

Suffering, Reformation, and Redemption

As we move into the holiday season, our thoughts move to gift giving, vacation, and reconnection with our loved ones. Beneath this annual tradition, however, are the eternal themes of suffering, reformation, and redemption.

When I was reformatting the Mudrashram® Correspondence Course for the second edition, I came across some very powerful meditations on these themes that the Astral Soul encounters when it takes the Third Cosmic Initiation. These themes, while germane to that Initiation, have a much broader context, applicable to our lives and our quest for meaning and purpose. I will excerpt from that lesson, and we will meditate together on these eternal themes.

Excerpted from the *Mudrashram® Correspondence Course*

The Hell Worlds (Suffering)

“Traveling through the 108 nodal points of this realm, the Astral Soul comes to deeply understand what hell, human misery and suffering truly mean. Through the meditations presented here, you will look into the roots of your own suffering.”

The Worlds of Suffering

We encounter suffering in many forms. We experience

- (1) Physical suffering through injury and acute pain
- (2) Etheric suffering through illness and debilitation
- (3) Emotional suffering through disappointment, anxiety, abuse, and loss
- (4) Mental suffering through ignorance and retardation
- (5) Personal suffering through lack of meaning and purpose, or failure to achieve desired objectives

- (6) Spiritual suffering by being cut off from the sources of spiritual sustenance and the Divine Origin, or by persecution and oppression by those of other faiths
- (7) Essential suffering, the pain of lack of growth and failure to actualize human and spiritual potentials.

The vision of Hell presented to you in the First Planetary Mesoteric Initiation portrayed the suffering of the spirit in various ways. This suffering appeared as the vicissitudes of reincarnation, from being separated from the sustenance of the Soul and Divine Spirit by being exiled to the lower realms, or being thrown into a world of torment or chaos.

But this vision of Hell in the First Mesoteric Initiation did not paint the larger, multi-dimensional picture of suffering that we experience. To know that suffering is more profound than that experienced by the spirit, but touches all levels of our being, is both humbling and enlightening. The healing transformation we are called to do must take place at all of these levels.

In this first of the realms of the Third Cosmic Initiation, you are called to meditate deeply and comprehensively on the nature of suffering, what causes it, and what relieves it. You will discern what portion of your suffering is self-caused by your own reckless or misinformed actions, or by your failure to act wisely and appropriately when action was required. You will understand what portion of your suffering was received at the hands of others, and those aspects of your suffering you could not control.



Meditation on Suffering

Bring yourself to the state of union with the spirit of the fifth Path. From this vantage point you are going to ask a series of questions, and listen for the answers.

Below are some helpful, evocative questions to help you obtain insight into your suffering, and your own dispassionate inquiry may bring up other questions you may wish to ask. [Please note, you will not necessarily receive an answer for each question you ask, and you may be called to wait for an answer or to simply accept the suffering as something you cannot remedy or change right now.]

- How am I suffering physically?
- How am I suffering ethereally (e.g., problems with vitality and energy)?
- How am I suffering emotionally?
- How am I suffering mentally?
- How am I suffering personally?
- How am I suffering spiritually?
- How am I suffering Essentially?
- In what ways have I caused myself suffering by taking action?
- In what ways have I caused myself suffering by failing to act?
- In what ways have I experienced suffering at the hands of others? What about that experience made me suffer?
- In what ways have I experienced suffering by causes clearly beyond my control (e.g. in wars, natural catastrophes, accidents involving other people in which I was an unintentional victim)?
- In what ways might I relieve my physical suffering?
- In what ways might I relieve my etheric suffering?
- In what ways might I relieve my emotional suffering?
- In what ways might I relieve my mental suffering?

- In what ways might I relieve my personal suffering?
- In what ways might I relieve my spiritual suffering?
- In what ways might I relieve my Essential suffering?

As your intuition gives you answers to these questions, notice if you are willing to implement these changes suggested. If you detect resistance, inquire:

- Why would I be unwilling to implement this means to relieve my physical (or other types of) suffering?

Lord Buddha traced human suffering to our unresolved desires and attachments. He pointed out that the source of our suffering is our unwillingness to let go of our dreams and desires.

We are at our core unwilling to put away our limited concepts of identity, to relinquish our attachments to those people with whom we have formed relationship bonds of love, friendship and enmity, and to release those ideas in which we have invested our hopes, aspirations and ideals.

We dread abandoning our clinging to the human body that must undergo illness, old age and death. This clinging at the root of our psyche, which resists change, pain, and loss, is the essential cause of our suffering—by overcoming this we find a way out of the multiple miseries of life.

