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Place  
Postage  
Here

**EMPTY SPACES OFTEN ALLOW FOR WHAT IS OF GREAT VALUE TO SURFACE:**  
Perhaps you'd like to use this space to promote the contemplative programs at your institution; add your personal testimony, experiences, and encouragement before sharing with a friend; mail to someone who might be deeply touched by these messages of profound simplicity and great power; sketch a vision; or...

## Finding the Freedom Within

# THE POWER OF MEDITATION



We hope this will encourage you to experiment personally with sitting in silence. You might also interest a friend, or find or start a meditative group in your institution. This is an inward journey, but it helps to have companions.

To assist, we have included some letters from incarcerated persons, guidance on how to begin meditating, and an extensive resource list for those seeking information and support in developing a contemplative practice. Don't hesitate to contact one or more of these groups. Remember, as you embark on your journey, that you are surrounded by love and supportive energy!

The techniques they have used are simple and usually involve sitting in silence. Focusing. Relaxing. Listening. Breathing with attention. Resting in prayer. Creating a time and space not to do anything but *to be*. Such simple practices have helped those inside and outside of prison to find the freedom within. They describe letting go of what seemed the “big problems in life” and the anger and self-hate that can tear us apart. They feel in touch with what is most powerful, however one defines it, that gifts us with life, love and joy.

In prison the body is confined. The spirit and soul need not be. Thousands of inmates around the country are using their confinement to trigger an inward journey. They are traveling to a place of greater joy, peace, and freedom. You are invited to join.

## RESOURCES FOR THOSE ON A CONTEMPLATIVE PATH INSIDE JAILS AND PRISONS

### AMBER-ALLEN PUBLISHING

P.O. Box 6657  
68 Mitchell Blvd., Suite 215  
San Rafael, CA 94903-0657  
Phone: 415-499-4657

The publishing house focuses on personal growth, health, inspirational, and spiritual books, and will, when able – upon request – send free copies that have been returned from stores.

### ANTHROPOSPHICAL PRISON

**OUTREACH PROJECT**  
1923 Geddes Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-1797  
Email: prisonoutreach@anthroposophy.org  
Website: www.anthroposophy.org

For prisoners looking for a deeper meaning in their experiences, with emphasis on thinking and knowing, not just faith. Write for an initial package with a booklet on self-development in the penitentiary, as well as other articles and meditation exercises.

### EMMAUS INTERNATIONAL

P.O. Box 1028  
Dubuque, IA 52004-1028  
Phone: 563-585-2070

Website: www.emmausinternational.com  
Emmaus International is a nondenominational ministry offering English or Spanish Bible study correspondence courses free of charge to any inmate. Certificate of completion issued after each unit.

### FREEING THE MIND / KADAMPA BUDDHISM

324 17th Street, San Francisco, CA 94110  
Phone: 415-503-1187  
Website: www.kadampas.org

The New Kadampa Tradition (NKT) is an association of Buddhist Centers and practitioners that derive inspiration from ancient Kadampa Buddhist teachings, as presented by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso. Write for free books in English or Spanish.

### THE GANGAJI FOUNDATION

Prison Program  
P.O. Box 716, Ashland, OR 97520  
Phone: 541-482-3100

Email: prisonprogram@gangaji.org  
Website: www.gangaji.org  
The Gangaji Foundation Prison Program,

dedicated to helping individuals access universal consciousness and the peace within, sponsors in-prison visits, a correspondence program, and provides books and other materials free of charge.

### HUMAN KINDNESS FOUNDATION/ PRISON

**ASHRAM PROJECT:**  
P.O. Box 61619, Durham, NC 27715  
Phone: 919-383-5160  
Website: www.humankindness.org

The Prison-Ashram Project sends interfaith spiritual books, newsletters, and CDs. Our materials are free to anyone who is incarcerated or formerly incarcerated. Our best-known book is *We're All Doing Time* by Bo Lozoff, which includes instructions for meditation, yoga, and other practices.

