

## MEDITATION CORNER: EMERGING FROM OUR BURROWS FOR VALENTINES DAY

By Arthur K.

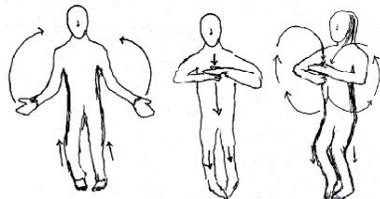
On February 2nd, midway between winter solstice and spring equinox, a groundhog emerges from its hole, and if it sees its shadow, it returns to the burrow and winter continues for six more weeks. As an under-earner, I've never been in a financial position to undertake continued Jungian analysis, but from my time in program, I believe I've learned a lot – both about burrowing and the Jungian “shadow.”

Artists use shadows to delineate the shape of an object. Blind people use the shadows cast by sounds to perceive the objects around them. Our perception of shadows allows us to perceive objects casting them. Just as the shadow is not the object, we are not our finances, but what we do with our finances helps define our lives and selves. In twelve step programs, we identify ourselves with the manifestation our shadow behaviors have taken in our lives. “I'm a debtor, under-earner, compulsive spender, deprivation addict, time debtor, clutterer, etc...” It's said that religions and spiritual pursuits are paths to integrate our shadow selves so that we may become whole. Steps 4 through 9 help us to identify the shadows of ourselves, our character defects and the actions that manifest them, offering us the opportunity to mend the shadows they have left behind in our lives, and giving us the opportunity to participate more fully in the world, fully radiating the inner light we possess.

If we retreat into our hole until we're ready for a metaphorical spring, what do we do there? The groundhog hibernates, and in sleep dreams present shadows again. Dreams reveal aspects of ourselves, and are often used as tools towards self-realization and actualization. Every character defect is said to be an instinctual need out-of-balance, and can become a character strength with moderation. As such, something like envy can be an indicator that we have a capability within us; if we “own it” and commit to pursuing it, we can use envy as a motivator for growth instead of becoming crippled by it.

Meditation is a tool to help us allow clearer perception of ourselves and our interactions in the world. Here's an extremely simple moving meditation I learned in a Tai Chi class. It brought me imperceptibly into an unexpectedly deep state of calm, something I realized when a school secretary interrupted the class to ask me a question. Jarred into “reality,” the shadow of the meditation revealed the deep meditative state I had achieved.

Begin by flexing muscles throughout the body; lift each foot and rotate the ankles in both directions, put hands on your knees and gently guide them in circles over your ankles, clock-wise and counter-clockwise. Let your hands hang limp by your sides and make circles with your hips in both directions. Roll your shoulders forward and back, and sink into slightly bent knees, dangling your arms by your sides, and look out over your nose as you guide the tip of it in horizontal circles around your neck. Shake yourself out if you like. Then begin the meditation:



Point the toes slightly towards each other, sink slightly into bent knees with your elbows near your torso, palms up. As you inhale, lift the palms up and out, palms up, as you straighten the knees, drawing a circle with your wrists. Bring the palms together near your upper chest, and flip the palms facing down, one above the other but not touching. Exhaling, push the hands down a center line in front of you towards your pelvis, sinking into bent knees again. Continue making these circles with your hands synchronized with your breath, sinking into the earth as you exhale and rising up from it as you inhale. See how long you can continue, and notice how your state of mind changes. That's all there is to it. Very simple, but effective.

There is also a positive shadow in Jungian thought. This represents our suppressed talents and desires, our “light hidden under a bushel.” Bringing this into the light could be thought of as identifying our vision. In the Platonic cave parable, the unfamiliar light of this vision could frighten us to return to our cave. Maybe Groundhog Day is a Platonic Holiday.

I was recently reading a book which claimed that there are “push” and “pull” motivators in life. When we try to suppress a behavior, we “push” it out of our lives, and these are difficult motivations to maintain. If we move towards a desired goal in our life, we “pull” towards it, and “pull motivators” often help us change more effectively. A vision is a pull motivator. Visions give us a reason to continue with the program when the memory of the pain that got us here recedes. If we haven't owned our visions yet, others around us may offer us hope that we have something to move forward towards in our lives.

