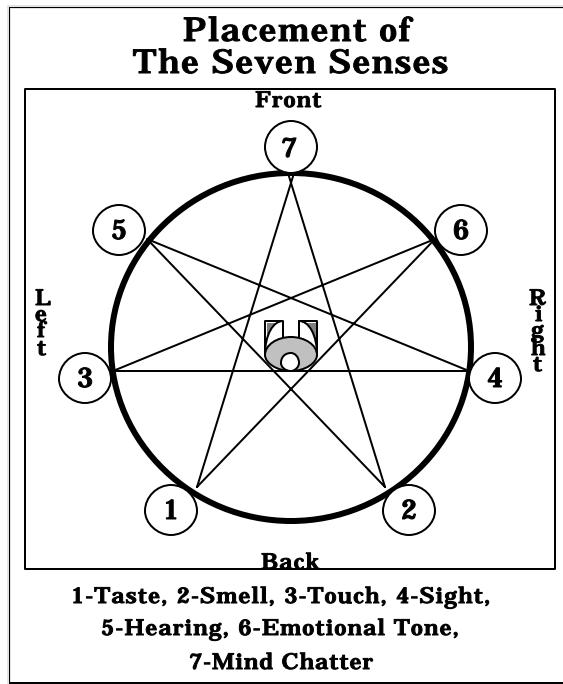


# The Center of Stillness Meditation

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## INTRODUCTION

There is, in the nature of human consciousness, the need to take apart, particularize, define and limit a thing in order to come to an understanding of it. In the name of science, we dissect the frog of experience in the hopes of learning how it works, ignoring the fact that we have killed it in the process and are examining a dead thing. The error we fall into is that we neglect to re-integrate our nascent understanding back into the organic whole from which we have plucked it.

Instead of removing the frog to our laboratory, we also have the option of taking our laboratory to the frog, and observing our subject in its natural environment, with its livelihood still intact.

Our natural environment is the Infinite Universe, within which we humans exist across a broad spectrum of vibration. We experience one end of this continuum through our most sublime thoughts; and the other end, through the physical reality of our bodies. The realm between these two poles, that which personalizes and binds our thoughts to our physical bodies, is our emotional field of experience. These levels of human vibration have been defined as "spirit" (mental body, the realm of thought), "soul" (astral body, the realm of emotion), and "physical" (physical body, the realm of sensation). However, it must be realized that these divisions are arbitrary, human constructs, for there is no point at which one degree of vibration is separate from that next to it.

Our experience at the physical level is one of aloneness. We live as separate beings, within a Universe filled with other separate beings. Yet laying behind these levels of vibration, is That

which is vibrated, or vibrates -- the One Self of which we are all an expression. It is this base fabric which calls to us in our physical aloneness and reminds us of the core truth that we are all somehow connected.

The whole of human existence is a dance between our experience of separateness and our primal need for connectedness. One of the great paradoxes of the Universe, is that it is the very fact of our physical existence that blinds us to the level at which we are connected. The physical world so captivates our conscious awareness that we are seldom cognizant of what lies beyond it; yet, it is only by casting our awareness beyond it, only by tearing our attention from it and turning within, that we come to experience the deeper levels of Self and touch upon our primal Unity.

The main barrier then, to a conscious experience of our shared inner Self, is that our bodily senses gobble up the majority of our attention. This is a natural consequence of a physical existence, and cannot really be judged in terms of good or bad. It simply is. The senses can be viewed as either a wondrous Gift from a Benign Universe, whose only purpose is to give us the faculties needed for physical life; or, as an onus of evil, which we are doomed to suffer and battle. The meditation technique which follows is based upon the former and stresses a non-judgmental control over the senses.

We each have an inherent ability to negate the senses. While you have been reading this, have not your senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch been diminished as your attention turned to seeing, emotionally feeling, and rationally thinking about these words? This is but one example of how we sub-consciously select one or two sensory inputs over the others. The active ingredient here is attention, or conscious awareness, and it is this key which the Center of Stillness Meditation (CSM) technique employs in its training of the conscious negation of the senses. By building upon what we each do a million times a day un-consciously, the CSM brings it to the level of a conscious faculty.

