

# CONCENTRATION & MEDITATION

A portrait of Swami Sivananda, a prominent Hindu spiritual leader. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a brown shawl over a white shirt. His eyes are closed, and he has a serene expression. The background is a dark, textured reddish-brown. In the upper right corner, there is a vertical decorative element consisting of a series of geometric symbols, including a sunburst at the top, followed by a triangle, a square, and other intricate patterns.

SWAMI SIVANANDA



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AND  
MEDITATION**



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Sri Swami Sivananda



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*OM*

*Dedicated to  
Yogins and Bhaktas  
Who Strive to Attain  
The Summum Bonum of Life  
Through Concentration  
and  
Meditation  
OM*



## SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.

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22. 11. 1958

Blessed aspirants,

For success in life and Sadhana,  
Concentration of mind is indispensable  
All diff. culties and obstacles  
will melt away, if you know  
how to tap the source of power,  
by concentration and meditation.

Regular practice of concentration  
and meditation will give you  
peace, bliss, success and  
at length Self realization

Om Tat Sat.

Sivananda

## INTRODUCTION

Concentration and meditation are the royal roads to perfection. Concentration leads to meditation. Fix the mind on one object either within the body or without. Keep it there steadily for some time. This is concentration. You will have to practise this daily. Purify the mind first through the practice of right conduct and then take to the practice of concentration. Concentration without purity of mind is of no avail. There are some occultists who have concentration. But they have no good character. That is the reason why they do not make any progress in the spiritual line.

He who has a steady posture and has purified his nerves and the vital sheath by constant practice of control of breath will be able to concentrate easily. Concentration will be intense if you remove all distractions. A true celibate who has preserved his energy will have wonderful concentration.

Some foolish, impatient students take to concentration at once without in any manner undergoing any preliminary training in ethics. This is a serious blunder. Ethical perfection is a matter of paramount importance.

You can concentrate internally on any of the seven centres of spiritual energy. Attention plays a very prominent part in concentration. He who has developed his powers of attention will have good concentration. A man who is filled with passion and all sorts of fantastic desires can hardly concentrate on any subject or object even for a second. His mind will be jumping like an old monkey.

A scientist concentrates his mind and invents many new things. Through concentration he opens the layers of the gross mind and penetrates deeply into the higher regions of the mind and gets deeper knowledge. He concentrates all the energies of his mind into one focus and throws them out upon the materials he is analysing and finds out their secrets.

He who has gained abstraction (withdrawing the senses from the objects) will have good concentration. You will have to march on in the spiritual path step by step, stage by stage. Lay the foundation of right conduct, postures, regulation of breath

and abstraction to start with. The superstructure of concentration and meditation will be successful then only.

You should be able to visualise the object of concentration very clearly even in its absence. You will have to call up the mental picture at a moment's notice. If you have good concentration you can do this without much difficulty.

In the beginning stage of practice, you can concentrate on the 'tik-tik' sound of a watch or on the flame of a candle or any other object that is pleasing to the mind. This is concrete concentration. There is no concentration without something to rest the mind upon. The mind can be fixed on any object in the beginning which is pleasant. It is very difficult to fix the mind in the beginning on an object which the mind dislikes.

Those who practise concentration evolve quickly. They can do any work with scientific accuracy and great efficiency. What others do in six hours can be done by one who has concentration within half an hour. What others can read in six hours, can be read by one who does concentration within half an hour. Concentration purifies and calms the surging emotions, strengthens the current of thought and clarifies the ideas. Concentration helps a man in his material progress also. He will have a very good outturn of work in his office or business house. What was cloudy and hazy before becomes clear and definite. What was difficult before becomes easy now and what was complex, bewildering and confusing before becomes easy within the mental grasp. You can achieve anything through concentration. Nothing is impossible to a man who practises regular concentration. It is very difficult to practise concentration when one is hungry and when one is suffering from an acute disease. He who practises concentration will possess very clear mental vision.

Meditation is the only royal road to the attainment of salvation or Moksha. Meditation kills all pains, sufferings and three kinds of Taapas (fevers) and five Kleshas or sorrows. Meditation gives the vision of unity. Meditation produces sense of oneness. Meditation is an aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high in the realms of eternal bliss and everlasting peace. It is a mysterious ladder that connects earth and heaven and takes the aspirant to the immortal abode of Brahman.

Meditation is the continuous flow of one thought of God or Atman, like the continuous flow of oil from one vessel to another (Tailadharavat). Meditation follows concentration.

Practise meditation in the early morning from 4 to 6 (Brahma-Muhurta). This is the best time for the practice of meditation.

