

# Ekant Billing: Practical Meditation

Speaker 6: Welcome, everybody. I'm glad to present again. As you might remember from last time, we spoke comprehensively about meditation in connection to the Work. The idea was to follow up with a more practical session, so I invite you to experience this, which will be more of an experience than a transfer of knowledge.

I will speak a little, give a few ideas about meditation and different methods. The focus will be on five short meditations where I will present different techniques for us to experience. If you want, you might share your experience afterward. This is my plan. I hope you can see the presentation. It is called "Practical Meditation Exercises and Techniques and How I Can Use Them."

I want to start with a quote from Paulo Coelho's Handbook of the Warrior of the Light, which fits our purpose perfectly.

"The warrior of light meditates. He sits in a quiet place in his tent and surrenders himself to the divine light. When he does this he tries not to think about anything. He shuts himself off from the search for pleasure, from challenges and revelations, and allows his gifts and powers to reveal themselves, even if he does not recognize them then. These gifts and powers are taking care of his life and will influence his day-to-day existence. While he meditates, the warrior is not himself, but a spark from the soul of the world. These are the moments that give him an understanding of his responsibilities and how he should behave accordingly. A warrior of light knows that in the silence of his heart he will hear an order that will guide him."

This expresses perfectly what I also understand meditation to be.

I will speak a little between our meditation sessions about the purpose of meditation, why we need techniques at all. Then I will give a comprehensive list of different meditation techniques, well-known and well-experienced. I would like to make a connection between those techniques and the Work on centers, their relation to our Work methods. And of course, the practical examples, which we will do in between.

I have chosen five different examples. First is body shaking, which is a very healthy experience. Second is for the heart, the emotional part—I call it humming. Third, we engage our mind with a kind of counting. The fourth is a combination of breathing and sensing, commonly used in our area of work. The last is, in a way, the peak: just being there in stillness.

We will start with meditation for the body: shaking. I invite you either to stand, if possible, or to remain sitting if more convenient. Use your computer's sound, as I have prepared special music to guide us. If you stand, stand loose with your feet on the ground, relaxed. Follow the impulses given by the music. When you shake, breathing goes quite naturally. You can direct your attention to your body, to be loose in your legs, knees, hips, back, arms—everywhere. Just loosen up and bring the energy flow inside your body into a certain vibration.

I will start the music, which lasts a few minutes. Just enjoy the experience. Don't be fixed in a certain pattern; give impulses to your arms and different limbs. Shake your body up.

(Music plays)

I hope you feel a little energized now, especially Tanya. Shaking is a method we use a lot, learned from Osho meditations where shaking is an essential part. It is very nice and healthy.

The Purpose of Meditation Techniques

Meditation is a kind of exercise. It is a secure space where we are either alone or in a group with people who share the same interest, the same doing, to explore ourselves. In a group, there is also more to be explored, but basically we explore ourselves. It is not for communicating with others. We explore, develop, and practice specific skills for ourselves—not the usual skills for behaving in the world, but skills directed toward ourselves.

We practice relaxation; we observe our tensions. We continuously treat ourselves by relaxing, coming back, observing tension again, relaxing again. We deepen our sensing, keeping direct contact with the body—there is actually not much else to do in meditation. Everything that could distract us is usually removed. We practice intensified, undisturbed self-observation. Usually, when you are alone, you have nothing else. We observe ourselves, which is one aim of meditation.

We also use directed attention, focused attention, or relaxed, unfocused attention. We work a lot with attention, a basic aim of the Work. We practice non-distraction, non-reacting, non-doing—though meditation itself is a kind of doing, an exercise, but we try to practice non-doing in a way.

Through continuous meditation practice, we become accustomed to what we could call a collected state. Someone who meditates regularly finds it much easier in a moment of silence, or even within a talk, or when a shock arrives, to remember this, to get into direct contact with the body and gather himself inside into a collected state. Meditation is a very good preparation for this. We gather energy. Everyone knows after meditation, sometimes in the body, sometimes in the mind, we have more energy or more orderly energy inside. Eventually, after long practice, meditation can become not just an exercise, but an attitude, or even a general state we are in when we do something.

