

Bindu: Pinnacle of the Three Streams of Yoga, Vedanta and Tantra

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In loving service,

Swami Jnaneshvara

Bindu: Pinnacle of the Three Streams of Yoga, Vedanta and Tantra

Piercing the Pearl of Non-Dual Wisdom

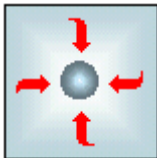
by Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati

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By understanding the *end* of the journey,
it is much easier to understand and
practice the steps along the way.



Symbols of the Bindu, Dot, or Point



Understanding the end of the journey: *Bindu* means *Point* or *Dot*, is sometimes likened to a *Pearl*, and is often related to the principle of a *Seed*. This is not just a poetic choice of words or philosophy. There literally is a stage of Yoga Meditation in which all experiences *collapse*, so to speak, into a *point* from which all experiences arose in the first place. The *Bindu* is near the end of the subtlest aspect of mind itself, after which one travels beyond or transcends the mind and its contents. It is near the end of time, space, and causation, and is the doorway to the Absolute. To understand this principle is extremely useful, if not essential to Advanced Meditation.

Convergence of practices: Awareness of the nature of *Bindu* helps tremendously in seeing how all of the various practices are complementary, not contradictory, with each, in its own way, leading in the direction of the *Bindu*. The *Bindu* is the convergence point of Meditation, Contemplation, Prayer, and Mantra, and is part of the mystical, esoteric aspect of many, if not most religions and meditative traditions. The experience of *Bindu* is an actual, internally experienced reality, which is the convergence point of the highest principles and practices of Yoga, Vedanta, and Tantra. Seeking to experience and then transcend the *Bindu* serves as an organizing principle and focal point for all of those spiritual or yogic practices that are intended to lead one to direct experience.

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All other Yoga practices can be seen as support or preparation leading toward *Bindu*, this higher convergence point. Thus, it is an organizing principle for all practices.

Other practices are support for this convergence: By understanding the convergence point (*Bindu*) of these practices (Yoga, Vedanta, Tantra), all of the other practices of Yoga and Meditation (Karma, Hatha, Bhakti, Jnana, Kundalini, Laya and Kriya Yogas) can be done in the context of their being *support* structures or *preparation* for the higher practices, experiences, and revelations.

This simplifies the other articles on SwamiJ.com: By keeping in mind this highest perspective on the *Bindu* (the convergence point), all of the other articles on SwamiJ.com (as well as many other writings) can be understood more clearly. Each of those articles, in its own way, *points* in the direction of the *Bindu*. Otherwise, it can seem rather confusing at times. By remembering the focal point of *Bindu*, it is easier to explore the depth of all of the practices, while not getting lost along the way.

The *Bindu* is literally and directly experienced, pierced, and transcended in Advanced Meditation.

The guru or teacher within: This point of convergence works in conjunction with Guru Chakra (Jnana Chakra), which is the center for the shakti diksha (initiation) that opens the conduit to the teacher or guru within. While this is a universal process, it is also the channel used for the direct, internal transmissions of wisdom and experience given by the [tradition](#) of the Himalayan masters. Guru Chakra is also explained further below in this article.

For those who read the *last page of a book first*.

Reading the last page first: These teachings and trainings on this highest perspective are for those people who insist on reading the last page of a book first. Such people are not satisfied with incomplete representations of Yoga and Meditation, such as those limited to physical fitness, stress management, or medical treatment. They want to see the big picture of Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Meditation with a clear vision of the path and the

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means of attaining the final goal. While delving into explanations of the depth of Advanced Yoga Meditation, the focus of this article is on the very practical and down to earth.

See also the Advanced section (lower right) of the article:
[Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Meditation](#)

Keeping it simple: A funny thing happens with Meditation--it is both very complex and utterly simple at the same time. Both the Beginning and Advanced stages have their own forms of simplicity to the process.

It is the middle ground, the Intermediate stages, where it can get confusing. In the very Beginning one simply sits, does a few basic practices, and experiences some degree of peace of mind. It seems pretty simple. Then, we start learning about philosophy and many other practices; it gets complicated, or so it seems.

The good news is that at the Advanced end of the spectrum, we return to simplicity, but of a much higher order. We come to see that all material objects are made *only* of fundamental elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space (and the more primal elements or gunas of sattvas, rajas, and tamas). We come to see beyond the vast *contents* of mind, to the fact that the *instruments* of mind and senses are not really so complex after all.

Soon, we come to see that all of the complexity comes down to a few simple principles, which merge into the *Bindu* or point of convergence. We come to see that the point of *convergence* is one and the same with the original point of *divergence*. Pretty simple. Not easy to do, but simple.

Leaving something out: While we are speaking of a simplicity to this process of experiencing the convergence at the *Bindu*, it is useful to keep in mind that whenever we try to explain this in simple terms, we quite naturally leave out some other parts of the explanations. If we know this, and keep this in mind when we are looking for the simplicity, then we can have the benefits of that straightforward view, while keeping it in the proper context of the sometimes more complex whole.

Once again, see also the article for perspective on this:
[Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced Meditation](#)

Remembering the *Bindu*, the *Mustard Seed*,
is a focal point and organizing principle
for all of the other practices
of Yoga and Meditation.
This makes the entire journey much more
straightforward and understandable.

Symbols of the *Bindu*: The point of divergence and convergence is called *Bindu*, which means *Point* or *Dot*, and is also related to a *Seed*. The Sanskrit root of *Bindu* is *to break through* or *to burst through*. The symbol has been used in a variety of ways, including the following:

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The Dot as a symbol: The Point or Dot has been widely used as a symbol for the way in which the unity or unmanifest coexists at all times and places with the gross, external, or manifest worlds.



Cross: The Point or Dot has also been used as a symbol of unity emerging through four lines to form the appearance of two lines crossing. The journey inward is merging back into the point.



Yin-Yang: The Dot shows two fundamental forces of static and active, with the seed of one permeating the other, manifesting as the symbolic 10,000 things, while ever remaining one.



Dot and Crescent: The Point and the Crescent is an ancient symbol of the unmanifest point and the manifest reality, later seen as a five pointed star and crescent.



Light and a Tunnel: People having near-death experiences may report seeing light at the end of a Tunnel. The Tunnel is the subtle channel called Brahma Nadi and the light emerges from *Bindu*.



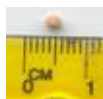
Hub of a Wheel: The ever still Hub of the Wheel symbolizes the Self (Atman) and the spokes are the [Four Functions of Mind](#) (Manas, Chitta, Ahamkara, Buddhi) engaging the outer world.



OM Mantra: The dot at the top of the [OM](#) symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, or Pure Consciousness. OM is suggested in both the Yoga Sutras and Vedanta. (Described in greater detail below)



Sri Yantra: The highest, most advanced symbol of Tantra has a Dot or *Bindu* in the center, which also symbolizes this point of divergence and convergence. (Explained further below)



Mustard Seed: The mustard seed has been widely used as a symbol of the smallest point, out of which the largest emerges, and to which that largest returns. (Discussed below)

[**Note:** These descriptions of *Bindu* and various symbols are not attempts to universalize the world religions and meditative traditions, which may have quite different practices and views of reality, particularly in the exoteric faces of religion. However, there is a seemingly universal human experience of the *Bindu* itself on the inner journey, just as the inner experiences of light and sound seem to be common and universal. While the reality is universal, the way of *interpreting* the experience of *Bindu* may be different for people of different cultures and religions. See also the article, [Mysticism, Yoga, and Religion](#).]

Bindu and the Mustard Seed: Here are a few interesting examples of the mustard seed being used as a symbol of seeking experience of the smallest point, out of which the largest emerges, and to which that largest returns:

"Atman [Self], residing in the lotus of the heart--is smaller than a grain of paddy, than a barley corn, than a **mustard seed**, than a grain of millet or than the kernel of a grain of millet. This, my Atman residing in the lotus of the heart is greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds. (Chandogya Upanishad)

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"The one I call holy does not cling to pleasures, like water on a lotus leaf or a **mustard seed** on the point of a needle. (Dhammapada)

"Seek first the kingdom..." (Matthew) "The kingdom of heaven is like a **mustard seed**, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest..." (Matthew)

"The gate of liberation is narrow, less than one-tenth of a **mustard seed**. The mind has become as big as an elephant; how can it pass through this gate? If one meets such a True Guru, by His Pleasure, He shows His Mercy. Then, the gate of liberation becomes wide open, and the soul easily passes through." (Guru Granth Sahib)

Bindu is beyond the senses and thoughts: It is very important to understand that the actual *Bindu* is far beyond the senses and thoughts in the conventional sense of thinking processes involving strings of words, images, or other such impressions. This means transcending not only the senses as operating through the *physical* organs, but also the *inner* or *mental* experience of sensation. For example, one not only closes the eyes, but also goes beyond all manner of inner visualization. When attention on all of the Gross and Subtle objects and processes *collapses*, so to speak, and thus, moves inward towards the *Bindu*, there is a convergence on a point, which is the finer meaning of one-pointedness of mind. There may be an extremely intense awareness of the nature of pure sound and light, but this is very different from what we experience by *mental* visualization or imagination. The journey to the *Bindu* starts to become the experience of the *source* of light (*Jyotir Bindu / Tejo Bindu*) and the *source* of sound (*Nada Bindu*), as well as being the *source out of which* other sensation, mental processes, and the instruments of mentation emerge.

Earlier and later stages of practice: In the earlier stages of Meditation and Contemplation, inner sensory experiences and mental processes are intentionally explored so as to attenuate the colorings of attachment, aversion and fear (for example, see Yoga Sutras [2.1-2.9](#)). It is later, building on this solid foundation of purifying and balancing the mind, that the aspirant seeks to transcend these experiences so as to enter the inner cave with the intent of encountering and piercing the *Bindu*. By being aware that the inner thoughts and sensing either *are* or *are not* present at the different stages of Meditation and Contemplation, the process is predictable, comfortable and not confusing. There is a true art in finding the times, the moments when it is just right to seek to enter the stillness, darkness, and silence so as to pursue the *Bindu*. Like all arts, it refines with practice.

Integrating with your regular practices: It is not the goal or intent of this article to significantly alter or replace your existing method of Meditation or other practices. Rather, it is to describe the nature of *Bindu*, and how this is a convergence point that is a unifying force for a variety of practices, as well as an experienced stage in the inner journey. Whatever your current focal point of Meditation, whether breath, mantra, sensation, stream of insights, deity, visualized image, or any other form of Meditation, you will hopefully find that some of the focus here on the nature of *Bindu* will serve that practice, which you are already doing. Please read the rest of the article in that light.

Three Streams: Yoga, Vedanta, Tantra

Bindu is the convergence: While the *Bindu*, Mustard Seed, Dot or Point are widely used symbols, the focus here is on the convergence of *Bindu* in the three streams of Yoga, Vedanta, and Tantra. In particular, it focuses on the convergence point of the highest principles and practices of Raja Yoga as codified in the Yoga Sutras, Advaita Vedanta as summarized in the Mandukya Upanishad, and the highest Tantra, which is Samaya (Internal) Tantra and Sri Vidya. These are briefly outlined below, and then further described in the remainder of the article:

Yoga: Meditation on OM Mantra is recommended in the Yoga Sutras (1.23-1.29) as a direct means of removing the obstacles to Self-Realization and to that Realization itself. As noted above, the *Bindu* at the top of the OM symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, Purusha or Pure Consciousness that is to be realized.

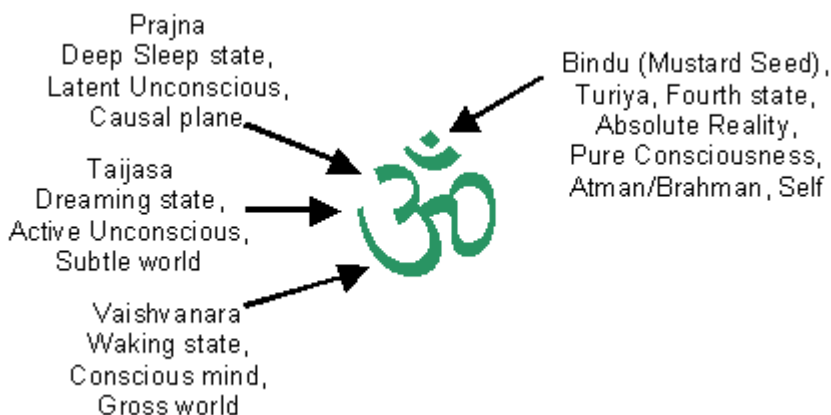
Vedanta: Contemplation on the four levels symbolized by OM Mantra is at the very heart of Vedanta practice leading to Self-Realization, the pinnacle of which is outlined in the Mandukya Upanishad. Here again, the *Bindu* at the top of the OM symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, Purusha or Pure Consciousness that is to be realized.

Tantra: Meditation in Tantra is on the convergence of all energies, with the highest of those inner practices being in Samaya Tantra and Sri Vidya, which is represented by the Sri Yantra. The *Bindu* at the center of the Sri Yantra symbolizes the final union of Shiva and Shakti (the static and active), the Absolute Reality that is to be realized.