Recently I was in a meeting listening to the DA Visions pamphlet being read, preoccupied with the challenges I faced with my clients. Suddenly it dawned on me that the career I was embroiled in was once merely a DA vision for me. Sick of providing computer tech support, I longed to be doing creative design work. Through steps that I couldn't yet imagine, with the support of others in the program, I walked down a path that has turned into a source of income. I've been told that any time we commit to pursuing something in life, there's a spiritual law that we will encounter resistance. This is a reminder that God never gives us more than we can handle, and helps us discover the strength to persevere. Often the best approach is rather than to meet challenges head-on, we can tack our sail into the head-wind and navigate around and through the resistance. This realization of my evolving vision made my client problems seem less daunting.

February also delivers Valentine's Day. Pujya Swamiji, or “Muniji,” recently suggested that if you make God your Valentine, your life will be taken care of. Applying principles over personalities in the program, we can offer a form of unconditional love to those around us. The heart center regulates the interaction between our animal desires and spiritual nature. When we speak from the heart, it is said that we cannot lie, that others will understand us completely, and we will communicate more effectively. Love is the antidote to fear.



Here's a meditation to open your heart and participate in the flow of love in the world. Sit cross-legged, bringing your hands into a prayer position at your heart and sternum. Inhale, extending your arms directly in front of you, palms forward and fingers up. Then exhale as you swing your fully extended arms out to your sides, pushing out to your sides with the palms. Inhale as you bring them back together in front of you, and exhale as you bring them back to a prayer position at your heart and chest. When you inhale silently say to yourself, “I am willing to receive love.” As you exhale, silently say, “I am willing to give love.” Continue for 3 to 11 minutes. Happy Valentines Day.

*Note: Checks and Balances would like to hear from you. Share with the fellowship! Send to [publications@socalda.org](mailto:publications@socalda.org).*

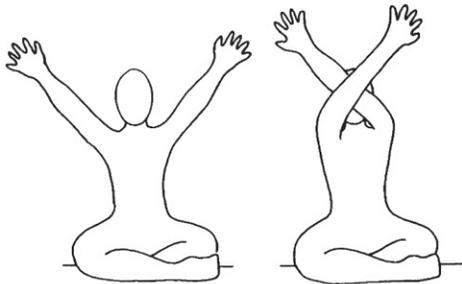
June 21, 1996



This is a 5 part kriya. Each part must be practiced for an equal amount of time, either 3 Minutes or 11 Minutes. Do not exceed 11 Minutes. Only the first exercise of this kriya may be practiced on its own, separately from the other exercises.

1. Sit in Easy Pose with a straight spine. Allow your upper arms to be relaxed, with the elbows bent and the palms in front of the chest. Strike the outer sides of the hands together, forcefully hitting the area from the base of the little finger (Mercury finger) to the base of the palm. This area is called the Moon area. Next strike the sides of the index fingers (Jupiter fingers) together. Hit hard! Alternately strike the Moon area and the Jupiter area as you chant "Har" with the tip of your tongue, pulling the navel with each "Har". Your eyes are focused at the tip of your nose. This meditation was taught to the rhythm of *Tantric Har* by Simran Kaur.

2



"I'm going to give you a very handy tool, one that you can use anywhere, and you'll become rich. To become rich and prosperous, with wealth and values, is to have the strength to come through. It means that transmissions from your brain and the power of your intuition can immediately tell you what to do." YB

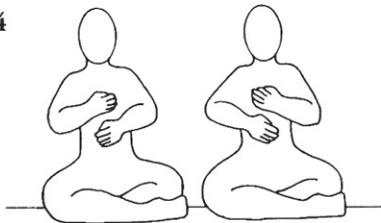
2. Stretch your arms out to the sides and up at a sixty degree angle. Spread your fingers wide, making them stiff. The palms face forward. Cross your arms in front of your face. Alternate the position of the arms as they cross: first the left arm crosses in front of the right and then the right arm crosses in front of the left. Continue crossing the arms, keeping the elbows straight and the fingers open and stiff. This movement is also done to the rhythm of *Tantric Har* by Simran Kaur, but this time you do not chant with the tape.

