



15. EMPTY BOWL MEDITATION

Sit comfortably and quietly with your palms up and open and placed on your knees, like empty bowls. Open your mouth slightly, and touch the tongue to the roof of the mouth, behind the front teeth. Closing your eyes if you feel comfortable doing so.

Begin by paying attention to your breath. Let your lungs breathe with no effort on your part. Simply watch the movement of your breath. Inhale. Exhale.

During inhalation, the air touches the inside of the nostrils or mouth. Be aware of that breath.

During exhalation, again air touches the nostrils or mouth. The ingoing air may feel cool, the outgoing air warm. For a fraction of a second, enter into your nose. Sit in the nostril and watch your breath: ingoing, outgoing, ingoing, outgoing. Let your lungs do their job. You are simply sitting and watching.

Practice this for a moment. Ingoing, outgoing; sitting and watching.

After a few minutes, follow the breath. When the lungs inhale, go with the air into the nose, to the back of the throat, the trachea, lungs, heart, diaphragm. Go deep down behind the navel, where you will experience a natural stop. For a fraction of a second, the breath stops. Stay in that stop, and then when the lungs exhale, again follow the breath as it reverses its course. Come up from the navel to the diaphragm, heart, lungs, trachea, throat; back to the nose then out of the body.

During exhalation the air goes out of the body to about 10 centimetres in front of the nose, where there is a second stop. Again, stay in that stop for a moment.

These two stops are very important. The first stop is behind the navel, the second outside the body in space. As your awareness rests in these two stops, time stops, because time is the movement of the breath. When breath stops, mind stops, because mind is the movement of the breath. When the mind becomes quiet, you simply exist, without body, without mind, without breath.

In that stop, you become like an empty bowl, and when you become an empty bowl, all is still in the present moment. Sitting quietly in the stop, the stop as a door: a door to tranquillity and peace surrounding you.

Present moment stillness... as you sit as an empty bowl... tranquillity and peace surrounding you.

And when you are ready, bringing your awareness back to your body sitting on the chair or cushion. Opening your eyes and moving forward with your day... imprinted with the sense of stillness and peace.