See also the article:

[Yoga, Vedanta, and Tantra](#)

Each stream leads to the convergence called *Bindu*: Each of these three streams of Yoga, Vedanta, and Tantra leads to the convergence point called *Bindu*. To the sages of the [Himalayan tradition](#), these three streams *converge* to form the most direct route back to the Reality from which all of the streams have first *emerged*.



The lower curve represents the Gross, Conscious, and Waking state level, called *Vaishvanara*.

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The center curve represents the Subtle, Unconscious, and Dreaming level, called *Tajjasa*.

The upper curve represents the Causal, Subconscious, and Deep Sleep level, called *Prajna*.

The dot, point, or Bindu represents the fourth state, the absolute consciousness, which encompasses, permeates, and *is* the other three, and is called *Turiya*.

The arc below the dot symbolizes the separateness of this fourth state, standing above, though ever remaining part of the other three.

The four levels symbolized in OM Mantra are universal: It is extremely important to understand that the levels of consciousness mapped out by the OM Mantra symbol are universal and not just within the domain of any particular traditions, lineages, schools of Meditation, or religions. While one might argue that the visual symbol of OM Mantra has this kind of exclusive relationship (though it really doesn't), these three levels and the fourth, the *Bindu*, do exist in reality, entirely independent of the symbol itself. It doesn't matter whether you *do* or *do not* "believe in" the OM Mantra.

The fact of the matter is that there *really are* Gross, Subtle, and Causal planes, along with the Absolute beyond (the four parts of OM), regardless of what symbol or names you use to describe them, though different people might describe these somewhat differently.

The fact is that there *really are* Conscious, Unconscious, and Subconscious levels of functioning, and the Consciousness permeating them (the four parts of OM), though people might also describe these somewhat differently.

The fact is that there *really are* states of Waking, Dreaming, Deep Sleep, and Turiya, the Fourth (the four parts of OM), or some other term to acknowledge that beyond the first three states.

None of these require "belief" in the visual symbol of OM, chanting its vibration, or remembering its sound. The underlying realities are still there. What is most important to know is that the shortest route to Self-Realization is directly through these few levels of reality. Most people will settle for experiencing only the first two levels, that of the *Gross* world (Vaishvanara) and the *Subtle* plane (Tajjasa). Very few are interested enough or motivated enough to know the *Causal* plane (Prajna) or to seek the direct experience of the Pure Consciousness, the Absolute that is the *Fourth* state (Turiya) symbolized by the Dot or *Bindu* on the OM symbol. For the few who are so inspired, the path is directly inward to the core of his or her Being. It is the path of the Saints and Sages.

See also these articles:

[OM Mantra and the 7 Levels of Consciousness](#)

[Levels and Domains of Consciousness](#)

[Self Behind the Canvas](#)

[Realization Beyond the Subtle and Causal Planes](#)

The Bindu of Sri Yantra is also universal: It is very useful to be mindful of the commonly reported experience of people having near-death experiences and the reports of people from a wide range of Meditation and other spiritual practices. In each of these ways, there have been numerous reports of seeing *light at the end of a tunnel*. This does not require following any particular religion, spiritual teachings, or Meditation methods. People

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having such experiences may have no such Meditation practices in their lives and may not be followers of any religion. Yet, the same experience is reported. This is so because of the fact that the descriptions are of *Subtle* and *Causal* body anatomical realities, rather than being opinions stemming from mere belief systems (though some people are obviously operating more from belief rather than experience). To say that there is a tunnel with a source of light at the end is more like the statement that all people have lungs and a stomach than it is like a statement that falls in the domain of religious *belief*; it is a factual reality. Though the Sri Yantra is discussed in greater detail below, it is important to note that the *Bindu* in the center is symbolic of the source of that point of light as it is viewed when looking through the energy channel (tunnel) leading to it. It doesn't matter whether one *does* or *does not* "believe in" the Sri Yantra or Tantra. The symbolized reality is exactly that, a reality, regardless of whether or not the *Bindu* has yet been consciously experienced.



Beyond the Rat Cage: In the *Gross* and *Subtle* realms (which are mapped out on the OM Mantra symbol) there is no end to the interplay of time, space, and causation. While this never ending activity is part of the beauty of these *manifested* worlds, it is also the trap (See [Yoga Sutra 2.5 on Avidya](#)). It is common for people to say that Meditation is an ongoing *process*, which has no final goal, as one encounters experience after experience. However, this is true only for those who choose to remain in the relatively shallow waters of the *Gross* and *Subtle* planes, where there are countless combinations and permutations of objects and events, perceptions and conceptions. There are very few who seek to go beyond all of this activity in the *Gross* and *Subtle*, to the *Causal* and *Absolute* from which all of this emerges and into which it returns. For the few who do, Truth or Reality is found. It is to be found on the other side of the *Bindu*, through an experience known as *Piercing the Bindu* (Bindu vedhana). All of the other practices lead one in the direction of this. It happens at the end of the mind, through what one may call God, grace, guru, shakti, or luck, depending on one's perspective. It is the job of the aspirant to do all of the preparation practices, while being *ever mindful* of the convergence point toward which he or she is headed. To understand this is to have a higher understanding of the principle and practice known as surrender.

See also these pages for more info on these Four Levels:

[Index of Articles on Levels](#)

[OM and the Seven Levels of Consciousness](#)

[Levels and Dimensions of Consciousness](#)

1st Stream: Yoga

OM Mantra and the Yoga Sutras: It has been widely acknowledged that one of the finest summaries of the entire process of Yoga is the Yoga Sutras, which contains some 196 sutras (verses, or literally, *threads*). Contained within the Yoga Sutras is the instruction that one of the most direct routes to Self-Realization is through the use of the OM Mantra. Those sutras on OM also explain that the *key* is to focus on the *meaning* of the OM Mantra, not to just sit around mindlessly chattering or jabbering the mantra like a parrot (although, even that will train the mind in one-pointedness, which is useful).

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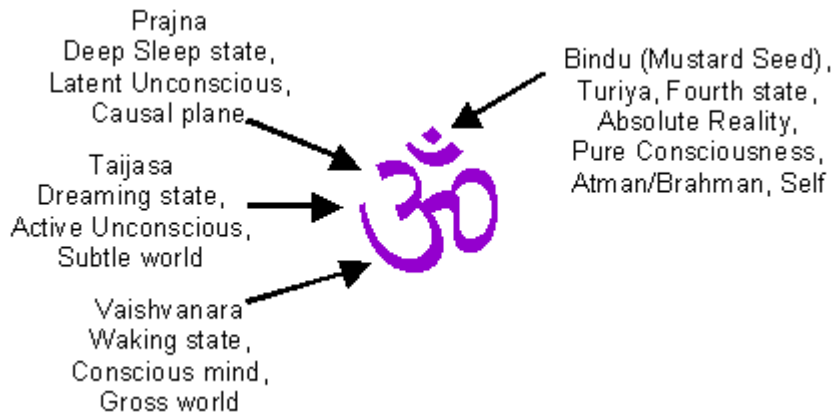
See also these articles on the Yoga Sutras:

[Index of articles on the Yoga Sutras](#)

[Yoga Sutras Summary Page](#)

[OM Mantra and the Yoga Sutras \(1.23-1.29\)](#)

Bindu and the symbol of OM Mantra: One of the most useful principles is that the dot or *Bindu* at the top of the symbol represents the doorway to the final goal of Yoga. Yoga means *union*, and the *Bindu* is the symbol of that union. To remember this visual principle alone can be of tremendous help in keeping all of the many practices of Yoga in a simple light, while still acknowledging that the meaning of the OM Mantra is profoundly deep. (It is useful to keep in mind that there is not universal agreement about the meaning and use of OM Mantra, as seems to be the case with virtually all yogic or spiritual principles and practices.)



Exploring and transcending the Subtle: Remember that we are here talking about *Bindu*, which is *beyond both* the Gross and Subtle processes. It is *beyond* the withdrawal of the senses and all of the imagery or thought patterns that might be seen or heard in *either* the Gross or Subtle realms. This is not to say that exploring these processes is bad, or should not be done. It is just that this is not the subject of discussion with *Bindu*. In fact, much of Yoga has to do with encountering the many thought impressions of the Conscious and Unconscious mind. A brief review of [Chapter 3](#) of the Yoga Sutras will reveal many of the subtleties that are encountered, including the energy flows called Vayus and the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space. All of these are preliminary practices that might ultimately lead one to encounter, pierce, and transcend the *Bindu*, so as to realize the Truth or Absolute beyond. Remember, OM Mantra was introduced in the earlier stages of the Yoga Sutras as a direct route through the various levels (Yoga Sutras [1.23-1.29](#)). In this way, all of those exploratory practices can easily be seen as support or preparation practices for the realization of That beyond the *Bindu*.

OM Mantra is a direct means in Yoga Sutras: Meditation on OM Mantra is recommended in the Yoga Sutras ([1.23-1.29](#)) as a *direct* means of removing the obstacles to Self-Realization and to that Realization itself. As noted above, the *Bindu* at the top of the OM symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, Purusha or Pure Consciousness that is to be realized.

Yoga Sutras 1.23-1.29: From a special process of devotion and letting go into the creative source from which we emerged (ishvara pranidhana), the coming of samadhi is imminent. That creative source (ishvara) is a particular consciousness (purusha) that is unaffected by

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colorings (kleshas), actions (karmas), or results of those actions that happen when latent impressions stir and cause those actions. In that pure consciousness (ishvara) the seed of omniscience has reached its highest development and cannot be exceeded. From that consciousness (ishvara) the ancient-most teachers were taught, since it is not limited by the constraint of time. *The sacred word designating this creative source is the sound OM, called pranava. This sound is remembered with deep feeling for the meaning of what it represents. From that remembering comes the realization of the individual Self and the removal of obstacles.* (See [Yoga Sutras 1.23-1.29](#))

Practical exercise with OM Mantra: Below is a practical exercise you can do to get a feel for the principle of concentrating on a point. However, we first need to explain several stabilizing Meditations from the Yoga Sutras. Then, the exercise itself is presented and explained. These practices are from Yoga Sutras 1.33-1.40.

See also this article on practices with OM Mantra: [Seven Methods of Practice with OM Mantra](#)

Ten stabilizing Meditations are recommended: The science of Yoga is a complete Meditation system. In the *later* stages, one systematically explores the nature of his or her own construction so as to discriminate (viveka) between that which is false identity or not-self and that which is the True Self (Atman, Purusha, etc.). However, the Yoga Sutras recommends ten specific Meditations that are *first* done to clear and stabilize the mind (Yoga Sutras [1.33-1.39](#)). Once this has happened to some degree, then the deeper, subtler Meditations can be done. Those ten Meditations include:

Four Attitudes: Meditation on the four attitudes of friendliness or love, compassion, gladness or supportiveness, and acceptance or neutrality.

Five Alternatives: The remaining five Meditations are on breath awareness, sensation, inner luminosity, Contemplation on a stable mind, and focusing on the stream of the mind.

Tenth option on whatever is pleasing: There is also a tenth suggestion given, which is to meditate on whatever one finds pleasing so as to stabilize the mind. This allows tremendous diversity and flexible within Yoga Meditation. Once again, this Meditation is done for stability and clearing so that the later self-exploration can be done.

Developing the ability to focus on the
smallest and the *largest*
is a sign that the mind is under control.
(Yoga Sutra [1.40](#))

Skill of focusing on the smallest and the largest: It is pointed out in the Yoga Sutras that the measure of a mind being under control is the ability to be aware of either the smallest or the largest (Yoga Sutra [1.40](#)). The exercise below touches on this process of meditating on a small point, transitioning from a larger object. This helps train the mind in the *skill* of one-pointedness, a *skill* that can then be used in ever deeper levels of Meditation.

Yoga Sutra 1.40: When, through such practices (as previously described in [1.33-1.39](#)), the mind develops the power of becoming stable on the smallest size object as well as on the largest, then the mind truly comes under control. (Yoga Sutra [1.40](#))

Exercise #1

Meditation on the Smallest: This exercise gives a feeling of what it is like to have the awareness focus on a very small space as compared to a larger. The smallest point used in this exercise is not the *Bindu* itself, but is a small point, the size of a mustard seed. Cultivating the skill of focusing in this way is quite useful in being able to do the concentration that eventually reveals the actual *Bindu*. In the exercise, attention is brought to the first of those nine Meditations from Yoga Sutras [1.33-1.39](#) described above. Then attention is brought to a mustard-seed-size point in the space of the heart center. One after the other, attention is brought to each of those nine practices from Yoga Sutras [1.33-1.39](#) and that mustard-seed-size point.

The lengthy descriptions might make these exercises sound difficult or complex. They are not. They are really quite simple and straightforward; it just takes understanding what to do, and this comes by reading and experimenting. Then, the insights come.

First: Sit comfortably, with your head, neck and trunk aligned, with your eyes closed, as if prepared for your regular Meditation.

Friendliness and love: Think of some person you know who is very friendly and loving. Allow your own feelings of *friendliness* and *love* towards this person to be there in the field of mind. Allow your love for this one person to expand to a feeling of universal love itself. Do this for a minute or so.