*Meditation on the relationship between
desire, attachment, and suffering*

Focusing as in the last meditation on the seat of the spirit in the sacral center, ask the following questions:

- What part of my suffering is due to my unfulfilled desires?
- What part of my suffering is due to my craving for pleasure?
- What part of my suffering is due to my running away from pain?
- What part of my suffering is due to my running away from death?

- What part of my suffering is due to my unwillingness to relinquish my attachments of love and of hate for other people?
- What part of my suffering is due to my unwillingness to relinquish my attachments to my concept of identity, who I believe myself to be?
- What part of my suffering is due to my unwillingness to relinquish my attachments to an ideal to which I aspire, to which I attribute virtue, by which I give my life hope and meaning?

This meditation can shake you to your foundations, as you realize how desire has both motivated you, yet trapped you.

- It has tempted you by pleasure, but enslaves you through tenacious habits and addictions.
- It has protected you by fear, yet limited your world to a narrow corner of tenuous safety.
- It has tied you to others by bonds of love and hatred, yet made you dread your own solitude.
- It has defined you and created an ordered world in which to dwell, but it has veiled your infinite depths from your awareness.
- It has given your life hope and meaning, yet it has placed a horizon on your vision of what is possible and attainable.

Varieties of Suffering

Focus your attention on the cerebral center, and move 108 nodal points beyond the last nodal point of the Second Cosmic Initiation. As your awareness opens, see if you can sense the many types of human suffering. Now allow yourself to feel compassion for the suffering of yourself and others. Feel the all-embracing flood of compassion pouring around you and through you.

The Purgatorial Worlds (Reformation)

Purgatory is viewed as a place where the spirit turns away from its wicked behavior and erroneous attitudes, and cultivates virtue. It is a place where people aspire to improve their character, to aspire to a higher model of living. It is a place where people change for the better.

In this realm, the wayfarer contemplates change and reformation.

- You consider what sets up the desire to change, and how people change.
- You examine how you bring about change in your self, and how others can influence you to change in both positive and negative ways.
- You discover when you changed because of Fate or through apparent Supernatural intervention, through forces or agencies beyond your control.
- You appreciate the differences between your aspiration, how you feel that you should ideally be, and your reformation, the changes you can concretely and actually make.

Types of Change

In this realm you will consider the seven types of change, including: (1) physical change, (2) physiological or vital change, (3) emotional change, (4) mental change, (5) volitional change, (6) spiritual change, and (7) world change. The process of observing change leads to the recognition of those agencies or factors that cause the change. Ability to control these causal agencies or factors brings mastery of the phenomena.

The contemplation of observed change develops the faculty of discrimination. Mastery comes by isolation of causal factors and control of the phenomena by application of appropriate means. Fully understanding change leads to mastery of nature, mind and spirit.

Inquiry about change

Focusing as in the last meditation on the seat of the spirit in the sacral center, ask the following questions:

- What makes me want to change?
- What makes people change?
- What changes do I want to bring about in my self, and what do I need to do to accomplish these changes?
- How have others influence me to change in both positive and negative ways?
- In what ways have I been changed through apparent forces beyond my control?
- What do I feel that I should ideally be? What changes could I make in the future to bring that about?
- What changes can I actually make now in my life?

When desires are abandoned, the motivation to strive after many goals and dreams may disappear. The spiritual wayfarer must find the appropriate balance between renunciation brought about by the release of desires, and right activity, which selects life-affirming and constructive objectives to construct a fulfilling and meaningful life.

The teachers of the Mudrashram® lineage do not advocate the renunciation of the world, but rather, learning to commune with the spiritual worlds while living an active life in the world.

*Meditation on the balance between
fulfillment of desires and renunciation*

Consider for a moment what it would be like if you did not restrain yourself in any way, either through acceding to the wishes of others or your own personal conscience. Examine your desire fantasies, and what your life would be like if you lived only to fulfill your desires without other considerations. What would you do? How would you be different than you are today? Would you like being that kind of person?

