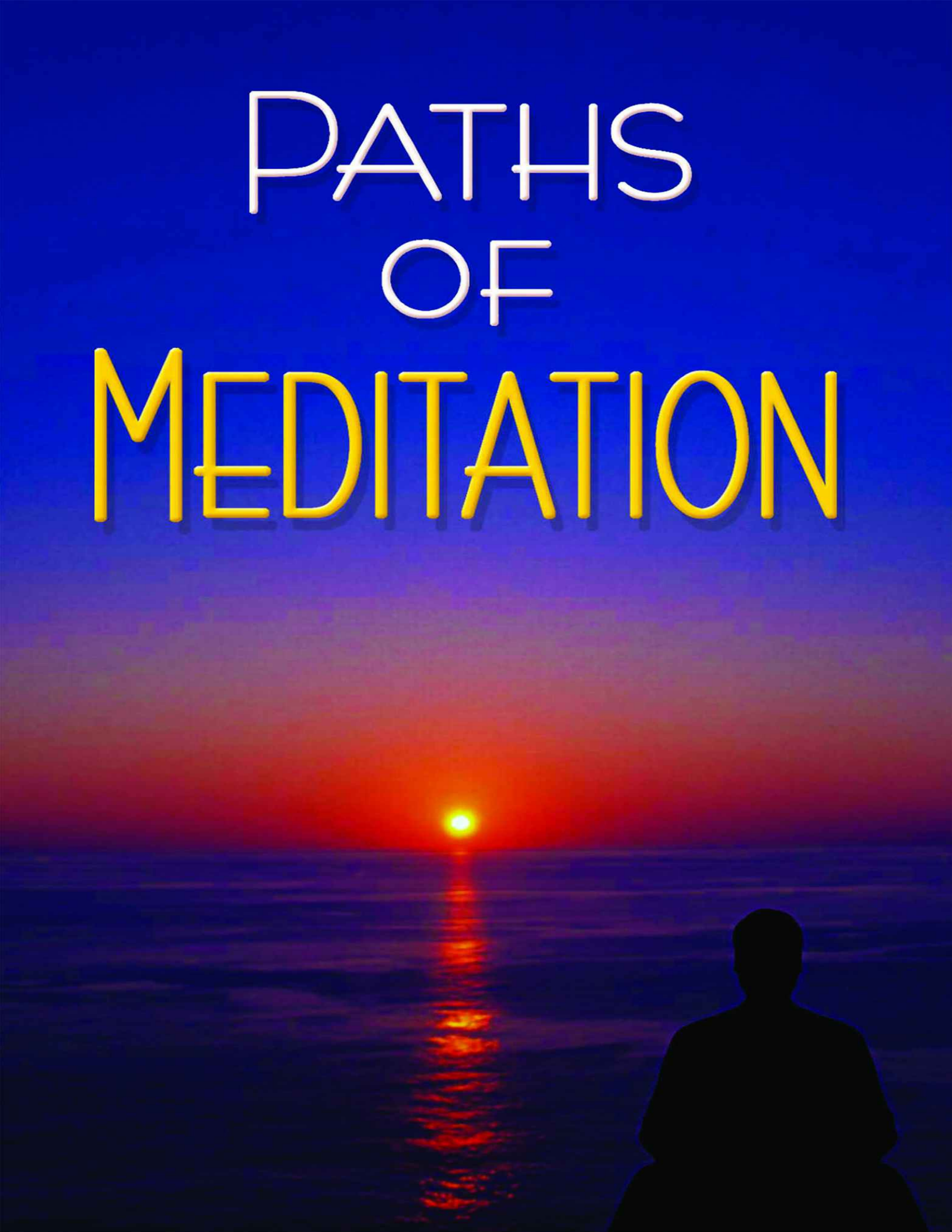


PATHS OF MEDITATION



PATHS OF MEDITATION

*A collection of essays on different
techniques of Meditation according to
different faiths.*



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We have great pleasure in placing before our readers this short symposium on Paths of Meditation.

Originally contributed as articles for the 1979 Special Number of the *Vedanta Kesari*, these essays present an interesting cross section of the diverse theories and techniques relating to the art and science of Meditation. The writers are not only specialists, each in his own field, but speak from deep personal experience. They write, therefore, not like scribes but with authority.

Meditation is not escapism. It is neither an imposition nor a luxury. It is as indispensable for the spiritual life as breathing is for the physical. To meditate is to open the door of the mind to the spaciousness that is our birthright. Devoid of meditation, one is like a blind man in a world of light and colour and loveliness. Our prayer is that this handy volume may serve as an eye-opener to all seekers of the supreme fulfilment.

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras.

Kalpataru Day,

1-1-1980

Publisher

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO THE TRINITY

IN THE WORDS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

If a man is able to weep for God, he will see Him. He will go into Samadhi. Perfection in yoga is Samadhi. A man achieves Kumbhaka without any Yogic exercise if he but weeps for God. The next stage is Samadhi.

There is another method—that of meditation. In the Sahasrara, Siva manifests himself in a special manner. The aspirant should meditate on Him. The body is like a tray; the mind and Buddhi are like water. The Sun of Satchidananda is reflected in this water. Meditating on the reflected sun one sees the Real Sun through the grace of God.

The first stage is that of the beginner. He studies and hears. Second is the stage of the struggling aspirant. He prays to God, meditates on Him and sings His names and glories. The third stage is that of the perfect soul. He has seen God, realized Him directly and immediately in his inner consciousness. Last is the stage of the supremely perfect, like Chaitanya. Such a devotee establishes a definite relationship with God, looking on Him as his Son or Beloved.

The heart is a splendid place. One can meditate there or in the Sahasrara. There are rules for meditation given in the scriptures. But you may meditate wherever you like. Every place is filled with Brahman-Consciousness, Is there any place where It does not exist? Narayana in Bali's presence covered with two steps the heavens, the earth and the interspaces. Is there any place left uncovered by God? A dirty place is as holy as the bank of the Ganges. It is said that the whole creation is the Virat, the Universal Form of God.

There are two kinds of meditation, one on the formless God and the other on God with form. But meditation on the formless God is extremely difficult. In that meditation you must wipe out all that you see or hear. You contemplate only on the nature of your inner self. Meditating on His inner self Siva dances about. He exclaims, "What am I? What am I?" This is called the Siva Yoga. While practising this form of meditation one directs one's look to the forehead. It is meditation on the nature of one's inner self after negating the world, following the Vedantic method of Neti, Neti.

There is another form of meditation known as the Vishnu Yoga. The eyes are fixed on the tip of the nose. Half the look is directed inward, and the other half outward. This is how one meditates on God with form. Sometimes Siva meditates on God with form, and dances. At that time he exclaims 'Rama, Rama' and dances about. God is born as man for the purpose of sporting as man. Rama, Krishna and Chaitanya are examples. By meditating on an Incarnation of God one meditates on God Himself.

When I meditated during my Sadhana, I used to think of the unflickering flame of a lamp set in a windless place.

In deep meditation a man is not at all conscious of the outer world.

A person can achieve such single-mindedness in meditation that he will see nothing, hear nothing. He will not be conscious even of touch. A snake may crawl over his body but he will

not know it. Neither of them will be aware of the other.

In deep meditation the sense organs stop functioning, the mind does not look outward. It is like closing the gate of the outer court in a house. There are five objects of the senses; form, taste, smell, touch and sound. They are all left outside.

At the beginning of meditation the objects of the senses appear before the aspirant. But when the meditation becomes deep they no longer bother him. They are left outside. How many things I saw during meditation ! I vividly perceived before me a heap of rupees, a shawl, a plate of sweets and two women with rings in their noses. 'What do you want?' I asked my mind. 'Do you want to enjoy any of these things?' 'No', replied the mind, 'I don't want any of them. I don't want anything but the Lotus Feet of God.'

Nangta used to tell me how a Jnani meditates. Everywhere is water; all the regions above and below are filled with water; man, like a fish, is swimming joyously in that water. In real meditation you will actually see all this.

Do you know another way a Jnani meditates? Think of infinite Akasa, and a bird flying there, joyously spreading its wings. There is the Chidakasa, and Atman is the bird. The bird is not imprisoned in a cage; it flies in the Chidakasa. Its joy is limitless.

Do you know what one feels in meditation? The mind becomes like a continuous flow of oil—it thinks of one object only, and that is God. It does not think of anything else.

IN THE WORDS OF THE HOLY MOTHER

Meditate and pray to the particular aspect of the Divinity revealed to you. The meditation begins in the heart and ends in the head. Neither Mantra nor scripture is of any avail. Bhakti or devotion alone accomplishes everything.

Continuous meditation will make the mind so steady that you will not feel inclined to give it up. When the mind is not in a mood to meditate, do not force it to do so. In such conditions, get up from the seat of meditation after making prostrations. Real meditation is of a spontaneous nature.

If meditation is not possible do Japa. Realization will come through Japa. If the meditative mood comes, well and good; but by no means do it by force.

One must practise meditation and Japa. That removes the impurities of the mind.

As one gets the fragrance of a flower by handling it, as one gets the smell of sandalwood by rubbing it against a stone, in the same way one gets spiritual awakening by constantly thinking of God. Sit for meditation in the morning and evening. Keep your head cool and practise meditation and prayer. It is very difficult to do so. It is rather easy to dig the earth with a spade.

IN THE WORDS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

When the mind has been trained to remain fixed on a certain internal or external location, there comes to it the power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that point. This state is called Dhyana.

The meditative state is the highest state of existence.

When by the previous preparations, it becomes strong and controlled and has the power of finer perception, the mind should be employed in meditation. This meditation must begin with gross objects and slowly rise to finer and finer, until it becomes objectless.

When one's Self is meditated upon as zero, and bereft of quality, that is called Abhava. That in which one sees the Self as full of bliss and bereft of all impurities, and one with God is called Mahayoga. The Yogi, by each method, realizes the self.

The multiplicity of waves gives place to unity and one wave is left in the mind. This is Dhyana, meditation.

Whenever the Yogi meditates, he can keep out all other thoughts; he becomes identified with that on which he meditates. When he meditates, he is like a piece of crystal. Before flowers the crystal becomes almost identified with the flowers. If the flower is red, the crystal looks red, or if the flower is blue the crystal looks blue.

Dharana is holding the mind on to some particular object. An unbroken flow of knowledge in that object is Dhyana.

If the mind can be fixed on the centre for twelve seconds it will be a Dharana, twelve such Dharnas will be a Dhyana, and twelve such Dhyanas will be a Samadhi.

With every sense and every organ active, have you that tremendous peace so that nothing can disturb you? Standing in Market Street waiting for the car with all the rush going on around you, are you in meditation—calm and peaceful? In the cave are you intensely active there with all quiet about you? If you are, you are a Yogi; otherwise not.

Take some holy person, some great person whom you revere, some saint whom you know to be perfectly non-attached, and think of his heart. That heart has become non-attached, and meditate on that heart; it will calm the mind.

Meditation is the removal of attachment; it is perfected by the suppression of the modifications. Also by non-attachment and practice, meditation is perfected.

The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation (Dhyana). In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation.

Meditation is a constant remembrance (of the thing meditated upon) flowing like an unbroken stream of oil poured from one vessel to another.

When the Jiva is sought to be united with Brahman, it is best; when meditation is practised, it is medium; repetition of name is the lowest form, and external worship is the lowest of the low. You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate those fields.

After initiation there should be in the aspirant after truth, Abhyasa or repeated attempt at

practical application of the Truth by prescribed means of constant meditation upon the chosen ideal.

Meditation is the one thing. Meditate, the greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life—the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life when we are not at all material—the soul thinking of itself, free from all matter, this marvellous touch of the soul.

Meditation is the focussing of the mind on some object, If the mind acquires concentration on one object, it can be so concentrated on any object whatsoever.

First, the practice of meditation has to proceed with some one object before the mind. Once I used to concentrate my mind on some black point. Ultimately, during those days I could not see the point any more, or notice, that the point was before me at all—the mind used to be no more—no wave of functioning would rise, as if it were all an ocean without any breath of air. In that state I used to experience glimpses of superconscious truth. So I think, the practice of meditation even with some trifling external object leads to mental concentration. But it is true that the mind very easily attains calmness when one practises meditation with anything on which one's mind is most apt to settle down. This is the reason why we have in this country so much worship of the images of gods and goddesses. The fact however is that the objects of meditation can never be the same in the case of all men. People have proclaimed and preached to others only those external objects to which they held to become perfected in meditation. Oblivious of the fact, later on, that these objects are aids to the attainment of perfect mental calmness, men have extolled them beyond everything else. They have wholly concerned themselves with the means, getting comparatively unmindful of the end. The real aim is to make the mind functionless, but this cannot be done unless one becomes absorbed in some object.

When the meditation is deep one sees many wonderful things. While meditating at the Baranagore Math, one day I saw the nerves Ida and Pingala. One can see them with a little effort. Then when one has a vision of the Sushumna one can see anything one likes. If a man has unflinching devotion to the Guru, spiritual practices—meditation and Japam, etc.,—come quite naturally; we need not struggle for them. The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, and the Guru is Siva Himself.

As churning brings out the butter in the milk, so Dhyana brings the realization of Brahman in the Soul.

PROLOGUE

WHY MEDITATE

Meditation is a portmanteau word. It means many things to many men. A plethora of concepts get packed in that one elastic expression. Meditation spans an astonishingly broad spectrum of mental functions from the grossest scheming to the finest non-thinking. A Hitler meditates on the extermination of the entire Jewish race; a politician meditates on ways and means of topping the polls and feathering his own nest; a Gandhi meditates on the establishment of Rama Rajya and the settlement of all conflicts through non-violence; a Yogi meditates to gain perfect control over the turbulent senses; and Siva meditates for no reason whatsoever ! What then is the focus of meditation? What is its quintessence?

The dictionary helps. We find in it the term 'meditation' derived from the Latin word 'MEDITARI' which means 'to heal'. Meditation is part of the science and art of healing.

To meditate is to set in motion processes that lead to the restoration of one's well-being—physical, mental, spiritual. We are only too painfully conscious what an incredible bundle of ailments and grievances each one of us is. Whatever facade we may manage to put up, inside it is all agony and frustration. '*Duḥkhālayam, aśāśvatam*' says the Lord in the Gita, characterising this life of ours. The world we live in is sorrow's shrine. It echoes and re-echoes with the mocking laughter of transitoriness. The whole life is a ceaseless struggle to ward off misery and gain a bit of pleasure. As Swami Vivekananda has aptly put it, misery is like rheumatism—you exorcise it from one limb only to find it firmly ensconced in another. There seems to be a rigid law of Conservation of Misery. The sum total of human suffering appears to be constant. Remove sorrow from one field of life, presto! it greets you with another face in another field. Can this iron chain be broken? Can we have happiness untainted by misery? Is it possible to enjoy unqualified bliss? Meditation says, 'Yes'. It accepts the mighty challenge and promises to heal our wounds. It can assist us to overcome handicaps and grow into wholeness. With the file of meditation the iron chain of suffering can be snapped asunder. We need not remain pathetic little fragments of humanity; if we take the trouble, we can through meditation blossom into joyous integrated beings.