Mustard seed: Then shift your attention to the space of the emotional heart, the space between the breasts, letting go of the Meditation above. Allow your attention to be on a very small *point*, which is the size of a mustard seed. You may or may not see this with your inner eye. As the memory of the person fades, concentration intensifies on this point. Allow the sound of OM to silently drift through the inner mind, with the *silence* (symbolized by the *Bindu*) after the A, U, and M, *merging* into the point.

Compassion: Gently let go of the point and allow attention to expand, remembering some person who is not feeling well, such as one who is physically ill. Hold that person in your mind, and intentionally allow feelings of *compassion* to arise. Meditate on that feeling of *compassion* itself, expanding beyond the one person. Do this for a minute, or as long as it takes to get absorbed in the experience.

Mustard seed: Gently let go of that feeling and return to the mustard-seed-size space in the heart center. Meditate on that *point* for a while, in the *silence* after the OM.

Benevolence and gladness: Again expand attention, but now to a person who is virtuous or benevolent. Cultivate and meditate on your own feelings of *benevolence* and *gladness* for that person. Meditate on that feeling or attitude in an expansive, universal way.

Mustard seed: Again return gently to the heart, noticing how it feels to concentrate

on that *point* once again, allowing the *silence* after OM to *merge* into the point.

Acceptance or neutrality: Similarly imagine a person you think of as bad or evil, and meditate on your own feelings of *acceptance* or *neutrality* (accepting the reality, not approving of the behavior). Allow this to expand to a broader spirit of acceptance, meditating on this attitude.

Mustard seed: Return to the point at the heart, with OM merging into silence.

Breath: Be aware of the *feel* of the *flow* of breath in the nostrils, and how that breath expands and contracts. Especially allow the exhalation to be a little *slower* than usual. Do this for a minute or so.

Mustard seed: Return to the point at the heart, allowing OM to go to silence.

Sensing: Meditate on the process of *sensation*, collectively on the ability itself to see with the inner eye, to hear within, to smell, to taste, and to touch. It does not matter whether you actually, literally experience these. It is the effort that is important to the exercise.

Mustard seed: Gently bring attention once again to the point at the heart.

Luminosity: Imagine a *luminosity* in the inner realm, whether in the mind field, the space of the heart, or pervasively in that inner field. Whether or not you literally see is not so important. Allow this luminosity to expand to the whole of the universe, to whatever limit your mind is able to hold that.

Mustard seed: Return to the point at the heart, noticing the feel of shift to concentration on the mustard-seed-size point at the heart.

Steady mind: Return to the field of mind and imagine that your mind is a very stable, steady mind, *like the mind of some great Meditation master* you may know of. Imagine that your mind is like his or her mind in its *steadiness*.

Mustard seed: Return to the point at the heart.

Stream of the mind: Again be aware of the field of mind, as if you were a completely non-attached witness to whatever objects come before the mind. Like *watching a flowing stream*, all thoughts are allowed to come and go.

Mustard seed: Once again, return to the point at the heart.

Meditation on a point: If it feels comfortable, and if you want, continue to meditate on this mustard-seed-size point in the inner chamber of the heart, as if that Meditation would lead you *through* the point, on to the actual *Bindu*, and then to the highest Truth.

This exercise is meant as that, an exercise. This sequence, in its entirety is *not* meant here to be a permanent Meditation. You may find that one of the Meditations feels particularly resonant for you, and that may be a core Meditation for you for some time, but that is your personal choice. Again, this exercise is suggested here so that you can get a better feel of what it is like to meditate on the smallest, as described in Yoga Sutra [1.40](#). This, in turn, gives some insight into the nature of Meditation on *Bindu*, although the actual *Bindu* is much deeper and comes when Meditation advances.

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Practical exercise with the evolutes of matter: Below is a practical exercise dealing with the evolutes of *Prakriti*, or primal matter. The exercise is pretty easy to do, even with minimal understanding of the philosophy behind it. However, you may enjoy it more by reviewing the principles of Sankhya philosophy. In general, the exercise is similar to the one above, although the objects of Meditation include the inner elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space), mental processes, and sensory experiences of smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, and hearing.

Sankhya is the foundation of Yoga: The philosophical foundation of Yoga is known as Sankhya. Because of this, Yoga is sometimes known as Sankhya Yoga. In Sankhya there is a process of something emerging out of something else (material cause). The classic examples are of ornaments being formed from gold or pots being made from clay. In the inner world, our senses emerge out of the field of mind and the mental objects we experience emerge out of earth, water, fire, air, and space (similar to the fact that physical objects *emerge* from atoms and molecules). Sadhana (yogic spiritual practice) is thus a process of reversing this, of tracing consciousness back to its source. It would be most useful to also read through the article on Sankhya, which is linked below. This will give a more detailed understanding of the evolutes.

The juncture Point in Sankhya: Notice how earth, water, fire, air, and space emerge from a point of a subtler reality. For example, there first has to be space before there can be anything existing in that space. There has to be a fine substance, or air, before it can manifest as fire, water, or earth. Similarly, the senses operate from a point bursting forth in the mind. Even trains of thought burst forth in this fashion from the lake of the mind. Eventually there is the point of *divergence* and *convergence* of the finest Prakriti, or primal matter, as contrasted with Purusha, or pure consciousness. While scholars might argue philosophically that Purusha and Prakriti never actually meet, we can see the way in which the *Bindu* is a juncture point being sought and transcended in these practices, so as to experience that True Consciousness standing alone, in its own true nature (Yoga Sutras [1.3](#), [3.56](#)).

See also these articles for info on **Sankhya**:

[Sankhya Yoga: Prakriti and Its Evolutes](#)

[Six Systems of Indian Philosophy \(including Sankhya\)](#)

Exercise #2

Meditation on Evolutes of Matter and *Bindu*: In this exercise the attention is *alternated* between the evolutes of matter (from Sankhya Yoga) and the mustard-seed-size space in the cave of the spiritual heart (or the space between the eyebrows if you prefer). This helps to give direct experience into the nature of Meditation on a point. While this point is not the *Bindu* itself, which is much subtler, it does give a feel for the process. Also, each of the evolutes on which you concentrate here can be a Meditation unto itself, though this is not what is being suggested here. As you go through this exercise, a key is to allow attention to become *absorbed* before moving on. This should not take long with a little practice.

The lengthy descriptions might make these exercises sound difficult or complex. They are not. They are really quite simple and straightforward; it just takes understanding what to

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do, and this comes by reading and experimenting. Then, the insights come.

First: Sit comfortably, with your head, neck and trunk aligned, with your eyes closed, as if prepared for your regular Meditation.

Five Elements:

Earth: Be aware of the whole of your body, experiencing its solidity as *earth*. Do this until your attention becomes *absorbed* in this experience.

Mustard seed: Gently let go of this, and shift your attention to a mustard-seed-size point in the space at the cave of the spiritual heart (or inside a tiny circle at the eyebrow center). Become *absorbed* in this point.

Water: Then, gently let go of that point and be aware of the flow or fluidity within the body, which is *water*, becoming *absorbed* in this.

Mustard seed: Again, gently become *absorbed* in the mustard-seed-size point at the cave of the heart (or the circle at the eyebrow center).

Fire: Similarly, be aware of *fire* in the body.

Mustard seed: Then return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Air: Be aware of *air* in the body.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Space: Be aware of *space* that the body occupies.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Karmendriyas -- Means of Expression (See [Indriyas](#)):

Elimination: Shift attention to the nature of *elimination* throughout the whole of the body and mind, and how that which is no longer needed is cast off.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Procreation: Be aware of the nature of *procreation* and how that manifests throughout the whole of the body.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Motion: Be aware of the many ways that *motion* manifests through the vehicles of body and mind.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Holding: Be aware of the many ways in which *grasping* or *holding* manifests through the vehicles of body and mind.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Speaking: Be aware of *speech* and the intent of *communication* as it manifests through body and mind.

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Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Jnanendriyas -- Means of Cognition (See [Indriyas](#)):

Smelling: Become absorbed in the sense of *smelling*.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Tasting: Be aware of the sense of *tasting*.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Seeing: Be aware of the sense of *seeing*.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Touching: Be aware of the sense of *touching*.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Hearing: Be aware of the sense of *hearing*.

Mustard seed: Return to the point, becoming absorbed in it.

Four Functions of Mind (See [Four Functions of Mind](#)):

Chitta: Shift awareness to the field of mind (*chitta*), allowing all of the thoughts to flow without interruption, not engaging them, but witnessing them as a stream.

Mustard seed: When well established in this, return to absorption in the point.

Manas: Shift awareness to the mind itself (*manas*), as the instrument that is operating the senses and the means of expression such as moving and grasping. Be aware of mind as an instrument, not just the thoughts flowing in the mind.

Mustard seed: After becoming absorbed in this awareness, then gently return to absorption in the point.

Ahamkara: Be aware of that strong wave of *I-am-ness* known as ego (*ahamkara*), not as egotistical, but as the one who declares, "I am!" Become fully aware of, and absorbed in this; meditate on this *I-am-ness*, independent of any of the false identities of who you think you are, but rather, only the *I-am-ness*.

Mustard seed: Then, let go of it and return to absorption in the point.

Buddhi: Shift awareness, as best you can, to that deep aspect of mind that is individuation itself, the witnessing aspect that *knows* (*buddhi*), in the higher sense of what *knowing* means, which is neither cluttered with false identities nor that strong wave of *I-am-ness*. It just *is*, and *knows*.

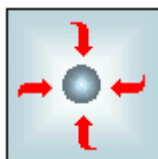
Mustard seed: Finally, shift awareness again back to that mustard-seed-size point, becoming completely absorbed in it.

Meditation on a point: If it feels comfortable, and if you want, continue to meditate on this mustard-seed-size point in the inner chamber of the heart (or inside a tiny circle at the eyebrow center), as if that Meditation would lead you to that which is beyond all of this manifestation, as if it would lead you *through* this imagined point,

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on to the actual *Bindu*, which is the doorway to the Truth beyond.

As with the previous exercise, #1, this exercise is meant only as an exercise, *not* as a permanent Meditation. Meditation on these evolutes, however, can be quite useful in discriminating between what is "I" versus "not I," which is a most important part of later Meditation (See Yoga Sutra [2.5](#) on avidya). Hopefully, this exercise will provide an easy way to experience Meditation on a point, which can help lead to an understanding of *Bindu* and a greater mental openness to approaching that subtle most point.



Integrating the various schools of Yoga: As you hold in mind the nature of *Bindu* as described above, and as captured in the two practical exercises, it is pretty easy to see how it is that the various Yogas are not merely alternative *choices* about which Yoga to practice. Rather, the Yogas are actually support practices that each, in its own way, leads toward the experience and transcending of *Bindu* into the higher Truth, however you personally name or conceptualize that Truth. For purposes of reflection on this, here are a few brief reminders of some of the various Yogas:

The Classical Yogas:

Bhakti Yoga: Cultivating love, reverence, devotion, surrender, and absorption in the Divine, however one may hold It, He, or She, transcending all of the lesser, as that lesser collapses into the *Bindu*.

Jnana Yoga: Learning through listening, reflection and deep, Contemplative Meditation, systematically setting aside that which is *not-me*, so as to experience the *fourth*, Turiya, symbolized by *Bindu*.

Karma Yoga: Attenuating the colorings of attraction and aversion while living in the world, weakening karmas by dedicating actions to others, shrinking the false identities, opening the door to *Bindu*.

Raja Yoga: Meditating on and systematically training all of the aspects of one's being, including body, senses, and the many nuances of energetic and mental processes, so as to reveal that beyond *Bindu*.

Complementary Yogas:

Hatha Yoga: Balancing of the energies of *ha* and *tha*, *sun* and *moon*, *ida* and *pingala*, with the intent of awakening Kundalini and the pursuit of higher Meditation through Raja Yoga, which leads to *Bindu*.

Kundalini Yoga: Balancing and awakening the manifestations of primal energy flowing through chakras in the channels called nadis, the most important of which is sushumna, which leads to *Bindu*.

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Laya Yoga: Transcending through dissolution all of the levels of false identity that have manifested through the energy systems, tracing back, one after the other through the levels, to the *Bindu*.

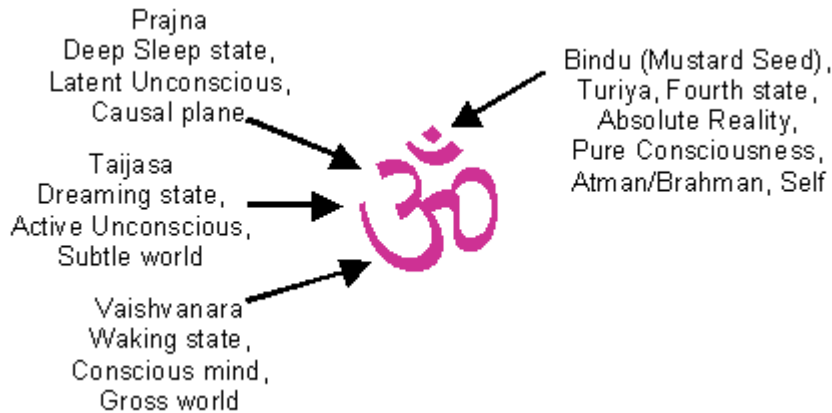
Tantra Yoga: Merging the static and all of the active manifestations of consciousness, through the countless forms of light and sound, retracing all of the energy to and through the point of *Bindu*.