### Why Techniques?

We can list all the messages given in the Work: we are unable to do; we are mechanical, impulse-driven, reactive; our centers are not working correctly; one center uses up the energy of another, they disturb each other; we have a lack of self-control; a lot of tension consumes our energy; we are easily distracted—everyone can observe how quickly we are disturbed by a message on the computer, a noise, a thought, anything. There is our ongoing, disturbing thinking process, hard to stop and bring to stillness, and all our emotional irritations and dynamics.

Why techniques? Because usually in life we are overwhelmed and easily identified. We need a technique, a specific structure, a certain space, and guidance.

What does a technique give us? It gives structure, order, rules to follow, a certain frame, guidance, inspiration, security, alignment, a specific aim. It gives explanation beforehand, a rational justification, and motivation. A technique also provides repetition, so we can recognize and gain trust. Practicing together gives us togetherness, connectedness, cooperation, and harmony.

Now, the next meditation, more for the heart than the body—though the body is always involved. We call it humming. The instruction: Use normal breath. Inhale slowly through the nose, exhale with a closed mouth, making any tone. It doesn't matter how loud or if it fits the music I provide. Do not sing a melody; just experience the effect humming has on you. You may feel vibrations in your throat spreading down into the chest, maybe to the belly, or up into the mouth and head.

On the in-breath, slow breathing; on the out-breath, with closed mouth, make a tone. The volume should be such that you can hear it and experience the vibrations. In addition, if sitting, you can turn your upper body slowly in a little circle, giving a sense of centeredness. I will provide music for this. Everyone in their own rhythm.

(Music plays)

Take a deep breath and slowly come back, open your eyes.

I remember when I came across this kind of meditation—I think it is the Nadabrahma meditation from Osho, which uses half an hour of humming. I was so touched by its effect on me that I used it wherever I was, like when with my children at the swimming pool, sitting aside and humming. No one is disturbed, and it felt very harmonizing for my body. I encourage you to use this; it's very beautiful, even without music.

Speaker 3: Just so you know, I can't hear the music at all.

Speaker 6: I'm sorry. I will send you the music so you can practice afterward.

### Different Techniques

**Shaking:** We can shake parts or the whole body, with different intensity, spontaneous chaotic movements, move to patterns, sit, stand, walk, circle, turn, jump. There are many active parts in, for example, Osho meditations.

Positions or postures, mudras (specific hand patterns) can influence energy flow.

**Tension and relaxation:** Intentionally tense a body part, then relax. Emphasis is usually on relaxation.

**Sensing:** A basic thing in the Work. Sense parts of the body one after another, in combination, or try to perceive the whole body.

**Breathing:** Breathe naturally, slow down, deepen, use fast, intense, rhythmic breathing, sometimes with music, certain patterns or techniques. I have tried many breathing techniques, mostly from Sufis, but recently becoming aware of Gurdjieff's warnings, I am more careful. It's better to do it carefully or use natural breathing.

Humming or singing, using the voice.

**Talking:** Using words, mantras, sacred words, numbers, names.

**Imagining:** Imagine energy flow in the body—down the back, up the front, from pelvis into limbs. Imagine holy pictures to evoke a certain quality or emotion.

**Listening:** To music, our own noise, silence, the pauses between sounds.

**Touch:** Using the sense of touch—hands on knees, holding an object, touching our own body, or in specific meditations with a partner or holding hands in a circle. Touch our surroundings.

**Looking:** Focused or unfocused. Focus on a candle, a clock, a point. Or use peripheral vision: open the look, make eyes soft, focus on nothing, let visual impressions come in. Sitting in nature, not focusing but being nourished by impressions—wind, leaves, birds.

**Watching:** Watching our insight.

**Labeling:** As Robin mentioned, when we experience a phenomenon, give it a name to disidentify: "a thought," "a tickling." This helps not to react.

Counting: Count breaths, movements, sensations, up and down, or specific patterns like circular counting used in Gurdjieff exercises.

Feelings and attitudes: Experience certain qualities evoked by images, ideas, words, prayers, names—like speaking the name of prophets.