### LIBERATION PRISON PROJECT

P.O. Box 33036, Raleigh, NC 27636  
Phone: 415-701-8500  
Email: info@liberationprisonproject.org  
Website: www.liberationprisonproject.org

For those interested in Tibetan Buddhism we offer free books and booklets to individuals and prison libraries. Selected literature is available in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

### LIONHEART FOUNDATION

P.O. Box 4145, Boston, MA 02117  
The National Emotional Literacy Project for Prisoners publishes *Houses of Healing: A Prisoner's Guide to Inner Power and Freedom*. This book is sent free to prison libraries, and to prison programs when funds are not available for purchase. A program facilitator's guide is also available.

### NALJOR PRISON DHARMA SERVICE

Website: sourcepointglobaloutreach.org/  
what-we-offer

Over the Internet, offers The Heart of Dharma Collection, teachings designed for daily study, contemplative meditation, and inspiration. Also offers a 29-page printable directory of interfaith resources (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Native American, etc.), and other resources concerning free books, pen-pals, legal and re-entry assistance, creative writing, career development, continuing education, and personal health.

### PARALLAX PRESS

Prison Book Donation Project  
P.O. Box 7355, Berkeley, CA 94707

Parallax Press publishes books on engaged Buddhism and the practice of mindfulness. We publish James Baraz's *Awakening Joy: 10 Steps to Happiness* (which has been used in prison groups around the country), as well as Thich Nhat Hanh's *Be Free Where You Are*. Please write for these or other titles.

### PRISON CONTEMPLATIVE FELLOWSHIP

P.O. Box 1086, Folsom, CA 95763-1086  
Website: www.upaya.org/social-action/

Write us for a free pamphlet about Centering Prayer materials to help start a Centering Prayer circle in your facility, or a free copy of *Finding God Within: Contemplative Prayer for Prisoners*.

### PRISON FELLOWSHIP

P.O. Box 17500, Washington, D.C. 20041  
Phone: 703-478-0100  
Email: correspondence@pfm.org  
Website: www.prisonfellowship.org

Though the hope provided by Jesus Christ, we offer a broad array of restorative services inside and outside prisons, including brochures and Life Recovery Bibles available by mail.

### PRISONERS FOR CHRIST OUTREACH

**MINISTRIES**  
P.O. Box 1530 Woodinville, WA 98072-1530  
Phone: 425-483-4151  
Email: GVT@pfc.com  
Website: www.prisonersforchrist.org

We are a nondenominational prison ministry offering free brochures, pen pal support, and a Bible study correspondence course with a certificate of completion after each unit.

### PRISON OUTREACH PROJECT

Upayu Zen Center, 1404 Cerro Gordo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Website: www.upaya.org/social-action/

prison-outreach  
The Upayu Prison Project supports, through providing literature and correspondence, inmates in developing a Buddhist-style mindfulness practice.

### SAN FRANCISCO ZEN CENTER

Prison Outreach Program  
300 Page St., San Francisco, CA 94102  
Phone: 415-354-0361

Email: outreach@sfcz.org  
We offer meditation practices and Buddhist teachings from the Zen tradition. Please contact us about receiving free Buddhist literature and our pen pal program.

### SET FREE PRISON MINISTRIES

P.O. Box 5440, Riverside, CA 92517  
Phone: 951-729-5499  
Email: pwsfreec@adl.com

SFPM provides Bible study courses, in Spanish and English, sent free of charge to inmates along with a postage-paid return envelope. A certificate is provided for each completed course.

### SIDDHA YOGA PRISON PROJECT

P.O. Box 99140, Emeryville, CA 94662  
Phone: 510-898-2700, x4113  
Email: prisonproject@syda.org

Siddha Yoga teaches that the real purpose of life is to experience the joy, freedom and greatness which lies within each of us. We provide an in-depth “In Search of the Self” Correspondence Course, with free monthly lessons in English or Spanish, to guide the student in the spiritual wisdom of meditative practice.

## TESTIMONY FROM INCARCERATED PERSONS

It's hard to believe I can sit in a prison cell, on my floor, and go to a place, in the middle of all this madness, and find freedom inside myself. I can stay calm at times when everyone around me is in constant turmoil.

*Danny, California Men's Colony,  
San Luis Obispo*

This has helped me immensely to emerge from the prison of the mind that was my life even before entering this prison of the world.

*Marty, Sheridan, Ore.*

It is early morning, following my prayers and some very quiet, still meditation. There was a time in my life when "quiet" made me feel so uncomfortable because I could not stop the craziness in my head. Finally, today, this morning, I understand the passage: "Be still and know that I am God." Yes, God truly is a part of all and all is a part of God.