In the last analysis happiness and sorrow reside in the mind. It is the mind that is the cause of man's bondage, it is the mind that is the cause of his freedom. Using the mind we have been able to achieve the vast wonders that constitute modern civilization. But with the same mind we suffer untold agonies of hatred and war, want and fear. This mind is an Alladin's lamp that can conjure into existence comforts and luxuries galore, but it can also raise Frankensteinian monsters that make life a nightmare. Meditation is the technique for diverting the wayward destructive mind into planned, constructive channels. It is the moderator that converts the devastating atom bomb into the creative atomic reactor. The nuclear reaction that takes place in both the devices is the same. But whereas the immense energy generated by the atom bomb destroys like a river in flood, the controlled release of power in the atomic reactor is like a well dammed river that helps us to irrigate land and produce electricity. Meditation turns a curse into a blessing. It is the alchemy that transmutes the dross of everyday life into the gold of unalloyed bliss. The master-key of meditation opens all the doors in the grand mansion of the soul.

How then to meditate? Meditation is at once simple and difficult. It requires no special equipment, it costs nothing. But you must have a *mind* to meditate. The will produces the way. There should be a tremendous urge, an intense concern that the *summum bonum* should be realised in this very life. There can be no instalment plan in gaining the Infinite. Here and now, with no conditional clauses in small print, we must have that for which we have assumed this life. We must attain the Ultimate without any dilly-dallying, free from all reservations. Given that irrepressible eagerness, each one of us can soar on the wings of meditation to realms of breath-bereaving loveliness and power.

What are the methods to be adopted in meditation? Are there proven procedures that can deliver the goods? Fortunately, yes. Sadhakas and savants, saints and seers ancient and modern, of the East and of the West, have elaborated different systems and tested many techniques that bring fulfilment. In fact there is no religion or philosophy of the spirit that does not lay down its own series of steps for meditating. Buddhism, for instance, is based on the supreme enlightenment gained by the Buddha in meditation. The Noble Eight-fold Path, which summarises the Buddhist way of life, is climaxed by meditation 'in which alone perfection lies, and through which alone can one with patient toil unveil the inner world of Reality.' The various schools of Buddhism have prescribed different but precise steps for reaching the threshold of Nirvana. Zen again is derived from the Sanskrit *dhyana*. Its steps lead to *satori* or living experience. The Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali and the precepts of the Christian churches are all systematised meditations. This volume presents a representative cross-section of the diverse paths of meditation laid down by various schools of spiritual striving.

A distinction must, however, be drawn between prayer and meditation. Prayer is essentially a supplication to an external Being or Power. It is a yearning of the heart for things it lacks. It is importuning a Higher Potency to fulfil our wants and desires. But meditation has no element of begging in it. It is a reorientation of the mind for producing the knowledge by which all that is rightly needed is acquired. It is a purified mind calling upon the wisdom that dwells within. While prayer is addressed to an outside Power, meditation seeks conscious union with the Truth inside. Desire is the motive force for all action. But whereas in prayer the desire is self-centred, in meditation one 'attaches one's belt to the Power-house of the universe', as R.W. Trine puts it. The contemplative works, not for himself but *bahujanahitāya*, *bahujanasukhāya*, for the welfare of the many, for the happiness of all. In meditation the dew drop merges in the Shining Sea.

Likewise, there is a line of demarcation between concentration and meditation. By concentration we mean the preliminary exercises in one-pointedness of thought which must of necessity precede success in meditation. Before an instrument can be used it must be forged properly. The mind with which contemplation is achieved must first be trained to develop the power of converging all its energies at any required point. Not that concentration *per se* has any ethical or spiritual value. It is indeed a common requisite for progress in any field of art or science. A ballerina has to go through many physical exercises to make her limbs sufficiently pliable. The fencer repeats postures and motions till he acquires precision of aim. The mind likewise has to be disciplined by a series of exercises till it becomes a search-light that can be focussed wherever desired and can be switched on or off at will. But the concentration thus attained is neutral. Like any instrument it can be used for good purposes

or bad. With a knife a surgeon saves the life of a patient; with a knife you can also cut another's throat. With fire we can warm ourselves, cook our food and produce articles of utility in the factory; with the same fire we can also destroy our neighbour's house. Concentration gives us power, it is up to us to put it to the highest use. And the highest use of a concentrated mind is in meditation.

Concentration is only a process. It is useful in daily life at all levels, but has no moral or spiritual significance. Meditation, on the contrary, produces a state of consciousness in which the spiritual point of view alone counts. The techniques of concentration can be taught openly, they can be sold for money. No more reverence need be attached to such information than, say, to instructions about physical culture. In meditation, however, the aspirant enters another world. It is a dimension in which there is a revolutionary transvaluation of values. Motives become of paramount importance and purity of character an essential postulate. It is forbidden not only to sell but even to use for personal ends the knowledge and power meditation brings. In meditation one treads on holy ground. One may speak of one's achievements in concentration with anyone else. But what one experiences in meditation has to be kept an utmost secret. It is caviare to the general. Our spiritual adventures are not to be worn on our sleeves for daws to peck at. This is why we find many of our scriptures adding a stern foot note: 'What I have taught you is the secret of secrets. It is not to be imparted to the faithless'. When we first read such vetoes we are apt to wonder why so much fuss is made about something that looks commonplace. The fact is that the commonplace look of spiritual experiences is highly deceptive. An atom is invisibly small but within it is packed energy that can wipe away a Hiroshima or Nagasaki. The power that meditation brings is divine in its intensity and so has to be handled with the greatest care and keenest wisdom. Hence also the importance of meditating in loneliness. We are advised to meditate in the darkness of the night, not only because it ensures an undisturbing environment, but also in order that other people may not know of our meditating. Meditation should not be a public performance but a private pursuit. The more secret it is, the more sacred it proves.

A tree is known by its fruit and the touchstone of meditation is its effect on character. Meditation leads to a spiritual rebirth, a return to the child state in the sense of an honesty of thought and speech and a simple directness of action. With it goes an astounding width of vision and an unfathomable inner quietude. To realise the marvellous impact of meditation on the individual's personality we need go no farther than to Sri Ramakrishna whose whole half-century of sojourn on earth was an object lesson in the contemplative way. The least an earnest aspirant can do is to tread in the footsteps of that Child of the Divine Mother, in whose presence every one, man and woman, young and old, felt the upsurge of supernal joy.

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO THE BHAGAVATA

By

SWAMI SIDDHINATHANANDA

*Tasmāt sarvātmanā tāta
nigrhāṇa mano dhiyā
Mayi āveśitayā yukta
etāvān yogasamgrahaḥ
[Bh. XI.23.61]*

‘Do thou restrain by all means thy fickle mind, my son, by thy superior intelligence set steady on Me. This is the sum and substance of all Yoga’. So spake the Lord to Uddhava.

Meditation means reflection, derived, according to the Chambers’ Dictionary, from the Latin *meditari* probably cognate with the Latin root *mederi*, meaning to heal. So, meditation is the science of healing in its origin. Most ailments are mental and physical, and then there are the purely mental ones. Primarily the component that needs healing is the mind. So meditation is identical with Yoga which is defined as the prevention of mental modifications. Mental modifications are the root cause of all misery and their eradication is the science of Yoga. Arresting of the ripples is only the negative aspect of the process; the positive aspect is the reflection on the witnessing Self which is ever present. Self awareness is the goal of Yoga and the means is meditation. Dhyana is the term used by the Yoga system for meditation. Dhyana has various degrees of intensity; they are called Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. Dharana is the process of placing the mind on the object of meditation to the exclusion of contrary thoughts. When the mental flow becomes steady and deep, it is Dhyana. When the object of meditation alone remains to the exclusion of all else, it is Samadhi. Samadhi is the end and the other two, the process.

In Dhyana or meditation, there are three factors: the meditator, the process of meditation and the object of meditation. Of these three, the first two are constant factors in any form of meditation. The possibility of difference, if any, is only in the object. Here also, there cannot be any real difference in the object but, only in the conception of the object. When one sneaks of ‘Meditation according to the *Bhagavata*’, the qualification on ‘Meditation’ can apply only to the object. For, in meditation, whether it be according to the *Bhagavata* or the Yoga Sutras, the person and the process are the same. The objects may differ. The Yoga Sutras suggest a few such as God, a flame, a saint and so on. The *Bhagavata* elaborates this to infinite proportions and at the same time provides a supreme, sublime person as the object of meditation.

Meditation is the soul of spiritual life. A life without meditation is like a horse without reins or a boat without rudder. That science has been perfected by Patanjali. All types of aspirants have adopted that method with suitable modifications to attain their goals. Mind is the object of attack for all. It is an internal instrument evolved by the soul out of subtle matter. Subtle matter by association with the luminous soul becomes live and serves both its father, the soul and its mother, Nature, *i.e.*, the body. Though it was intended to be a loyal servant of

the soul, it played foul and started serving the demands of its material parent, with the result that the soul has been caught in interminable woes and worries. It is like the filament of an electric bulb claiming the luminosity to itself. Rightly has it been compared to a drunk and maddened monkey. It is this monkey that has to be tackled. The strange part of it is that the hero and the villain are the same mind. The mind has to be trained to conquer itself. It is almost an impossible task and often, very exasperating. Arjuna was perfectly right when he compared the attempt at controlling the mind to binding the mighty wind. Krishna's reply acknowledged the hazard involved and at the same time struck a positive and optimistic note. It is a slow, steady and prolonged process. 'Watch and wait' is its watchword. The secret of success lies in patience and steadiness. In spiritual life, the method is more important than the end. Once the end is fixed on, one can forget it; the whole attention may then be directed to the means. The sustained struggle itself is practically the end so far as an aspirant is concerned.

The monkey has to be taught to obey the bidding of the master. Mind has to be made aware that it is only a servant and that the master is someone above it. In the path of knowledge, the mind is required to dwell on the Ultimate, incomprehensible Reality. By definition, the Ultimate Reality is beyond mind. To assign the mind to grasp the infinite is asking for the impossible. Even the wise lose their way in that path, says the Bhagavata. Patanjali's path, though very systematic, is difficult of attainment, for it is almost impossible to possess all the prerequisites. It is a frontal encounter with the mind. Either it plays truant or cracks. The *Bhagavata* has a smooth and effective way for the purpose.

Concentration is the essence of meditation. It is well known that the mind gets easily concentrated on matters of its liking. Objects of the senses are charming and the mind naturally flows towards them. Give it something more charming and it will automatically flow in that direction. Instead of trying to stem a strong current abruptly, cut a channel on the upper reaches and divert the flow through it, and you can regulate the water to turn a turbine to produce light and power. That is the method that the *Bhagavata* proposes and hence its popular appeal. That takes into account the needs and limitations of the mind, and therefore it is a truly psychological approach.

*Asti bhāti priyam rūpam
nāma ca ityamśa-pancakam
ādya-trayam brahma-rūpam
jagad-rūpam tato dvayam*

Being, knowing, bliss, form and name are the five constituents of the Totality. The first three are Brahman and the last two the changing world. Philosophically the world is called Maya. Mind is Maya individualised. It operates in the *mayic* field. Its field is the phenomenal world. Endow Brahman with a *mayic* cover and the mind will apprehend it. Invest the Satchidananda with a name and a form and the mind can grasp it. That is why Narada instructed Vyasa, the author of the *Brahmasutras* to sing the glories of the Incarnations of God. The *Bhagavata* provides innumerable forms of God for meditation, all sublime and enchanting. Not only that, it allows free play to all human emotions. Emotion directed to divinity is devotion. The Bhagavata approves of establishing any kind of emotional relation with divinity; paternal or maternal, fraternal or filial, erotic or esoteric relations to the divine are adopted. Nay even an antagonistic way to God is recognised. All the demons of the

Bhagavata are deeply devoted to God and their apparent antagonism is an expression of their impatience to go back to the feet of God. In intensity of feeling, perhaps they may rank on a par with the bucolic lasses of Vrindaban. The advantage in adopting an emotional and personal relation to God is that the mind will dwell on Him constantly without cessation. It will be spontaneous, smooth and incessant meditation. The devotee dwells ever in the presence of God. There is no formality in this path. It is meditation with eyes open. Wherever his eyes set, there he espies his Beloved. The Gopis were always in sublime peace, a state of divine intoxication. Suka was ever in bliss, Narada was at all times in divine inebriation. Prahlada was soaked in bliss divine for ever. Mira, the great saintly singer, is said to have been brought up by her grandparents as she lost her parents early in life. Her grandfather was a devout man. He used to sing and dance in the name of God and lose himself in meditation. The little girl was fascinated and perplexed. She asked her grandpa why he was shouting and jumping at times and sitting like a stock at other times. How to explain the mysteries of devotion to a tiny tot? He said he was praying and meditating. What is praying, and what is meditating, demanded Mira. Her grandpa said: 'When we talk to God, it is prayer and when God talks to us, it is meditation'. Mira's whole life was a continuous dialogue between her Soul and her Beloved.

Well, Mira's way is the *Bhagavata* way, a continuous pre-occupation of the Soul with God. The afflicted man, when at his wit's end, turns to God and pours out his Worries and cares, submits his complaints and prays for succour. That is the stage of the Soul speaking to God. When man feels utterly helpless and cries quarter, God opens his portals and man remains mute. These are the various stages of meditation.

In Book XL Ch. 23 of the *Bhagavata* there is the story of a Brahmana, who was miserliness personified and hated by one and all. Fate deprived him of all his wealth, and he became a mendicant and was insulted and tortured by the people. Learning his lesson through bitter experiences, he became cool and composed. There is a beautiful philosophical passage attributed to him. Among other things he says: 'These people are not the cause of my misery, nor the angels nor God, nor the stars, nor fate nor time. Mind is the prime cause and the whole wheel of life turns and twirls because of the mind. It sets in motion the strong desires. The Jiva embraces the mind and gets entangled and enchained in worldly affairs. All spiritual disciplines such as fasts and vigils, charity and dutifulness purity and poverty, all these have only one goal in view, namely the control of the mind: for, the highest Yoga is concentration of the mind. If once the mind is controlled, of what use are charity and other virtues? And if the mind is not under control, what availeth one the observance of charity, poverty and the like? All the gods are under the control of the mind; the mind is not under the control of anyone. Mind is a terrible god, stronger than the strongest. He who has it under his control is verily the God of gods. Without subjugating this relentless foe, man falls foul of fellow-men. Identifying himself with the body which is nothing but a mental construct, he roams about deluded in this endless darkness. I shall take to the path the ancient sages have trodden. I shall serve the Lord's feet and shall cross this shoreless ocean of Samsara.'

The normal haunts of the mind are the world of the senses. Give it something better and sweeter and it will take to it.

