

MYSTICISM



Learn to be a Modern Mystic
Five Key Practices

by Maetreyii Ma Nolan PhD

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Five Key Practices

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DEDICATED TO THE THE
NUMINOUS DIVINITY
WITHIN ALL THAT IS

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Five Key Practices

Are you already, or do you aspire to be, someone who has a deep and profound connection to the Divine Source of Being? Do you want your heart and mind to soar with the eagles, dive to the depths of the sea, awaken to the dawn, and feel its light within you? Do you want to be touched by grace and divine love?

If your answer is yes, then you may well be a mystic within. Mysticism is the ability to directly experience the beauty and grace of the Divine. Webster's dictionary offers a definition of mysticism as “the experience of mystical union or direct communion with ultimate reality as reported by mystics.” It also notes that “the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth, or ultimate reality can be attained through subjective experience.”

What are these subjective Experiences and how do you cultivate them? There are 5 basic guidelines you can follow to enhance your ability to have this most profound mystical connection to ultimate reality, God, or spiritual truth. Whether you are a western mystic, a yogi, or simply someone seeking a deep connection, these 5 principles apply.

1. Follow a lifestyle that supports your spiritual

connection: It is generally understood that your thoughts create your actions, and your actions reinforce the way you think about yourself and the world around you. That being said, in order to cultivate an intuitive, spiritual connection to Source, it is important to break the cycle of beliefs and related actions that move us out of harmony and away from spiritual truth.

In order to do this, it is essential to have some sort of standard or ethical base for how we act in the world, the kinds of behaviors we cultivate, and the kinds we avoid. For example, if we tend to treat others with loving kindness and avoid intentionally doing harm to someone else, we will probably not only help those around us but begin to feel better about who we are. Actions toward others change our self-perception. We begin to feel we are worthy of love, worthy to feel divine love and presence. The light within us grows brighter.

The best teachings I have found on how to cultivate a lifestyle that enhances our connection to Divine Source have been laid out over two thousand years ago in the Yoga Sutras by Patanjali. The principles for this are part of the eight-fold path of yoga. They are called Yama and Niyama. They are considered foundational to God-Realization. Without working on our actions in the world, and thus our self-image, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to know spiritual truth.

Thus, the yogis of ancient times evolved the teachings of Yama and Niyama, the behaviors to cultivate and those to avoid for self-development. I have written a book on these practices that goes into the psychological depth that the modern mind can understand. In my book, *Living Love the Yoga of Yama and Niyama*, I explain how these ancient principles can be applied to everyday life here and now, as well as bring in other topics such as gratitude, compassion, and working with the shadow. I call the book *Living Love* because these practices are really about how to live your life in love and thus have a successful spiritual life.

2. Meditate, regularly, sincerely, and deeply: Part of living a life that embodies Divine Love is getting in touch with the essential essence within us, to be able to commune with God or our True Source of Being. To do that, we have to take the time to quiet the body and the mind. We need to meditate. According to Webster's Dictionary, the practice of meditating is "to engage in mental exercise (such as concentration on one's breathing or repetition of a mantra) for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness."

That heightened spiritual awareness is what allows us to move into the light and experience the same states of divine union as the yogis and mystics of the past. When the thoughts calm and our conscious awareness can move deeper, it allows our minds to open and melt into the Infinite One. This is the core of mysticism.

Lifestyle is the foundation and meditation is the vehicle, but there is one caveat. The meditation must be deep and sincere with an intense longing to know the Infinite One. This longing is essential. Without it, we can reap many positive physical and mental benefits from the practice of meditation, but the deep truth may evade us.

Yet for those whose hearts are longing for love divine, for union with the true Beloved of the heart, grace finds a way to find you and the more you meditate the more grace opens for you. This is the way of the mystics.

3. Develop your intuition and insight: There are a lot of people offering courses on how to develop your intuition or promote your psychic abilities. For those who are more interested in knowing Divine Truth than gaining some kind of personal power, and perhaps enhancing the ego in the process, what is really important is learning to commune through your feelings.

Empathy is a powerful force. As you lead a kind and harmonious lifestyle and meditate deeply and sincerely, intuition and empathy naturally grow. You become more sensitive, more attuned. You find you can suddenly sense things about others, maybe you know who is calling on the phone, and you may feel you can understand what animals around you need and want. Everyone is different in how it manifests, but intuition and empath are the natural outcomes of a deeper connection to the Divine Source and they in turn allow you to feel more deeply.

This allows you to connect with the Infinite, surrendering what you have thought of as you, in your encased self-perception, to the wholeness of Being. As you feel more attuned and in communion with the infinite, Divine perception may intuitively begin to flow into you, allowing you to perceive what is in harmony with nature and divine being and to align even deeper. This is the true intuition of the mystics, born of Divine grace and guidance, harmonizing with all existence.

