**MEDITATION ON LIGHT:** Tratak or *trataka* involves looking into the heart of a candle flame for as long as possible without blinking, and eventually holding the image of the flame in the mind’s eye when the eyes do close. When looking into the flame, practitioners’ eyes would start to water. This was said to clean and purify them, leaving the eyes clear and bright. The practice dates back to at least the 15th century, and can be found in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika,*which introduces two different types of tratak; *Bahiranga Trataka*or ‘external concentrated gazing’ and *Antaranga Trataka or ‘*internal concentrated gazing’.

**Bahiranga Trataka: Candle Gazing Meditation**

This form of ‘external concentrated gazing’ is the type of trataka that uses a candle flame. It should be *practiced in a dark room.* This meditative practice focuses the mind upon one point, and therefore bring attention away from the mind’s chatter.

Practice:

* Light the candle and place it at eye level, ensuring it does not flicker.
* Sit in a comfortable meditative posture with the hands on the knees. Set an intention or simply breathe slowly to relax the body and develop stillness.
* Close the eyes, and eventually open them, gazing at the center of the candle flame, just above the wick. Try to keep the eyes steady without blinking.
* Allow your breath to deepen and slow.
* Gaze for as long as possible without straining the eyes, and then close them when you need to. Continue to breathe deeply, focusing image of the flame that you see on the inside of your eyelid for as long as possible, noticing any colors that may appear.
* Now: imagine that you are the candle and flame. As the image begins to change and recede, imagine your essence merging with the candle’s energy, lighting a pathway to a place of complete happiness and serenity.
* Finally, imagine that you the one who is watching the meditation: See yourself looking at yourself, the flame, and the flame as you…
* You are the meditator, the object of meditation, and the one who is observing the meditation.