*Viṣayān dhyāyataścittam
viṣayeṣu viṣajiate*

*mām anusmarataścittam
mayi eva pravilīyate
Bh. XI. 14. 27.*

‘The mind that dwells on sense-objects gets stuck in them. The mind that remembers Me constantly, gets dissolved in Me,’ says Krishna to Uddhava. That is the mode of meditation advocated by the *Bhagavata*. Ordinarily, meditation is the despair of aspirants, for, the mind does not relish any sort of restraint. But then, sweeten the emotion with devotion, and meditation becomes sweet and spontaneous. Prahlada told his friends: ‘It isn’t very difficult to please the Lord, for He is within one and all and is visible everywhere.’ He was looking through the eyes of love. When his teachers asked him who turned his head to Hari, Prahlada replied: ‘As the iron filings fly to the magnet, so does my mind run to the feet of the Wielder of the discus.’ When meditation is cultured in the medium of love, it is easy, sweet and lovely. Then look anywhere, you will see the wonder child of Vraja playing around. Tune your soul to Vrindaban, you will hear the sweet strains from Krishna’s flute. If only you love Him sufficiently, you can constantly live and play with Him.

*Komalam kūjayan veṇum
śyamaloyam kumārakaḥ
vedavedyam param brahma
bhāsatām purato mama*

May He of hue welkin-blue, He, the Supreme Soul of all the Vedas, dance before me playing on His divine flute’. That is the prayer of the devotee: that is the vision he craves for. And that is the meditation according to the *Bhagavata*, a sweet and constant awareness of the ever playful and the ever blissful Supreme Lord.

Attune your ears to Vrindaban like the Gopis; you will hear the call of Krishna through his flute. Pluck at the lute of your heart with loving abandon, like Narada; Hari will come running into your heart. Open your Soul to the Lord like Prahlada; you will see Hari everywhere. Meditate on the Lord like Sri Suka and you are ever in the presence of God.

The finale of meditation is spiritual illumination and its language is silence. A peace that passeth understanding is its subjective content and an irenic, elusive smile, its visible indication. ‘Silence is Brahman’ say the Seers.

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

By

SWAMI ANANYANANDA

Introduction

It is being increasingly recognized by modern psychologists that meditation should form part and parcel of the daily life and routine of man, in order to provide a counter-balance to the intensely active mode of life he lives in the present-day world. Meditation calms the mind, brings self-composure, and enables one to concentrate one's mental powers. By self-conscious effort, one can develop those virtues and graces that bring affection in human hearts, smoothen their inter-relationships, and provide a sound basis for mutual amity and understanding. Last but not the least, regular practice of meditation enables men and women to bend their energies in the pursuit of Truth and eventually to attain spiritual beatitude and the peace that passeth all understanding.

According to Swami Vivekananda, 'religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man'. Meditation is the means and the method by which the soul unveils the layers of ignorance covering it and discovers the essential divinity of its own being, by a three-fold process of *śravaṇa* (hearing), *manana* (reflection), and *nididhyāsana* (meditation), being equipped with what is known as *sadhana chatuṣṭaya* (four-fold pre-requisites of spiritual life). This can be described as spiritual unfoldment leading to Self-knowledge. This, however, is the language of the *jnani* or Vedantin (philosopher treading the path of knowledge or *jnana*).

In the language of the *bhakta* (devotee), meditation is a process in which the individual soul pours out its own being into the divine, like the unbroken flow of oil poured from one vessel to another, and empties itself in the latter, as the river flowing into the sea. It finds itself safe and secure under the protection of the divine, in being held fast in the bosom of the divine. In this case, meditation acts as a link to establish a connection between the individual soul (*jivatman*) and the Super Soul (*Paramatman*).

What Is Meditation?

'What is meditation?' asks Swami Vivekananda, and answers himself: 'Meditation is the power which enables us to resist all this (manifold manifestation of alluring names and forms, which distract our minds from our chosen path). Nature may call us, "Look, there is a beautiful thing !" I do not look. Now she says "There is a beautiful smell; smell it !" I say to my nose, "Do not smell it", and the nose doesn't. "Eyes, do not see !" Nature does such an awful thing—kills one of my children and says, "Now, rascal, sit down and weep ! Go to the depths !" I say, "I don't have to". I jump up. I must be free. Try it sometimes. In meditation, for a moment, you can change your nature. Now, if you had that power in yourself, would not that be heaven, freedom? That is the power of meditation.' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, IV, p. 248).

‘How is it to be attained? In a dozen different ways. Each temperament has its own way. But this is the general principle: get hold of the mind. The mind is like a lake, and every stone that drops into it raises waves. These waves do not let us see what we are. The full moon is reflected in the water of the lake, but the surface is so disturbed that we do not see the reflection clearly. Let it be calm. Do not let nature raise the wave. Keep quiet, and then after a little while she will give you up. Then we know what we are. God is there already, but the mind is so agitated, always running after the senses. You close the senses, and yet you whirl and whirl about’, (*ibid*).

Meditation is concentration of mind and its innate powers. The untrained mind is scattered (*vikshipta*), as it runs after every sensation obtained through the sense organs. The mind needs to be weaned from those contacts with the senses and then collected together, concentrated into a single force, and directed towards a lofty object that is pure, holy, and spiritually uplifting—no matter whether it is personal or impersonal. Swamiji says: “Meditation is the gate that opens that (infinite joy) to us. Prayers, ceremonials, and all other forms of worship are simply kindergartens of meditation. You pray; you offer something. A certain theory existed that everything raised one’s spiritual power. The use of certain words, flowers, lights brings the mind to that attitude, but that attitude is always in the human soul, nowhere else. People are all doing it; but what they do without knowing, do knowingly. That is the power of meditation”. (*ibid*, p. 249).

The embodied soul has forgotten its real nature. Rather, it is not aware of it. By concentration and meditation, the soul can realize its true nature. One of the methods advocated is the purification of thought, word, and deed (*trikarana-suddhi*). It is a slow and gradual process. It sounds funny, but none the less cannot be denied, that whenever we try to sit quiet and collect our mind, and think of concentrating it on some elevating ideal, our mind rebels and refuses to obey at first, and flies here, there, and everywhere, except to the object of concentration.

Swamiji portrays to us the pitiable plight of this ‘maddened monkey’ in his *Rajayoga*: ‘How hard it is to control the mind! Well has it been compared to the maddened monkey. There was a monkey, restless by his own nature, as all monkeys are. As if that were not enough, some one made him drink freely of wine, so that he became still more restless. Then a scorpion stung him. When a man is stung by a scorpion, he jumps about for a whole day: so the poor monkey found his condition worse than ever. To complete his misery, a demon entered into him. What language can describe the uncontrollable restlessness of that monkey? The human mind is like that monkey, incessantly active by its own nature; then it becomes drunk with the wine of desire, thus increasing its turbulence. After desire takes possession comes the sting of the scorpion of jealousy at the success of others, and last of all the demon of pride enters the mind, making it think itself of all importance. How hard to control such a mind!’ (*C.W.*, I, p. 174).

In order to succeed in this task of controlling the mind and attaining concentration on a particular object that is spiritually elevating, Swamiji’s prescription is *pratyāhāra*, which he describes in these words: “The first lesson, then, is to sit for some time and let the mind run on. The mind is bubbling all the time. It is like the monkey jumping about. Let the monkey jump as much as he can; you simply wait and watch. Knowledge is power, says the proverb, and that is true. Until you know what the mind is doing, you cannot control it. Give it the rein;

many hideous thoughts may come into it; and you will be astonished that it was possible for you to think such thoughts. But you will find that each day the mind's vagaries are becoming less and less violent, that each day it is becoming calmer. In the first few months, you will find that the mind will have a great many thoughts; later, you will find that they have somewhat decreased; and in a few more months, they will be fewer, until at last the mind will be under perfect control, but we must patiently practise every day. As soon as the steam is turned on, the engine must run; as soon as things are before us, we must perceive; so a man, to prove that he is not a machine, must demonstrate that he is under the control of nothing. This controlling of the mind and not allowing it to join itself to the centres is *pratyāhāra*. How is this practised? It is a tremendous work, not to be done in a day. Only after a patient, continuous struggle for years can we succeed' (C.W., I. pp. 174-75).

The Object of Meditation

Commenting on the sutra '*Yathābhimatādhyānādvā*' (Yoga-Sutra, I, 39), 'Or by the meditation on anything that appeals to one as good', Swamiji warns us: 'This does not mean any wicked subject, but anything good that you like, any place that you like best, any scenery that you like best, any idea that you like best, anything that will concentrate the mind' (C.W., pp. 227-28).

Stating that there are various stages of meditation, he points out how the first would be the gross, the second the fine, and then on to the still finer objects. The objects of meditation can be both, personal and impersonal. If it be personal, usually it is the form of a god or a goddess, an Incarnation of God or a god-man, or a perfected being who has attained the consummation of spiritual life. The name and form of such beings play an important role in the process of meditation. Contemplation on the form (*rūpa*) of the chosen ideal (*ishta-devatā*) and repetition of the name (*nāma*) of that being constitute the essential acts of meditation of the personal type. The need of a guru (spiritual teacher) is considered to be the *sine qua non* in this method.

There is also an impersonal form, a symbol, regarded as most sacred and ancient, which has come down to us from the dim ages of Vedic antiquity, and is still held in high veneration and as holy by all the religious sects and schools in India. It is the sacred mono-syllable *Aum*, popularly written as *Om*. Swamiji considers it the 'holiest of all holy words, the mother of all names and forms' (C. W. III. p. 57). He goes on to say, 'the whole universe may be supposed to have been created' out of this eternal *Om* (*ibid.*)

'*Om* is the only possible symbol which covers the whole ground, and there is none other like it. If properly pronounced, this *Om* will represent the whole phenomenon of sound-production, and no other word can do this; and this, therefore, is the fittest symbol of Sphota, which is the real meaning of the *Om*. And as the symbol can never be separated from the thing signified, the *Om* and the Sphota are one. And as the Sphota, being the finer side of the manifested universe, is nearer to God and is indeed the first manifestation of divine wisdom, this *Om* is truly symbolic of God' (*ibid.*, pp. 57-58).

Again: 'These word-symbols, evolved out of the deepest spiritual perception of sages, symbolize and express, as nearly as possible the particular view of God and the universe they stand for. And as the *Om* represents the Akhanda, the undifferentiated Brahman, the others

represent the Khanda or the differentiated views of the same Being; and they are all helpful to divine meditation and the acquisition of pure knowledge' (*ibid.*, p. 59).

In the light of what has been stated above, we can really understand the unique position accorded to the *mantra* (sacred name of a god or formula) and the *japa* (its repetition) in the different religious systems and spiritual practices the world over.

In this context, it is worthwhile to recall the *Yoga-Sutra* (I. 28), '*Tajjapastadarthabhāvanam*'—'The repetition of this (*Om*) and meditation on its meaning (is the way)' Explaining this *sutra*, Swamiji says: 'Why should there be repetition? We have not forgotten the theory of *samskāras*, that the sum total of impressions lives in the mind. They become more and more latent, but remain there; and as soon as they get the right stimulus they come out, molecular vibration never ceases When the vibrations of the *chitta* subside, its molecular vibrations go on; and when they get the impulse, come out again. We can now understand what is meant by repetition. It is the greatest stimulus that can be given to the spiritual *samskāras*. "One moment of company with the holy makes a ship to cross this ocean of life". Such is the power of association. So this repetition of *Om*, and thinking of its meaning, is keeping good company in your own mind. Study, and then meditate on what you have studied. Thus light will come to you; the Self will become manifest' (*C.W.*, I.p. 219-20).

Aids to Meditation

An aspirant needs a conducive and congenial environment to practise meditation. Swamiji's advice is: 'Those of you who can afford it will do better to have a room for this practice alone. Do not sleep in that room; it must be kept holy. You must not enter the room until you have bathed, and are perfectly clean in body and mind. Place flowers in that room always; they are the best surrounding for a Yogi; also pictures that are pleasing. Burn incense morning and evening. Have no quarrelling, nor anger, nor unholy thought in that room. Only allow those persons to enter it who are of the same thought as you. Then gradually there will be an atmosphere of holiness in the room, so that when you are miserable, sorrowful, doubtful, or your mind is disturbed, the very fact of entering that room will make you calm..... The idea is that by keeping holy vibrations there the place becomes and remains illumined. Those who cannot afford to have a room set apart can practise anywhere they like' (*ibid.*, p. 145).

The *Bhagavad Gita* prescribes the *modus operandi* for meditation as follows in the sixth chapter, entitled 'Dhyana Yoga': 'Having set in a clean place his firm seat, neither too high nor too low, covered with sacred grass (*kuśa*) a deerskin, and a cloth, one over the other; there taking his place on the seat, making his mind one-pointed and controlling his thought and sense, let him practise Yoga for the purification of the soul. Holding the body, head, and neck erect and still, looking fixedly at the tip of his nose, without looking around, serene and fearless, firm in the vow of celibacy (divine life), subdued in mind let him sit, harmonized, his mind turned to Me and intent on Me alone' (VI. 11-14).

In addition to the prescription of the *Gita* delineated above, we can profit by Swamiji's own suggestion also in this regard: 'Sit in a straight posture, and the first thing to do is to send a current of holy thought to all creation. Mentally repeat, "Let all beings be happy; let all beings be peaceful; let all beings be blissful". So do to the East, South, North, and West. The more you

do that the better you will feel yourself. After doing that, those who believe in God should pray—not for money, not for health, nor for heaven; pray for knowledge and light; every other prayer is selfish. Then the next thing to do is to think of your own body, and see that it is strong and healthy; it is the best instrument you have. Think of it as being as strong as adamant, and that with the help of this body you will cross the ocean of life. Freedom is never to be reached by the weak. Throw away all weakness. Tell your body that it is strong; tell your mind that it is strong; and have unbounded faith and hope in yourself' (C. W., I. 145-46).

Impediments to Meditation

It is relevant to quote here the warning sounded by Swamiji to those who take to the Yoga of meditation, out of curiosity and seeking something mysterious out of it: "Anything that is secret and mysterious in the systems of Yoga should be at once rejected. The best guide in life is strength. In religion, as in other matters, discard everything that weakens you; have nothing to do with it. Mystery-mongering weakens the human brain. It has well-nigh destroyed Yoga—one of the grandest of sciences. From the time it was discovered, more than four thousand years ago, Yoga was perfectly delineated, formulated, and preached in India. It is a striking fact that the more modern the commentator the greater the mistakes he makes, while the more ancient the writer the more rational he is. Most of the modern writers talk of all sorts of mystery. Thus Yoga fell into the hands of a few persons who made it a secret, instead of letting the full blaze of daylight and reason fall upon it. They did so that they might have the powers to themselves' (*ibid.*, p. 134.)

Pointing out the main aim of meditation, Swamiji remarks: 'Meditation is one of the great means of controlling the rising of these (thought) waves. By meditation, you can make the mind subdue these waves; and if you go on practising meditation for days, and months, and years, until it has become a habit, until it will come in spite of yourself, anger and hatred will be controlled and checked' (*ibid.*, p. 242-43).

In each and every one of us, there are what are called six internal enemies. These are born with us: *kāma* (desire), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (delusion), *mada* (pride), and *mātsarya* (jealousy). These are powerful impulses native to every embodied human being, and belong to the very flesh of humanity. Most often, we are under their sway; we are helpless, as it were. To master them by keeping them under check and eventually to sublimate them is the aim of all spiritual struggle. In this, meditation and self-reflection will help us a great deal. This is the teaching of every religious system and every spiritual discipline: to sublimate them and derive help from them, and not to suppress them. Suppression may lead to undesirable consequences and psychological complications and disorders. Instead of helping one, such a situation may create unforeseen hindrances. Hence sublimation is advocated as the best means.

