent for 11 seconds. One method is the Thumb Meditation. Stare at your thumb for a total of 11 seconds with no thoughts. This technique will improve your concentration power.



Setup a daily reminder to help you do 11-second meditation.

**-Sohum Meditation-** Throughout the day, repeat 'Sohum' with every breath. 'So' when you inhale. 'Hum' when you exhale. Sohum in Sanskrit means, 'I am That'.



**-Whenever** and wherever you put yourself in touch with God, it is the state of meditation. - Baba

Pick one activity in which you connect to Swami the most (ex. Playing music, walking, etc.) and do that activity for at least 20 minutes each day.



## Testimonials

### Power of Intention

#### - A testimonial from a Young Adult in Southern California, USA

My husband and I had decided to go whale watching on a Saturday. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon. The boat took all its eager passengers along with us, about 10 miles into the ocean to spot these magnificent creatures. En route we spotted many a school of happy dolphins in the ocean jumping up and down along the waves. My husband and I decided to put the intention out to have the dolphins come really close to the deck of the boat where the two of us were standing so we could see them up close. No sooner had we set the intentions in our heart we noticed the dolphins were less than a feet away from us! Once the boat reached the section of the ocean where the whales are usually expected to be spotted, the boat hovered around in hope to spot them. But after half an hour and much searching no whales were in sight. The ride time was well beyond what was promised and yet no whales in sight, so the driver had no choice to announce he was turning the boat around to go back to land as it was getting very late. All of us were disappointed at not having seen what we came for.



The boat had turned around and started to make it ways back when we decided to put out the intention to spot the whales. Together we thought from a selfless space in our hearts and for the enjoyment of all present that the whales show up and no one would go away disappointed. We prayed that if it was for the highest good of all present then the whales present themselves for us to see. We sent out love to the whales and imagined ourselves as no different from these beautiful sea beings. No sooner had we opened our eyes from our prayers we heard the people on the boat excitedly scream and point to a direction in the distance. They had just spotted the whales! We were all so thrilled. There were 2 of them swimming in the distance. We again set the intention for them to come close and soon enough they were so close to our boat. They even circled the entire length of our boat and then headed back to the vast ocean and disappeared. We were told there were 5 other boats in the ocean that afternoon and no other boat had spotted the whales except for ours! We thanked the whales for this beautiful sighting and experience and yet again our faith in the power of intention-intention with love was strengthened.



## What Meditation and Prayer Mean to me

– A testimonial from a Young Adult in Southeast Region, USA

Mediation/prayer is a state of constant integrated awareness(CIA). A state where you get to put on the glasses of LOVE, and just WATCH. Watch, your words, actions, thoughts, Character and heart. A state without any judgment or boundaries of right or wrong. It is a state of complete surrender to the source within. When we unconsciously get sucked into our thoughts, we manifest habits. When we consciously observe the source of our thoughts, we manifest a state of 'being'. Mediation allows us to focus on the being, rather than doing. Prayer which emanates from the depths of heart, blossoms the transformation of the individual. So what is the best prayer? As Swami tells, all of us ask for the fulfillment of worldly desires and other tinsel and trash. The best prayer is the one coming forth like a waterfall from the depth of the heart. 'Oh! lord lead from ignorance to wisdom, lead me from darkness to light, lead from mortality to immortality.'



## Further Reading

### Three Stages of Jesus' Life

*The following is an excerpt from Divine Discourse given on Christmas day, 1978.*

Jesus was kaarana-janma, a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring love, charity and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self, nor paid any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. He had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, and he went about the land preaching the lesson of love. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity. Like most seekers, he first searched for the Divine · in the objective world. But he soon realized that the world is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and sought to find God within himself. His stay in the Himaalayan monasteries in Kashmir and in other centres of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, gave him greater awareness. From the attitude of being a Messenger of God, he could now call himself the Son of God. The bond of relationship increased: the 'I' was no more some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the "I." With the body-consciousness predominant, he was a messenger. With the heart-consciousness in the ascendant, he felt a greater nearness and dearness, and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage. Later as the Aathman-consciousness was established, Jesus could declare, "I and 'My Father are One." The three stages may be described as: "I was in the Light," "the Light was in me," and "I am the light," and may be compared to the Dhwaitha (dualism), Visishtaadhwaitha' (qualified non-dualism) and Adhwaitha (non-dualism) stages as described in Vedhic philosophy. The final stage is the one when all duality has been shed. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.



