

Meditation

Ajahn Chah

Sitting meditation and making the mind peaceful, you don't have to think about too much. Right now, just focus on the mind, and nothing else. Don't let the mind shoot off to the left or to the right, to the front or behind, above or below. Our only duty right now is to practice mindfulness of the breathing. But first, fix your attention at the head and move it down through the body to the tips of the feet, and then back up to the crown of the head. Pass your awareness down through the body, observing with wisdom. We do this to gain an initial understanding of the way the body is right now. Then begin the meditation, noting that at this time your sole duty is to observe the inhalations and exhalations. Don't force the breath to be any longer or shorter than normal, just allow it to continue easily. Don't put any pressure on the breath, rather let it flow evenly, letting go with each in-breath and out-breath.

You must understand that you are letting go as you do this, but there should still be awareness. You must maintain this awareness, allowing the breath to enter and leave comfortably. There is no need to force the breath, just allow it to flow easily and naturally. Maintain the resolve that at this time you have no other duties or responsibilities. Thoughts about what will happen, what you will know or see during the meditation may arise from time to time, but once they arise just let them cease by themselves, don't be unduly concerned over them.

During the meditation there is no need to pay attention to anything that arises in the mind. Whenever the mind is affected by any thoughts or moods, wherever there is a feeling

or sensation in the mind, just let it go. Whether those thoughts are good or bad is unimportant. It is not necessary to make anything out of them, just let them pass away and return your attention to the breath. Maintain the awareness of the breath entering and leaving in a relaxed way. Don't worry about the breath being either too long or too short. Simply observe it without trying to control or suppress it in any way. In other words, don't attach to anything. Allow the breath to continue as it is, and the mind will become calm. As you continue the mind will gradually lay things down and come to rest, the breath becoming lighter and lighter until it becomes so faint that it seems like it's not there at all. Both the body and the mind will feel light and energized. All that will remain will be a one-pointed knowing. You could say that the mind has changed and reached a state of calm.

If the mind is agitated, re-establish mindfulness and inhale deeply till there is no space left to store any air, then release it all completely until none remains. Follow this with another deep inhalation until your lungs are full, then release the air again. Do this two or three times, then re-establish concentration. The mind should be calmer. If any more sense impressions cause agitation in the mind, repeat the process on every occasion. Similarly with walking meditation. If while walking, the mind becomes agitated, stop still, calm the mind, re-establish the awareness of the

meditation object and then continue walking. Sitting and walking meditation are in essence the same, differing only in terms of the physical posture used.