In this process of sublimation, meditation comes in handy and serves a very useful purpose. In short, spiritual life means the sublimation of these 'six internal enemies' which drag us out, lead us away from our set goal of perfection, and make us fritter away our vital energies for no earthly or heavenly benefit !

The *Yoga-Sutra* enumerates several impediments on the path of yoga: 'Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception,

non-attaining concentration and falling away from the state when obtained, are the obstructing distractions' (I. 30). Commenting on this *sutra*, Swamiji explains these distractions one by one: '*Disease*—This body is the boat which will carry us to the other shore of the ocean of life. It must be taken care of. Unhealthy persons cannot be Yogis. *Mental laziness* makes us lose all lively interest in the subject, without which there will neither be the will nor the energy to practise. *Doubts* will arise in the mind about the truth of the science, however strong one's intellectual conviction may be, until certain peculiar psychic experiences come, as hearing or seeing at a distance etc. These glimpses strengthen the mind and make the student persevere. *Falling away from the state when obtained*—Some days or weeks when you are practising, the mind will be calm and easily concentrated, and you will find yourself progressing fast. All of a sudden, the progress will stop one day; and you will find yourself, as it were, stranded. Persevere. All progress proceeds by such rise and fall' (C.W., I. p. 221).

Fruitful Meditation

The mind of man has a unique capacity, which no other creature has. The human mind operates on two levels—the higher and the lower. The higher reflects divinity. It is ennobling. The lower reflects animality. It is degrading. Another feature of the human mind, which has no parallel, is its inherent quality of itself becoming both, the subject and the object. It can play a dual role simultaneously ! The mind can, and does, divide itself into two—objectify itself and study it also. It is a curious mixture.

Human beings possess what is known as conscience. It is this special possession of man that warns him at critical times. But man, as he is constituted, pays little or no heed to the warnings or the gnawing of conscience. The result is that, in spite of these warnings, he indulges in wicked deeds and becomes more and more roguish and vicious. He degrades himself and becomes a curse to his fellowmen. On the other hand, one who is wakeful to the inner workings of one's mind and listens to the voice within pays heed to the caution sounded by this conscience in time. He guards himself against possible pitfalls, conducting himself in accordance with the established social moral code. He engages himself in working for the good and welfare of others among whom he lives and functions. By such acts, he himself becomes noble and proves to be a blessing to others as well. Let us listen to what Swamiji has to say on this point: 'The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down, down, for ever—rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided will save us, free us' (C. W., VI. p. 30).

Swamiji's advice to us is to meditate in silence. About the power of silence, he says: 'Truth cannot be partial; it is for the good of all. Finally, in perfect rest and peace, meditate upon It; concentrate your mind upon It; make yourself one with It. Then no speech is needed; silence will carry the truth. Do not spend your energy in talking, but meditate in silence; and do not let the rush of the outside world disturb you. When your mind is in the highest state, you are unconscious of it. Accumulate power in silence, and become a dynamo of spirituality' (C.W., pp. 60-61).

Be the witness ! That is the trumpet-call of Swamiji, when he says: 'Say when the tyrant hand is on your neck, "I am the Witness! I am the Witness !" Say, "I am the Spirit ! Nothing external can touch me." When evil thoughts arise, repeat that, give that sledge-hammer blow

on their heads," I am the Spirit ! I am the Witness, the Everblessed ! "I have no reason to do; no reason to suffer; I have finished with everything; I am the Witness' (C. W., V. p. 254). Further: "It is all play. Play ! God Almighty plays. That is all You are the almighty God playing.It is all fun. Know it and play. That is all there is to it. Then practise it. The whole universe is a vast play. All is good because all is fun.Do not be miserable! Do not repent: What is done is done. If you burn yourself take the.consequences Be sensible. We make mistakes; what of that? That is all in fun. They go so crazy over their past sins, moaning and weeping and all that. Do not repent! After having done work, do not think of it. Go on! Stop not! Don't look back! What will you gain by looking back?" (C.W., II. pp. 470-71).

Let us close this exposition with Swamiji's own immortal and inspiring exhortation: 'Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the goal is reached.'

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO PATANJALI

SWAMI HARSHANANDA

The diffused rays of the sun, when gathered to a point by a convex lens, can start a devastating fire. A powerful searchlight can reveal any object, towards which it is turned on. In the same way, when the forces of the mind, normally diffused or even confused, are gathered together and concentrated, can give us knowledge and power.

However, this concentration of mind involves a very arduous process. As in the case of any other science, art or craft, this also has to be learnt from competent teachers and practised assiduously. One of the all-time great teachers of this science and art, is the sage Patañjali. His “Yoga Sutras” is a basic text embodying a systematic treatment of this subject.

As in the case of other Indian philosophical systems, here also *kaivalya* or liberation is set forth as the goal of life. But unlike, in those systems, Patañjali cares little for philosophical disquisitions and goes straight to the practical means of achieving it. Mind being the chief means in this process, he has dealt with the subject of its composition, function and control. According to him, the mind is as much a product of the three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) as the body or the external physical objects, though it has much finer vibrations. It normally functions in the form of *vṛttis* (waves or modifications).

Swami Vivekananda compares the mind to a lake. When the water of the lake is absolutely calm and steady, one can see the reflection of one’s face in it, or a piece of stone lying at its bottom. When the water is disturbed by waves, this will not be possible. In the same way when our mind is rising in the form of *vṛttis* it is not possible to get a true picture of our real self. If and when, as a result of practising yoga, we successfully eliminate all the *vṛttis*, we will certainly have a vision of our true self, the spirit behind our mind, our personality.

Patañjali defines yoga as *citta-vṛttinirodha*, suppression of the modifications of the mind. Since these *vṛttis* are innumerable, will it ever be possible to control them and suppress them? Patañjali being endowed with a practical and scientific attitude, assures us that it is possible to do so. How? Though, individually, there appear to be any number of these *vṛttis* category wise there are only five ! He classifies them as: *pramāṇa* (true cognition), *viparyaya* (false cognition), *vikalpa* (verbal cognitions), *nidrā* (deep sleep) and *smṛti* (memory).

Pratyakṣa (direct perception), *anumāna* (inference) and *āgama* (verbal testimony or scriptural testimony) constitute true cognition. False cognition is wrong knowledge of things, and includes doubts as also uncertain cognitions. Verbal cognition arises by hearing a word which has no corresponding reality. Sleep stands for dreamless sleep and is due to the preponderance of *tamas* in the *citta*, which *tamas* is the cause of absence of ordinary perception at that time. Memory is the reproduction of past experiences without any alteration or innovation. All other cognitive mental states can be included under these heads.

After conceding the possibility of controlling and suppressing these mental modifications, Patañjali reveals the age-old (open?) secret of achieving this: *abhyāsa* (repeated practice) and *vairāgya* (dispassion).

The tremendous energy of the waters of a river is wasted when it flows wildly, often

bringing untold sufferings to the people living on its banks. When a dam is constructed across it, this energy is conserved. It is then guided through channels and canals or pipes for irrigation or generation of power. In exactly the same way the mad rush of the mental energies which are being wasted through the senseless enjoyment of sensual pleasures must be halted by cultivating dispassion towards these sense objects and the energies thus saved should be directed towards the self or God within. *Vairāgya* and *abhyāsa* mean just this and nothing more ! However Patañjali advises us to practise yoga constantly, continuously and with feeling, and warns us not to expect quick results!

Man by nature is averse to hard and sustained effort. He always seeks for short-cuts. Hence Patañjali provides for that too ! He declares out of infinite compassion for mankind, that by devotion and self-surrender to God (*Īśvarapraṇidhāna*) one can get complete control over the mind resulting ultimately even in *samādhi* (super-conscious experience).

Any person who wishes to have a strong and healthy body, must have a basic knowledge of diseases which destroy this health. After all, prevention is better than cure ! So anyone desirous of practising yoga, must be aware of the obstacles to yoga so that they can be avoided or remedied. Patañjali lists 9 obstacles to yoga: (1) *vyādhi* (physical sickness) (2) *styāna* (languor); (3) *saṁśaya* (doubts and misgivings); (4) *pramāda* (heedlessness) , (5) *ālasya* (sloth); (6) *avirati* (absence of dispassion); (7) *bhrāntidarśana* (hallucinations); (8) *alabdhabhūmikatva* (non-attainment of the stage of communion in spite of effort); (9) *anavasthitatva* (instability).

Vyādhi should be overcome by proper medicines, treatment and diet, *styāna* by discrimination and will-power, *saṁśaya* by faith in the scripture, the guru and oneself, *pramāda* by eternal vigilance, *ālasya* by healthy physical activity, *avirati* by reflecting on the transient and evil nature of sense-pleasures and *bhrāntidarśana* by right perception. The last two, viz., *alabdha-bhūmikatva* and *anavasthitatva* are more serious obstacles encountered in the higher stages of *sādhanā*. Just as rat-holes in an agricultural field drain away all water, in the same way, deep-rooted evil *saṁskāras* (impressions left over by past-life experiences) nullify all efforts at spiritual progress. Guidance from the Guru or advanced souls as also prayer and self-analysis will help to locate and eradicate these *saṁskāras*.

This preliminary knowledge should suffice the beginning of yogic practice which itself consists of eight graded steps: 1. *yama* (restraint): 2. *niyama* (culture): 3. *āsana* (posture): 4. *prāṇāyāma* (control of psychic *prāna*): 5. *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of senses): 6. *dhāraṇā* (fixed attention): 7. *dhyāna* (meditation): 8. *samādhi* (perfect concentration resulting in super-conscious experience).

Yama is a moral discipline and consists of: *ahiṁsā* (abstention from all kinds of injury to life); *satya* (truthfulness in thought, word and deed); *asteya* (non-stealing); *brahma-carya* (control of carnal passions) and *aparigraha* (non-acceptance of gifts, more than necessary for sustenance).

Niyama consists in cultivating *śauca* (cleanliness), *santoṣa* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity of body, speech and mind), *svādhyāya* (study of scriptures) and *īśvara-praṇidhāna* (surrendering the fruits of actions to God).

It is to be noted here that *yama* and *niyama*, the basic ethical disciplines, have been placed at the very foot of the ladder of yogic ascension. This implies that those who have not given

up evil ways of life, cannot aspire to become yogis! Misdeeds and meditation cannot co-exist!

Āsana is a discipline of the body, and consists in the adoption of steady and comfortable postures for the sake of meditation. This is achieved through releasing the physical and mental tensions and through the contemplation on the *ananta*, the infinite sky. The steadiness of the body thus achieved is conducive to the steady flow of mind towards the ideal.

An excited mind throws the breathing out of rhythm. A calm and quiet mind, on the other hand, is invariably accompanied by rhythmic breathing. This fact from our experience gives us a very useful and practical hint to control the mind. Practice of rhythmic breathing, and even stopping the breath for some time in a systematic way, will help bring the mind under control. This is exactly the principle behind *prāṇāyāma*. *Prāṇa* is actually the life-force permeating the whole world and manifests itself in our bodies as the bio-chemical and nervous energy. This energy is connected with the breath on the one side and with the mind on the other. Hence, control and regulation of breath gradually leads to the control and regulation of the mind itself. The process itself consists of *recaka* (exhalation), *pūraka* (inhalation) and *kumbhaka* (retention), in certain fixed proportions.

It is interesting to note that the great sage Patanjali has finished all about *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, about which so much fuss is often made, in only eight *sūtras*. It must be remembered that the object of practising these two disciplines as also the others, is to obtain *samādhi* and that one gets a right to practise them only after scrupulously following moral discipline and culture as enjoined by *yama* and *niyama*.

The next step is *Pratyāhāra*, the withdrawal of senses from their respective external objects, keeping them under the control of the mind. When the senses are effectively controlled, they follow not their objects, but the mind, itself. So, in this state, the mind is not disturbed by sights and sounds coming through the eyes and the ears, but makes these senses follow itself, and see and hear its own object.

These five disciplines are regarded as *bahiraṅga-sādhana* (external sides) of yoga, whereas the next three, (*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, are classified as *antaranga-sādhana* (internal means).

Dhāraṇā is the fixing of attention on a definite locus, such as the lotus of the heart, the light in the brain, the tip of the nose or the tongue, or on an external object like the moon or the image of gods and so on.

When *dhāraṇā* ripens so that the flow of the thought-current becomes unbroken, it becomes *dhyāna*. Here the mind hovers round the object of meditation. There is still the consciousness of the trio—the ego-sense, the object of meditation and the process of meditation.

When again *dhyāna* becomes perfect and the mind is so deeply absorbed in the object that it loses itself and has no awareness of itself, the state attained is called *samādhi*. In this state, only, the object of meditation will be shining in the mind and the yogi is not even aware of the thought process involved in it. Even the ego-sense is completely subjugated.

In the state of *samādhi*, which is an intuitive and superconscious experience, the object of meditation will reveal all its secrets to the yogi. If the yogi can make his own self or *Īśvara* the object of meditation after learning about them from the *Sāñkhya* (an allied philosophical

system declaring the knowledge of the self as the means of liberation), he will get *kaivalya* (liberation). Patañjali calls these two *sāmādhis* respectively, as *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta*. In the former, the object of meditation is known in its entirety. In the latter, nothing outside the self is known (*samprajñāta*=well known, *asamprajñāta*=not known).

This process of yoga and meditation as prescribed by Patañjali can be easily adopted to the path of Bhakti also. In the latter case, the *Iṣṭadevatā* (the chosen deity) becomes the object of meditation.

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO YOGAVASISHTHA

PROF. B. KUPPUSWAMY

1. Assumptions of Vasishtha

According to the *Vāsishtha*, Brahman, the Absolute, manifests itself in the world. Everything originates out of, exists in and finally merges into, the Brahman. He gives the analogy of the waves in the ocean. The waves arise, exist, and merge into the ocean. The difference between the world and the Brahman is due to ignorance and will cease to be believed in the enlightened state (VI-a. 49. 32). Similarly he held that the mind is not different from the Absolute. The limited and relative forms called the mind originate from and merge into the Brahman (III. 100.23). Again, according to Vasishtha every object of the world is the being of consciousness and the being of consciousness is the being of the world (III. 14.74).

The second assumption of Vasishtha is that all living beings and all human beings, strive for happiness (VI. 188.20). The only trouble is that we seek happiness in wrong places. The animals and many human beings seek happiness by satisfying the bodily needs and by striving for sense-joys. However, the sense-enjoyments are pleasant only at the beginning. They have an inevitable end (V. 22.30). All pleasures terminate in pain (V. 49.6). Freud, the great psychoanalyst, called this the pursuit of *pleasure-principle*, typical of children. Vasishtha asserts that things by themselves are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. It is our attitude towards the objects and experiences that make them agreeable or disagreeable. The same object, say a sweet, is very pleasant when one starts eating. But with more of them, disgust towards them ensues (VI-a. 44.2-3).