4. Surrender your ego-oriented self-narrative: Hopefully, if you are working on having the right actions in your life, doing regular meditation, and opening up to your feelings and intuition, your ego-oriented self-narrative is diminishing. What is the ego-oriented self-narrative? It is part of your thinking that defines and confines you to identify with your body and mind structure. This is the part of your mind that tells you that you are just the body, personality, and the thoughts that run various narratives to fit into your self-identity.

This ego-oriented self-identity really does not allow room for mysticism or any feelings of expanded consciousness. It tells you that you're small, you're limited, you can never know true love, and you can never expand to fill your being with the vastness of Spiritual Truth. This is the self-identity with Ego, with the little self.

Yet in reality, this limited self-identity is not all that you are. Yes, you have a body and a mind related to embodiment, yet the mental narrative that tells you that this is all there is and makes you separate from all life is a false narrative you can grow out of.

How do you do this? Not by acquiring. Always acquiring more is the work of the monkey mind. To move out of the ego self you let go and surrender your false narrative about yourself. In your meditation allow yourself to feel your connection to the whole of being, to as they say, “let go and let God.”

As long as you want to stay in control and be in charge, you are stopping the flow of all life within you, the interwoven, interconnected web of life that moves in you, through you. The ego identity creates a narrative to support your separateness and your isolation. When you practice letting go, giving way to something vast, something greater than your ego self, you find the deeper Self, the Self of yourself, your connection to the whole.

This is mysticism; to let go, surrender your beliefs, your defenses, your smallness to the infinite source of all being. Let go of your narrative, let go of your self-defense, open your heart, open your feelings, and allow the light in. Allow the love which has no second, the Truth of all truths, the infinite presence of Being to surround, to dissolve you in endless love and infinite grace. This is mysticism.

5. Allow Divine Presence: The way of the mystics is one of absorption in Ultimate Reality. How does this happen? We can live a good lifestyle in harmony with the Divine. We can meditate sincerely and deeply and even develop our intuition and try to surrender our ego narrative, but how do we actually call in Divine presence?

The trick is we don't. The ego self is not in control. We cannot make it happen but what we can do is open up to grace, open up to allow awareness of the mystical whole. The presence of Divine grace is like a gently falling rain. It is falling everywhere but when we have the umbrella of our ego-oriented narrative running our minds, we prevent it from falling on us. The solution is simple. Take down the umbrella. Close it. Stop the narrative, consciously and intentionally. Then open the mind. Let go. Let your heart soar, reach with your feelings. Not to control or direct, but in love, in passion, surrender all that you have ever thought you are and feel what is there when you step out of the way. Feel the love, the presence, and the peace that has always been there and always will be there when you drop the narrative and let go.

You cannot control the Ultimate Reality, but you can step out of the way and listen for it. Listen with your heart and your feelings. Listen where the mind stops talking, the self-delusion of your ego narrative is suspended. Listen with the whole of you, with all of your heart, all of your love. Say "I am yours." Feel the immense love, the unconditional kindness, pure and deep enough to break even the hardest heart. Let go, give way. Let the walls down. Cry. Love. Dance. Be.

The Experience

There are moments when you feel you have gone past your day-to-day engagements, your struggles, and your difficulties, your joys, your relationships. You have gone deep within for a moment and touched something profound. Perhaps you feel expansiveness, a connection with nature, with all beings, perhaps with the stars in the heavens, perhaps with a loved one. For a moment you transcend your ordinary way of looking at the world, the ordinary boundaries by which you define yourself and confine yourself and you become for a moment, free, unbound, alive, connected to your Soul, to your essence.

Your heart goes out in connection to all the living beings in the world, all the people, all the plants, all the animals, and even the sunset, the mountains, the ocean. Have you ever felt yourself soar on the wings of an eagle, dive into the sea, rise with the sun, expand with the vastness of the universe? Have you ever contemplated all the planets and the multitude of living beings in the stars above?

If so, you begin to realize how small is a human life, how fleeting and yet how precious each and every moment because each and every moment is an opportunity to know the Infinite, to connect to the source of being. Each and every moment is an opportunity to expand your consciousness beyond the limits of your five senses and your physical body, to expand and become something more, something great, something amazing.

Opportunities for Mystical Experience

Each and every moment is an opportunity to know your innermost Self and through knowing that Divine Self, you come to know the vastness of this whole creation. For all truly lies within, in the depths of your Soul. In the deep inner recesses of your being lies the unstruck music from which stars are born, planets come to exist, and endless living beings move, are being born, live a time and fade from this world. Countless beings are coming and going, all abiding in the chords of eternity and known in the depths of your own being.

Mystical Experience

In the depths, the difference between I and thou dissolves. There, where light and sound are one, your experience is flooded with a shower of light. There, love abides, undefined, unconfined. There, love is an unconditional light and truth. And the chord is a sound from which all creation unfolds. There, past, present, and future meld together as one. There, all knowledge abides, and the heart is fulfilled. There, lover and beloved become one and the weary traveler finds his or her home at last. In the sunrise, in the sunset, in the sound of the robin flitting from limb to limb, in the mountain, in the sea, in the moment between then and now is the doorway to this uncharted land, the land of your Soul. So, take heart, find your boat and sail the uncharted waters in the depths of your being to find the untouched shore of eternity and the unfettered essence of your own Self.