The ability to negate the senses at will, takes effort and persistence to attain; especially with any consistency. But even with the first brief moment of separation from the senses, comes a re-acquaintance with the Center of Stillness, that Primal Quiet we all know in our bones. Once this Stillness has been experienced, the question of effort becomes irrelevant in light of the exciting possibilities perceived within. The further refining of one's control over the senses passes quickly thereafter, and the inner realms unfold.

The first realm to open is that of the personality. In the CSM, this is visualized as a web of light-fibers, which we each spin within the stream of time-space. This is the level at which we place our Selves within the context of where and when we are, and bind ourselves to a physical expression. The personality is our creation -- one which we usually create un-consciously and feel little power with.

As with our power to negate the senses, we also have an inherent ability to craft our personality. Remember back to your adolescence, when "peer-pressure" was the weather-vane of who you chose to be (at least to some extent); a time of trying on several different masks and choosing ones that felt "safe", or hopefully, "right" for you. As you grew into your adulthood, did you not dis-

card certain masks for new ones? We each have experiences of changing "bad habits", or annoying little idiosyncrasies, to better fit into our lives. The muscles we use in our un-conscious, selective negation of the senses, are the same ones we use in the un-conscious crafting of our personalities. The CSM exercises these muscles upon the personality, and you learn to consciously craft it, weaving it anew into a clearer expression of who you are and want to be.

The experiences with the personality invariably lead to the awareness that there is a Self who is experiencing -- a core which is the Doer, the Crafter. This is the next level to unfold, the level of Individual Self, the Self-Who-Acts. We most often experience this aspect of Self through very strong feelings, or intuitions, that a certain course is the one we must follow. Probably the most dramatic experiences of your life have been accompanied by the clear knowledge of who you are at the core. This is your Individuality; your Self perceiving itself as an autonomous, unique Individual. It is the Individuality which projects and crafts the web of the personality, and consequently manifests physically in a body; or to put it another way, the personality and the physical body are the vehicles of the Individual Self.

In the CSM, the level of Individual Self is visualized as a Sun with the aspects of the personality and physical body orbiting as its solar system. This Sun exists in an Infinite Universe, filled with other Individual Selves, other solar systems, other stars populating the night sky. From the perspective of Individual Self, one looks "down" to the personality and body, wielding them as magical tools in the clear expression of the Individuality's purpose. As with the senses and the personality, the CSM takes this otherwise un-consciously natural process and makes of it a consciously integrated faculty. One learns to act powerfully and directly in the Universe as an equally important Individual.

As the Individual Self matures and learns to express itself more clearly, the power of its essential purpose asserts itself. The knowledge, and more importantly, the experience, that all is interconnected and of One Source, begins to crystallize. Slowly, one is lead to the Great Transformation, which comes with the opening of the next level of Self, that of the Greater Self.

The Greater Self is the first level at which we truly experience an interconnectedness. The Greater Self exists beyond space-time-meaning (that which is the foundation of space-time), manifesting countless Individualities (and consequently, personalities and physical bodies) within its stream. Since words are space-time constructs, it becomes impossible to clearly describe such a realm -- only poetry and mysticism can approach an expression of it -- so my words must be taken as symbols, filled-to-brimming with meaning. That said, I would describe it as a womb, from which we emerge as Individual foci of conscious awareness. Yet, there are several (an infinite number of?) Greater Selves, casting their progeny into the river of existence; so this is clearly not the Ultimate Connectedness which calls to us. Such a connection comes only with the awareness of The One Self, the Self of which we are all equal centers of expression. This is the Ultimate Union with All, the ultimate goal of the CSM.

## **CSM PRACTICE**

### **#10 - MALKUTH: Body**

Acknowledgment of, and separation from, the Seven Senses  
(taste, smell, touch, sight, hearing, emotional tone, and mind chatter).

The CSM begins with the physical Body; its comfort and relaxation. Find for yourself a comfortable position, one that you can remain comfortable in for at least half an hour. For some this will be achieved best by sitting upright in a cushioned chair; for others, by laying down flat on the back, or through the assumption of a chosen yogic asana.

Once you are settled, close your eyes, calm yourself and take note of your breath. Count out your inhale and your exhale, and for a few moments, breathe to this steady rhythm.