So, Vasishtha concludes that when all desires are given up by the heart one experiences joy within (V. 74.24). One must give up notions like 'may this be mine' and 'may this not come to me.' In other words, real happiness arises with self-realization. It arises when the mind is at peace; that is, when the mind is not functioning at the level of 'wants' and 'don'ts'.

2. Manas, Karma and Vasana

Manas, mind, is ever-active like the ripples in the motionless ocean. The ocean is like the *chit*, the pure consciousness, or Brahman. That is, the *chitta*, the mind, has evolved from the *chit*, the pure consciousness. The nature of manas is *karma*, activity. Thus according to Vasishtha, karma is nothing but the activity of the manas. Each activity of manas is determined by its preceding activity and determines, in its turn, the succeeding activity. Thus the cessation of karma leads to the cessation of manas— *karma nāśe mano-nāśaḥ* (III. 95). This is the unique theory of Karma of Vasishtha, namely that Karma is mental activity. According to him, when *manas* arises from Brahman, *karma* also arises simultaneously (III. 95. 1-12). That is, it is impossible to conceive of *manas* without *karma*. The two are the same. According to Vasishtha the terms *manas*, *chitta*, *vāsanā*, and *karma* refer to the same. They are merely varied names (II. 9. 13-21).

What about *vāsanā*? *Vāsanā* is the root desire, the root inclination in the *manas*. All action

or active agency is associated with *vāsanā*. It is the presence of *vāsanā* that brings about the sense of agency, *kartr̥tva* and sense of enjoyment, *bhoktr̥tva*. Those who are free from *vāsanā* are free from attachment. They are active without being attached to the fruit of activity. That is, *vāsanā* and *karma* are, as Dasgupta (History of Indian Philosophy Vol. II, 1932) puts it, “more or less like the potential and actual states of the same activity” (p. 255) Vasishtha assumes that there are two distinct groups of *vāsanās* operating in the *manas*, one leading to the good of the individual and the group and the other leading to the evil of the individual and the group. It is the duty and the task of the individual to rouse the good *vāsanās* and overcome the evil *vāsanās*. (II. 9.25-31). It is Vasishtha’s conviction that man is a free agent and it is for him to choose the course of action which contributes to his own good and the good of the group in which he lives.

3. *Prāṇa* and its control

According to Vasishtha, the *chitta* transforms itself into *cittavṛttis*, the mental states or mental modifications, due to two reasons. One of these is the *parispanda*, the vibration of the *prāṇa*. The other is the *vāsanā*, the strong and deep-rooted desires and inclinations. It is the *prāṇa-spandana*, the vibration of the *prāṇa*, that leads to the manifestation of the thoughts and the world- appearance. Consequently, the cessation of the vibration of *prāṇa* means the cessation of all cognitive functions. There is also a close relationship between *prāṇa-spanda* and *vāsanā*. *Prāṇa* is set in motion through *vasana* and *vasana* is created and stimulated into activity by *prāṇa-spanda*. The cessation of the *chitta*, the cessation of all the cognitive functions, is possible through *prāṇāyāma*, regulation of breath and *dhyāna*, meditation. (V 91. 20-27).

In the purvardha of the Nirvana Prakarana, Vasishtha relates the story of Kaka Bhusunda (VI.a. Chs. 24-26). Bhusunda is the venerable old crow, who instructs Vasishtha about *prāṇa*. The body is compared to a house and *ahamkāra*, the ego, to the householder. A description is given of *rechaka*, the outgoing breath, *puraka*, the breathing in and *kumbhaka*, the interval between the two. Also there is a description of the two *nāḍis*, *iḍā* and *pingalā*, the left and right columns of the spinal cord with *sushumnā* in the centre. There is also the statement that the *prāṇa* forces are responsible for the breathing, the movement of the eyes, the digestion of food and the power of speech (Via. 25. 6-11). Dasgupta observes, “It is curious to note in this connection that in the whole literature of the Ayurveda, there is probably no passage where there is such a clear description of the respiratory process” (ibid, p. 258 footnote). It is asserted that when there is cessation of the two operations of breathing in and breathing out, there is an unbroken continuity of *kumbhaka*. There is also the assertion that all the functions of breathing are due to the movement of *chitta* (Via. 25. 61-74). Earlier it is said that *chitta* and the movement of the breath and body are one and the same, inseparable like the snow and its whiteness (V. ch. 78).

It is said that there are two ways of destroying the *chitta*, one by the cessation of mental states through *prāṇāyāma*, and the other by right knowledge. From the movement of *prana*, there is the movement of the *chitta* and from the movement of the *chitta* there is knowledge, *samvid*.

The control of the movement of *prāṇa* may be achieved through concentrating one’s mind

on one subject or through long inhalation associated with meditation or the practice of *kumbhaka*, retention of breath.

When Vasishtha asks Bhusunda to describe the nature of *prāṇa vāyu*, he is informed that it is *spanda śakti*, the ever-moving vibration energy and that it functions in all the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, that is, in all states of consciousness. It is said that all the three processes of inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath, occur without any effort (VI a. 251-11). It is pointed out that the person who pays attention to these three processes in a deliberate way is a Yogi. He gradually develops a contempt for all other activities and sense pleasures (Via. 25. 20-24).

Bhusunda asserts that by resorting to *praṇa samādhi* in this manner, he was able to attain *chitta viśrānti*, mental peace. This is *ātma samādhi*. He experiences this peace whether he is stationary or moving about, whether he is awake, dreaming or asleep. He is in communion with the Absolute and is never concerned with the past or anxious about the future. He says that he will be in the *sushupti* state even while he is awake and active. (VI a. 26. 1-10). He has *samadrishṭi*, he looks on all as being equal. Whether it is a piece of wood (*kāśtam*) or a coquettish woman (*vilāsini*), a mountain or a blade of grass (*trṇa*), they are all the same. As a result, he says, he is ever happy. He further says that he never thinks of a person as a friend or relative (*bandhu*) or as an alien (*para*). He is able to look upon every one as the manifestation of the *chit*, the pure consciousness (VI. a. 26. 20-21). So he feels close, intimate and friendly towards every person. (VI a. 26. 34-35).

4. Control of Mind

According to Vasishtha, the World-experience is a delusion. He gives the analogy of the illusion of a circle of fire caused by the swinging round and round of torch (V. 78.1). As noted above, he asserts that there are two ways of overcoming this world delusion, namely, Yoga and Jnana. (V. 78.8). He asserts that Atmajnana, knowledge of self, leads to the control of mind. Jnana, he says, consists in having the conviction that the Absolute is beginningless (*anādī*) and endless (*anānta*), that it is eternal and self-luminous. When this *jnāna* arises, *ajnāna*, nescience is destroyed. When *ajnāna* is destroyed there is *mano-nāśa*, the destruction of the mind. With it all the *manovṛttis*, the mental processes and the experience of forms and perceptions, automatically vanish. It is the mind that is responsible for the functioning of the various organs of sense and actions (the *jnānendriyas* and *karmendriyas*). When there is control over the mind, all the organs of sense and action are automatically under control (V. 80. 15-20). Desires, then, will have no hold on one. When the desires are not there, the question of joys and sorrows does not arise at all (Y. 80. 38-42).

When this Jnana arises, one is not disturbed by the functioning of the mind. Experiences will come and go in the manner of the waves of the sea which arise and disappear (V. 81. 11-14). In that condition, man has neither the desire to acquire nor the desire to reject. He becomes free from likes and dislikes (V. 86. 10).

Some persons try to calm the mind with the help of drugs. Vasishtha condemns these efforts. He also condemns the desire to acquire and exhibit *siddhis*, supernormal powers (V. 89. 12-16).

Vasishtha says that the *chitta-sattā*, the apparent reality of the mind, is responsible for

world experience. So *chitta-nāśa*, the destruction of the mind leads to enlightenment. An enlightened person is not affected either by external or internal wants. He will be like a mountain that is unaffected by the winds. So long as one thinks about the seen (*the dṛśya*), he is steeped in foolishness.

Vasishtha told Rama that the world experience and the round of worldly activities (*samsara*) is due to the wheel of delusion (*maya chakra*); the hub of this wheel of delusion is the mind, the *chitta*. So the task of the individual is to utilize his intelligence or wisdom (*buddhi*) and make the mind stable. When the mind is stabilized through deliberate effort, the movement of the wheel of Maya will be arrested. When one attains that stability, all suffering and sorrow will vanish. It is *chitta nirodha*, the restraint of the mind, that is the supreme remedy for the disease of the wheel of worldly activities (*samsāra*). When the mind, the *chitta*, without being engaged in thinking of the past and the future, is concerned with the present in an effortless way and with detachment, then it becomes *achit*, free from concern and anxiety. When the *chit*, the consciousness, is free from *chitta*, the mind, it becomes *śuddhātmā*, pure self.

Rama asked Vasishtha to enlighten him about the seed of worldliness (*samsāra bīja*). The seed, he replies, is the body and the mind. The sprout is the *vāsanā*, the impressions in the mind which determine the further mental processes and consequent worldliness. So that supreme well-being (*sreyas*) consists in controlling the mental processes (*chitta vṛttis*). When such control is attained, the seed will be burnt (*dagdha bīja*) and powerless to sprout (V. 91. 1-46). So long as the mind is active, the *vāsanās*, the impressions, will be powerful. When there is *mano nāśa* (the destruction of the mind and mental concerns), *vāsanā kshaya* will ensue. The past impressions and predilections will become powerless to influence the conduct of the individual (V. 91.54-55).

Self-knowledge, the company of the good, the relinquishment of predictions, the control of breath, are all necessary to attain victory over the mind (V. 92. 35-36).

This is why Vasishtha warns that mere control of the body through Hatha Yoga, without a control of the mind and without the attainment of self-knowledge, is futile (V. 92. 38-48).

According to Vasishtha the term Yoga stands for the practice in self-realisation. The term Yoga stands for (a) the deep affirmation of One Reality (*ekatattvatabhyāsaḥ*), (b) stopping the movement of the *prāṇas*, the vital currents (*prāṇānām vilayaḥ*) and the control of mind (*manovinigrahaḥ*). (VIa. 69. 27). Success in any one of them leads to success in the others also. However, he prefers the control of mind as the easiest and the best. Of all the three methods of realisation, the control of mind is the best, because it is easily effected and leads to peace soon. (VI a. 69. 29).

Vasishtha is emphatic that the mind can be controlled and dissolved by one's own efforts and not by penances, pilgrimages, learning, sacrifices, etc. (VI b. 163.8). The important and effective means for control of the mind is the eradication of egoistic feeling. Egoism (*ahambhāva*) arises with the identification of the self with some particular aspect of the Infinite and the Absolute, whether it is the body, or the family, or the nationality, etc. It is *ahamkāra*, self-affirmation, that is the root of the tree of mind. This has to be destroyed (VI a. 94.13). This self-affirmation will die when we realise that it is unreal from the point of view of the Absolute. He asserts that when the nature of the ego is known, it will vanish. Let a man

who is already peaceful, self-controlled and free from sensual pleasures and selfish desires, Vasishtha says, sit on a soft seat and utter the *pranava*, Om, and feel that he is the entire cosmos (VI a. 128. 1-25).

5. The seven stages of self-Realization

Vasishtha describes the seven stages in different sections: a) in the 118th chapter of the third Prakarana, the Utpatti Prakarana, b) the 120th chapter of the purvardha of Nirvana prakarana, and c) in the 126th chapter of the same prakarana.

Putting them all together we can describe the progressive path of the individual as he ascends from particular conscious states to the state of pure consciousness in the following way:

The first stage consists of *subhecchā*, the aspiration to transcend the worldly pre-occupations and engage himself in the study of the relevant books. The second stage consists in *vicharana*, critical inquiry regarding the nature of the self, the world and the Brahman. The third is the development of *asanga bhāvanā* the affirmation of one's being detached from worldly pursuits and enjoyments. When *asanga* detachment, is cultivated, the aspirant will be peaceful and happy. The fourth stage is *vilapana*, in which all desires are annihilated. The fifth stage is that of *asamsakti*, in which one becomes detached from the objective world. As a result of this arises the sixth stage, *padārtha abhāvanā*, the realisation that the things of the world are unreal, that is, are not permanent. The seventh and final stage is that of *turiya*, the stage of liberation here and now, which is free from all agitations and is characterized by *samatva*, equanimity and *samadarśana*, looking on all persons with an equal eye. Such a person has no concern with differences in age, sex, status, etc. This is the stage of the *jīvanmukta*, the liberated man. The first three stages correspond to the *jāgrat*, the waking state, the fourth corresponds to the *svapna*, the dream stage, and the fifth and sixth correspond to the *sushupti* state, the state of deep sleep. The last stage is the culmination, in which all his desires, thoughts and actions have been burnt up and so leave no *vāsanās*, no traces or impressions, which generate further desires, thoughts and actions.

6. Concluding Remarks

It is clear from the above that Vasishtha's views regarding Yoga are quite different from the views of Patanjali and others. As noted above, he looks upon Yoga as the method which enables one to transcend the finitude of world-experience. *Samsarottaraṇe yuktiyogaśabdena kathyate*—Yoga is the method of crossing over the Samsara (VIa 13.3). Jnana, self-knowledge, is the only means for attaining this. It is the conviction that Brahman alone is the Reality. *Jnāna*, thus, is not a mere intellectual affair. It is not mere knowledge. In fact, he calls a man of knowledge a *Jnāna-bandhu*. He is not a *Jnānin*. He asserts that a Jnanabandhu is one who studies scriptures merely to earn his livelihood. In this he is like an artisan, a skilled craftsman, rather than an artist. He does not make any effort to practise what he has learnt. His knowledge does not manifest itself in his actions. He just follows the injunctions of the Sruti. His aim is not self-realization. (VI b. 21. 3-8). The ideal of Yoga, according to Vasishtha, is to be in the *turiya* state, the fourth state, which is the realisation of bliss which is the nature of pure consciousness. (VI a. 128. 50-51).

As a result his emphasis is more on control of breath *prāṇāyāma*, control of the mind, *manovinigrahaḥ*, and the attainment of *jnāna* self-knowledge.

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THE PLACE OF MEDITATION IN ADVAITA VEDANTA

DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

Vedānta is not only a teaching of truth but also a way of life. The Upanishads which constitute Vedanta teach not only about the Reality referred to as *Brahman* or *Atman*, but they also prescribe in detail the methods by which *Brahman* is to be realized, i.e., to be experienced as the sole Reality. According to the Upanishads as expounded by Sankara: “The Absolute Spirit is the non- dual Reality; the world of phenomena is an illusion; the so-called individual soul is the Absolute Itself, and no other.” The world appears to be real because of ignorance which binds the soul to the recurring cycle of birth and death. Knowledge of the non- dual *Brahman-Atman* (the Self free of limitations) effects release of the soul from restrictions superimposed on it, by removing ignorance. Release is only another name for the eternal Self (*Brahman-Atman*).

Release which is the goal as taught in the Upanishads is not what-is-to-be accomplished. The expression that it is “attained” is but figurative and only from our limited standpoint of diversity. It is from this point of view that we say, knowledge must be “gained” etc. Actually knowledge is not acquired, for acquiring implies activity and anything caused by activity is by nature bound to be perishable.