2nd Stream: Vedanta

Vedanta and the *Bindu* of OM Mantra: Contemplation on the *four levels* symbolized by OM Mantra is at the very heart of Vedanta practice leading to Self-Realization, the pinnacle of which is outlined in the Mandukya Upanishad. Here again, the *Bindu* at the top of the OM symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, Purusha or Pure Consciousness that is to be realized.

See also:

[Six Schools of Indian Philosophy](#)



Contemplation on four levels and *Bindu*: Vedanta or Jnana Yoga is more of a *contemplative* process, or what we might call *Contemplative Meditation*. The descriptions and examples below deal with OM Mantra, as did the Yoga stream above, but with a slightly different focus. Here, we will be exploring the four levels of OM with emphasis on realizing the *meanings* of the *levels* contained within OM. This is not just a one-pointed focus to transcend the levels, but a process of *insight* into the *nature* of those levels. This will become more clear through diligently doing exercises such as those suggested below.

Integrating Contemplation and Concentration: This *Contemplative Meditation* is a bit more refined practice than basic one-pointed concentration on a point. This is not to say that perfecting one-pointed concentration is *easy*, but rather, to say that a moderate amount of skill in that one-pointedness is needed to move into this kind of Contemplative Meditation practice. The fact that one-pointed concentration is needed, and that the Contemplative Meditation may be somewhat more refined, is *not* to suggest that one is *better* than the other. These two move together in the dance of sadhana (practices). To

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practice these streams of practice separately from one another, and to later allow the streams of practice to flow together into the *Bindu* is a very high order of sadhana.

See also these articles on OM and Contemplation:

[OM Mantra and the 7 Levels of Consciousness](#)

[OM Mantra and 7 Methods of Practice](#)

[Mahavakyas or Great Contemplations](#)

Contemplation on only a few principles: There are extensive writings on the principles and practices of Vedanta, which can seem pretty complicated. One of the ways in which swamis and advanced sadhakas (practitioners) are taught to simplify these practices while moving in a straight line towards the highest direct experience, is to contemplate on *only one* or a *handful* of principles. This usually involves Contemplation on one or several Mahavakyas or great utterances, which are aspects of the reality mapped out in OM Mantra (See the article on [Mahavakyas](#)). This is used as a foundation for all other practices.

OM of Mandukya Upanishad is the juice: By putting a good bit of effort into understanding the framework of consciousness mapped out here by the OM Mantra (the four levels), all of the other studies of the vast Yoga and Vedanta literature can be seen in a more straightforward and practical light. This improves the ability to use these principles as actual practices that will lead in the direction of Self-Realization, rather than being mere intellectual study, however stimulating such study may be. It is because of this that it has been said that the juice of the Vedas is the Upanishads, and the juice of the Upanishads is the Mandukya Upanishad, which is on OM Mantra.

Twelve instructions on OM Mantra: Following are the twelve verses of the Mandukya Upanishad. The entire subject of the Mandukya Upanishad is the four levels of the OM Mantra, including the Dot or *Bindu*, which is the height of the practices. It might be best to read through these verses gently and patiently, though persistently, allowing the deeper insights to unfold in time, particularly through the practices of Meditation and Contemplation, such as the two exercises that follow.

Mandukya Upanishad - OM Mantra

Verses 1-2 describe the Self and the Absolute.

Verses 3-7 explain the four levels of consciousness.

Verses 8-12 outline the four aspects of AUM.

The Self and the Absolute (1-2):

1) All is OM : Hari Om. The whole universe is the syllable Om (symbolized by the three curves and the *Bindu*). Following is the exposition of Om. Everything that was, is, or will be is, in truth Om. All else which transcends time, space, and causation is also Om.

2) Atman has Four Aspects: All of this, everywhere, is in truth Brahman, the Absolute Reality (symbolized by the three curves and the *Bindu*). This very Self itself, Atman, is also Brahman, the Absolute Reality. This Atman or Self has four aspects through which it operates.

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Four Levels of Consciousness (3-7):

3) First is Waking / Gross: The first aspect of Atman is the Self in the Waking state, Vaishvanara (symbolized by the lower curve). In this first state, consciousness is turned outward to the external world. Through its seven instruments and nineteen channels, it experiences the gross objects of the phenomenal world. (See the articles on the [Indriyas](#) and the [Four Functions of Mind](#))

4) Second is Dreaming / Subtle: The second aspect of Atman is the Self in the Dreaming state, Taijasa (symbolized by the middle curve). In this second state, consciousness is turned towards the inner world. It also operates through seven instruments and nineteen channels, which engage the subtle objects of the mental realm. (See the articles on the [Indriyas](#) and the [Four Functions of Mind](#))

5) Third is Deep Sleep / Causal: The third aspect of Atman is the Self operating in the Deep Sleep state, Prajna (symbolized by the upper curve). In this third state, there is neither the desire for any gross or subtle object, nor any dream sequences. In deep sleep, all such experiences have receded or merged into the ground of undifferentiated consciousness. Here, one is filled with the experience of bliss, and can also find the way to clearer knowledge of the two preceding states.

6) Find the Experiencer: The one who experiences all of these states of consciousness is the omniscient, indwelling source and director of all (symbolized by the **Bindu**). This one is the womb out of which all of the other emerge. All things originate from and dissolve back into this source.

7) The Fourth Aspect is Turiya: The fourth aspect of Atman or Self is Turiya, literally the fourth (symbolized by the **Bindu**). In this fourth state, consciousness is neither turned outward nor inward. Nor is it both outward and inward; it is beyond both cognition and the absence of cognition. This fourth state of Turiya cannot be experienced through the senses or known by comparison, deductive reasoning or inference; it is indescribable, incomprehensible, and unthinkable with the mind. This is Pure Consciousness itself. This is the real Self. It is within the cessation of all phenomena. It is serene, tranquil, filled with bliss, and is one without second. This is the real or true Self that is to be realized.

Four Aspects of AUM (8-12):

8) Those Four are the Same with "A-U-M" and Silence: That Om, though described as having four states, is indivisible; it is pure Consciousness itself (symbolized by, and permeating the three curves and the **Bindu**). That Consciousness is Om. The three sounds A-U-M (*ah, ou, mm*) and the three letters A, U, M are identical with the three states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping, and these three states are identical with the three sounds and letters. The fourth state, Turiya is to be realized only in the silence behind or beyond the other three.

9) The Sound "A" is Waking / Gross: Vaishvanara is the consciousness experienced during the waking state, and is A, the first letter of Om (symbolized by the lower curve). That simple sound of A is first and permeates all other sounds. One who is aware of this first level of reality has fulfillment of all longings and is successful.

10) The Sound "U" is Dreaming / Subtle: Taijasa is the consciousness experienced during the dreaming state, and is *U*, the second letter of Om (symbolized by the middle curve). This intermediate state operates between the waking and sleeping states, reflecting some qualities of the other two. One who knows this subtler state is superior to others. For one who knows this, knowers of Brahman, the Absolute Reality, will be born into his family.

11) The Sound "M" is Deep Sleep / Causal: Prajna is the consciousness experienced during the state of dreamless, deep sleep, and is *M*, the third letter of Om (symbolized by the upper curve). It contains the other two, and is that from which the other two emerge, and into they recede or merge. A knower of this more subtle state can understand all within himself.

12) Silence after "A-U-M" is the True Self: The fourth aspect is the soundless aspect of Om (symbolized by the *Bindu*). It is not utterable and is not comprehended through the senses or by the mind. With the cessation of all phenomena, even of bliss, this soundless aspect becomes known. It is a state of nondual (advaita) reality—one without a second. This fourth state, Turiya, is the real Self or true Self. One with direct experience of this expands to Universal Consciousness.

See also these articles on OM and Contemplation:

[OM Mantra and the 7 Levels of Consciousness](#)

[OM Mantra and 7 Methods of Practice](#)

[Mahavakyas or Great Contemplations](#)

Exercise #3

Contemplative Journey through the Three Levels: This exercise involves three parts. The first part is done with your eyes *open*, and includes being aware of your external world of objects, and your abilities of action and sensing. The second part is done with your eyes *closed*, and includes being aware of your inner world of memories and images, as well as your inner process of sensing. The third part is also done with your eyes *closed*, and involves being aware of the blank field on which the unconscious activity flows, like being aware of the blank canvas on which paintings are created, or the blank screen on which movies are projected. This three part process gives an inner simulation of the nature of the three stages of the OM Mantra that are described above. This three part process is then repeated two more times, for a total of three cycles of the three part process.

The lengthy descriptions might make these exercises sound difficult or complex. They are not. They are really quite simple and straightforward; it just takes understanding what to do, and this comes by reading and experimenting. Then, the insights come.

A of AUM: Be aware of each of these as aspects of Vaishvanara, the Gross world, your Waking state, and your Conscious mind:

Eyes OPEN: Sit comfortably with your **eyes open**.

External objects and people: Be aware of objects or people in the room, around your home, at work, in the city. Explore them all as being in the Gross world, part of

your Waking state, and your Conscious mind.

Outer means of expression: Be aware of the processes of elimination, procreation, moving, grasping and speaking (the karmendriyas of verses 3 and 4), also exploring these as being in the Gross world, part of your Waking state, and your Conscious mind. Explore these five systematically, one at a time, becoming absorbed in the experience before moving on to the next one.

Outer means of cognition: Be aware of the processes of smelling, tasting, seeing, touching and hearing (the jnanendriyas of verses 3 and 4), also exploring these as being in the Gross world, part of your Waking state, and your Conscious mind.

Outer five elements: Be aware of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space (the five elements of verses 3 and 4), also exploring these as being in the Gross world, part of your Waking state, and your Conscious mind.

U of AUM: Be aware of these as aspects of Taijasa, the Subtle world, part of your Dreaming state, and your Active Unconscious mind:

Eyes CLOSED: Now sit with your **eyes closed**. (Note that the process *below* is the same as the one *above*, only here, you are attempting to gain insight into the nature of the Subtle, Dreaming and Active Unconscious, whereas the section above dealt with the Gross, Waking, and the Conscious mind.)

Inner stream of thoughts and dreams: Be aware of streams of thoughts in the mind, allowing them to flow as you might in a dream, or a day dream. Be mindful of these all as if being in the Subtle world, part of your Dreaming state, and your Active Unconscious mind. (Note that this is an experiential *exercise*, even though you are not actually in the Dreaming state.)

Inner objects and people: Be aware of many objects, people and places, intentionally allowing the stream of these to continue to flow. Explore these all as being in the Subtle world, part of your Dreaming state, and your Active Unconscious mind. (Note that this is an experiential *exercise*, and you are not actually in the Dreaming state.)

Inner means of expression: Be aware of the *inner* processes of elimination, procreation, moving, grasping and speaking, also exploring these as being in the Subtle world, part of your Dreaming state, and your Active Unconscious mind. Explore these five systematically, one at a time, becoming absorbed in the experience before moving on to the next one.

Inner means of cognition: Be aware of the *inner* processes of smelling, tasting, seeing, touching and hearing, also exploring these as being in the Subtle world, part of your Dreaming state, and your Active Unconscious mind.

Inner five elements: Be aware of the *inner* experience of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space (the five elements of verses 3 and 4), also exploring these as being in the Subtle world, part of your Dreaming state, and your Active

Unconscious mind.

M of AUM: Be aware of these as aspects of Prajna, the Causal plane, part of your Deep Sleep state, and your Latent Unconscious or Subconscious mind:

Next: Continue to sit with your **eyes closed**.

Blank canvas: Be aware of an inner field of mind that is like a blank canvas, on which all of the many paintings of actions and sensation are drawn. Be aware of this field as the screen on which the movies are projected. Allow your attention to *become fully absorbed in the nature of this field*, which is sometimes called *kutastha*, which means anvil, as in the unchanging anvil on which the blacksmith fashions so many objects.

Rising and falling impressions on the canvas: While maintaining full awareness of this field, canvas, screen, or *kutastha*, allow random images, memories or impressions to intentionally rise, and then to intentionally fall back into the field from which they arose.

Receding of people and objects: In this way, be aware of individual people, places, objects, activities or ideas, allowing them to arise and fall, while being ever mindful of the field, canvas, screen, or *kutastha*.

Receding of means of expression: Allow each of the active expressions of eliminating, procreating, moving, grasping, and speaking to arise in this way, yet fall away, returning to the field, continuing to focus on the field itself.

Receding of cognitive senses: Similarly, allow each of the cognitive senses of smelling, tasting, seeing, touching and hearing to rise and fall, remaining aware of the field throughout.

Rising and falling of the five elements: So too, allow awareness of the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space to rise and fall from, and return into the field, canvas, screen, or *kutastha*, once again remaining constantly aware of the field itself.