Meditation is a practice that allows you to quiet the restless mind so that you may listen within and traverse to the shores of the inner sea. The truth of meditation is always with you because it is your soul of souls; it is your very own Self; it is the love that has no beginning and no end, of which all relations of this world are but mirror reflections rising again and again always to remind you of the nature of the Infinite. Take the time to journey within to those pristine halls where the unstruck music plays eternally. And remember for success, as in all journeys a way needs charting.

The Map through Uncharted Waters

The sages of the past have given us a map, have charted the deep waters, and found a way to access the vast love within each of us. In the ancient Yogic practices of Yama and Niyama, they have illumined a way to live in love in this very world. Understanding of the journey to living love in every moment of your life unfolds through the mystic practices of yama and niyama, as through them you learn how to live with harmony and reverence for all life. With these practices you learn how to live without doing harm to others, to stand in the truth, to see the Infinite all around, and to be in peace and contentment. You discover how to love selflessly and surrender on the infinite shores of your soul's abode. These yogic practices work with the body and the mind to foster a ground for the transformation of consciousness. For more information on these practices and how they can help you, you can go to my book, *Living Love, The Yoga of Yama and Niyama*.

Dwelling in Infinite Love

Yama and Niyama practices are for the purpose of purifying the worldly vessel so that which is infinite, pure, and untarnished may be perceived. They are like the cloth that is used to shine the mirror, taking off the dust and dirt so that the clear reflection of reality may be perceived.

Then, when the god of death (from the Rig Veda) Yama, comes to pay his call upon you, you may say to him, "Lord Yama, you are very powerful indeed, but I have not wasted this life.

I have purified my mind and body so that the perception of the Infinite has come to me. You will have to seek another, for though this body may pass from existence, I am beyond your reach. I dwell with the Divine in infinite love. You will have to go elsewhere, for I am not bound by the comings and goings of this finite world." The Lord Yama may not take what is not his, what has already been freed from the bondage of this world.

So, if you want to be a mystic and know the Infinite, to go beyond the reach of death, follow the codes of spiritual life laid down long ago by those who have understood the workings of the mind and who have walked the journey before you. Follow these practices and rest your mind upon the Infinite.

Follow the principles for a life in harmony with Divine Being. Meditate deeply and sincerely on the Infinite, develop your connection to inner guidance and intuition, surrender your ego oriented self-identity, let go and allow Divine Presence.

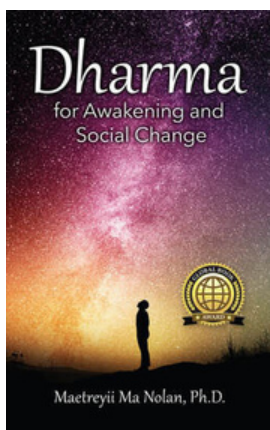
Then the peace and love inherent in all existence will be yours eternally. Never think it is too difficult. It is your birthright, oh human being, to know Divinity. Walk forward without fear. Surely the grace of the Infinite will fall upon you and the strength you require will be given to you.

So go forward with all your heart, following the five principles for practicing Mysticism, keeping your mind ever fixed upon the Supreme, and that which you love will surely become your own.

ABOUT MAETREYII MA

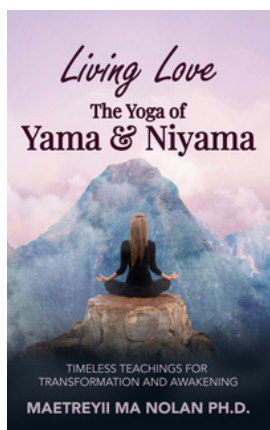
Maetreyii Ma Nolan, Ph.D. is an author of spiritual books, a teacher of mysticism and yoga, and a psychologist in private practice. She is also an expert in yoga philosophy. Dr. Nolan has a school for mystic yogic teachings called Ananda Gurukula. She has years of experience leading retreats, teaching yoga teachers training, yoga therapy training, and meditation training.

BOOKS BY MAETREYII MA



Dharma For Awakening and Social Change delves into an exploration of spiritual truths and their relationship to us personally and collectively with insight and resonance. Each of us has a deep connection to the whole. We are part of an interwoven, interconnected network of life. There is a harmony, a place of deep connection that we can learn to access. The way to that deep Source is Dharma.

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Living Love the Yoga of Yama and Niyama is a guidebook that can help you to open your heart, connect to the love that is all around you, and learn how to live a life more in alignment with your spiritual values.

"Kind, wise, and reflective of timeless truths, this yoga manual merits careful reading and rereading." -Kirkus Reviews

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