*Anonymous*

This place was no joke. So much violence and death! I was deeply in love with my wife and she found someone out there and it destroyed me. But due to prayer and meditation I was able to let go and let God. This helps out with those who want to kick drugs and alcohol. Meditation brings relief to those who lost hope.

*Jim, Old Folsom Prison, Calif.*

As a Muslim, I have been fortunate enough to be guided and have a sense of spiritual direction that I lacked before being incarcerated. [Spiritual study] has reminded me of the transforming power that unchanging Truth has to offer anyone willing to look within themselves and others for the good nature that we all share.

*Rossie, California Men's Colony,  
San Luis Obispo*

Early on I struggled with many thoughts and emotionally charged feelings, but I have since learned that this is a natural part of meditation. Now I experience great times of peace, joy, and love deep within.

*Don, California Institute for Men, Chino*

Now, when a strong emotion manifests in my mind, I focus my attention below my navel and practice deep breathing. If I feel anger towards another person, I remember that they suffer just like me. I remain calm, embrace

my anger, and do my best to water the seeds of understanding and compassion. Before too long the emotion passes. I am finding these practices come easier as time passes.

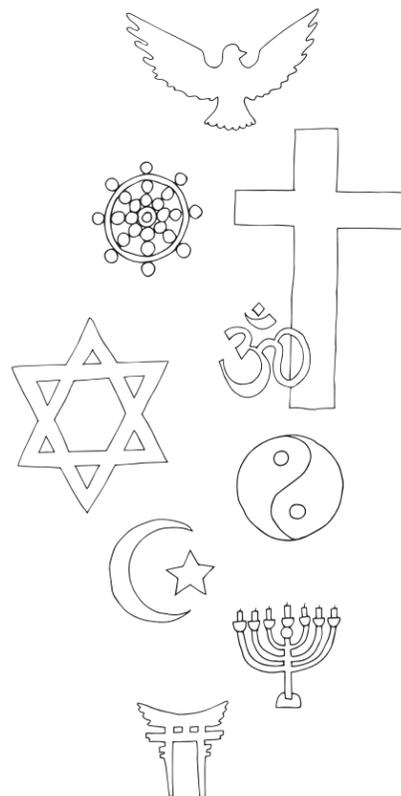
*Chris, Ariz.*

One can through meditation achieve that bond between oneself and others necessary for seeing oneself as part of the community outside the prison walls.

*Robert, Vacaville State Prison, Calif.*

How can a prisoner's heart "change" if prisons are nothing more than hate factories? Something wonderful happens when a resentful and bitter heart becomes softened through meditation and [spiritual] books. My mind desires to do no harm to any human being. I have stopped hating society, and I have stopped hating myself.

*Tom, Atascadero State Prison, Calif.*



## MEDITATION INSTRUCTIONS *A Variety of Practices*

### **“Peaceful Abiding” Meditation**

1. Take your meditation posture: The spine is upright, with a natural but alert posture. The hands are resting on the thighs. The arms and shoulders are relaxed. The back of the neck is relaxed, which allows the chin to come down very slightly. The eyes are open and gaze downward about 6-8 feet out; the gaze is unfocussed and soft. The face and jaw are natural and relaxed. If you're sitting on a cushion or the floor, keep your ankles loosely crossed. Make sure you are sitting on a high enough support so that your knees don't stick up higher than your hips. If you're sitting on a chair, keep your feet flat on the floor.

2. Begin by noticing how your body feels for about 30 seconds, settling down into your meditation practice.

3. Make a clear and precise beginning to your practice. Tell yourself (silently, in your mind): "Now I will work with my mind and develop peace for myself and others."

4. Place your attention on the breath. Stay with its flow. Do not manipulate your breath, just notice the breath rising and falling in the body. Feel the body breathing. Stay with the feeling of the flow of the breath.

5. At first, you may find that you have many thoughts that distract you. That is completely natural. When you notice you're caught up in thinking it, acknowledge it; you can silently label it "thinking" in your mind if you wish. Then gently let the thought go and return to noticing the breath. With time and practice, your ability to stay with the breath will gradually become more steady.