Silence after AUM: Be aware of Silence, as if you are experiencing the permeating Consciousness, Turiya:

Aware of the permeating consciousness: Allow your intelligence to be aware of the fact that consciousness, the Fourth, Turiya, is permeating each of these states of Waking, Dreaming and Deep Sleep. Reflect on this in stillness and silence.

Permeating actions, sensations and thoughts: Be mindful of how that consciousness permeates all of the actions, sensations and thought processes of the states of Conscious, Active Unconscious, and Latent Conscious (or Subconscious).

Permeating the five elements: Be aware of how that consciousness permeates all

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of the five elements as they exist or express in the Gross, Subtle, and Causal planes.

Aware of the glimpse: Be aware of how it is, that these are so, even though this is but an exercise, and experiment, not the direct experience itself of Turiya. Be aware of how even a little glimpse can be the inspiration to seek that direct experience.

Repeating the process:

Three times: The process above moves through the three stages, to the fourth. Repeat this entire cycle two more times, for a total of three times.

It becomes easier: Each cycle will become easier than the previous. As with many practices, the insights and benefits come with repetition.

Meditation on a point: If it feels comfortable, and if you want, continue to meditate on this mustard-seed-size point in the inner chamber of the heart (or inside a tiny circle at the eyebrow center), as if that Meditation would lead you *through* the point, on to the actual *Bindu*, and then to the highest Truth.

This exercise, like the previous ones, is meant only an exercise, *not* as a permanent Meditation. However, you might want to practice this several times over a handful of weeks to gain further insight (or later, from time to time). In time, this kind of witnessing and introspection, or inspection within, becomes a very easy self-awareness habit. It becomes a natural process to do. This opens the door to the depths of Contemplation or Contemplative Meditation, and this is part of the process leading to the *Bindu*, and That beyond these experiences. (See also [Witnessing](#).)

Twenty-six principles: The twenty-six principles mentioned in verses 3 and 4 of Mandukya Upanishad are explored through introspection or Contemplation, as in the exercise above. The seven instruments (verses 3 and 4) are the more *macrocosmic* instruments, while the nineteen channels relate more to the *microcosmic*, individual person.

These are explored in Meditation and Contemplation: All of these seven instruments and nineteen channels are the *means* by which the Self or Atman operates in the external world, which is Vaishvanara, the subject of this third verse of the Mandukya Upanishad. It is extremely useful, if not essential, to understand and remember these twenty-six principles, instruments, or channels. This is not just intellectual information, but rather, is a real key to the self-observation and self-awareness practices that lead to the transcendence of all of these, and the realization of the Self. If they are not conscientiously witnessed, one can be deprived of the depths of spiritual awakening.

Seven Instruments: First, Consciousness manifests outward as space, air, fire, water, and earth, along with the individuation from the whole and the flow of energy (which we know as the pulsing impulse towards breath).

Nineteen Channels: Then, the individual operates through the four functions of mind (aspects of antahkarana, the inner instrument), which are manas, chitta, ahamkara, and buddhi. Those four operate through the five pranas (prana, apana, samana, udana, and vyana), the five active senses or indriyas (karmendriyas of eliminating, procreating,

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moving, grasping, and speaking), and the five cognitive senses (jnanendriyas of smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, and hearing)

Most Important: The [Four Functions of Mind](#) and the [Ten Indriyas](#) are the most important to witness. This may take some experimentation, although it is not as difficult as it may seem. Like many things, it just takes a little practice.

See also these articles:

[Four Functions of Mind](#)

[Ten Indriyas](#)

[Witnessing Your Thoughts](#)

Exercise #4

Contemplation on "I am" and the *Bindu*: This Contemplation deals with the question, "Who am I?" Attention is brought to one aspect of body, followed by an inquiry of whether this is "who I am," and then attention is brought to that mustard-seed-size point in the space of the heart center. One after the other, attention is brought through the various aspects of body, breath, senses, and mind. With each, there is reflection on "who I am," whether this is "I," with attention brought to that point of *Bindu* with the remembrance that what is true is that, "I am That," or "I am that I am."

The lengthy descriptions might make these exercises sound difficult or complex. They are not. They are really quite simple and straightforward; it just takes understanding what to do, and this comes by reading and experimenting. Then, the insights come.

First: Sit comfortably, with your head, neck and trunk aligned, with your eyes closed, as if prepared for your regular Meditation.

Am I my Body?

Whole Body: Be aware of your body, the whole of the body, as if you can be aware of all of the parts of the body in one, complete glance.

Question internally: "Is this who I am? Is this body really me, at the deepest level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond the body: to, into, and through this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am. I am That."

Arms/Trunk/Legs: Systematically be aware of the physical parts of the body, in whatever way is comfortable and natural to you. One at a time, be aware of: head, face, neck, arms, hands, fingers, trunk, abdomen, legs, feet, and toes.

Question internally: "Is this who I am? Is this *part* really me, at the deepest level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond this single aspect of this body, this part. Who I am is to, into, and through this point, this

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mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Systems/Organs: Be aware of the physical systems and inner organs of the body, however you may do that. One at a time, be aware of the muscular, skeletal, cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, lymphatic, and nervous systems. Be aware of the individual inner organs, whether stomach, eyes, or the many other organs.

Question internally: "Is this who I am? Is this system or organ *really* me? Is it who I am? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond this single physical system or organ, however beautiful and functional it, and the whole of the body may be. Who I am is to, into, and through this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am."

Am I my Breath?

Breath: Be aware of your breath, as the physical function that exhales and inhales, filling and emptying the lungs with air.

Question internally: "Is this breath who I am? Is this breath really me, at the deepest level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond even the breath. I am on the other side of this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am."

Spine: Be aware of your breath, as if flowing up the spine with inhalation and down the spine with exhalation.

Question internally: "Is this who I am? Is this body really me, at the deepest level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond the body: to, into, and through this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am."

Nostrils: Be aware of your breath at the nostrils, as the flow moves in and out; cool coming in, and warm going out.

Question internally: "Is this who I am? Is this focused breath really me? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond the breath at these nostrils: to, into, and through this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am."

Energy: Be aware of breath as energy, which flows at both gross and subtle levels of the body, in many ways throughout the subtle energy system.

Question internally: "Is this who I am? Is this level of energy, though subtler, really me, at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Who I am is beyond even this subtle flow of energy: to, into, and through this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am."

Am I my Thoughts?

People: Allow the memories of people to drift through your mind. Think of family, friends, coworkers and other people you've never met, but see around your community from time to time. Remember people from your past, whom you no longer see, as well as people you currently know.

Question internally: "Of all these people, wonderful as they may be, who amongst them is really a part of me, at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Though I relate to them all, who I am is beyond these relationships. I am of that beyond this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am that I am that I am."

Places: Think of the many places you visit in your daily life: communities, buildings, roads, stores, lakes, mountains, beaches and other places of nature or mankind. Allow streams of these places to flow through the mind.

Question internally: "Are these many places really related to me? Or are they locations that I've visited, which now only appear to have something to do with me? Of all these places, beautiful as they may be, are they really a part of me, at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. Though I am familiar with them all, none of these places are really related to me. I am of that place on the other side of this point, this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Objects: Think of the many objects in your personal world; in your home, your place of work, your community. Think of the things you handle daily, or see in your travels here or there. They are small things and large things, this diversity of objects.

Question internally: "Which of the objects are *mine*? Are any of them really *mine*, or do I just *use* them? What do these objects have to do with me, at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am That. I am that I am that I am. None of these objects are mine; none are really related to me; that is all appearance, and nothing more. I am beyond all manner of objects, truly dwelling only on the other side of this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Am I my Mind?

Manas: Be aware of the thinking mind, which calculates, plans, and sorts out this or that; the part of mind that brings in the sensory experiences, and which causes motion and expression. It is the thinking mind, which is sometimes seen as disturbing and noisy, while it is also a most useful instrument.

Question internally: "This mind, this wonderful instrument of mind--is it *me*? Is it who I am? Am I this personality, which is animating through this mind? Is this mind who I am at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "No, I am not this mind. It is my tool, a very useful too. I am that I am that I am. I am That. I am beyond all of the activity of this mind, and truly dwell only on the other side of this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is

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beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Chitta: Be aware of an inner field of mind that is like a canvas, on which all of the many paintings of actions and sensation are drawn. Or, be aware of mind as lake or ocean, on which the waves of thoughts are stirring. Or, be aware of this field as the screen on which the movies are projected. Thoughts and impressions are coming and going, but all of this is happening in, and on that field, canvas, lake, ocean or screen. *Question* internally: "Is this field or lake of mind who I am, however vast it may be, and however those memories may have come to be stored there? Is even this grand totality of mental process who I am at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?" *Answer* internally: "I am that I am that I am. I am beyond all of this vast field, on which the mental and sensory dance plays. My real home, my true identity is on the other side of this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Ahamkara: Allow this powerful "I" to declare itself, the part that says with great strength, "I *am* this or that. It is 'I' who owns these things. It is 'I' who is the doer of these actions. Allow that wave of ego to be there, to stand firmly in awareness in this moment.

Question internally: "Is this ego, this powerful ego who I really am? Is this one who claims both identity and ownership who I am at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "I am that I am that I am. I am beyond even this, which makes the strongest of all claims, by its declaring "I am." My true identity is subtler still, residing on the other side of this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Buddhi: So clearly now, all of this is seen. This Buddhi, this one who knows, decides, adjudges with clarity and discriminates decisively now stands seemingly alone. Be aware of this seemingly finest instrument of knowledge and wisdom. At rest, this high intelligence stands in quiet contentment.

Question internally: Yet, ask again, "is even this seemingly finest intelligence who I really am? Or, does this subtle, fine being still draw its essence from some still finer consciousness? Is this Buddhi, this highest aspect of mind, who I am at the *deepest* level of my being? Who am I?"

Answer internally: "Still subtler than this, is who I am. I am that I am that I am. I am that pure consciousness that is to be found only on the other side of this mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Who am I?

"Oh, mind, oh, mind, oh, mind. Sing the song of stillness and silence. Surrender; let go, mind. I am that I am that I am. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

Rest in That for some time, as if there is no time. Rest in that point called *Bindu*, as if there is no space in which to rest. Allow body, breath and mind to be still, as if they are not even there, nor ever were.

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"I am that I am that I am. I am that beyond the mustard seed called *Bindu*. Who I *am* is that, which is beyond: the Fourth, Turiya, Atman. I am That. I am that I am that I am."

"I am That."

"OM," and silence....

As with the previous exercises, this exercise is meant only as an exercise, *not* as a permanent Meditation or Contemplation. However, you might want to adapt this practice in some way so that you personally spend some of your practice time doing this type of introspection, inspection within, or Contemplation. In time, this kind of witnessing and introspection, or inspection within, becomes a natural self-awareness habit. It opens the door to the depths of Contemplation or Contemplative Meditation, which is part of the process leading to the *Bindu*, and That beyond these many other experiences. (See also [Mahavakyas - Great Contemplations](#).)

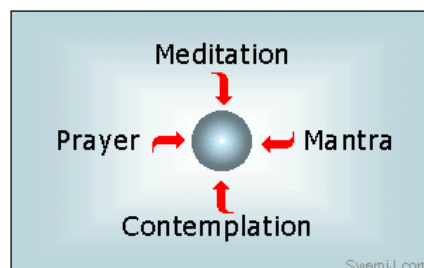
Go gently with these practices: These practices systematically reveal the underlying nature of oneself and the broader universe, both manifest and unmanifest. It is wise to balance these, and all other practices, in light of one's personal life in the world and dedication to the inner journey. To walk the middle road, not going too extreme in either direction, seems to be the ideal for most people. Gently, smoothly, lovingly are the ways to peace, insight, and realization, staying within ones comfortable capacity.

Integrating the Great Contemplations: The *Mahavakyas* are the Great Sentences of Advaita Vedanta, and are contained in the Upanishads. *Maha* is Great, and *Vakyas* are sentences, or utterances for Contemplation. They provide perspective and insights that tie the texts together in a cohesive whole. The Contemplations on the *Mahavakyas* also blend well with the practices of Yoga Meditation, Prayer, and Mantra, which are companion practices.

See also the article:

[Mahavakyas - Great Contemplations](#)

Converging Four Practices on *Bindu*: By practicing each of the practices of Meditation, Contemplation, Prayer, and Mantra, these four converge into a unified force of clarity, will, focus, and surrender.



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Meditation:

- Gross objects:** May start with gross objects or words.
- Subtle:** Becomes subtle, such as the light or sound.
- Bliss:** Leads to the joy-producing essence of the object.
- I-ness:** Rests in the still being-ness or existence itself.
- Bindu:** Meditation merges into and beyond the *Bindu*.

Contemplation:

- Thought:** May start with a verbal thought process.
- Reflection:** Deepens to quiet reflection.
- Intuition:** Later brings intuitive wisdom.
- Knowing:** Then leads to a formless knowing.
- Bindu:** Contemplation merges into and beyond the *Bindu*.