Sit in Padma or Siddha or Sukha Asana. Keep the head, neck and the trunk in a straight line, and concentrate either on the Trikuti, the space between the two eyebrows, or on the heart with closed eyes.

Meditation is of two kinds viz., Saguna Dhyana (concrete meditation) and Nirguna Dhyana (abstract meditation). In concrete meditation the Yogic student meditates on the form of Lord Krishna, Rama, Sita, Vishnu, Siva, Gayatri or Devi. In abstract meditation he meditates on his own Self or Atman.

Place the picture of Lord Hari with four hands in front of you. Gaze at this picture steadily for five minutes and then close the eyes and visualise the picture. During visualisation move the mind on the various parts of Vishnu. See with the mind His feet first, then in the following order, legs, His yellow silk cloth, His golden necklace set with Kaustubha gem on the breast, the earring, Makarakundala, then the face, then the crown on the head, then the discus in the right upper hand, then the conch in the upper left hand, then the mace in the lower right hand, then the lotus in the left lower hand. Then come down to the feet and repeat the process again and again. Finally fix the mind either on the feet or on the face. Repeat the Mantra, Hari Om or Om Namō Narayanaya, mentally. Think of the attributes of the Lord such as Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Purity, etc.

Meditate on Om and its meaning with feeling. This is Nirguna Dhyana. Repeat Om mentally. Identify yourself with Atman. Feel "I am the all-pervading immortal Self or Atman. I am Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman. I am Sakshi or silent witness of three states and all modifications of the mind. I am pure consciousness, I am distinct from the body, mind and Prana and senses, I am the self-luminous Light of lights. I am the eternal supreme Soul."

If you have contentment, cheerfulness, patience, unruffled state of mind, sweet voice, one-pointedness of mind, light

body, fearlessness, desirelessness, disgust for worldly things, think that you are advancing in the spiritual path and that you are nearing God.

O Prem! There is a place where you will neither hear any sound nor see any colour. That place is Param Dham or Padam Anamayam (painless seat). This is the realm of peace and bliss. There is no body-consciousness here. Here mind finds rest. All desires and cravings melt away. The Indriyas remain quiet here. The intellect ceases functioning. There is neither fight nor quarrel here. Will you seek this silent abode through silent meditation? Solemn stillness reigns supreme here. Rishis of yore attained this place only by melting the mind in the silence. Brahman shines in native effulgence.

Forget the body. Forget the surroundings. Forgetting is the highest Sadhana. It helps meditation a great deal. It makes the approach to God easier. By remembering God, you can forget all these things.

Taste the spiritual consciousness by withdrawing the mind from the sensual objects and fixing it on the lotus-feet of the Lord, who is ever shining in the chambers of your heart. Merge within by practising deep silent meditation. Plunge deep. Swim freely in the ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Float in the Divine river of Joy. Tap the source. March direct towards the fountain-head of Divine Consciousness and drink the Nectar. Feel the thrill of Divine Embrace and enjoy Divine Ecstasy. I shall leave you here. You have attained the state of immortality and fearlessness. O Prem! Fear not. Shine now. Thy light has come.

Practise regular systematic meditation during the same hours daily. You will get the meditative mood easily.

The more you meditate, the more you will have inner spiritual life, wherein mind and Indriyas do not play. You will be very close to the source, Atman. You will enjoy the waves of bliss and peace.

All sensual objects will have no attraction for you now. The world will appear to you as a long dream. Jnana will dawn in you by constant, deep meditation.

You will be fully illumined. The curtain of ignorance will drop now. The sheaths will be torn. The body-idea will vanish. You will realise the significance of the Mahavakya, "Tat Tvam Asi." All differences, distinctions, qualities will disappear. You

will see everywhere one infinite, illimitable Atman, full of Bliss, Light and Knowledge. This will be a rare experience, indeed. Do not tremble with fear like Arjuna. Be bold. You will be left alone now. There is nothing to see or hear now. There are no senses. It is all pure consciousness only.

Thou art Atman, O Prem. Thou art not this perishable body. Destroy the Moha for this filthy body. Do not utter in future "My body." Say, "this instrument." The sun is setting now. It is drawing within all the rays. Now sit for meditation. Again have a dive in the sacred Atmic Triveni within. Collect all the rays of the mind and plunge within quite deep into the innermost recesses of the heart. Give up all sorts of fears, cares, worries and anxieties. Rest in the ocean of silence. Enjoy the eternal peace. Your old Jivahood is gone now. All limitations have disappeared. If the desires and old cravings try to hiss, destroy them by the rod of Viveka and the sword of Vairagya.