Shift your awareness to your feet, and gently relax each of their muscles. Release all the tension from your feet. Follow by gently relaxing and releasing the tension from your ankles, then calves, knees, thighs, hips, buttocks, groin, stomach, lower-back, upper-back, chest, shoulders, upper-arms, elbows, forearms, wrists, hands, neck, throat, mouth, cheeks, nose, eyes, forehead, scalp, ears, and rectum. Release all the tension from your Body.

Turn your attention to the taste in your mouth. Note it closely and experience it as clearly, and thoroughly, as you can. Willfully and abruptly, let it go. Consciously release it, just as you did with the tension in your Body -- as if you were opening your hands and letting go of something which you had grasped. Willfully separate the Sense of Taste from your Self. Make of it a sphere of whatever color seems appropriate, and place it behind you, to the left.

You are now separate from the Sense of Taste. To reconnect with it, simply reach behind you and touch the sphere. This brings Taste back to you as a usable sensory organ; it re-unites you with Taste, re-involves your attention. Disengage from Taste once again, by first taking close note of its input of information, and then by consciously separating it from your Self. Let it go, and place it external to your Self, behind you, to the left.

Willfully turn your attention AWAY from the sphere of Taste and TO your Sense of Smell. As before, delve deeply into your experience of this Sense's input. Smell all there is to be smelled. Note all the thoughts and emotions that these smells bring up, and let them go -- try to focus on Smell alone, try to isolate this one Sense -- let Smell happen without judgment, or extraneous thought. Then abruptly, and willfully, let Smell go. Separate it from your Self, placing it as a colored sphere, behind you, to the right. Picture it clearly, suspended next to the sphere of Taste. Both are external to you and do not involve your attention.

Willfully turn your mind's eye AWAY from the spheres of Taste and Smell, and TO your Sense of Touch. Clearly feel all that your nerves relay to you... delve into each sensation, trying always to isolate the Sense of Touch. Let it go as before, and place its sphere directly to your left, next to that of Taste.

To your right, you will place the sphere of your Sense of Sight, following the same process used with the previous Senses. In front of you, slightly to the left, place the sphere of your Sense of Hearing, next to that of Touch.

This completes the separation from the Five physical Senses. Laying behind these physical senses are those of the Astral and Mental Bodies. The Senses of the Astral Body manifest in the physical matrix through the Emotional Tone, and those of the Mental Body, through the Mind Chatter. Though the Emotional Tone and Mind Chatter have their source in subtler realms than the physical, they nonetheless, impact our physical experience in the same ways that the Five physical Senses do. Consequently, they too must be let go of.

With the Five physical Senses separate from you, and surrounding you, look within and experience your Emotional Tone. Try to isolate it even from "thought"...FEEL it, know it...and let it go. Separate it from your Self, and place its sphere in front of you, slightly to the right, next to that of Sight. Each time that it, or any of the Senses, reaches out and grabs your awareness, note it, and then return it to its separateness.

Willfully turn your attention AWAY from your Emotional Tone, and TO your Mind's Chatter. As with the other Senses, delve into your Mind's Chatter, experiencing it as fully as possible. Isolate it, and let it flow of its own, without your involvement, or attachment to certain threads of its progression. Each time you are drawn into it, note the fact and then separate from it. Externalize it, make of it a beautifully radiant sphere, and place it directly in front of you.

The experience of Self, with all Seven Senses separate and external, is the Center of Stillness. At first, this Center of Stillness may be elusive, but as your ability to separate the Senses increases, your presence within it will extend from moments to minutes, then to tens of minutes, and so on.

Of all the Seven Senses, Mind Chatter is the most subtle and the one to which we have the strongest attraction. So, do not be discouraged by the brevity of your initial successes with its separation. Each time you exercise your separating-muscle, the effort required becomes less and the result greater. Before you know it, your ability will have grown to the point of absolute control over all Seven of the Senses, and quick access to the Center of Stillness.

### **#9 - YESOD: Personality (instinct)**

Complete control over the Senses. Attention turns to the "Web" of one's Life.

Once you have broken through the barrier of the Seven Senses, build upon your skill at negating the Senses, and concentrate on attaining the Center of Stillness. Visualize yourself sitting in the Center of Infinite space, with the spheres of the Senses surrounding you -- separate, yet at your beck and call. All about you is a Quiet darkness. Spend a good amount of time coming to know and feeling comfortable with this Center. Drink heartily from this cup of Silence.