Next consider the sacrifices you must make to obtain an education, to hold down a job, to maintain your family, to pay for the things you desire. Ponder further what sacrifices you might have to make

- To be an Olympic athlete
- To write a 1,000 page novel
- To start and run a successful business of your own
- To become a concert musician
- To champion a cause dear to your heart by bringing it to thousands of other people.
- To achieve spiritual mastery

Next look at the spiritual ideals imposed by systems of moral codes such as the Ten Commandments in the *Bible*, the Yama and Niyama of Patanjali (in *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*), or other spiritual groups whose beliefs and values you are familiar. Can you live up to these ideals of behavior? Here are several examples:

- Could you live brahmacharya—chastity in thought, word or deed?
- Could you adopt a lacto-vegetarian or vegan diet?
- Could you give up using intoxicants such as alcohol, psychoactive drugs, and nicotine?
- Could you stop being angry, forgive those who have injured and abused you, and regard everyone with love?
- Could you give a tenth of your income in charity, to spiritual organizations or to community service organizations?
- Could you fast on days considered holy days?
- Could you wear special clothing that would mark you as a member of a particular faith or sect?
- Could you go to spiritual services once a week? What about attending them daily?

- Could you meditate for two and one-half hours per day? How about meditating for four hours a day? Could you meditate for ten hours a day?

Imagine what it may be to be a full renunciant, spending your entire time meditating and serving the needs of others.

- You would own nothing, renounce sexuality and family life, and obey without question the dictates of a spiritual superior, a priest or guru who supervises you.
- You would follow the lifestyle dictated by that spiritual leader, desiring nothing for yourself, seeking only to serve others.

Could you make those kinds of sacrifices?

- If sacrifice is a continuum going from hedonistic abandonment to the whole-hearted pursuit of desires, to the renunciation of all desires, where are you on that continuum today?
- Where would you like to be?
- What would you have to change in your life to be there?
- Is that something you are willing to do?

Varieties of Reformation

Focus your attention on the cerebral center, and move 108 nodal points beyond the last nodal point of the Hell Worlds in the Third Cosmic Initiation. As your awareness opens, see if you can sense the many types of human efforts at reformation and change.

- In what ways have you been changing and attempting to improve yourself?
- Those whom you know?
- Can you feel the collective sacrifice to make the world a better place?

Feel the sacrifice and self-denial undertaken by multitudes of people all over the world.

Notice how people are improving themselves, by reforming their character, strengthening their will, mastering new abilities, purifying their passions, and undergoing austerities to earn the blessings of the deities of their faith.

- Do you sense this change is adaptive, that the world is changing in positive ways?
- Or is the austerity destructive, warping character and channeling personal development in unnatural ways?
- When is it constructive?
- When is it destructive?
- How can you change constructively, avoiding the pitfalls of fanaticism, immoderation, or self-abuse?

The Heaven Worlds (Redemption)

Heaven is a world of peace, happiness, and joy.

- For some, this means obtaining all that they have ever desired.
- For others, it is a place away from care and responsibility, a kind of perpetual vacation in a tropical paradise.
- For others, it may mean being surrounded by myriad varieties of beauty.
- For others, it may mean being able to continue their life's work and study without the restraints of finances and demands of other people.
- For others, it may mean the contemplation of the deep symbolic truths of their faith and to dwell in the continual presence of their spiritual Master and Lord.

- For others it may mean continuing development of their wisdom and gifts in realms beyond the physical world.
- For others, it may mean a merging of the Soul and spirit in their origin in the Divine Source.

Each individual has ideas about what it means to be happy, to experience lasting joy, to be at peace. Yet sometimes, when they actually experience those things they thought would bring them happiness, they find that they are not at all what they expected.

Indeed, sometimes what we thought would be a source of happiness turns out to be a source of pain and misery.

- Have you ever dreamed about having a new television set, and the machine continually breaks down?
- How about the new car for which you yearned that is now continually in the shop?
- What about the marriage that was supposed to have been made in heaven, but now seems like it was born in hell?

In the Third Cosmic Initiation, you will contemplate the meaning of the redemption of the heavenly worlds in many ways.

Redemption means preserving, saving, or retaining the essence of something away from harm, decay, and destruction.

In the spiritual notions of the First Mesoteric Planetary Initiation, the objective was the preservation of the spirit and the Moon Soul from being sucked into Hell's vortex of destruction, and being saved in some realm of great peace, sanctity, and spiritual beauty.

Here, you will see that the idea of heaven is multi-dimensional, and that redemption and inner transformation is seen to take place at all levels.

Meditation on Happiness and Disillusionment

Consider for a moment what you believe makes you happy physically, ethereally, emotionally, mentally, personally, spiritually and Essentially. Why do you believe that those things make you happy? What are these driving forces of your life?