**Answer Key to the Word Scramble:**

- 1) concentration;
- 2) jyothi;
- 3) brahmamuhurta;
- 4) sohum;
- 5) contemplation;
- 6) awareness;
- 7) oneness;
- 8) relaxation;
- 9) meditation



# Spiritual Discipline Program

November 2011



## Daily Meditation and Prayer

STUDY CIRCLE GUIDE



The objectives of the study circle are to get a better understanding of:

- ✚ What is Meditation and Prayer
- ✚ Significance and benefits of meditation and prayer
- ✚ How to meditate
- ✚ Using Divine guidance in daily life

Start the study circle with 3 OMs. Starting out with sitting in a circle. **The facilitator now takes the participants through the following exercises.**

- Close your eyes. Visualize Swami sitting in the middle of the circle. Now visualize a connection between your heart and Swami's heart in whatever form that comes naturally to you. It could be in the form of a golden thread, or a beam of light, etc.
- Ask Swami to send His unconditional love through that connection to you
- Feel the strong powerful energy enter your heart from Him.
- Now visualize the same connection between Swami and everyone present in the room. Visualize everyone connected to Swami like spokes of a wheel connected to the center.
- Thank Swami for His love and guidance in doing this exercise.

## **Introduction & Discussion - Meditation and Prayer**

### **Meditation**

- Discuss the following questions with the group
  - What does meditation mean to you? What is the goal of meditation?
  - How often do you meditate?

### **Prayer**

- Discuss the following questions with the group
  - What does prayer mean to you? What is the goal of prayer?
  - Share instances from your life when you pray to or call on Swami.
  - How is prayer different from Meditation? How is it similar to meditation?



**Read the following quotes on Meditation and Prayer and discuss the questions:**

**"Real meditation is getting absorbed in God as the only thought, the only goal. God only, only God. Think God, breathe God, love God." -Conversations with Sai**

**"There are two roads to fulfillment: prayer and meditation. Prayer makes you a supplicant at the feet of God. Meditation (dhyana) induces God to come down to you and inspires you to raise yourselves to Him; it tends to make you come together, not place one in a lower level and the other on a higher." -Sathya Sai Speaks V**

### Discussion Points:

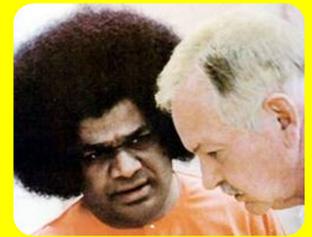
- Have the above quotes changed how you see Meditation and Prayer? If so, how?
- In what ways does Meditation help us to see the Oneness with Swami and all.
- Share an instance from your life when you lost yourself in a task. For example, you were concentrating fully on something that you thought of nothing else. How did you feel?
- What do you experience while in Meditation?

### More discussion on Prayer

- 1) What do you pray to Swami for? What do you not pray to Swami for?
- 2) Is it wrong to ask Swami for materialistic things?
- 3) If we are God, why do we need to pray to Swami?

*Let's read to the answer Swami gave to Dr. John Hislop regarding this:*

**Swami to Hislop:** "When you ask God, you rise to His level. You must ask God. To ask God is perfectly all right. It is your duty to ask God. Words must be said and, the thoughts must correspond to the words. It is true enough that the Divinity knows all. But He requires that true words be said. The mother may know that, to maintain life, the child requires food. But milk is given only when the child asks for it."