It is true, however, that action may precede knowledge. For example one may act by turning the head towards the sun, but what is subsequently seen is not the result of an action but what is already there. In this sense, paths towards Release can be considered to consist of *karma*, disinterested service without expecting rewards, *bhakti*, devotion to a chosen Deity, and *jnana*, the way of inquiry. To follow the discipline of inquiry, which is the path of knowledge, certain qualifications are necessary. Sankara lays down these as the qualifications: Discrimination of the eternal from the non- eternal phenomena; non-attachment to the enjoyment of fruit (of endeavours) here or in a here-after; the possession in abundance of virtues such as calmness and equanimity, and the longing for release.

It is obvious that these qualifications of eligibility to follow the path of knowledge are difficult to obtain. What one should basically achieve is perfect mind-control. Mind- control is achieved through concentration and meditation. Meditation, it must be remembered, is a mental act and is different from knowledge. It is prescribed for those who are not yet ready for the path of knowledge. The benefit of meditation is that it arrests the current of the mind which courses its way to objects of sense, and causes it to concentrate on *Brahman*. Meditation on *Brahman* may be compared to a delusion which becomes fruitful. A delusion which yields a fruitful result is called *samvadibhrama*. *visamvadibhrama*, its opposite, is a delusion which does not lead to any fruitful consequence. Let us illustrate this by an example: The light of a lamp and the light of a gem may both be mistaken for a gem. Both are cases of delusion; but the person who mistakes the lamp light for a gem, approaches but gains nothing; while the one who mistakes the light of a gem for a gem itself, gets the gem. Meditation on *Brahman* is like the latter. There is meditation on *Brahman* with attributes (*saguna*) and there is also the meditation on *Brahman* without attributes (*nirguna*). *Brahman* as such is unconditioned, without attributes, without qualifications (*nirguna*). It is the same

Reality as endowed with attributes that is called God when viewed in relation to the empirical world and souls. *Brahman* is the same as *nirguṇa* (attributeless) and as *saguṇa* (with attributes). There are no two *Brahmans* as wrongly alleged by some critics. Even when God is referred to as the lower (*apara*) *Brahman*, what is meant is not that *Brahman* has become lower in status as God, but that God is *Brahman* looked at from the lower level of relative experience. These are two forms (*dvirupa*) of *Brahman* and not two *Brahmans*; *Brahman* as-It-is-in-Itself, and *Brahman* as-It-is-in-relation-to-the-world. The former is the unconditioned *Brahman*, the latter is *Brahman* as conditioned by nomenclature, configuration and change.

Superior to meditation on *Brahman* with attributes is meditation on *Brahman* without attributes. The criterion by which superiority of a particular method is determined is its relative proximity to *Brahman*-knowledge. Judged by this standard, meditation on the attribute less *Brahman* is superior to the remote methods like the performance of rites and formal worship. Just as a delusion that turns out to be fruitful becomes very much like knowledge at the time of yielding fruit, even so meditation on *Brahman* without attributes, when it matures, becomes like knowledge at the time of release.

Meditation on the attribute less *Brahman* usually takes the form of meditation on the sacred syllable *Om*, referred to as *praṇava* Gaudapada, the illustrious predecessor of Sankara, explains the method of meditating on the significance of *Om* in his verse, commentary on one of the Upanisads, the Mandukya-Upanisad. *Om* is the sound which is indicative of *Brahman*. It is inclusive of all sounds; and hence it is the support of the world of speech (*vāk-prapañca*). And of all that is denoted by sound, the ground is *Brahman*. So, for purposes of meditation the sound *Om* is made to stand for the Self or *Brahman*. Of all the symbols, the sound *Om* has come to be regarded as the most important and fruitful. The Kathopanishad says, "The word (or goal) which all the Vedas declare, that which penances proclaim, and desiring which people lead an austere life, that word (or goal) I tell thee in brief: It is *Om*." The Mundakopanishad compares the *praṇava* (the syllable *Om*) to the bow, the individual soul to the arrow, and *Brahman* to the target, and says that the target is to be unerringly hit. Thus is union with *Brahman* attained. The fifth question of the Prasnopanishad relates to the meditation on *Om* as a means to the Realization of the higher and the lower *Brahman*, i.e., the unconditioned *Brahman* and *Brahman* as conditioned. It is stated there that by means of *Omkāra* the wise one arrives at the Highest, which is quiescent and free from decay, death and fear.

The use of *Praṇava-dhyāna* or meditation on *Om* is, thus, well recognized in the Upanishads. In fact, the Mandukya starts by saying that its object is to expound the significance of *Omkāra*, and sketches the method of identifying the components of the sound "*Om*" with the aspects of the Self, and thereby realizing the truth of non-duality. There are four *mātrās* or morae of *Om* corresponding to the four phases of the Self. The four *mātrās* are a, u, m, and the fourth which is really *amātrā* or the mora-less part which is represented by the point (*bindu*) of the *anusvara*. The phases of the Self are *Viśva*, *Taijasa*, *Prājña* and the *Turiya*; the first three stand for the Self in waking, dream and sleep respectively, and the fourth is the Self *per se*. The principle of the meditation on *Om* is to equate the *mātrās* with the phases. Gaudapada calls the knowledge or equation *mātrāsampratipatti*, (i.e., knowing the *mātrās* to be identical with the phases) and *omkārasypādaśovidyā* (knowledge of the morae of *Om* as the phases of the Self). Now, if two things are to be identified or compared there must be some similarity between them. Mandukya and, following it, the Karika, give reasons in each

case for the identification of the phases of the Self with the *mātrās*. And the reasons, it is advisable to remember, are intended only for helping concentration on the significance of *Om*.

The first of the *mātrās* is *a* and the first of the phases is *Viśva*. These two are to be regarded as identical because of the common quality of being the first (*ādi*) as well as that of pervading (*āpti*). Of the sound components of *Om*, *a* is the first; so also of the aspects of the Self, *Viśva* is the first. And just as *a* is pervasive of all speech, *Viśva* is pervasive of the universe. In the case of the second *mātrā* *u*, and the second phase of the Self, *Taijasa*, the common qualities are exaltation (*utkarṣa*) and intermediateness (*ubhayatva*). The exaltation of *u* is due to its being subsequent to *a*. Similarly *Taijasa* is exalted over *Viśva* because of its superior order. *U* is intermediate between *a* and *m*; and *Taijasa* is between *Viśva* and *Prājña*. The common features that constitute the basis for the identification of *m* and *Prājña* are being the measure (*miti* or *māna*) and the locus of mergence (*apiti* or *laya*). In repeating *Om* again and again, *a* and *u* merge into and emerge from *m*, as it were. Here *m* is said to be the measure of the other two *mātrās*. *Prājña* is the measure of *Viśva* and *Taijasa* because these two evolve out of it in creation and enter into it in dissolution; the worlds of waking and dream get resolved in sleep, and from sleep they emerge again. The second common quality is *laya* or disappearance; just as *a* and *u* end in *m*, *Viśva* and *Taijasa* disappear in *Prājña*. It will be clear that the letters *a*, *u* and *m* are employed in this meditation as mnemonics. Each letter stands for the first letter of the words signifying certain features of the Self in its manifestation as *Viśva*, *Taijasa* and *Prājña*. The second quality of *Prājña* is the only exception. Thus *a* stands for *ādi* and *āpti*; *u* for *utkarṣa* and *ubhayatva*; and *m* for *miti* or *māna*.

The fourth *mātrā* is, as we said already, *amātrā*. It is the silence into which the sound *Om* culminates. It is the *Om* without the distinction of parts. It has not even a name, and therefore it does not come under the purview of empirical usage. It is the *Turiya*, Self or Pure Consciousness which transcends the distinctions involved in the forms of *Viśva* and *Taijasa*, and the seed of plurality implicit in *Prājña*.

The Mandukya-upanishad eulogizes the meditation on the identity of the *mātrās* and the phases of the Self by specifying the fruit which each stage in the meditation yields. He who knows Vaisavara, (*i.e.*, *Viśva*) as *a*, says the Upanishad, obtains all desires and becomes first among the great. He who knows the identity of *Taijasa* with *u* exalts or increases the continuity of knowledge and becomes equal or of the same attitude towards all and in his family none who does not know *Brahman* is born. He who knows the one-ness of *Prājña* and *m* measures the whole world, (*i.e.*, knows its true nature) and becomes the place of its mergence, (*i.e.*, he becomes the Self which is the cause of the universe). He who knows the mora-less *Omkāra* in its fullness as signifying the *Turiya* realizes the Self and does not return to empirical life.

Meditation or *upāsanā* is defined thus by Sankara: the process of taking hold of some stay or *ālambana*, established as such in the sacred texts, and directing a continuous flow of even modes of the mind towards it, without the intervention of any other cognition contrary to it, is *upāsanā*. There must be some point of attention for concentration. This is the *ālambana* (support). It is of service in steadying the thought-current and making it flow in one direction. The *pratīkas* or images are useful in this way. The centrifugal tendency of the mind is arrested, and it becomes unflickering and one pointed like the flame of a lamp kept in a still place. The images which are wrongly called idols have a place in spiritual discipline because

they help to direct the mind of The aspirant Godward.

That *Praṇava* or *Omkāra* has the pride of place among the symbols of the invisible Spirit, we have already stated. Its significance and the method of meditation thereon have also been explained. Gaudapada concludes his exposition of *Praṇava-yoga* by praising it and those who practise it. "The mind should be yoked to *Praṇava*, for *Praṇava* is *Brahman* in which there is no fear. For him who is ever identified with *Praṇava* there is no fear anywhere. *Praṇava* is the lower *Brahman*; it is the higher also. It has no cause; there is nothing besides it, nothing outside it. Nor is there anything that follows from it. *Praṇava* is immutable. It is the beginning, the middle and the end of all. He who knows *Praṇava* thus attains the Self. *Om* is to be known as the Lord present in the heart of all. Having understood the all- pervading *Om*, the wise one does not grieve about anything. *Omkāra* is without measure (*amātrā*), and is without limits (*ananta-mātrā*); It is That in which all duality ceases, It is bliss. He who knows this is a saint, and no other."

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MEDITATION ACCORDING TO ASHTANGA-YOGA

by

SWAMI VIJNANANDA

Man is ever in search of peace and happiness; but real and perennial peace and bliss are to be found in one's self alone and not in the sensate objects of pleasure. Our self is of the nature of pure being, consciousness and bliss. It is our essential nature; but the self is enveloped by ignorance, by the sheaths of body and mind, by our worldly passions, desires and activities. One has to practise yoga in order to pierce through these psychic strata and reach one's self. Absolute control and sublimation of mental states is the only way to become aware of the self. This control and, sublimation are brought about by Abhyasa, Vairagya and meditation.

Abhyasa means continued effort to steady the mind and Vairagya or non-attachment means self-mastery obtained by giving up all desires. Non-attachment brings about tranquillity of mind. With a tranquil mind, concentration and meditation become easy. Meditation with a concentrated mind illumines the self. Meditation is an integral part of spiritual life. It is a direct means to spiritual enlightenment. When a man takes to meditation, he takes the path that leads directly to deliverance.

Meditation is an important limb of Ashtanga-yoga. Ashtanga-yoga is not a science of enquiry (pariksha-sastra); but is a science of instruction (upadesa-sastra). So, it is more practical than speculative in its intent and content. It is not based on mere theory or hypothesis; but on facts that have been tested and proved. Ashtanga-yoga is a practical mode of discipline in which the self achieves independence and liberation. It is not concerned with problems of philosophy. Neither is it burdened with logical intricacies. Its only interest lies in helping man to free himself from ignorance, from bondage of body and mind, from the stress and strain of life and to achieve peace and happiness.

The key-word in Ashtanga-yoga is the term yoga. Though the word 'yoga' may mean several things, it specially and specifically means meditation in Ashtanga-yoga. Through meditation the self or the soul becomes liberated from the shackles of the mechanism of the body and mind. Mind is less binding than the gross body. Like the body it is also a form of matter. The goal of yoga is to completely extricate the spirit from every vestige of matter, be it body or mind.

Man in his essential nature is not the complex of body and mind. He is a spirit inhabiting a body. He has forgotten his spiritual nature. Due to ignorance, he identifies himself with the body and mind. As a result, he feels miserable and wretched. He is suffering from conflicts and is not at peace either with himself or with the world. By means of meditation man realises his true nature and remains in it. His ties with the body and mind become severed and he attains to serene peace and unalloyed bliss.

There are five obstacles to yoga. They are ignorance (avidya), self-consciousness (asmita), attachment (raga), aversion (dvesha) and desire to cling to life (abhinivesa). To consider what is non-eternal as eternal, what is impure as pure, what is painful as pleasant, etc., is ignorance. Ignorance is the basic obstacle from which all the other obstacles stem

forth. Erroneous identification of the self with the body and mind is self-consciousness. Attachment means that which makes a man dwell upon what is pleasurable and aversion means that which makes a man dwell on what is painful. The instinctive desire to cling to life and dread of death constitute what is called abhinivesa.

Since the self is enveloped by the sheaths of body and mind, impurities pertaining to them are to be eliminated before one can have a vision of the self. Patanjali prescribes Ashtanga-yoga, *i.e.*, yoga consisting of eight limbs for the purification of the mechanism of the body and mind and for gaining a direct vision of the self. The eight limbs are yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. The first five are the external limbs while the latter three are internal.

The first two, yama and niyama are meant to chasten and direct our will in the right direction. Cultivation of these two is very necessary for higher life-because they together constitute the moral foundation upon which the whole of spiritual sadhana is based. Without these two, no spiritual sadhana becomes effective.

Yama comprises five virtues; ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha. Ahimsa means abstaining from harming others in any way at any time. It virtually means renunciation of hatred towards all beings. A spiritual sadhaka should not injure any being either by word, deed or thought. This becomes possible by the cultivation of (a) maitri or friendliness towards those who are happy (b) karuna or compassion towards those who are unhappy, (c) delight in the company of the virtuous people and (d) indifference towards the wicked.

Satya means speech and mind corresponding to the reality of things. It should be cultivated for the good and happiness of all and not for hurting the feelings of anybody. Satya ceases to be so if anybody is hurt by it. An aspirant should not indulge in falsehood or unnecessary talk.

Asteya means abstaining from appropriating things not sanctioned by the sastras or belonging to others. Brahmacharya is sex-purity in thought, word and deed. It is the most essential virtue in spiritual life. Aparigraha consists in non-acquisition of things. An aspirant has to possess only as much as is necessary to keep his body and mind in a fit condition to carry on spiritual practice without being hindered by hunger or disease.

These categorical imperatives are to be observed under all circumstances irrespective of time, place and exigency.

Next come the disciplines collectively called niyamas. They are saucha, santosha, tapas, svadhyaya and Iswarapranidhana.

Saucha means physical cleanliness and mental purity. Regular bath keeps the body clean and remembrance of God makes the mind pure. Santosha or contentment consists in being satisfied and happy with what one gets by due exertion and in not coveting more. Tapas or austerity does not consist in unnecessarily violating one's body or mind. It consists more in bearing the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, etc., with equanimity than in self-infliction. Svadhyaya consists in the study of scriptures that are conducive to one's liberation. Iswarapranidhana or devotion to God consists in offering oneself and one's actions to the Supreme Teacher.