Directly below you, begin visualizing the web of your personality; the tapestry you weave of your life. Let each light-fiber of its structure be made from some aspect of who you are in the world.

Be absolutely honest with your self about your good points as well as your bad points. Look at your life and reflect its meaning in your web. Each and every aspect of who you are and how you express your Self, must be carefully gathered, acknowledged and woven into your web. Craft a web that truly and completely reflects the totality of your personality.

As you weave, you will be faced with making value judgments about the strands of your personality. You will be sorely tempted to deny their place in your work of Art, but please do not. The first goal is to get a picture of your personality exactly as it exists now, without getting caught up in value judgments and consequent self-change. Do not try to craft your personality into something new at this stage, merely diagram it and in that way, come to know its every wrinkle, blemish, and beauty.

Return repeatedly to the Center of Stillness and craft this symbol of your personality until you feel it to be complete. Then ask yourself if you're really sure its thorough enough. Keep asking until you're sure that you're sure.

### **#8 - HOD: Personality (rational mind)**

Study of the "Web" and beginning of conscious activity within it.

The web, when complete, is a thing of rare beauty. It is totally unique to each individual: a one-of-a-kind work of Art. Now that you have come to know the ins and outs of the personality you currently manifest, you can begin to change it and shape it into a clearer expression of your Self.

We each carry within us a sensory organ which will guide us in self-change -- our conscience. Our conscience, above all other factors, speaks to us of what is personally right or wrong. It can override all other "laws", or it can be ignored and denied, but it always speaks to our inner ear.

Examine your web with the search-light of your conscience and note what aspects of it, what patterns of reactive, instinctive behavior, emerge into your field of view. Begin actively making those value judgments you tried to avoid earlier. Look closely at your web and judge it honestly, with self-love and acceptance. Judge its good parts as well as its bad parts. Make note of what you desire to transform and the parts you wish to preserve.

Once you have a solid image of what you wish to accomplish in terms of self-change, then and only then, should you begin making changes. Choose one item at a time and work with it till you have achieved the transformation you desire. I use the word "transformation" quite intentionally, because I wish to stress that this is not a "getting rid of"; but rather, a shifting of an already present energy-substance to a new focus. Your task is to transform the light-fiber of your chosen item into the new aspect you desire.

Self-change however, requires more than mere visualization. As with all the aspects of the CSM, the process of self-change must be integrated into one's physical life. The transformations you cause in the web of your personality must be reflected in who you are in the world, they must be evident in your consequent actions and patterns of thought.

Work at transforming your chosen item with every faculty at your disposal and do not rest until you have met with success. When your life and the light-fiber of your chosen item match each other, reflecting the reality of your successful transformation, only then should you move on to another item.

#### **#7 - NETZACH: Personality (lower emotions)**

Mastery over the "Web". Attention turns to separation from the "Web"  
and toward Individual Self.

Keep returning to the Center of Stillness and the web of your personality, continuing relentlessly in your work of self-change. Gradually, your web and your life will reflect the personality you have chosen to self-craft. Let it be an image of unique and great beauty, clearly expressive of your core nature.

The work with the personality never really reaches an end. Life experiences will always show you parts of yourself that need improvement, parts you were unaware of previously, or that suddenly no longer serve you well. "Perfection" is an elusive and fluid thing at this level of self expression. So, over the years, you will need to return periodically to your web with the critical eye of your conscience, and make new adjustments.

At a certain point (you will know when it arrives) you must say "enough for now", and move on from involvement with your web. If you can look at the tapestry of light-fibers and feel proud of who you have become, then you have truly reached this turning point and are ready to move on.

Sitting in the Center of Stillness, look down at the web of your personality. Experience it as fully as you can, listening closely to its input, to what it tells you of your core nature. Now, let it go. Separate it from your Self just as you did with the Seven Senses. It lies below you, separate from you. To re-involve yourself with it, merely touch it and you are reunited. Note its input, and then carefully return it to its separateness.

In this state of separateness from the Senses and the web, spend time meditating upon the Self-Who-Acts. Strive to identify with that part of you which crafted the web so carefully. This is your Individuality, the aspect of Self which is expressed through the web of your personality.