### **So what should we pray for?**

**"Three types of activity reach God and earn His Grace: (1) activity not prompted by personal desire, (2) activity emanating from unselfish Love and (3) prayer arising from pure hearts. These are the items to which the Lord pays heed. They reach God direct. The rest are the concern of deities who preside over their disposal. Therefore, prayers have to be unselfish, saturated with Love, and free from the taint of "attachment to the gift that the prayer would bring." – Sathya Sai Vahini**

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) What are ways we can transform a seemingly selfish prayer or desire to a prayer arising from a pure heart? How is this related to surrendering to Swami's will?
- 2) Many people believe in the power of intention, that is, you can achieve anything you put your mind to. How is this different from praying for something to happen?

### Benefits of Meditation and Prayer

- On a sheet of paper, list the benefits YAs derive from regular meditation. You may break the list down to categories like physical, mental, and spiritual benefits.
- What values do you cultivate as you meditate?
- How does meditation help you achieve union with God
- Discuss an incident in your life where meditation or prayer helped you to overcome a challenge.
- List the challenges in your life that give you the most stress. Of all the daily activities, which are the hardest ones to fully focus on? How can meditation help you to overcome these challenges?

- What are the benefits of a group prayer versus praying individually? Think of some ways the group can practice praying as a group.

## How to Meditate

Meditation is one activity in which we can reap many benefits from following a structured method of practicing the discipline. For the next activity, ask two people to read the lines of Dr. Sai and Ram as Ram learns how to meditate properly.



### Dr. Sai Teaches How to Meditate

**Dr. Sai:** Hey Ram, It's good to see you. How have you been doing with you spiritual discipline?

**Ram:** Good to see you to Dr. Sai. My sadhana has been going well. I've been attending my Sai center on a regular basis, have a new-found respect for my family, and have been learning to put a ceiling on desire.

**Dr. Sai:** That's great Ram. Glad to see you're putting into practice what you learned. What can I help you with today?

**Ram:** Well, I have been beginning to learn Meditation and have been having the hardest time. The minute I sit down, I get so many thoughts running through my mind. I am not able to concentrate at all! On top of that, I can't sit straight for more than 5 minutes.

**Dr. Sai:** Oh I see your problem. The first thing you should know is like everything else, meditation requires patience. If meditation was easy, the great saints of the past would not have practiced various austerities and subjected themselves to innumerable difficulties in the deep forests. Let us start with the basics. How often do you meditate?

**Ram:** It's hard for me to meditate every day. I always have a tough time getting up in the morning. So I just try to do it when I feel like it.

**Dr. Sai:** Meditation should be practiced on a regular basis and preferably at the same time. This will help form a habit which will automatically put you in a meditative state when the time for meditation approaches. The best time to meditate is in the early morning between 3AM and 6AM. This is called the Brahmamuhurta. This is when the body is fresh and the mind is alert but not over-active. But if you cannot wake up early then anytime of the day is fine. Just maintain a regular discipline.

**Ram:** Hmm. I will take that into consideration. How about my posture? I always end up slouching soon after beginning to meditate. How can I improve my posture?

**Dr. Sai:** You may keep any sitting posture in which you can sit steadily for some length of time without having to move the body. If you are sitting on the floor, be sure to sit cross-legged. Also, remember to place a mat or a cushion below. The most important thing to remember is that your spine and head should be straight. This helps the Divine energy to flow freely through the body. You may place your hands in the chin mudra (index finger and thumb connected) or dhyana mudra (hands on the lap, one on top of the other). Be comfortable and relaxed. See that there is no stiffness anywhere. Relaxation is the key to meditation.

**Ram:** Thank you Dr. Sai. These are very helpful tips. What should I do next?

**Dr. Sai:** Ok. Now you can start meditation. Have a seat here and show me the correct sitting posture. (*Ask everyone to sit in the correct posture as instructed earlier*) When at home, have a flame or a candle before you with an open and steady flame. I will now lead you through a guided Light Meditation.

**(Make sure everyone is ready to do the Light Meditation. Ask everyone to repeat as instructed. You may play an audio that has a guided light meditation)**

**Dr. Sai:** (*Repeat each sentence slowly and with a soft, soothing voice*) Close your eyes or keep them partly open. First of all, relax the body and mind. By means of a gentle massage, relax the neck. Then relax the shoulders, hands, chest, teeth, stomach, fingers, back, thighs, knees, calves, and feet.