3



3. Keep your arms out and up at sixty degrees as in the previous exercise. With your hands, make a fist around your thumb, squeezing your thumb tightly as if you are trying to squeeze all the blood out of it. Move your arms in small backward circles as you continue squeezing your thumb. Your arms are stretched and the elbows stay straight. Chant the mantra "God" powerfully from your navel. One backward circle of the arms equals one repetition of "God." The speed and rhythm of the chanting is the same as in the previous exercises. Move powerfully so that your entire spine shakes, you may even be lifted slightly up off the ground by the movement.

4



4. Bend your arms so that your elbows point to the sides. The forearms are parallel to the floor and the palms face the body around the level of the diaphragm. The right hand moves up a few inches as the left hand moves down. The left hand moves up as the right hand moves down. The hands move alternately up and down between the heart and navel. As the hands move, chant *Har Haray Haree, Whahay Guru* in a deep monotone with one repetition of the mantra approximately every 4 seconds. Chant from your navel. If you are practicing the exercises for 11 minutes each, then you will chant the mantra out loud for 6 Minutes, whisper it strongly for 3 Minutes, and then whistle it for 2 Minutes. If you are practicing the exercises for 3 minutes each, then you will chant the mantra out loud for 1 Minute, whisper it strongly for 1 Minute, and then whistle it for 1 Minute.

5



5. Bend your elbows and rest your right forearm on your left forearm, with your palms down. The arms are held in front of your body at shoulder height. Close your eyes, keep your arms steady. Keep your spine straight and your arms parallel to the floor. Breathe slowly and deeply so that one breath takes a full minute. Inhale for 20 seconds, hold for 20 seconds, and exhale for 20 seconds.

*About Subagh Kriya, Yogi Bhajan has said "It's a complete set. This is all called Subagh Kriya. If God has written with His own hands that you shall live under misfortune, then by doing Subagh Kriya you can turn your misfortune into prosperity, fortune, and good luck."*

## **MEDITATION AS MEDIATION**

*By Arthur K.*

*"When you talk to God, that's prayer. When you listen to God, that's meditation. When God talks to you, that's schizophrenia."*

Meditation and prayer are an integral part of a spiritual lifestyle; at the very least they can help you feel less like you're losing your mind when life's demands become overwhelming. Obviously, I'm a strong proponent of this practice in its various forms—silent meditation, meditation that involves chanting, and—my favorite—meditation in motion (e.g., T'ai Chi, which I'll address in a future article). But here are a few tips to get you started, and take you past the rough patches. My most important piece of advice: Keep trying. Approach the project from different angles. Peace is worth pursuing.

One of the toughest issues in any spiritual practice is fighting one's emotions. I find this gets more pronounced the longer it's been since I last made time to reach out. The emotional centers of our lives and related character defects/sins (sins are things that cut us off from God) cause us to re-act to these feelings. For instance, at the end of last month my lease renewal came up, and fear of financial insecurity made me squirm and simmer throughout my morning meditation. But sticking with it helped me to cope.

And then, there is the issue of internal chatter: many of us, when we first sit down to meditate, suddenly become aware of the "monkey mind"—that restless, crazy beast that bounces around between our ears when we try to focus. An initial step to help calm and quiet this creature is using a word with spiritual significance to you. It could simply be "God," repeated over and over. This helps give that monkey mind something to focus on, and eventually it begins to work with you instead of against you. You can do this out loud, or silently.

It's said that extroverted people often have a more rewarding experience during meditation because they reach out to God during the process and have an encounter with Him/Her, whereas more introverted types may find themselves caught up in the monkey mind and unable to make that connection. The solution? Try to make an inward effort to connect with God during meditation, whatever form that encounter may take. Sometimes my outreach is hostile; I've come to understand that God can take it. Later on, our relationship is such that we kiss and make up. (I'm beginning to like this idea of God as a woman.)

Sometimes the connection with the Higher Power feels like it's absent, despite our attempts to reach out. It's like we pick up the phone, and no one is there. This might be a mental trick, or it could be a dry day, spiritually speaking. In case it's the latter, remember that prayer and meditation are like dealing with Ma Bell: the silence we hear on the line always indicates a problem with our *own* equipment; we aren't ready to listen yet. Tomorrow, it will be different.