Return often to this meditation.

#### **#6 - TIPHARETH: Individuality (core)**

Separation from the "Web" and the achievement of  
the perspective of Individual-Self.

At some point, there will occur a shift in your perspective, and you will find your Self looking down at the personality and body, as you would look down at your feet. They are still an integral part of you, a part required for physical existence and expression; yet, they are somehow separate

in a totally new way.

This shift in perspective is very difficult to describe with words. Suffice it to say that it will be a transformative revelation; a cathartic experience of coming to know and experience your Self as a powerful, autonomous Individual.

Once this new perspective has been achieved, visualize your Self as an Individual Sun, with the aspects of your personality, the Seven Senses, and your body, orbiting about you. Stand as the center of gravity in the solar system of your life. All around you, in the darkness of Infinite Space, the night sky is populated with countless other solar systems. Each bright point of light is a Star like your Self.

Keep returning to this experience of Individual Self, building upon your initial revelation until it is easily attained and comfortable.

### **#5 - GEBURAH: Individuality (will)**

Study of the Individual-Self and beginning of its conscious activity in the external Universe.

Your task now is to become consciously and directly active as an Individual. Look down at your web and your physical existence. How clearly is your Individual Self expressed through their agency? As you come to know and identify with your Individual Self, project your essential nature into your web and your physical life.

Let each breath, each thought and action, express clearly the goals and tasks of your Individuality. As you move throughout your life, see to it that each moment reflects who you are. Shape and craft your life to this end. It is after all, the vehicle of your Individuality's physical expression.

Come to know, experience, and exercise your Individual power in the Universe.

### **#4 - GEDULAH: Individuality (higher emotions)**

Mastery of the Individual-Self. Attention turns to separation from Individual-Self and toward Greater-Self.

Look now to those other Stars which fill the Universe. Reach out and communicate with your neighbors, as one Individual to another. Over time, become active within this community of Individuals, contributing your own unique talents and perspectives to the Universal culture.

As you travel and experience the Universe, you will encounter other Individuals who seem completely familiar, as if they were parts of your Self. Gradually, the awareness of a deep level of connection with these others will emerge. This is the initial perception and experience of the Greater Self, the level of Self at which many of us are One.

This level of connection appears to be hidden by a veil. While it is only with the Blessing of Divine Providence that this veil can be truly penetrated, it still requires a concomitant personal effort to lift. So, spend time meditating upon this barrier. Study it thoroughly. Approach it and try your best to pass through it. When the time is ripe, you will succeed in separating from your Individuality and uniting with your Greater Self.

### **#3 - BINAH: Greater Self (Understanding)**

Separation from Individual-Self and the achievement of the perspective of Greater-Self.

When you have, with the Grace of the Divine, penetrated the veil, you will no longer be the person you were before that moment. Your experience of the Self and its role will be totally and dramatically transformed. This can be a very unsettling time for your physical life, so treat yourself well throughout.

Come to know your Greater Self, returning to this perspective often as you strive to integrate its awareness into your life. Look down to your Individuality, personality, and physical body, and note how clearly they manifest the purpose of your Greater Self. This is to be a time of Self-discovery.

### **#2 - CHOKMAH: Greater Self (Wisdom)**

Mastery as Greater-Self and its activity in the external Universe.

Attention turns to separation from the Greater-Self and toward The One Self.

When you are comfortable with the experience of Greater Self, begin crafting the Individuality to better express the Greater Self's goals. See to it that the Greater Self is fully integrated at the levels of Individuality, personality, and physical body. Then, reach out, and communicate with the other Greater Selves that you perceive. Much like the experience of your Individuality joining the larger community of the Universe, exert the power of your Greater Self within this new, subtler Universe.

These experiences will lead you to the realization of The One Self, the level at which even the various Greater Selves are United. Though the veil between the Greater Self and The One Self is very ephemeral, it still requires conscious effort (and, of course, the Blessings of Divine Providence) to breach. Guidance for this task must come from within.

### **#1 - KETHER: The One Self**

Separation from the Greater-Self and Unity with The One Self.

Ultimately, one separates from even the Greater Self, and merges completely with The One Self. This is the true experience of Unity. May we all be so Blest!