6. Practice staying with the breath – and returning to the breath when you realize you have gotten distracted – over and over again. A daily session of just five minutes has great benefits. Over time, you can also build toward longer sessions of up to an hour or more.

### **Centering Prayer**

Before starting Centering Prayer choose a word that can remind you of your intention to detach from any thoughts that may arise during the prayer period. Words like peace, joy, trust, and listen are good. Some prefer breath, life, joy, yes, mercy, God, Allah, Jesus, or any word that helps us let go of our thoughts without creating new thoughts.

Set aside time for practice. Twenty minutes is the goal, but do what is feasible, twice a day if possible.

Sit comfortably on a chair, bunk, or on the floor with your back against a wall. Whatever position

you use, sit unmoving and keep your back straight—for many this is easier if your back is supported. (Lying flat on your cot can also be a good option, as long as you can stay awake.)

Close your eyes and take a few deep, slow breaths. Silently introduce the sacred word as a symbol of your intention to consent and surrender to the Presence within you. As thoughts and feelings rush in, silently and gently repeat your sacred word until they go by.

Thoughts are normal; don't try to stop them, but use your sacred word to replace them. As you get more comfortable with this practice you may not need your sacred word as frequently. At times it may simply drop away and you can abide in the quiet.

*Adapted from Chaplain Ray Leonardini*

### **Lovingkindness Meditation**

You can begin the practice of lovingkindness by meditating for fifteen or twenty minutes. Let yourself sit comfortably. Let your body be relaxed. Let your heart be soft. Let go of any plans or preoccupations.

Begin sending lovingkindness to yourself. Breathe gently, and recite inwardly the following:

*May I be filled with lovingkindness.*

*May I be safe from inner and outer dangers.*

*May I be well in body and mind.*

*May I be at ease and happy.*

As you repeat these phrases, picture yourself as you are now, or as a young and lovable child, and hold that image in a heart of lovingkindness. You can change the words in any way that best opens your heart of kindness. Repeat these phrases over and over, letting the feelings permeate body and mind. Practice this meditation for a number of weeks, until the sense of lovingkindness for yourself grows. Be aware that this meditation may at times feel mechanical, awkward, or painful. Be patient with yourself.

When you feel you have established some stronger sense of lovingkindness for yourself, you can then expand your meditation to include others. Start a session by first focusing on yourself for five or ten minutes, and then choose a benefactor, someone in your life who has loved and truly cared for you. (In fact, some people find lovingkindness for themselves so hard that they begin their practice with a benefactor—this is fine.) Picture this person and carefully recite the same phrases:

*May you be filled with lovingkindness.*

*May you be safe from inner and outer dangers.*

*May you be well in body and mind.*

*May you be at ease and happy.*

After this you can include others: Spend some time wishing well to a wider circle of friends. Then, in future sessions, gradually extend your meditation to picture and include community members, neighbors, people everywhere, animals, all beings, the whole earth. Finally, include the difficult people in your life, even your enemies, wishing that they too may be filled with lovingkindness and peace. This will take practice. But as your heart opens, first to loved ones and friends, you will find that in the end you won't want to close it anymore.

*Adapted from Jack Kornfeld*

### **Daily Reflection**

This a method, perhaps taking 15-20 minutes, for reviewing in a spiritual light the day you have just had. It is based on the "Examen" of St. Ignatius of Loyola, but as adapted for general use.

1) I ask a Higher Power (God, Allah, Jesus, Krishna, or any divine principle you feel connected with) for light. I want to see my day through the eyes of a Higher Power, not merely my own.

2) I give thanks. The day I have just lived is a gift from a Higher Power. I am grateful for it.

3) I review the day. Looking over this day, where did a Higher Power give me strength to endure challenges? Where have there been blessings even amidst life's hardships?

4) I honestly face my shortcomings. Knowing I am not perfect, and yet I am loved and accepted by my Higher Power, I admit where I could have done better and ask for forgiveness.

5) I look toward the day to come. I ask for strength where I am weak, vision to see life's blessings, and help and guidance from my Higher Power for how to fulfill my spiritual purpose.

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• If you can access the Internet, go to [www.loyola.edu/bridgeproject](http://www.loyola.edu/bridgeproject) to print out a copy of the brochure (available in several sizes and formats); or

• Contact the organization from which you received this brochure; or

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