Quiet your mind. Reach out. Pick up the cosmic phone, and make that Big Outreach Call.

## MEDITATION, THE ELEVENTH STEP, AND KARMA YOGA: 1

By Arthur K. (*librlart@gmail.com*)

Many people claim that they've tried meditation—but "it doesn't work." This is like a baby trying to walk and deciding it doesn't work. Keep on trying. Those who have the most trouble meditating are often the ones who later find they gain the most from it.

I heard one person say that when life is going really well, they need to meditate at least 30 minutes a day. When it gets really hectic and they have absolutely no time for anything, *they need to meditate for at least 45 minutes*. Yet for the beginner, this may seem incomprehensible: Where can you start when *three minutes seems unbearable* and restlessness pulses through every cell?

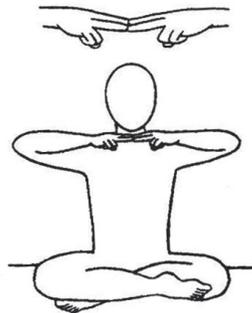
Start by working on your breathing for a few minutes a day. The breath controls the mind, and the body follows the mind; when you breathe consciously you utilize your *prana* (incoming life force) more effectively, and gain control of your emotions rather than be their slave. Pay attention to your breath; consciously try to slow it down. *Breathe more deeply*.

This breathing exercise is good for getting centered and dealing with stress; it balances the hemispheres of the brain. Close your eyes, and sit cross-legged with relaxed arms and shoulders and a straight spine. Wrists are on the knees, palms up; index fingers touch the thumbs. Other fingers are extended. Known as *Gyan Mudra*, this classic (and often-stereotyped) meditation position helps calm and center you. It's said that you can't stay in a bad mood in this posture. Inhale through your tongue curled like a straw; exhale through the nose. *Inhale faith, exhale fear*. Then reverse; inhale through the nose and exhale through the curled tongue. *Slow down your breath and your mind*. I do this breath to calm down when people cut me off in traffic (eyes open and without the posture and hand position, of course).

As you begin to meditate, try to keep in mind that abundance is the natural state of the universe. This may sound a bit New Age-y, but try it anyway. Abundance is not just about accumulating things; it's also about experiencing the gifts you've been blessed with, and realizing how they contribute to the world around you. We feel deprived when our fear blocks our contributions and our reception of reciprocal gifts. There's nothing "spiritually wrong" with being prosperous and experiencing abundance. When we're living prosperously we uplift everyone we come into contact with, and the whole world benefits.

The eleventh step mentions that the variety of prayer and meditation techniques available to us are vast. I'll be sharing a few techniques from Kundalini Yoga and other disciplines over the next couple of months. I have come to love these meditations, and there are many more to choose from. If you'd like more suggestions, email me and I'll send you a few. (*Of course DA does not endorse or support any religious or meditative practice, and I share these based on my own positive experiences.*)

**Karani Kriya** is an exercise for clarity and prosperity. This helps balance the negative and positive minds, creating a neutral state wherein you can more effectively visualize the things that will support your life and spiritual growth. It works on the throat chakra, seat of creativity and expression. This is one of the best exercises for helping to focus your mind on the career and financial objectives that will be most supportive to your life, helping you move toward your life's destiny. It's said that this breath meditation helps you find the source of creativity that is in your heart, solving the problem of how to make a lucrative livelihood and satisfy your soul.



Again sitting cross-legged, place your elbows at shoulder level with your palms down and your hands in fists with index and middle fingers extended, tips touching each other in front of your throat.

Control your breath; inhale 3 counts; hold for 5; exhale 10-15 counts through your nose. Focus eyes on the tip of your nose, with your eyes 1/10th open. Start with 3 minutes, then build up to 11, then 31.

### Karma Yoga

The basic idea behind Karma Yoga is that *all the work you do is done for God*. Page 63 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* tells us,

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a **new Employer**. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

If you take this idea very seriously, the Third Step Prayer adds a whole different dimension to your work life: Your boss or client may think he's in charge, *but you know that God is*; the boss is simply one of His agents. You show up, do your best, offer your efforts, and God takes care of the rest.

In the meantime: *breathe*.