- Are they a quest for the fulfillment of your need for survival?
- Are they predicated upon the experience of health and harmony?
- Are they based upon the search for the maximization of pleasure and ecstasy?
- Do they reach for the possibility of a lasting intimate and genuine relationship?
- Do they strive for the expansion of knowledge and ability, or the possibility of growth and achievement?
- Do they focus on the discovery of meaning and values to live by?
- Do they drive you to seek out and dwell in the ever-new joy and bliss of Being or seek the wellsprings of your spirit's solitude?

Next consider, what if they weren't there in your life? What would your life mean?

Now consider the times when you had an expectation that a thing, a person, an experience, learning something, achieving something, understanding something, attaining a station on the Great Continuum toward which you aspired, would make you happy, and it didn't.

- What things have you wanted that didn't make you happy when you finally got them?
- What people have you yearned for sexually, for their company, for their love and respect, for their guidance, and found these did not fulfill you when you got them?

- Have you felt that you would be happy if you could see the Great Wall of China, scale Mount Everest, or walk the streets of Jerusalem, go sky diving or kayaking, only to find it disappointing when you went there or did that?
- Have you gotten an advanced degree in academic study, only to find it did not begin to answer your questions or to slake your desire for knowledge?
- Have you achieved a goal you have been struggling towards for years, only to find it did not satisfy you?
- Have you searched for something meaningful and for true values, only to find you have outgrown them and they no longer resonate?
- Have you attained something spiritually, yet feel a yearning to keep moving?

Consider what it is in you that feels disillusioned, and continues to create new desires.

- In what ways does this essence of desire spur you on to growth?
- How does it entangle you in chasing evanescent pleasures, running up great debts in pursuit of your image of the good life, and waste your time?
- Have you risked your health and safety chasing desires?
- Have you found what you are looking for chasing desires, or do they seem endless and insatiable, and you are no closer to finding happiness than when you started?
- What is really important to you?
- Which of these desires are essential for you to obtain?
- Which are important, but you can live without?
- Which are mere whims that can be easily abandoned?

- Which desires are obsessions and compulsions, addictions that sap your life, destroy your relationships, consume your thoughts, shatter your peace, and fill you with self-loathing and contempt, which you must root out before they ruin you utterly?

Meditation on Redemption

Imagine for a moment that you have died, and you are looking at your own tombstone.

- What part of you remains physically?
- Does some part of you live on in your children?
- None of your possessions belong to you anymore, but have been distributed to others.
- Your wealth no longer belongs to you, but has been divided up among your heirs and used to pay your debts.
- You can no longer use your physical body to sense the world, or use it to move.

The vital force that animated your body has withdrawn, and returned to the Cosmic Reservoir.

- You dwell in a body of light, looking down at your body.
- You are breathless, without heartbeat, yet you are alive.
- Your physical strength is gone.
- Your physical body is being broken down into the elements that comprise it.

You have relived your experiences of life, and reviewed your loves and hatreds, your joys and disappointments, your victories and your losses, the things that seemed important to you.

- Now they are gone, cast-off like an old skin.
- You are free, dancing in the Cosmic current like a leaf on the wind.

You have reviewed the knowledge you have gained, and extracted from them the essential understanding and skills to carry with you on your great journey. You retain the essential patterns of your learning ethereally, as a great tree drops its leaves during winter, but its trunk remains.

You have seen that in all your meanings, only those truths that you have lived, and the love you have given remains with you here, as the veil of your former life is rent and you rise into the light of Eternity, in which you behold your Soul.

- Notice what your Soul has retained and kept from your experience in the flesh.
- Discern what growth your Soul has made in this incarnation.
- Observe the flowering and decline of your human personality, and what aspect of this you have preserved as seeds in your causal body, as lasting impressions that will sprout in future lives.
- Contemplate the realm in which your Soul dwells—what is this world in which you spend this Eternal moment?

Third Cosmic Initiates discover redemption is the knowledge of what aspects of human life survive death. This allows them to prioritize their activities to maximize what will be of lasting value—beyond death—for future spiritual growth and for future incarnations.



Varieties of Redemption

Focus your attention on the cerebral center, and move 108 nodal points beyond the last nodal point of the Purgatory Worlds in the Third Cosmic Initiation. As your awareness opens, see if you can sense the many types of after death experiences the Souls of human beings are undergoing.

- What Souls have undergone fruitful lives?
- What Souls have undergone disappointing lives?
- What Souls have advanced on their spiritual evolutionary tracks?
- Which have retrogressed as a result of lives of great sin and perfidy?
- What are these states of Eternity like?
- What are the qualities of these vibratory bands of the GCC in which these Souls dwell?



Thank you for attending our webinar today!