Now we come to the next limb of yoga called asana or posture. An easy and steady posture which will enable the sadhaka to practise meditation without feeling any mental strain or

physical discomfort and at the same time which will not lull the mind to sleep is to be adopted. A steady posture with limbs of the body remaining restful is *sine qua non* for meditation. If the posture is unsteady and limbs are restless, the mind and the senses also become restless and unmanageable. It is a matter of common experience that concentration and contemplation become easy and smooth when sitting in a steady and easy posture. Asana is an aid to mental equilibrium and poise. When asana is perfected fickleness of mind ceases. That asana which is steady and pleasant is considered to be the most suitable.

Then comes pranayama, the control of breath. Pranayama helps in restraining and regulating breath. Breathing and mind are closely connected. Whenever the mind is disturbed, the breathing becomes irregular. Rhythmic breathing calms down the mind. Prana on the physical plane appears as breathing which on the subtle plane is connected with the functioning of mind. By controlling prana on the physical plane the waves of the mind are controlled. This is pranayama. It is said in the Patañjali yoga-sastra that pranayama destroys the ignorance caused by our past karma. It must be noted that though pranayama is an integral limb of yoga, it is, according to Patañjali, a psycho-somatic means for a spiritual end. When pranayama is practised under the supervision of a competent teacher, it conduces to good health; but when practised haphazardly and unscientifically, it is very likely to produce mental and physical disorders. So, one has to practise it with great care.

The next step in Ashtanga-yoga is *pratyahara*, i.e., withdrawing the sense-organs from sense-objects with the help of the mind. The sense-organs obey and follow the mind. If the mind is self-controlled, it can easily control the sense-organs and withdraw them from the sense-objects.

Now we come to *dharana*. It consists in fixing the mind on an object. The object may be internal like a lotus imagined in the heart or may be external like the flame of a lamp. The mind is accustomed to wander about; so, it is not easy to fix the mind on an object internal or external. Repeatedly, the mind strays away from the object. But by repeated practice and perseverance and by cultivation of detachment, the mind can be made to stick to an object.

Dharana matures into *dhyana* or meditation. Meditation consists in an unbroken flow of thought towards the object of concentration. In meditation, the mind remains fixed for a while on the object of concentration. It is like pouring of oil from one vessel to another in a steady uninterrupted flow. In the process of meditation a succession of similar thoughts flow in the mind without any contrary or dissimilar thoughts interfering in the middle.

When meditation becomes continuous and constant, mind takes the form of the object of meditation itself. This state is called *samadhi*. This is the culminating stage of Ashtanga-yoga. In this state the self becomes liberated from its conditioned existence. This *samadhi* is called *samprajnata samadhi* because there is consciousness of object in this *samadhi*. There is another *samadhi* called *asamprajnata samadhi* or objectless *samadhi*. In this there is no consciousness of object; but it is not void because there is pure consciousness in it. This state is also known as *nirvikalpa samadhi*. In this state, a yogi remains in his real nature. It is a state of supreme peace and bliss.

The object or chosen ideal of meditation could be impersonal or could be personal i.e., a person invested with holiness and divinity. Meditation on the impersonal is rather difficult. The mind cannot operate except through name and form. Any symbol of God or form of God

which appeals to the heart of the sadhaka would be the ideal object for meditation. The object or chosen ideal may be imagined to be seated in the lotus of the heart.

There are many impediments to meditation like physical ailments, mental lassitude, doubt as to the utility of meditation, sense-attractions, non-attainment of concentration, etc. These must be warded off. Moderation in food, sleep, activity, wakefulness, etc., is also essential. Exciting foods should be eschewed.

A simple and sure faith in God and a total dependence on His grace help in making meditation and spiritual life easy and smooth. Meditation becomes all the more smooth and joyous when there is love for God.

Meditation serves two purposes. By means of meditation the sadhaka devotes himself to his chosen ideal; secondly, by means of meditation the sadhaka becomes able to penetrate to the core of the Reality. As many people seem to think, meditation is not a process of discursive reasoning. It is a means of concentration by which the sadhaka seeks to elevate his consciousness. By means of regular practice of meditation, the sadhaka becomes able to gain more and more concentration and to approximate more and more closely to the ideal of perfection. If the meditation is well established in the sadhaka, it ceases to be mere meditation. It acquires the character of perception. The object or the chosen ideal of meditation becomes the object of perception. This state, called samadhi, liberates the soul from the meshes of the body and the mind. It is a state of infinite joy and supreme peace that passeth understanding.

There is no need even for those who have no faith in dogmatic religion to despair of the conflicts and complexities of their life. They need not feel that their lives are in vain and devoid of any meaning. Yoga and meditation help men to solve their problems of life and to make their lives meaningful, purposeful and peaceful. Meditation is a real science and so it is universal. Anybody, whether believing in God or not, whether of the orient or of the Occident, can study it and practise it.

Integration of personality is the panacea for all of our ills of life. Meditation helps to bring about this integration of personality. It is well known that man has the three faculties of thought, will and feeling. When these are at variance with each other we feel disturbed in mind and suffer from conflicts. But when thought, will and feeling act in unison, we feel at peace with ourselves. So, thought, will and feeling are to be co-ordinated with each other and made to work in a spirit of harmony if we are to feel at ease and happy. Aberrations of thought, will and feeling are responsible for the lack of harmony and for the consequent disintegration of personality. So, these aberrations are to be consciously rectified and the whole mind should be harmoniously unified if integration of personality is to take place. Meditation helps us to correct the wayward vagaries and aberrations of thought, will and feeling and to purify, to unify and to harmonise our mind and thus to bring about integration by directing our thought, will and feeling towards our chosen ideal of meditation. Also, meditation gives a higher orientation to our thought, will and feeling; and exalts them.

Meditation is a manifold blessing. Man suffers from so many fears and frustrations. Swami Vivekananda says that ignorance of our spiritual nature, Atman, is the root cause of all our fears and frustrations. Ignorance creates a feeling of inherent weakness in man. Atman is the embodiment of strength. So, the best way of getting rid of our fears and frustrations is to

know and feel our spiritual nature, the Atman. The purpose of yoga and meditation is to help us to discover and realise our true nature, the Atman and thus to rid ourselves of all our fears and frustrations.

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MEDITATION IN CHRISTIANITY

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

The Hindu and Jewish-Christian traditions grew up on different soils and in different spiritual climates. Nevertheless, common points like union with the God-head or God in the impersonal and personal aspects as the goal of human destiny and ways to the goal such as meditation and prayer make our study of absorbing interest.

The term 'meditation' is used a few times in the Psalms of the old Testament.

"How much I love Thy Law
It is the object of my meditation."

(Psalm 119, 97)

"O Eternal, I meditate on your works."

(Psalm 143, 5)

Invoking the *name* of the Eternal is also mentioned in the old Testament:

"He (the Eternal) is always close to us whenever we invoke
His name."

(Deuteronomy II. 4, 7.)

In the New Testament the terms prayer, worship and contemplation bring together the various shades of meaning that Yoga- Vedanta gives to the term meditation. And when we say this, meditation should be understood both as act and attitude.

In St. John IV. 22, Jesus says, "God is Spirit; they that worship Him must worship Him as Spirit."

When the spirit is mentioned for the second time, it denotes the attitude of the worshipper. Only when the worshipper spiritualises himself, can God be worshipped as Spirit which reminds the Hindu of the Hindu dictum "*devo bhūtvā devam yajet*" To worship God one should become God, as pure as God. The various purifications or *śuddhis* are implied.

Prayer figures greatly as effective means to union with God with the early pillars of Christianity like St. Augustine. But more systematic meditation-material comes to us with mystics like St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. St. John of the Cross speaks of the four 'Nights' as four purifications necessary for the final mystical union and also of the ten steps of the Ladder of Perfection. This we shall consider later on. Then comes the Philokalia tradition with detailed instructions of prayer-meditation on the heart, so that the heart absorbs the Lord and the Lord the heart. With these preliminary remarks we can proceed further.

Jesus and prayer-meditation

Luke XI, suggests that there was evidence in Jesus's praying of an unusual closeness to God. Jesus prayed alone and sometimes prayed the whole night. 'Alone' may mean in solitude as is evidenced in the instructions Jesus gave: "When you pray, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and the Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." (Matthew VI-6). The insistence on 'secret' may be understood as the secret depth of the heart where one has to retire and into which depth God

sees.

In the Lord's prayer, which Jesus bequeathed to humanity, there is the power of realizing the Kingdom in the present moment of prayer as also of the daily spiritual sustenance, faith hope and love, symbolized by the daily bread.

Testimony of the Disciples

John I.14 says "We contemplated his (Jesus's) glory, full of Grace, and Truth." This contemplation-meditation should be understood as an echo of the contemplation to which Jesus himself refers when he says: "God is spirit and those who want to contemplate Him in truth should do so in spirit."

The result of this contemplation or communion with him is the acquisition of Light. In his first epistle John says: "If we say that we have communion with Him and walk in darkness, we lie. But if we walk in the light as He is in the Light, we have communion with Him and one with another....."

(1 John, 6, 7).

St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)

St. Francis of Assisi, the tallest tower of mediaeval Christian mysticism has left behind a great treasure of his prayers and meditations. What he speaks of his vision of two lights a few days before receiving the stigmata, may help in our meditation too. To his close associate Brother Leon he says:

"During that prayer two lights were shown to me: one in which I recognized God; and the other in which I recognized myself. And when I asked God who I was in comparison with Him, I plunged deep in contemplation where I felt the infinite depth of God's bounty as also the sad abyss of my spiritual misery."

So long as St. Francis saw the two 'lights', peace did not descend into him. When the light in which he saw himself as creature disappeared and became one with the Divine light the night before he received the stigmata, then only complete union with Christ became a living reality.

The prayer he has transmitted to us is absolutely inspiring at all moments:

"O Lord make me an instrument of your Peace:

so that

Where there is hatred,

I can bring love

Where there is offence,

I can bring pardon

Where there is discord,

I bring union

Where there is error,

I bring truth

Where there is doubt,

I bring faith

Where there is despair,
I bring hope
Where there is darkness,
I bring light
Where there is sorrow,
I bring joy.

Meister Eckhart (early 14th Century)

Meister Eckhart, called a scholastic mystique rather than a mystical scholastic, offered us very Advaitic meditations. For him the experience of 'purely existing' that we have in self-identity is the highest where Pure Being and experience of God mix and mingle. "In that unconditioned Being which is above God I was myself and what I am now, I knew myself. Therefore I am my first cause and in it all things were born. I am at the same time my eternal being and temporal being. It is to realize this immortal birth that I am born. I shall never die, I am the cause of all things." All this reminds us of the '*Aham Brahmāsmi*' (I am Brahman) of the Upanishads.

Meditations of St. John of the Cross

St. John of the Cross (1542-1591) was pre-eminently a Bhakti-yogin. His Ishtam was Jesus Christ and his relationship with the Ishtam was that of *mādhurya*, that of the Gopis with Sri Krishna; St. John was the bride thirsting for union with his beloved Christ.

He practised and taught four stages of purification to come to that union, stages which he called in a special sense 'Nights'. When the lights that guide human understanding and love are extinguished, God's light enters into man. This is a blinding light and a blinding day. But what is night for the unregenerate man is day for the regenerate.

The first meditation is on the purification of the senses by withdrawal from their objects and by a godward turn given to them. "The appetite is the mouth of the will" and when the appetite of the senses is nourished by Sattvic food, then the will becomes Sattvic and pure and by a pure will constant remembrance of God is easily acquired.

This meditation of St. John compares well with the *pratyāhāra* which is the fifth step in the ladder of Patanjali's eight-step yoga. The withdrawal of the organs from their objects by the conviction that all forms are in the mind, is *Pratyāhāra*.

The second Sanjuaniste meditation is on the purification of understanding through faith. Clarifying the notion the mystic doctor says: 'In this stage the soul remains for long hours lost in oblivion, beyond time and united with celestial intelligence. The soul feels the savour of love without knowing what it loves in particular, a general amorous knowledge. God at this stage plunges us in obscure faith. Faith at this stage cannot be analyzed or known by our superior intelligence, not even by the faculty that distinguishes between being and non-being. From henceforth faith becomes the light and guide of our soul. St. John says that at this stage the soul acquires the resemblance of God (*sādharmya*).

The third meditation is on the purification of memory by hope, the hope of salvation. We are all so deeply attached to our personal memories and this attachment shuts off the

memory which God has placed in us, the memory of His free Nature, Salvation.

In the language of the Gita cleansing of memory by Grace is gaining recognition of the true nature of the Self and loosening all the ties of the heart. (Gita, XVIII. 73).

The fourth meditation according to St. John of the Cross is purification of the will by love, the night of the will by love. The act of loving God is an act of will, an openness of will; It is neither emotion nor intellect that is involved in this act. To love by sentiment is shallow; to love by emotion leads us to feebleness and to emotionalism. To love by intellect is dry. But to love by the will to live and to love, which God has placed in us, is to pour out our whole being into God and be transformed into His being (*Ātmasamarpaṇa*).

When the momentum to love God comes from the will then of the two wills, of man's and of God's, there will be only one. In order to gain this momentum the will must be cleansed of joy, hope, pain and fear.

The Ladder of Perfection

The first step is a kind of languor of love. Having lost all taste for the things of the world the soul finds neither help nor taste nor comfort nor rest in anything. Renunciation of all gratification of the senses, memory and imagination is the second and third step. The agonizing pain of separation is the fourth step. The fifth is a very high state of impatient union. This state of intense passionate love of excruciating agony of the soul is expressed in the first stanza of the 'Song of Songs'. The sixth step is the joy of betrothal, the first stage of equality of love with God. The seventh prolongs that state of union. The intense love makes him climb the eighth step. The ninth step is for St. John the perfect state. The Holy Spirit infuses in the aspirant a supreme love of sweetness and bliss. This state quickly leads the soul to the tenth degree of the ladder wherein the soul experiences total union with God and the saint adds at this stage that the soul is ready to leave the body: the soul is God 'by participation'. It is a stage of 'clear vision' wherein the soul is totally assimilated with God. The ten steps show complementarity with the stages through which the mystic soul passes through as indicated in St. Theresa's writings: (1) Prayer of quiet, (2) Prayer of full union, (3) Prayer of Ecstasy, (4) Prayer of transforming union. St. Theresa was a contemporary of St. John of the Cross.

The Philokalia Meditation

The Philokalia is a collection of writings of the Fathers from the earliest times after the Declaration of Constantine the Great. The word 'Philokalia' means love of the beautiful, the exalted, the good. More precisely it contains an interpretation of the secret life in Lord Jesus Christ (which is the truly Christian life, that develops and rises to perfection through prayer of the heart).

'A true sanctuary is a heart free from thoughts, made active by the Spirit. For there all is said and done spiritually' (*Philokalia*, p. 38). 'Plunging thought into light, so that thought itself becomes light, the mind guided by the Spirit traces words in the pure hearts of those who listen. Then it understands the words: "And they shall be all taught of God" (John VI, 45)'

(*Philokalia* p. 42).

What is the prayer used by the tradition? “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me!”