**Dr. Sai:** Focus your mind on an object or a flame. Look on the flame steadily for some time, and closing your eyes try to feel the flame inside you between your eyebrows. Let it slide down into the lotus of your heart, illuminating the path.

When it enters the heart, imagine that the petals of the lotus open out by one, bathing every thought, feeling, and emotion in the light and so removing darkness from them. There is no space for darkness to hide. The light of the flame becomes wider and brighter.

Let it pervade your limbs. Now those limbs can never indulge in dark, suspicious, and wicked activities; they have become instruments of light and love. As the light reaches up to the tongue, falsehood vanishes from it. Let it rise up to the eyes and the ears and destroy all the dark desires that infest them and which lead you to perverse sights and childish conversation.

Let your head be surcharged with light and all wicked thoughts will flee therefrom. Imagine that the light is in you more and more intensely. Let it shine all around you and let it spread from you in ever widening circles, taking in your loved ones, your kith and kin, your friends and companions, your enemies and rivals, strangers, all living beings, the entire world.

*(Let there be silence for some time)*

**Dr. Sai:** Now slowly, open your eyes, and come back to the present.

**Ram:** Wow! That was incredible! I have never felt so much bliss from a meditation session. Thank you so much Dr. Sai for guiding me how to meditate properly. I will try to do as you said.

### **Swami explains the immense benefits of regularly practicing the Light Meditation**

- "Since the light illumines all the senses every day so deeply and so systematically, a time will soon come when you can no more relish dark and evil sights, yearn for dark and sinister tales, crave for base, harmful, deadening toxic food and drink, handle dirty demeaning things, approach places of ill-fame and injury, or frame evil designs against anyone at any time. Stay on in that thrill of witnessing the light everywhere.

## Meditation Experience

- Discuss how everyone felt during the guided meditation exercise. Were you able to visualize the light?

## Overcoming Challenges in Meditation

- What was the most challenging part of the meditation exercise? Discuss some ways to overcome each of the common challenges.
- What are some ways we can keep the mind focused during meditation?

## **Seeking Divine Guidance Activity**

Now let us move on to how we can use Meditation and Prayer to help us in our daily lives. We are constantly seeking Swami's guidance in everything we do. As Swami says, only in the depth of Silence can we listen to God's voice. Regular meditation and prayer are ways we can silence the mind and learn how to tune in to Swami for His guidance.

### Discussion Point:

1. How can we translate this concept to our daily lives. That is, how can we continue to stay connected to Swami throughout the day while working on mundane tasks?
2. What are some ways we can transform our work into worship and perform all acts as an offering to Swami?

## Listening to Divine Guidance and the Power of Intention ACTIVITY

- Have everyone stand in a circle. Pick one volunteer to come to the center of the circle
- Inform him/her that they will be blind-folded. Before that ask him/her to pick one person from the circle that they intend to go towards. The object of the game is to silence the mind completely and let Swami guide you towards the person you intended to go to.
- Blind-fold the person and turn him around until the person has lost their sense of direction. Make sure the person is completely blind-folded
- While being blind-folded, the person who was picked in the circle may switch positions
- Ask the blind-folded person to silence the mind and ask Swami to guide you in the right direction. The key is to trust your inner voice.
- Whenever the person is ready ask him/her to use your inner guidance to walk towards the person he/she had intended to go to.
- While the blind-folded person is walking, ask the others to focus the mind and intend for him/her to walk towards the right direction. Continue to think of the intention for a few minutes or until he/she reaches the person.
- This activity may be repeated with another volunteer
- After the activity, ask the volunteer what he/she felt during the exercise. Was he/she able to feel Swami guiding them?

## **Practical Tips and Sai Challenges**

- As a group, come up with 3 ways to practice meditation in a creative way
- If time is a challenge, list 3 ways you can make time to meditate and pray on a daily basis
- Think of 3 activities from your daily life where you have the most trouble staying connected to Swami. Make an intention in the heart for Swami to help you feel His presence during those activities