

## Why Should We Meditate?

*by Yogi Amrit Desai*

In the ordinary waking state, every thought is charged by your emotional reactions. Every perception is distorted by your anticipation and expectation of what is present. So everything you perceive at any given moment is distorted by personal biases, fears and attachments. Under these conditions, you suffer from blindness and deafness, where you cannot see what is, and your ears are deafened by your personal biases, fears and attachments.

Everything you believe that you see, hear and interact with in life is not reality. What you are actually experiencing is your reaction to reality. All reactions come from the conditioning of your past unresolved impressions and experiences. This means that every one of your reactions is related to the trauma, pain and hurt that has been experienced in the past and that is stored in your body in the form of physical tension and blockages. These blockages, working through the body, keep the body from functioning optimally. This creates agitation, restlessness and emotional reactions through the medium of the mind. This is why you are helplessly driven by restlessness in your mind, becoming a helpless victim who suffers from your own mental and emotional agitations. Thus the body and mind create a vicious cycle where they begin to feed negative energies into each other, creating constant mental agitation, emotional reaction and physical tensions, which is at the core of all human suffering.

In the system of body-mind-spirit, the mind can monitor the body. But in order to monitor the mind, it is necessary to go to the next higher level to restore the tranquility, creativity and health of the mind. For that, you must go into meditation. You cannot solve problems at the level of consciousness where the problems are created. All problems that you carry from the past are created at the body-mind level. Through the practice of meditation you are able to restore the healing interaction between body-mind.

The ego-mind operates through memory of the past and projections into the future. Problems you experience in the past invariably come up in the form of reactions to the present moment. Solutions that you call goals and desires are promised in the future. In

pursuit of promised happiness in the future you don't mind being miserable in the present. You do not mind creating stress on a physical, mental and emotional level with the expectation of being relaxed at the end. To be more relaxed at the end of the day, you don't mind creating tensions all day long. In an effort to make your retirement years prosperous, you don't mind making your whole working life miserable. This is how you manage to make your life miserable by relying on the false promise of happiness in the future.

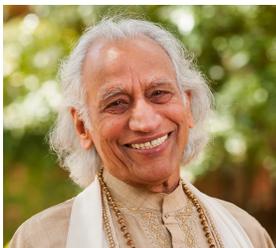
*Why do you have such restless minds and resist trying to find peace, especially when you try to meditate?*

When you learn to pay attention to the restlessness in the mind, irritations and emotions naturally arise. You will notice the restlessness and agitation, especially when you are attempting to quiet the mind through meditation. The thought patterns that are obscured by everyday events become instantly more visible and prominent when you are creating appropriate conditions to notice them through meditation. When you see such restlessness of mind during meditation, it is not really that you are more restless than usual; you are simply recognizing the restlessness that is usually buried under the intensity of the countless activities you are involved in.

*What is the best time of the day to meditate?*

It is especially beneficial to have a specific time for meditation that you can create in consideration of your daily activities. This can change from person to person. Once you decide a specific time, you must regularly follow that time and your psycho-physical clock begins to create appropriate conditions for you to avoid the usual indecision and hesitations that surround the discipline and the practice of yoga. That itself forms a very important part of spiritual discipline. Early morning and before going to bed are excellent times for meditation and are convenient for nearly everyone. Use either one or both times for meditation, but if that is not feasible because of work hours or other personal reasons choose whatever time you like. Whenever you are able to consistently meditate, that is the best time for you.

*This article, and many more, are available online at [IAM.yoga](http://IAM.yoga).*



**Gurudev Shri (Yogi) Amritji Desai** is one of a handful of gurus who came to America from India in the early 1960s. This wave began the initial yoga craze that has grown into massive and diverse yoga practices we have worldwide today. Amritji has been repeatedly honored for being one of the earliest pioneers in bringing yoga to the West. He is the last living guru from this initial wave.