Prayer:

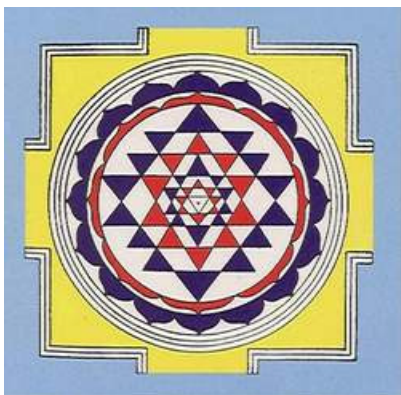
- Repetition:** May start by repetition in a traditional way.
- Relationship:** Shifts to a spontaneous inner relationship.
- Feeling:** Becomes a non-verbal feeling of love and devotion.
- Communion:** Transforms into a still deeper communion.
- Bindu:** Prayer merges into and beyond the *Bindu*.

Mantra:

- Spoken:** At first it may be spoken externally or internally.
- Heard:** Later it is heard or attended to internally.
- Feeling:** Later it experienced as a syllable-less feeling.
- Pervasive:** Then experienced as pervasive awareness.
- Bindu:** Mantra merges into and beyond the *Bindu*.

The four begin to merge: The practices of Meditation, Contemplation, Prayer, and Mantra begin to merge into one another. The state of deep, inner Stillness and Silence from which the higher knowledge (Paravidya) begins to come, is called Samahitam. It is the final launching pad, or jumping off place for the direct experience of the Absolute Reality. What at first seemed like very different practices are now seeming to be only most subtly differentiated. They converge into one laser like force-field of concentrated awareness, which then pierces the final barrier of *Bindu*, into the Realization of the Self, the Absolute Reality.

3rd Stream: Tantra



Bindu in Sri Yantra: Meditation in Tantra is on the convergence of all energies, with the highest of those inner practices being in Samaya Tantra and Sri Vidya, which is represented by the Sri Yantra or Sri Chakra. The *Bindu* at the center of the Sri Yantra symbolizes the final union of Shiva and Shakti (the static and active), the Absolute Reality that is to be realized. *Vidya* means knowledge, and *Yantra* is visual form. Thus, *Sri Yantra* is the visual form of *Sri Vidya*, which is the knowledge.

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See also these articles on Tantra:

[Schools of Tantra](#)

[Samaya Tantra section](#)

[Yoga, Vedanta, and Tantra](#)

[Kundalini Awakening](#)

[Shakti and Kundalini](#)

Simplicity in the higher view: Those who practice Sri Vidya Tantra at the lower levels find that there are a vast number of practices, rituals, and mantras that one might do. It is as if there is no end to these practices, just as there is no end to the diversity of objects and experiences that to be had at the Gross (Vaishvanara) and Subtle (Taijasa) levels of reality, which are mapped out on the OM Mantra. For those who seek the higher ground, the subtlest realities that eventually reveal the Absolute that is represented by the *Bindu*, there is an increasing simplicity (*simple* does not necessarily mean *easy*).

Piercing the *Bindu*: In the case of Sri Yantra and Sri Vidya, this means going through the chakras so as to experience merging into and piercing the *Bindu* at the center, just as there is seeking of the *Bindu* in the OM Mantra. Passing through the *Bindu* leads to the convergence and union of Shiva and Shakti, the static and active forces of the universe, also known as the masculine and feminine divine, which were never really divided in the first place.

A circle inside a circle: Imagine that you were to hold out a ring about five or six inches in front of you, and that you are looking through that ring. Imagine that you held a similar size ring a little further in front of you, past the first ring, and that you looked at one ring through the other. What would you see? You would see one ring inside the other. If you were to draw this view on a piece of paper, you would draw a circle inside of a circle.

Looking upward through sushumna and the chakras: If you were to look *upward*, from the base of the spine, through the [sushumna channel](#) (sometimes called *silver cord*), the central channel of the subtle body, *through* one after another of the chakras, what would you see? *Chakra* means *wheel*, and the chakras are like spherical fields of energy radiating from the energy convergences of the nadis (channels), of which sushumna is the main channel (chakras solidify to *form* the physical body, contrary to the usual notion that chakras are merely objects contained *inside* the physical body).

What would you see?: What you would see when looking upward through the fine tube, channel, or stream of sushumna would be a series of concentric circles. Inside of the smallest circle, at the far end, you would see the point of *Bindu*, which is the gateway to the highest Reality. This is a part of the symbolism of the Sri Yantra. This is why the practitioners of the higher Tantra, the Samaya school of Sri Vidya seek to go beyond, if not completely ignore, the lower chakras.

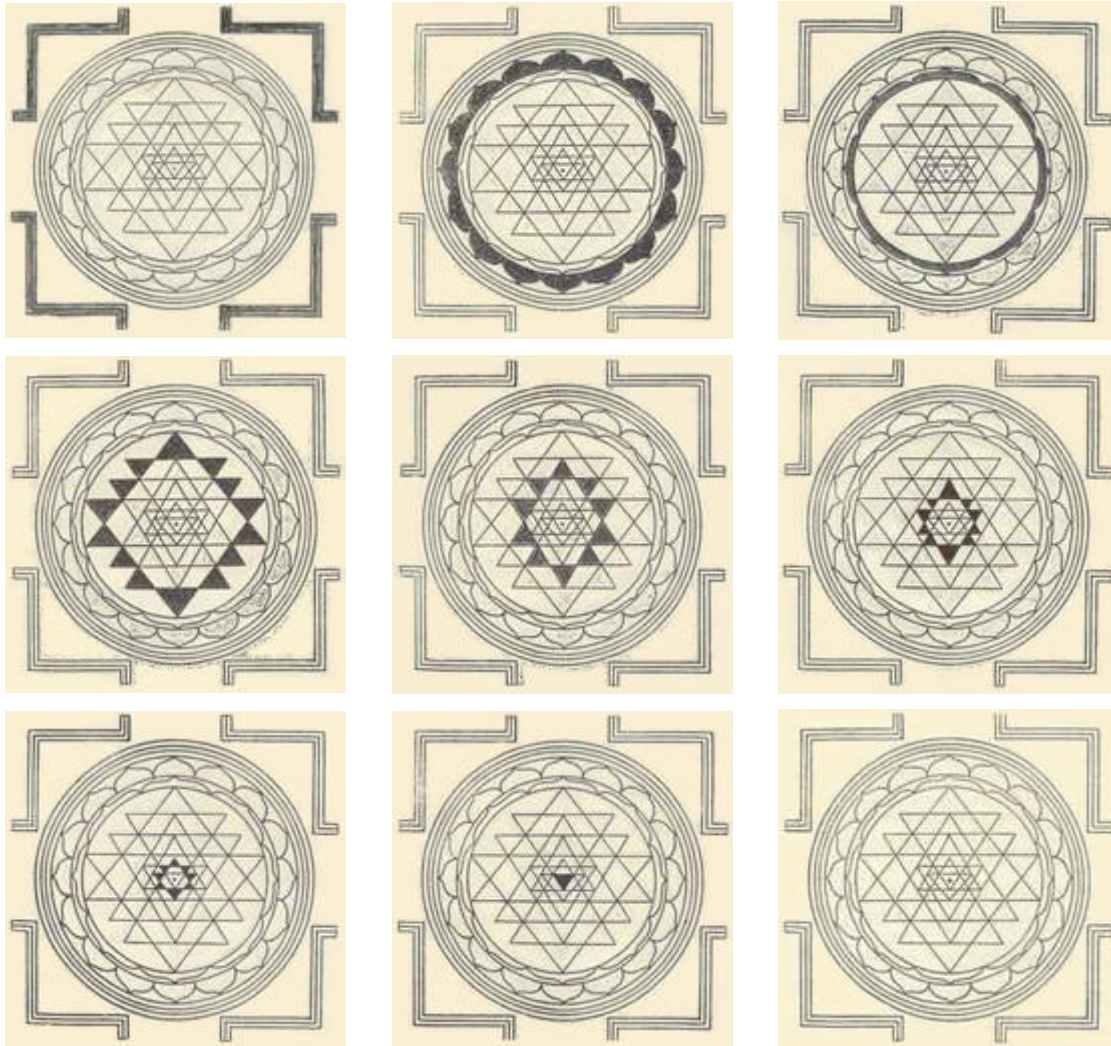
Video animation of the chakras of Sri Yantra (19 seconds):



Inward and upward, to and through *Bindu*

View of the chakras within Sri Yantra, going from outer to inner, lower to higher, culminating with the piercing of the *Bindu*.
(Look at the graphics below from left to right, top to bottom.)

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Need to balance the energies: To be able to see through, to enter and journey upward through sushumna channel and the chakras, it is necessary to balance the energy in the chakras, so that sushumna can be traversed, and the *Bindu* experienced.

Going past the lower chakras: There are many methods of working with the chakras, and there are many people teaching these methods for a variety of purposes. However, when the purpose one is interested in is the highest of direct experience, the goal is to balance the energy systems of the subtle body *so that* the lower chakras can *all* be *transcended* in deep practices.

The most important energy channel: Of the thousands of energy channels, it really comes down to three important parts, of which one is really the important one. Energy tends to flow on the left or right sides of the body, and those energies are known as ida and pingala. The central channel is called sushumna. What is important is balancing the left and right, so that the central channel is predominant and open, flowing clearly (described in the [Kundalini Awakening](#) article).

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Five elements, the chakras, and Bhuta Shuddhi: The five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space are the material substance of the first five chakras. These five elements are called *bhutas*. Thus, one way of describing the desired goal of preparing the chakras is to *purify* the *bhutas*. *Bhuta* refers to the five elements, and *shuddhi* means to purify. Thus, *Bhuta Shuddhi* is the practice of purifying the elements in the chakras, so that sushumna can be traversed, so that the *Bindu* may be encountered, pierced, and transcended. It should be self evident through common sense that by the nature of the two words (bhuta and shuddhi), there would be a variety of methods for attaining this purity and preparation of sushumna. The exercise below is one such practice, which is very effective, yet simple and straightforward.

Chakra	Element	Mantra	Karmendriya	Jnanendriya
7	(consciousness)	Silence	(consciousness)	(consciousness)
6	(mind)	Om	(mind)	(mind)
5	space	Ham*	speaking	hearing
4	air	Yam*	grasping/holding	touching
3	fire	Ram*	moving	seeing
2	water	Vam*	procreating	tasting
1	earth	Lam*	eliminating	smelling

* Pronounced like "Tom," "Mom," or "CD-ROM"

Exercise #5

Bhuta Shuddhi, Purifying the Chakras: In the Bhuta Shuddhi practice below, you are moving attention systematically upward, one chakra at a time, from the Root Chakra to the Crown Chakra. Then you reverse the process, moving attention downward one chakra at a time. Attention is focused on the location, while the mantra is remembered in the mind. Attention is also directed to be mindful of the expression and cognitive sense that is associated with that chakra (as in the table above). In doing the practice, you might at some point naturally experience sound or light, which is associated with the chakra. The sound and light are not *visualized* or *imagined*, as it is more preferred to experience them directly, as they are, than to create false impressions of them.

The lengthy descriptions might make these exercises sound difficult or complex. They are not. They are really quite simple and straightforward; it just takes understanding what to do, and this comes by reading and experimenting. Then, the insights come.

First: Sit comfortably, with your head, neck and trunk aligned, with your eyes closed, as if prepared for your regular Meditation.

Muladhara Chakra: Bring your attention to the perineum, the flat space between the anus and the genital area. Take several seconds to allow your attention to find the space, and to get settled into it.

Mantra Lam: Allow the mantra **Lam** to arise repeatedly in your mind field, silently.

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Allow it to repeat at its own natural speed. You may find that it comes 5-10 times and wants to pause, or you might find it wants to come continuously. If it pauses, allow it to return in its own time. The mantra may move quickly or slowly. In any case, keep your attention on that space; this is very important. That space might be tiny, such as a pinpoint, or it might be several inches across. Follow your own inclination about the size of the space.

Element Earth: Allow your mind to naturally be aware of earth, solidity, or form, while remaining aware of *Lam*. That awareness may come a little or a lot; either way is okay.

Indriyas of Elimination and Smell: Allow to come through your mind field the awareness of the karmendriya of elimination (which operates throughout the body), and the jnanendriya of smell, while remaining aware of *Lam* (best to become familiar with the nature of the [indriyas](#)). Gradually, over time with the practice, it becomes more clear how it is that the indriyas operate from these centers, along with the five elements. You may or may not also find that colors and sounds naturally come to the inner field of mind.

Svadhistana Chakra: When you move your attention upwards towards the second chakra, be mindful of the transition, of the motion of attention and the nature of the shift of energetic, emotional, and mental experience. Allow your attention to naturally find the location of the second chakra. Your own attention will find, and settle into that space. It is important to note that the actual chakra is in the back, along the subtle spine called sushumna, although we usually experience it in the front. Allow the attention to rest where it naturally falls, probably in the front, but be mindful from time to time that the chakra is actually in the back. Gradually attention will find this central stream running up and down through all of the chakras ([sushumna](#) is actually subtler than the chakras).