Non-reacting and non-doing: Retard or omit impulses from inside or outside; try not to react or do anything.

Stillness: The highest—doing nothing, thinking nothing, no counting, no pattern, no ideas, no feeling (though a certain emotional quality remains). Just presence, pure being, just being there—the most difficult kind of meditation.

### Connection to Centers

With regard to the body: Use it actively—shaking, sensing, moving, postures, dancing, relaxing. Use it passively—listening, relaxing, sitting, leaning, sometimes lying (if you don't fall asleep).

For the emotional center, the heart: Active—hum, sing, feel intentionally with an image or topic, use breath to calm or intensify emotions, use prayers or sacred words to evoke an inner quality. Passive—just observe, relax, let go. Very helpful during emotional disturbance.

For the mind: Active—ponder a question, concentrate on something, imagine, count patterns to keep the mind busy intentionally. Passive—just see, relax, let go, try to become empty—most difficult for many.

Combinations: Combine techniques for any center, active or passive. All the time, we work with awareness and presence, which are neither active nor passive, covering a neutral space. Awareness and presence are in this direction.

Next, a meditation to engage our mind. No music, so no sound problems. Instruction: First, connect with breathing. Let it flow naturally, but encourage it to be slower and deeper, relaxed. Breathe naturally but slow, without tension or effort. Find your own rhythm, tempo.

When we have found our tempo, start with the mind: Count every in-and-out breath as one. Breathe in and say "one," breathe out. Next in-breath, "two," breathe out. Next in-breath, "three," breathe out. Then one breath with no number, just breathing in and out. Then count backwards from three to one: "three," "two," "one." Then one breath with no number. This is the basic pattern.

Now introduce, to engage the mind further, the words "Lord, have mercy" and a pause—four elements. Putting it together: Breathe "one," "two," "three," then on the next breath say "Lord." Then go back: breathe "three," "two," "one," then a neutral breath with no number. Then start again: "one," "two," "three," then "have," and so on.

You can read the pattern to understand. I give you a few minutes to experience. If you lose yourself, start from the beginning. Try to remain in the pattern, doing nothing else. The mind is just a little engaged to hold the pattern. Otherwise, sense your breathing and be with yourself.

(Silent meditation)

Take another deep breath. I hope everyone had the chance to complete at least one cycle. This is a good meditation to keep the mind engaged, as we otherwise have difficulty not following distractions. This simple pattern keeps the mind engaged. The pause trains the mind not to be

bored. After a while, the words have meaning; we can inwardly connect, hearing "Lord, have mercy." It is quite simple to have a meditation over time that is not too difficult. We can make it more complicated by increasing numbers or introducing circular counting if the mind becomes too habitual. The benefit is to keep the mind engaged.

Active or Passive?

It depends on the aim you give to meditation. Active: We practice intentional use of attention, even to its expenditure. We use it intentionally, not mechanically. We learn to control the work of centers by giving impulses. We work against distraction by engaging different centers. We consume energy intentionally to prevent mechanical loss.

Passive: We practice the increase and gathering of attention. By doing nothing, being still in body and other centers, we learn to quiet the centers. We strengthen our ability to remain undistracted—I have experienced how much less I am distracted after years of meditation practice. We raise and collect inner energy on every level, in every center.

Neutral: Just present, watchful, very relaxed, unfocused but awake and collected, open, perceptive—like in prayer.

Fourth Example

This meditation combines different things, commonly used in Gurdjieff circles and seminars. It is for divided attention and increased alertness.

Establish a breathing pattern: Breathe in slowly, a little more fully than usual. Make a little pause. Breathe out slowly, letting the breath flow out until the body is quite emptied, without strong effort. Then a little pause. So: breathe in, little pause; breathe out, little stop—in your own rhythm.

While breathing, become aware that through the air we breathe in, substances come into us—what the teaching calls the second being-food. Sense that something enters the body when we breathe in. On the out-breath, sense that those substances are gathered in the pelvis, in the first chakra, the base. With each in-breath, substances enter; with each out-breath, they collect in the pelvis. Continue, feeling it fill more and more.

