



3.4. How to Begin with a Mantra?

How do we start with our newly chosen mantra?

After grounding ourselves and entering meditation mindfully, we begin to internally speak the mantra.

This occurs in the rhythm of the breath. Individual words can be recited with inhalation or exhalation, while longer phrases can be split between inhaling and exhaling.

Whether the word is spoken while breathing in or out is not fixed. Different practitioners give different instructions on this, as well as on whether to begin the phrase with the inhalation or exhalation.

I personally say the word or start the phrase on the inhale and continue it on the exhale. At the end of the exhalation and in the pause before the next breath begins, the body is at its calmest - this is the so-called zero point of the breath.

I let myself sink into the exhalation and this zero point with the completed mantra.

What matters

It is important that we do not think about the content or imagine any images.

The mantra works on the level of the spirit, not of the mind.

The mind will sometimes produce images or feelings, especially when using the name of a person. For example, when using the name "Jesus Christ," an image of him may arise or a feeling of devotion may appear.

That's fine, but we can just let it go - that's not the point.

When the mind no longer produces images and feelings, we are one step further. At this point, it can feel like the mantra is empty or neutral, like nothing is happening.

But that is exactly a good sign. It is important to continue reciting the phrase mindfully and with devotion.

The development of the mantra

After a few weeks, the mantra establishes itself, and we can speak it more softly and quietly in our thoughts - while it becomes more powerful at the same time.

In the third phase, grace comes into play:

The mantra becomes a real spiritual consciousness.

This is a mystical experience and a gift - it cannot be brought about by will. However, we

can move towards the second phase with patience and devotion.

Here I experience that the breath already carries the mantra within itself. The mindful awareness of the breath and the thought mantra have become one.

All the devotion we have invested is now embodied in the conscious awareness of the breath.

The mantra no longer needs to be actively thought - it feels as if the breath is singing it. This state naturally requires many hours of repetition.

Using the mantra in everyday life

We can also use the mantra during the day:

- In a mindful moment, breathe deeply into your heart and speak the mantra inwardly
- During a walk
- During a simple activity

In this way it becomes a constant prayer - a preparation for the grace of perpetual prayer.

The Advantage for Meditation Beginners

When one is still strongly dominated by their thoughts, a mantra can help as a method.

It occupies the mind and prevents it from wandering off into other thoughts more easily. However, this is not the actual purpose, but just a side effect.

Nevertheless, I recommend that beginners learn to meditate also without a mantra.

For instance, one could meditate alternately with and without a mantra.

I practiced several meditations a day for a long time - for example, a longer session and another shorter one of twelve minutes after a reading. The same in the morning and evening. This way, I had the opportunity to combine different exercises in one day.

The difficulty for experienced meditators

People who have been meditating silently for some time often find it difficult to use a mantra again.

The reason is understandable: those who have already learned pure meditation enjoy the silence and the absence of thoughts. The consciousness is clearer and already in a pure state of being. In this state, it can feel like a step backwards to repeat a word mechanically again.

Nevertheless, I recommend utilizing the spiritual power of God's name.

As suggested for beginners, you can practice a second, shorter meditation with mantra.

Advanced meditators can let the mantra gradually become very quiet inside. Just as the breath creates a constant, rhythmic sound that accompanies the meditation, the mantra

can become an accompanying inner sound.

After a while, one can also stop consciously repeating it and just listen to the breath.

You will often find that the mantra does not disappear completely - even if your thoughts are completely still.

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