Mantra Vam: Allow the mantra *Vam* to arise and repeat itself, at its own speed, naturally coming and going. Hold your attention in the space, whether a pinpoint or a few inches across.

Element Water: Allow the awareness of water to arise, and come to see how this has to do with allowing forms of flow or fluidity, whether relating to energy, physical, emotional, or mental. Remain aware of *Vam*.

Indriyas of Procreation and Taste: Explore the awareness of the karmendriya of procreation and the jnanendriya of tasting, while remaining aware of *Vam* (once again, become familiar with the [indriyas](#)). Again, colors or sounds may or may not come and go.

Manipura Chakra: Be aware of the transition as you move to the third chakra, at the navel center, which is also actually along the sushumna channel.

Mantra Ram: Allow the mantra *Ram* to arise and repeat itself, at its natural speed. Keep attention in the space, whatever size at which it is experienced.

Element Fire: Be aware of the element of fire, and the many ways in which it

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operates throughout the gross and subtle body from this center. Remain aware of *Ram*.

Indriyas of Motion and Sight: Be aware of the karmendriya of motion, and how motion itself happens in so many physical, energetic, and mental ways. Be aware of the jnanendriya of seeing, which you will easily see as related to fire and motion. Colors and sounds may or may not come and go. Remain aware of *Ram*.

Anahata Chakra: Observe the transition as you move your attention to the fourth chakra, the space between the breasts. Allow attention to become well seated there.

Mantra *Yam*: Remember the vibration of the mantra *Yam*, allowing it to repeat at its own speed, while being mindful of the feeling it generates.

Element Air: Be aware of the element of air, and notice how that feels with the mantra. Remain aware of *Yam*.

Indriyas of Holding and Touching: Notice how the element of air relates to the karmendriya of holding or grasping, whether physically, energetically, mentally, or emotionally. Observe how these relate to the jnanendriya of touching, and how that touching is very subtle in addition to being a physical phenomenon. Colors and sounds may come and go. Remain aware of *Yam*.

Visshuda Chakra: Bring your attention to the space at the throat, the fifth chakra, which is the point of emergence of space (which allows air, fire, water, and earth to then emerge).

Mantra *Ham*: In that space, be aware of the nature of space itself, allowing the mantra *Ham* to arise and repeat itself.

Element Space: Notice the mantra *Ham* reverberating many times through the seemingly empty space in the inner world (a space that is really not empty, but is of potential).

Indriyas of Speaking and Hearing: Awareness of the karmendriya of speech (actually, communication of any subtle form) is allowed to be there, experiencing how that vibrates through space, while continuing to remain aware of *Ham*. The jnanendriya of hearing is allowed to come, also seeing how it naturally aligns with space, speech, and the vibration of mantra. Notice the fine, subtle feelings, which come with the experience. Colors or sounds are allowed to come and go, if they happen to arise.

Ajna Chakra: Gently, with full awareness, transition awareness to the seat of mind at the space between the eyebrows, Ajna Chakra.

Mantra *OM*: Allow the mantra *OM* to arise and repeat itself, over and over, as slow waves of mantra, or as vibrations repeating so fast that the many OMs merge into a continuous vibration.

Beyond the Elements: Be aware of how mind has no elements, but is the source *out of which* space, air, fire, water, and earth emerge. Remain aware of *OM*.

Beyond the Indriyas: Be aware of how this space, this mind, itself, does no actions, but is the *driving force* of all of the karmendriyas of speech, holding, moving, procreating, and eliminating. Remain aware of *OM*. Be aware of how this chakra, this mind, has no senses itself, but is the *recipient* of all of the information coming from hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling, whether the source of this input is the sensations from the external world, coming through the physical instruments, or coming from the inner world of memories or subtle experience, presenting on the mental screen through the subtle senses. Gradually, come to see how [OM mantra](#) is experienced as the source or map of manifestation itself. Many senses, images, or impressions may come and go, but they are let go, as attention rests in the knowing beyond all senses, in the Ajna Chakra and the vibration of *OM*.

Sahasrara Chakra: Allow attention to move to the Crown Chakra, which is the doorway to pure consciousness itself.

Silence after OM Mantra: The "mantra" (in its subtler, silent form) is that silence (not mere quiet) out of which the rest have emerged. It is experienced as the silence after a single *OM*, merging into objectless, sense-less awareness. Allow attention to rest in that pure stillness, the emptiness that is not empty, which contains, and is, the pure potential for manifestation, which has not manifested.

No Elements and No Indriyas: Awareness here has no element (bhutas), no cognitive sense (jnanendriyas), no active means of expression (karmendriyas), as it is the doorway to pure consciousness itself. Experience how this is the source *out of which* mind emerges, *after which* emerge the five elements, the five cognitive senses, and the five means of expression. Continue to be aware of the silence after *OM*.

Returning through the chakras: Reverse the process, moving attention downward one chakra at a time, from the Crown Chakra to the Root Chakra. Attention is focused on the location, while the mantra is remembered in the mind.

Ajna Chakra: Briefly bring your attention back to the sixth chakra, allowing the vibration of **OM** to return, which starts the journey of attention back into the body and world. A few seconds, 30 seconds, or maybe a minute should be comfortable, though it may be longer if you wish.

Visshuda Chakra: Bring your attention down to the fifth chakra, the throat, remembering **Ham**, as you enter into the realm of space, hearing, and speaking. Again, a few seconds or a minute is good.

Anahata Chakra: Transition to the fourth chakra, the heart, as you allow the mantra **Yam** to arise, remembering the element of air. Awareness of holding and touching may or may not arise.

Manipura Chakra: Be aware of the third chakra, the navel center, and the vibration of **Ram**, along with the element of fire, with awareness of motion and seeing coming

or not coming.

Svadhistana Chakra: Bring your attention to the second chakra, and allow the vibration of the mantra **Vam** to arise and repeat itself, remembering the element of water, with awareness of procreation and tasting coming or not coming.

Muladhara Chakra: Transition attention back to the first chakra, at the perineum, allowing the mantra **Lam** to come.

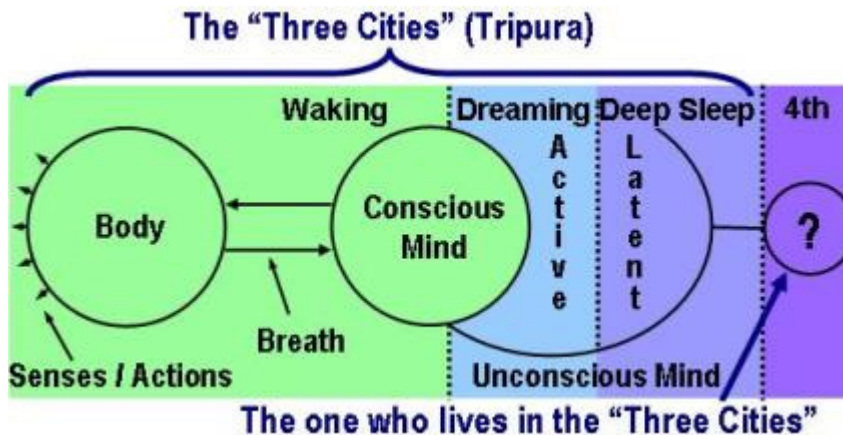
Meditation: After completing the Bhuta Shuddhi practice (above), you might want to continue with your regular Meditation, benefiting from the balancing qualities of the practice. One useful practice to do next is to simply breathe up and down the spine, as if you are inhaling from the base of the spine (first chakra) up to the crown of the head (Crown Chakra), and exhaling down to the base of the spine. You may want to inhale and exhale with Soham Mantra (See the article on [Soham Mantra](#)). Then continue with your regular Meditation, such as in the heart or eyebrow chakras. Inside of that space, it is useful to be mindful of the ever-existent *Bindu*, which, although not yet experienced, will one day be found and pierced, so as to experience That beyond.

Spinal breath and sushumna: One of the simplest of all methods to purify the chakras and open sushumna is the spinal breath practice. While the Bhuta Shuddhi exercise presented above is very useful, this spinal breath practice is very straightforward and does not require memorizing any steps or relationships with the chakras (the two practices are quite compatible, and both can be done).

- This practice is so utterly simple that it seems to many people that it is not a good enough practice. Because of this simplicity, it is seldom done often enough or regularly enough to consistently experience its profound effects.
- Lie on the back in shavasana, the corpse posture, and literally try to be as still as a corpse, and gently inhale up along the spine to the crown of the head, and exhale down to either the base of the spine or out into the space beyond; a tremendous effect will come in time.
- The pause between the breaths is completely eliminated (gently), and as it becomes smoother and smoother, the breath will naturally slow.
- When breath slows to around four to five breaths per minute (10-15 seconds per breath), mind will become calm and the body will quite nicely relax.
- When the breath slows to around two or three breaths per minute (20-30 seconds per breath), mind will become very still, without any words forming, and body awareness will become subtle.
- As breath naturally (*not forced*) slows to anywhere near about 45-60 seconds per breath or slower, one is at the doorway to experiencing pure energy of prana, and the sushumna channel will most assuredly be flowing smoothly.
- From here, the stage is set for deeper experiences. To do this practice effectively takes patience and getting past the inclination of the mind or ego to have some complex or technically difficult practice.

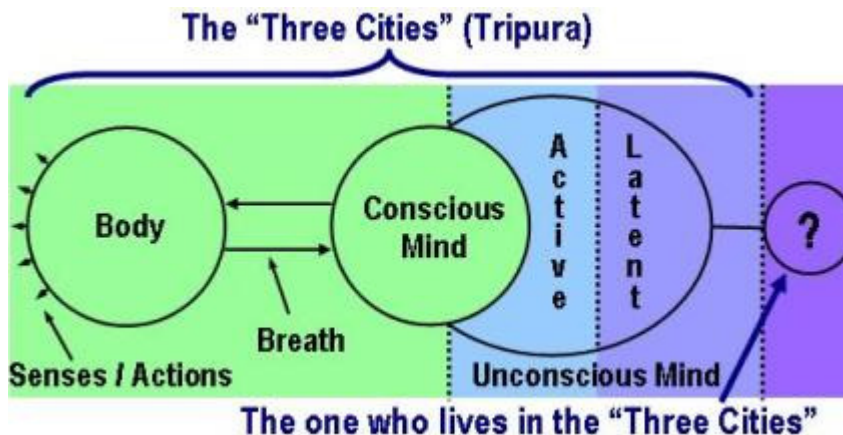
Tripura: *Tri* means *three*, and *pura* means *city*. *Tripura* is the consciousness that operates in the *three cities* of **Waking**, **Dreaming**, and **Deep Sleep**, as well as the Conscious, Unconscious, and Subconscious aspects of mind.

Tripura in Waking, Dreaming, and Deep Sleep:



Sometimes conceptualized as the divine feminine (Shakti), compared to the divine masculine (Shiva), she permeates the *three cities* of the **Gross** world, the **Subtle** plane, and the **Causal** reality.

Tripura in Gross, Subtle, and Causal:



Tripura also permeates the many other trinities such as the being ness inherent in past, present and future. This is a Tantric rendering of the three levels of consciousness mapped out by the OM Mantra symbol, and its levels of Vaishvanara, Taijasa, and Prajna (described above). Dedication, devotion, love, and surrender into this creative source or divine Mother is one of the finest aspects of Tantra as a direct route to Realization. Some conceptualize *Tripura* as an anthropomorphic deity, while the subtler practices are directed towards *Tripura* as formless, that *fourth* state beyond the other *three cities*. The *Bindu* of Sri Yantra is the symbol of this highest transcendent Reality. The quality of the *three cities* is an aspect of [OM Mantra](#), [Gayatri Mantra](#), and [Mahamrityunjaya Mantra](#).

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Guru Chakra: Beyond the first six chakras, between there and the Crown Chakra (Sahasrara Chakra), many other chakras, levels, or layers of reality are experienced. For the aspirant who is willing to do so, the Guru Chakra is used to purify the mind and to bring down spiritual truths. "Gu" means darkness and "ru" means light. [Guru](#) is the light that dispels the darkness of ignorance. Guru is not any person, although guru may operate through a person. Guru is actually the higher knowledge itself.

Also known as Jnana Chakra: Guru Chakra is the doorway to that knowledge, to the wisdom and guidance of the teacher within. The sixth chakra, at the eyebrow center, is called Ajna Chakra, which includes "a" and "jna", which means the center *without* knowledge or with *little* knowledge ("a" is *without* and "jna" is *knowledge*). Guru Chakra is experienced in the forehead, and is also called *Jnana* Chakra, or the center *with* knowledge. The knowledge of Ajna is *lower* knowledge, while the knowledge of Jnana is *higher* knowledge.

Offering thoughts to the fire: The Yogi invites all of the thoughts and samskaras to arise in the mind field of Ajna Chakra and offers them into the higher knowledge, the triangular shaped fire of Guru or Jnana Chakra (Ajna and Guru Chakras are also called *drikuti* and *trikuti* respectively). Like ice melting back into its form of water, the colorings of attraction, aversion and fear fall away in the inner fire. It has also been likened to gold being purified in a fire, whereby the dross burns away, allowing the gold to become purer. From that process the pathway is cleared, and higher wisdom and teachings come down to the Ajna. Eventually, awareness itself travels upward, receding through and beyond, to That which is the final abode, the Absolute, the union of Shiva and Shakti.