Keep these two with you always for some time till you get Brahmi-Sthiti (fully established in Atman).

OM is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Om is Infinity, Eternity. Sing OM. Feel OM. Chant OM. Live in Om. Meditate on OM. Roar OM OM OM. Hear OM. Taste Om. See OM. Eat OM. Drink OM. OM is Thy Name! May that OM guide you! OM! OM! OM! OM SANTIH.

*Swami Sivananda*

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## ॥ शिवध्यानम् ॥

शान्तं पद्मासनस्थं शशधरमुकुटं पञ्चवक्त्रं त्रिनेत्रं  
शूलं वज्रं च खड्गं परशुमभयदं दक्षिणांगे वहन्तम् ।  
नागं पाशं च घण्टां डमरुकसहितां चांकुशं वामभागे  
नानालंकारदीप्तं स्फटिकमणिनिभं पार्वतीशं नमामि ॥

I prostrate myself before the five-faced Lord of Parvati, who is adorned with various ornaments, who shines like Sphatika jewel, who is seated peacefully in lotus pose, with moon-crested crown, with three eyes, wearing trident, Vajra, sword and axe on the right side, serpent, noose, bell, Damaru and spear on the left side and who gives protection from all fears to His devotees.

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## ॥ शंकराचार्यध्यानम् ॥

पद्मासीनं प्रशान्तं यमनिरतमनंगारितुल्यप्रभावं  
फाले भस्माङ्कितभ्रं स्मितरुचिरमुखांभोजमिन्दीवराक्षम् ।  
कम्बुग्रीवं कराभ्यामविहतविलसत्पुस्तकं ज्ञानमुद्रां  
वन्द्यै गीर्वाणमुख्यैर्नतजनवरदं भावये शंकरार्यम् ॥

I meditate on Sri Sankaracharya who is seated in Padmasana with Jnanamudra, who is calm, endowed with virtues like Yama, Niyama, etc., whose glory is as great as that of Lord Siva, who wears the sacred ashes on the forehead, whose face resembles the blossomed lotus, with lotus-like eyes, possessing sacred books in hand, who is ever adored by people of high learning and wisdom, and who fulfils the desires of his devotees (who prostrate themselves before him).

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## ॥ ओङ्कारध्यानम् ॥

ओङ्कारं निगमैकवेद्यमनिशं वेदान्ततत्त्वास्पदं  
चोत्पत्तिस्थितिनाशहेतुममलं विश्वस्य विश्वात्मकम् ।  
विश्वत्राणपरायणं श्रुतिशतैः संप्रोच्यमानं विभुं  
सत्यज्ञानमनन्तमूर्तिममलं शुद्धात्मकं तं भजे ॥

I always meditate on the ever-pure, all-pervading Pranava, Omkara, which is known by the various Srutis as the source and support of Vedanta, as the cause of creation, existence and dissolution of this universe, which is the Soul of this universe and which is Truth, Knowledge and Infinity.

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## ॥ दत्तात्रेयध्यानम् ॥

मालाकमण्डलुधरः करपद्मयुगे  
मध्यस्थपाणियुगले डमरुत्रिशूलम् ।  
अध्यस्थ ऊर्ध्वकरयोः शुभशंखचक्रे  
वन्दे तमत्रितनयं भुजषट्कयुक्तम् ॥

I meditate on Dattatreya, the son of Atri, who has six hands, who is with garland and Kamandalu in two hands, with Damaru and Trisula (trident) in the other two hands and with conch and discus in the upper two hands.

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॥ गणेशध्यानम् ॥

गजाननं भूतगणादिसेवितं  
कपित्थजम्बूफलसारभक्षणम् ।  
उमासुतं शोकविनाशकारणं  
नमामि विघ्नेश्वरपादपङ्कजम् ॥

I worship the lotus-feet of Ganesa, the son of Uma, the destroyer of all sorrows, who is served by the host of Devas and Bhutas (elementals) and others and who takes the essence of Kapittha (a fruit resembling Bilva or stone-apple) and Jambu fruits.

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॥ सुब्रह्मण्यध्यानम् ॥

षडाननं कुंकुमरक्तवर्णं  
महामतिं दिव्यमयूरवाहनम् ।  
रुद्रस्य सूनुं सुरसैन्यनाथं  
गुहं सदाहं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

I always take refuge in Lord Guha of six faces, who is of deep red colour and infinite knowledge, who has the divine peacock to ride on, the son of Lord Siva and the leader of the army of the Devas.