Now, in addition, establish a sensing pattern: With the out-breath, let the substances flow from the pelvis into the limbs. First, into the right arm—feel it filled from fingertips to shoulder. Then switch to the right leg, fill it. Then the left leg. Then the left arm. Then the belly. Then the chest, the heart area. Then the whole body.

Let these substances fill your whole body. Take a deep breath to complete.

This is a very powerful exercise from the Gurdjieff teachings. There are different variants, but this is the basic pattern: circular awareness of limbs, being aware of what you breathe in and spreading it into the body.

Last Example: Stillness

The last, which I hope does not overstretch your capability: five minutes of pure silence. Try to relax, sit comfortably. Always come back to just being, to breathing, but not specifically observing it. Just be. Feel your presence, empty your feelings, empty your head. If something happens, just come back to being. Another five minutes together in silence.

(Silent meditation)

Take a deep breath. As our friendly guide says, "That was five minutes." That's it—practical meditation. I hope you enjoyed it. Now is time for sharing, as the session was not as long as usual. We meditated almost thirty minutes in some way. If tomorrow you see something more important than meditation, you can calm yourself knowing you already did it this evening.

Speaker 1: I have a question about shaking, which I enjoyed. Is it significantly different from Japanese stretching exercises that give a relaxed feeling afterward? Is it different or similar?

Speaker 6: Stretching and shaking are different in aim and effect. With shaking, there is a big variety of movements. It energizes all parts of the body, distributes energy, gets rid of pain and tension. The nice thing is you can experiment with intensity. Sometimes with too much tension, use strong, energetic, almost dancing shaking. Other times, when relaxed, it may be almost a vibration. There is always a loosening up. I know of hospitals or ashrams in India where people shake all day, with amazing stories of cures. From my own experience over 20 years of regularly shaking, it contributes incredibly to health, not just the body—the mind also has space or surrenders. I think stretching is beneficial but quite different.

Speaker 1: I need to do more to appreciate it. That's the only thing of the five I have no experience with.

Speaker 6: The nice thing with shaking is it takes a while to get accustomed, to know what state you put your body in. After some experience, I use this relaxation and energy distribution not just in meditation. For example, waiting at a bus stop, I stand and shake very slightly, so it's not noticeable. I use it whenever I have unwanted tension. It can be used every day, unspectacularly.

Speaker 3: This was really helpful. I do entirely too much sitting. Now I have the okay to do things like you've suggested, particularly shaking and standing. I try to avoid lying down in case I fall asleep. It occurred to me: the Shakers and Quakers from the 1800s—this was known as a way to get in touch with the unknown.

Speaker 9: I observed as I began shaking a coarse, heavy vibration in my hands, which subsided to a fine vibration. During the exercise, several organic shivers came—they feel good. In the humming exercise, I ended with a vision of an upside-down triangle from shoulder to shoulder to the navel, that it had become a center. Thank you, very good.

Speaker 1: How long do you normally continue humming? If I did a humming session tomorrow morning, how long would you recommend?

Speaker 6: Usual times are fifteen minutes for one kind. For example, combine shaking for fifteen minutes, then humming for fifteen minutes—a good timeframe even for less experienced people. For deeper sensations, I recommend half an hour; if time, up to 45 minutes or an hour of active practice, then 15 minutes of silence. This gives time to settle and experience deeply. Fifteen minutes minimum, thirty if there is time, a complete meditation for maybe an hour. You can share: fifteen minutes shaking, half an hour humming, fifteen minutes silence. When I explored humming deeply, I sometimes hummed for hours, not undisturbed, but after interruptions, I continued. I did this very often for at least a year, discovering deep contributions to my body state. Sometimes vibrations expand to the scalp, top of the head, even down to the legs. Humming is like a continuation of shaking—shaking more active outside, humming bringing the body inside into vibration. This also has a healing history.

Speaker 2: I have to leave for a two o'clock meeting. I want to express heartfelt thanks to both

Robin and Egon for a very amazing day. Will the recording and presentations be available on the Fathom the Gist website?

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 6: I will also share the music I created for this session. Thank you for being here, Stephen. It's always a pleasure.

Speaker 2: It's mutual. Take care, see you all soon. Bye.













































































































