

# The Goal of Meditation

MEDITATIONSLC

We all have our motives for getting into meditation. We want to accomplish or achieve something whether it be a physical result, mental or emotional result, or a spiritual result. Perhaps all three. Or maybe we just want to generally feel better. Now, it is important to note first that all paths don't lead to the same place. Different processes produce different results in the same way that different roads take us to different destinations. To know which direction, we should go the first thing we need to know is who WE are. If we know what our identity is then it is possible to know if we are moving in the right direction to achieve the peace and happiness that we crave.

In the ancient scriptures of yoga, the Vedas, this topic of our identity is explained in great detail. To briefly summarize, it is explained that our actual identity is a tiny individual spark of spiritual energy that is an eternal part and parcel of the Supreme Soul. The physical body and mind are like two layers of clothing covering us—the spirit soul. The mind is a subtle material covering which could be compared to our undergarments, and the physical body that we see with our eyes is like our pants and shirt. The spirit soul's connection with the mind and body is extremely close, so we regularly become affected by the pleasures and pains of the mind and body and conclude they are us. In reality, however, we are separate from these two bodies. So, for us to experience the peace and satisfaction we need, we must find it on the spiritual level, not the material level.

Now that we have (at least very briefly) established who we are, we have a platform from which we can look at the different goals of meditation. The path that most meditation practices take you on leads to a result having to do with the physical body or the mind. Even if it has “spiritual” or “transcendental” in the title. Some popular meditation techniques claim to award the result of success in business, relationships, physical beauty, “blessings” of different kinds, being present and living in the now, letting go of bad habits and thoughts, controlling your body and mind to a high degree, controlling someone else's body and mind to a high degree, controlling the different airs within the body, opening chakras, raising the life force through the chakras and leaving the body, etc.

These are certainly desirable things which can have benefit for us in our lives, and we should not necessarily reject these things. However, they are merely on the level of the body and the mind to a gross or subtle degree. The more subtle effects, like those on the chakras for example, are often mistaken for being spiritual, but in fact, are still on that material level and don't address our, the spirit soul's, needs. This and other subtle

benefits like controlling the mind and different energies in the body without a doubt raise a person to a higher level of consciousness above what is common in the mundane world. But again, staying on that level still brings us short of that which we need.

So, what is spiritual then? What does spiritual mean? Spiritual means that which is in connection with our eternal identity and function. The natural function of the individual spirit soul is to be connected in a favorable, loving relationship with the Supreme Soul. The word to describe this is “yoga”. Therefore, any practice or object that deals with our identity and function is technically spiritual.

A spiritual meditation that we do and teach is a mantra meditation that uses sounds that are described in yoga as having a spiritual quality. They have this quality because of their reference to the Supreme Soul. The result of hearing and saying/chanting these mantras is an increased understanding of who we are and an increased connection with the Supreme. Many other results automatically accompany these two such as being less self-centered, relating with other people more nicely, being less affected by different hardships we experience, more fearless, making decisions with more clarity, increased physical health, less stress, and anxiety, etc. In fact, the benefit derived from a truly spiritual practice takes care of all other things we may desire. Material or spiritual. The material results we mentioned earlier will also be achieved by the hearing and chanting of mantras comprised of the names of the Supreme Soul.

When we start down the path of meditation it is important to know that all meditations don't take us to the same place. In other words, the goal of different meditation practices is different. We can certainly choose any path we like but should do so with knowledge of who we are, and what is required to satisfy us in the way we need to be satisfied. I encourage everyone to take up a practice that is in fact spiritual. When we do, we will find that it satisfies all aspects of our self, physical and spiritual, like watering the roots of a tree satisfies the entire tree.