Visualizing and inner realities: Initially, it may seem that this practice is only one of inner visualization. It is actually a literal practice dealing with the energy levels of the colorings (kleshas). Like all discussions of practice relating to energy, the energy itself might not be experienced as such initially, though it will in time. In a sense, it really doesn't matter how you conceptualize the practice; it is effective in any case.

See also these articles about colorings or kleshas:

[Uncoloring Your Colored Thoughts](#)

[Colorings section of Witnessing](#)

[Kleshas in Yoga Sutra 1.4](#)

[Gross Colorings in Yoga Sutras 2.1-2.9](#)

[Subtle Colorings in Yoga Sutras 2.10-2.11](#)

Direct rather than indirect: Many methods help to balance, stabilize, and purify the mind, though most of these are indirect. Working with the body and training the breath have *indirect* effects on the mind, and this is very useful. The practice with Guru Chakra or Jnana Chakra works *directly* with the impurities of mind, including the colorings (kleshas) of attraction, aversion and fear. These are *directly* surrendered back into the field of higher knowledge from which they arose. Utilizing this direct method of purifying the mind does not negate the value of the indirect methods. Both are useful and work quite well together.

Exercise #6

Purifying the Mind through Guru Chakra: Mana-Prakshalanam is the purifying of the mind. The highest form of this purifying process is to *directly* allow the impurities of thought patterns to revert back into the source from which they emerged. It is like purifying gold by burning away the dross in the fire. Here, however, the fire is the inner fire of knowledge and the dross is the colorings of attraction, aversion, and fear. In systematic Meditation, first be aware of and relax the body, and then train the breath to be smooth and serene. Before Meditation in the field of mind, do the practice with Guru Chakra so as to calm, stabilize and clear the colorings. Then, move on to your regular Meditation.

- Body
- Breath
- Guru Chakra
- Meditation

The lengthy descriptions might make these exercises sound difficult or complex. They are not. They are really quite simple and straightforward; it just takes understanding what to do, and this comes by reading and experimenting. Then, the insights come.

First: Sit comfortably, with your head, neck and trunk aligned, with your eyes closed, as if prepared for your regular Meditation.

Body: Be aware of the body, the whole body, as one, complete physical being. Explore the body, as if you are really curious. Survey the head, face, neck, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers and finger tips. Return up the arms to the shoulders, to the chest and the abdomen, slowly moving attention at a comfortable rate. Be aware of the hips, thighs, knees, lower legs, feet, toes, and the tips of the toes. Return back up the legs, through the abdomen, chest, shoulders, arms, hands, fingers and finger tips. Then return up the arms to the neck, face and head. Explore the whole body in this way, or some other way that is comfortable and familiar (See the article on [Relaxation](#)).

Breath: Be aware of the breath at the diaphragm, establishing smooth, even, diaphragmatic breathing, which is slow and has no gaps or pauses between breaths. Continue with your regular breathing practices, such as mindfulness of breath along the spine, inhaling upwards and exhaling downwards. (See the article on [Breathing](#)).

Guru Chakra / Jnana Chakra: Bring your attention to the forehead, as if aware of a triangular size space. The base of the triangle is slightly (about 1/2 inch) above the space immediately between the eyebrows (Ajna Chakra), and the peak of the triangle is above. Be aware of the inner fire of Guru or Jnana, regardless of whether or not you can literally see it there in the space.

People: Allow some one person to come to mind for whom there is some coloring, such as anger or aversion. Allow the memory of the person to be there, but not turn into a mental train of thinking, worrying, planning or scheming. It is just the memory, as if in pause on a video player. It does not matter whether you can or cannot literally see the person in your inner eye, nor does it matter if you can literally see

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the inner fire of pranic energy in the triangle. Allow the impressions to go into the inner fire, as if the coloring will burn or wash away, without destroying the memory itself. It is as if the coloring itself (attraction, aversion, fear) is being removed. Hold the image or memory in that way for some time, in the fire. Notice that the feelings related to the coloring gradually soften and attenuate.

More people: Repeat this again, allowing some different person to come to mind. Once again, allow the memory to burn in the fire of Guru or Jnana, removing the attraction, aversion or fear, gradually resulting in there being only a mere memory left, which is uncolored. Continue this with whomever you wish, for as long as you wish (being mindful to stay within your comfortable capacity).

Objects: Think of some object with which there is a coloring of attachment, aversion or fear. Allow that object to go into the inner fire of Guru Chakra. As with people (above), don't allow it to turn into a train of thoughts, but remain only the memory of the object itself. Hold it in that way for some time, as the coloring starts to attenuate.

More objects: Repeat this again, with different objects coming into the mind field and being put into the inner fire of Guru Chakra. Allow each object to remain in the fire, as it gradually weakens its colorings of attraction, aversion or fear.

Opinions, attitudes, emotions: Similarly, allow individual opinions, attitudes and emotions, which are negative or not useful to burn in the inner fire of Guru Chakra. The practice is to allow the not-useful colorings of attachment, aversion and fear to weaken and fall away (The practice is definitely not about suppression or repression of thoughts and emotions in some way that would bring lethargy).

Finding stillness: After doing the practice for several minutes or longer, the mind will gradually come to some degree of stillness. Ideally, it will be quite still, as Meditation now comes quite easily and naturally. As with all practices, it may take some time to attain the benefits. Gentle, loving and persistent practice is the key.

Meditation: After some time, when it feels comfortable, continue with your regular Meditation, such as Meditation in the space between the breasts (Anahata Chakra) or the tiny circle between the eyebrows (Ajna Chakra), being mindful of either the source of light, or the source of sound, depending on your predisposition (or whatever is your regular method). During your Meditation, if colored thoughts (attachment, aversion, fear) should arise, do *not* return to the Guru Chakra. Just allow the thoughts to come and go, while staying focused on your Meditation. With practice, the amount of time at Guru Chakra will be sufficient that the rest of Meditation will be smooth and calm. It's better to take the weeks and months to become comfortable with the timing at Guru Chakra than to go on too quickly with your Meditation in a given Meditation session. If it is comfortable, meditate with full conviction that you will encounter that mustard-seed-size point leading to *Bindu*, the doorway Beyond.

After Guru Chakra (Mana-Prakshalanam), do Meditation: After this phase of the practice dealing with purifying the mind, it is time in the Meditation sequence to shift to pure one-pointedness, completely leaving behind any of the images or impressions, which may have been there during the Guru Chakra practice. Concentration and Meditation may become much deeper now, as a result of this purifying practice. With this preparation, it is

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now more within reach to truly clear the mind, so as to move towards experiencing deeper Meditation, as well as towards the levels of samadhi or the fourth state, turiya.

Heart or eyebrow center; light or sound: If you don't have a particular method to follow, you may find that after the Guru Chakra practice your mind is more willing to focus on either a point in the inner cave of the spiritual heart (Anahata Chakra), a space experienced as being about the size of the palm of your hand, or on a point within the tiny circle of the eyebrow center (Ajna Chakra). While focusing on that small point, resting in the stillness, silence, and darkness, you may find a predisposition to Meditation on either the source of light or the source of sound, and this inclination is useful to honor and follow. Remember that the various practices converge on the *Bindu*, and this will naturally incorporate your personal spiritual or religious perspective.

Approaching the *Bindu*: From this quiet state, after the Guru Chakra practice, there may be even a moment of transcending the active mind, leading towards or into the experience of the *Bindu* itself, and that which is beyond the *Bindu*. This is not said to prescribe for you the particular object on which you, personally should meditate. That may be different for different people, who follow a variety of traditions or Meditation methods. However, the *process* of purifying the mind with Guru Chakra, and then following this with your Meditation is valid for virtually all practitioners of Meditation.

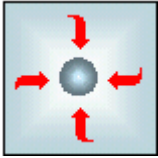
Meditation on *Bindu*: Recall that the discussion in this article started by acknowledging that the *Bindu* is encountered in the *later* or *advanced* stages of Meditation. Meditation on *Bindu* is not merely a visualization exercise whereby you imagine some mental object (though that may be useful). To find the *Bindu* takes a great deal of effort and patience, after having purified the mind. While it takes great effort, it also takes great surrender. In the inner field of the subtler aspects of mind, a circle, space, pit, hole or tunnel will eventually be experienced (it doesn't matter what you call it). Eventually, the *Bindu* is encountered beyond that. It is approximately like the stories we hear from time to time of some person having a near-death-experience, and seeing light at the end of a tunnel. The tunnel entrance is at the chakra, the tunnel is called Brahma Nadi, and the point of light is *Bindu* (Recall that *Bindu* means *point* or *dot*, and has been likened to a *mustard seed*). Note that in the stories about seeing light at the end of a tunnel, the witness has not yet gone up the tunnel, merged into the point, or transcended it. It can be a bit frustrating to read about encountering the *Bindu*, but not be able to do it at this very moment. Until it comes, it is common to sit there in the dark, not only not finding the *Bindu*, but not even finding a circle or tunnel. Patience and practice are the keys, as exasperating as it may be.

Piercing the *Bindu*: At some point the *Bindu* is encountered and transcended. It is like entering the circle or tunnel, traveling up the tunnel (Brahma Nadi), encountering and engaging the *point* or *Bindu*, and then *piercing* the *Bindu*, so as to experience that beyond, which is That out of which the *Bindu* and individuality originally emerged (In the [Himalayan tradition](#), this occurs through the process of grace called [shaktipata](#)). The precise process defies description, but it can be described in approximate terms. The word that seems to best capture the nature of piercing the *Bindu* is that it is like an *explosion*, as the mind and the sense of individuality and time seem to be transcended. The word *explosion* is not used in a destructive sense, but only an *experiential* sense. Another way of describing the piercing of *Bindu* is that it is like *crashing* through walls in very rapid succession. This process may happen in stages over time, like piercing a series of *Bindus*, or may be experienced at once, in rapid succession. Finally, there is a merging of individuality, light and sound into its unified, undifferentiated source, which was never really divided in the first place, but only appeared to be so. It is an experience not of going *into* and *out of*

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Meditation, but one of going *into* and *bursting through* to the other side. It leaves insights that are only somewhat captured by phrases like "All of this, is that Absolute Reality (karvam khalvidam brahman)," "I am that Absolute Reality (aham brahmasmi)" "I am that I am; I am That (sohamasmi; soham)."

Summary



Experiences collapse into the *Bindu*: There is a stage of Advanced Meditation in which all experiences *collapse*, so to speak, into a *point* from which all experiences arose in the first place. It is near the end of the mind itself, after which one travels beyond or transcends the mind and its contents. It is the doorway to the Absolute or Truth (by whatever name you call it). The *Bindu* is an actual, directly experienced reality.

***Bindu* is the convergence:** The *Bindu*, Mustard Seed, Dot and Point are widely used symbols. The *Bindu* is the convergence point of the highest principles and practices of Raja Yoga as codified in the Yoga Sutras, Advaita Vedanta as summarized in the Mandukya Upanishad, and the highest Tantra, which is Samaya (Internal) Tantra and Sri Vidya.

Yoga: Meditation on OM Mantra is recommended in the Yoga Sutras (1.23-1.29) as a direct means of removing the obstacles to Self-Realization and to that Realization itself. The *Bindu* at the top of the OM symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, Purusha or Pure Consciousness that is to be realized.

Vedanta: Contemplation on the four levels symbolized by OM Mantra is at the very heart of Vedanta practice leading to Self-Realization, the pinnacle of which is outlined in the Mandukya Upanishad. Here again, the *Bindu* at the top of the OM symbolizes Turiya, the Absolute Reality, Purusha or Pure Consciousness that is to be realized.

Tantra: Meditation in Tantra is on the convergence of all energies, with the highest of those inner practices being in Samaya Tantra and Sri Vidya, which is represented by the Sri Yantra. The *Bindu* at the center of the Sri Yantra symbolizes the final union of Shiva and Shakti (the static and active), the Absolute Reality that is to be realized.

***Bindu* allows practices to be seen as compatible:** It is extremely useful to have a means of holding in mind all of the many practices of the various aspects of Yoga and Meditation, as well as of Contemplation, Prayer, and Mantra. By seeing that each of these leads towards the *Bindu*, the different practices can be held as compatible and parallel with one another, rather than contradictory or of uncertain relation.

Consciously, intentionally remember the *Bindu*: One of the most beautiful aspects of this focus on *Bindu* is that all people can do this, whether or not you have absolutely or finally decided on your own conceptions of the nature of yourself, your Self, the universe, God, Absolute or Truth, etc. If you already have your own concepts, you can use your awareness of the existence of *Bindu* as a guiding light. Or, if not, you can focus on the practices and processes that are *leading towards* the *Bindu*, and then allow your own direct experience of whatever is discovered *beyond* the *Bindu* to speak for itself. Both ways work quite well when remembering that the practices along the way all *converge* on the point called *Bindu*, which leads to That beyond.

OM Tat Sat. OM, That alone Exists and is Real