“If one, instead of all other thoughts, forces to have only this one constant prayer within, if one continues to do this with one’s whole attention, then in time it will open for him the way to the heart.” (*Philokalia*, p. 34).

How to practise prayer

“In the morning force your mind to descend from the head to the heart and hold it there, calling ceaselessly in mind and soul: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me.’ Let the memory of Jesus combine with your breath—then will you know the profit of silence” (Ibid. p. 85).

“The beginning of every action pleasing to God is calling with faith on the life-saving name of our Lord Christ, as He Himself said: ‘Without Me ye can do nothing’ (John XV, 5), together with ‘the peace and love which accompany this calling’” (Ibid. p. 194).

“In quality, prayer is communion (co-existence, merging into one being) and union of man with God. In action, it is what the world stands by, reconciliation with God, the mother of tears and again their daughter, propitiation for sin, a bridge over temptations, a wall against sorrows....” (Ibid. p. 201).

Students of Yoga-Vedanta are quite conversant with its teaching that celebrates the importance of the heart in spiritual practices. The term in Sanskrit for heart is *hrdayam* which literally means ‘where the Lord resides.’

To Arjuna’s question: “How shall I, ever meditating, know Thee, O Yogin, in what several aspects art Thou to be thought of by me?” (Gita X, 17) the Lord replies: “I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the heart of all beings..” (Gita X, 20).

Sri Sankara in his commentary on the verse says: “You should think of Me as the innermost self, seated in the heart within of all beings. He who is unable to think of Me as the Self should think of Me in those things which are mentioned in the Vibhuti Yoga of the 10th chapter of the Gita.”

(1) “He that heareth my word and believeth in Him that sent me *hath* ever-lasting life.” (John V. 24). The accent is on *hath* and not wilt have. Hearing is not simply with the ears but with the heart.

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO SPANISH MYSTICS

SWAMI PARATPARANANDA

The most outstanding figures among the Spanish mystics are St. Theresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross. They were contemporaries and lived in the sixteenth century. Both of them belonged to the Carmelite Order and were instrumental in the toning up of and reforming the Order to which they belonged and which was then in a declining state. St. Theresa also founded sixteen convents and fourteen monasteries and in her position as directress of a large number of novitiates had to constantly write letters to guide them in their spiritual path. These letters along with an autobiography which the saint was asked to write by her confessors, have been published in book-form.

St. John of the Cross was a well-learned person who has left behind some beautiful verses depicting the spiritual ascent of the soul and its union with God. Explaining the significance of these verses he has written a long commentary which has served as a source of inspiration and guidance to the earnest seekers of the Christian community during the last two centuries.

When one goes through these works one rarely comes across the word “meditation” and when it occurs it is used in the sense of imagination, ideation or phantasy.¹ Yet, its usefulness and efficacy as a preparatory stage, are not deprecated or discarded. However, the Spanish mystics speak much of mental prayer and contemplation, as means to union with God, which may be, for all practical purposes, interpreted as meditation as we understand the word nowadays. For example, to St. Theresa prayer is not simply a mere utterance of some words but an intimate conversation with the Beloved. In a letter to the nuns she says: “Try to think and understand, my children with whom you are talking or going to talk. Even in a thousand lives of ours we shall not be able to know in what way the Lord deserves to be treated, this Lord in whose presence even the angels tremble. Everything is subject to Him, He can do anything and His mere wish is action. It is reasonable that we take delight in His grandeurs and be aware to whom we are espoused and what grand life will be ours.”² Here she compares the Lord to a beloved husband and says that one who has taken up the spiritual path is already married to Him. Then she places before the nuns the duties of a truly devoted wife in the world and how their own life and thoughts should be: “In this world when a woman marries, she knows to whom, his status in life and what he is. Now, my children, we who are already married to Him before the formal ceremony and are to be taken to His abode, shall we not think of Him? Those who are married to men here do not discard these thoughts. Why then, should we not try to know who this person is, who his father, what is that land where he will take us, what are the riches that he promises to give and so on? Also, in what way shall we be able to please him and in what way we shall transform our state to conform with that of his? In the world, a woman, who desires to be devoted to her husband, is not required to know everything else than these things even if the husband be a very low person. Should we then give lesser importance to our Lord than they do to men? Further, if the husband is of a jealous nature and wishes that the wife have no contact with anyone, it will be strange indeed that she should not think how best to satisfy him in this respect, for in him are all the things that one could desire! To know and understand these truths is mental prayer.”³

As we know, it is extremely difficult to concentrate on any particular subject for a long time unless we have a keen interest in it. And interest or taste for a thing unfolds itself only when we find ourselves involved in, feel an intimate relationship with, or affinity to, the subject. In the spiritual world too this theory or rule applies; so in thinking of God or meditating on Him, one has to establish a certain relationship with Him, if one has to make rapid progress. The mental prayer, as described above by St. Theresa, for the reason just mentioned, can be termed as a type of meditation. It helps the individual to dive deep into the mystery of the divine relationship and be aware of the benefit he receives in developing such an attitude of mind. The natural bent of the human mind is to seek a return for whatever one does, even a philanthropist is moved to act by some hidden motive, for example by a desire for name and fame. So unless man gets convinced that the sacrifice he is going to make, by discarding the things of the world and giving up even the appetite for them, will bring him in the long run, immense benefit, he will not take to spiritual life in the real sense of the term. Hence arises the necessity for deep reflection over the lasting gain that one gets from one's constant contact with God. The purpose of the mental prayer cited above is to maintain one's mind continually on God which is also "what meditation signifies. For this reason it may not be an error to call such a kind of prayer as meditation.

There is another form of prayer practised, in almost all religions, viz. vocal prayer. The Christians have a prayer which begins with the words: "Our Father who are in Heaven" and so on taught by Jesus himself. Advising the nuns as to how one should practise this prayer St. Theresa says: "The Master taught us by setting an example that this prayer be repeated in solitude, although it was not necessary for him. From this it is to be understood that it is not possible to talk with God and the world at the same time, i.e., praying to God and simultaneously listening to what is being talked about or to think of things of the world, though sometimes and in some cases this latter cannot be avoided because of the infirmity of the body or illness. Others should try to be alone when they pray, so that they could be aware with whom they are and what response the Lord has to their prayers. Do you think that He is silent because we do not hear Him? Well does He respond to the heart when we ask from the bottom of our heart. And it is of much benefit that we should consider that it is to each one of us individually that the Lord teaches this prayer and that the teacher is never so far from the disciple as to necessitate the latter to call him aloud, rather he is always very near to the disciple. For this reason my advice to you is that it is good for you that you repeat this prayer of the Lord in a proper manner and with diligence.

"You will say that this type of praying amounts to reflection or meditation, and that you are not able to do it or do not want to do it, but to pray vocally: because you have little patience and are ill disposed to take any trouble, which latter are necessary in the beginning, for the withdrawal of the mind. You are right if you stipulate that the above form of praying amounts to mental prayer, but I certainly do not know how you can separate the vocal prayer from the mental, if the former is to be practised well, knowing or being conscious with whom we are talking."⁴ She adds that one should try to pray with caution and with the introspection cited above as not to end in something superficial and unhelpful. "I have proved it," she continues, "and found that the best way is to try to have the thoughts directed towards Him to whom the words are addressed."⁵

Here we find that even while practising vocal prayer, the Spanish mystics exhort that it

should be done in solitude and with the mind turned towards God. Such a prayer well done, they say, dulls all the outgoing tendencies or faculties of the mind such as understanding, memory and will. That is to say the intellect refrains from seeking to understand the external objects, the memory desists from bringing to the surface of the mind thoughts that would divert its attention from the main purpose or object in view, i.e. God, and the will abstains from wanting to do anything that contradicts or affects adversely the spiritual life of the individual.

“The self then understands that the Divine Master is teaching it without having recourse to words, suspending the functioning of the faculties of the mind. For if these latter were to be active they will do more harm than good. Then they enjoy without understanding how; the soul is enwrapt in love, but does not know how it loves; knows that it enjoys what it loves but does not understand how it enjoys. Well does it understand that it is not that kind of enjoyment that the common or ordinary intellect conceives; and, the will merges in the soul without knowing how, but at the same time able to perceive that this good is not something that could be achieved by all the efforts that one can do in this world. It is a gift of the Lord of the world and the heaven. This, my children, is perfect contemplation.”⁶

To understand better what has preceded and what is to follow it is necessary to know some of the principal concepts of the Spanish mystics. St. John of the Cross speaks of the spiritual night as the immediate means for the union of the soul with the Divine. The soul has, according to them, three potencies or faculties, viz., understanding, memory and will, whose supernatural objectives are the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity or love, respectively. These three virtues are the means by which the soul unites with God, each one creating a vacuum and darkness in its respective faculty: faith in understanding or intellect, hope in memory and charity or love in the will. The understanding is to be perfected in the darkness of faith, memory in the vacuum of hope and the will buried in the lack of all sensual love, to go towards God. When these faculties are perfected in the above-said manner, one can clearly perceive what a great necessity there is that the soul, to travel safely in this spiritual path, should pass through this dark night, leaning on these three virtues, which empty it of all the things of the world. For the soul can unite with God in this life neither through reasoning, nor by enjoyment, nor through imagination, nor through any other sense organ, but only through faith, hope and love. Faith tells us what we cannot understand by the intellect or reasoning, and even if the intellect comes to grasp the certainty of the things manifested through faith, it is not able to understand clearly, rather finds itself groping in darkness.

Hope of uniting with God, without doubt, empties and darkens all memory of things of this world and the next, because hope is always of something one does not have and does not see. Charity empties the will of its resolutions to gain or obtain all external objects; it compels us to love God above all things, which cannot be done except through severing the love to these and directing it all to God. Thus these three virtues put the soul in the darkness and emptiness of all things of the world. And this is the dark spiritual night referred to above as the immediate means for union with God—to be blind towards things of the world, to renounce them totally.

Now we have seen what are vocal prayer, mental prayer and contemplation according to the Spanish mystics and how the first two go side by side: to be practised simultaneously, to be effective. The third one, contemplation, is meant for a very few and is a gift from God.

How to practise vocal prayer is next dealt with. First of all one should examine one's conscience and do other purificatory acts. "Then, my children," advises St. Theresa to her nuns, "seek company, because you are alone. What company is better than that of the Master, who taught the prayer that you are going to recite? Imagine that the Master is beside you and you will discover with what love and kindness He is teaching you. Be not without such a friend as long as you can. If you get habituated to bring Him near to you and He perceives that you do it with love and are trying to content Him then He will never fail you; certainly He will help you in all your efforts, He will be with you everywhere."⁷

The practice recommended here helps to put the mind in a state of concentration. Even an aspirant who is not able to discriminate or reason about theological problems is asked to cultivate this habit. For, to fix the mind on one subject for a long time is a difficult task and cannot be accomplished without years of hard practice. Admonishes St. Theresa her novitiates: "I do not ask you that you develop profound and intricate reflections about the Lord; do not ask you anything more than that you look at Him. What is it that impedes you to direct, even though it is for some moments if not more, your soul's eyes towards this Lord? Well can you look at things very ugly, and can you not look at the most beautiful thing that can be imagined? Your Lord, my children, never takes His compassionate eyes off you, even though you might have acted a thousand times vilely against Him. Is it then too much to ask that you take off your eyes from the external objects and direct them, some times at least, toward Him? Listen, He does not expect anything else from you, than this much."⁸

"Further, in the world they say that if a woman were to be considered as devoted to the husband, she should manifest sorrow in his sorrow, and happiness in his happiness, though in reality she may not feel so. Look, from what servileness you have been saved. But this sympathy the Lord truly shows towards us; He assumes the role of the servant and desires you to be the mistress, to serve you at your pleasure. If you are cheerful you will see Him in His glorious state of resurrection, majestic, handsome, victorious and cheerful, like one who, in a battle, has conquered a great kingdom which He desires to give you along with Himself. Is it then too much to expect of you that you look at Him, once in a way; Him who gives you so liberally?"⁹ These, says the saint, should be one's thoughts while praying.

What is the prayer that helps the soul to draw within itself? Jesus prayed: "Our Father that art in Heaven" and so on. Commenting on this St. Theresa asks: "Do you think that it is of little importance to know what is Heaven and where to seek your heavenly Father? I tell you that for dispersed minds it is most important to understand this, not only to believe in but try to know it through experience; because it is one of the things that influences the understanding and helps to withdraw the soul into itself. You know that God is everywhere, omnipresent. It is evident, they say, that wherever the king is, there his court is; similarly, where God is, is Heaven. No doubt, you can believe that where God is, there all grandeur is. St. Augustine says that he searched for God in many places and finally found Him within himself. Do you think it is of no consequence for one with a dispersed mind to know this truth and perceive that it is not necessary to go to Heaven to speak with the Eternal Father, or to be sumptuously feasted by Him; that it is not even necessary to speak aloud? In however low a voice one may speak He will certainly hear us, for He is very near; one does not require wings to go in search of Him. What one has to do is to retire into solitude and see Him within oneself; treat such a good Guest as one's own and not as a foreigner, and with great humility speak to Him as one's

own father, relate to Him one's difficulties, and seek solutions for these, knowing well that one is not fit to be a child of His."¹⁰

This prayer, accompanied by such thoughts as above, though practised vocally, helps to control the mind within a short time and does much good. It is called gathering of thoughts because the soul withdraws all its faculties and enters into itself with the Beloved, God. "The Divine Master comes to it within a much shorter time than by any other method, and blesses it with silent prayer. There the mind absorbed in itself can think of Christ's Passion, imagine there His presence and not tire itself trying to seek Him on Mt. Calvary and so on. Those who could in this way shut themselves up in this small heaven of their soul, where dwells He who made it as also this earth, and accustom not to look at nor be where the senses would be distracted, should be sure that they are treading an excellent path and will not fail to drink the water of the fountain of life." They are like those who go by boat, which with a little favourable wind reaches its destination in a few days.

Those who begin to practise thus have, so to say, already put to sea; who, though they have not left the land for ever, do what they can to free themselves from it by gathering their senses into the mind, at least during those moments. If the gathering of the senses is real and genuine, one feels it clearly because of the transformation that occurs in oneself: the self seems to rise beyond this play of the world, to become aware of better times and feels like a person who enters a fort to defend himself from the adversaries. Further, by such a withdrawal they shut their eyes to the things of the world, i.e., these latter have no power of attraction for such a man. On the other hand his inner eyes open to the wonders of the self. Thus whoever treads this path, if his prayer is constant, will overcome the lure of the worldly objects, defeat the baser instincts of the body and strengthen his mind. And though in the beginning one cannot feel this change it being so slow as to be imperceptible, yet if one persists in one's effort, say the Spanish mystics, one would clearly feel, how the mind gains control over the senses. They may go out again but would not be able to do any harm as before, because they go out as prisoners on parole or obedient subjects, who return immediately they are called back. With the repeated gathering of the senses by this method of prayer, God pleases to dispose that the soul be in perfect contemplation or total absorption.

Let us conclude with an idea that the Spanish mystic placed before the novitiates to help them withdraw their minds into themselves: "Suppose within you there is a palace with immense riches, edifices of gold, inlaid with precious stones, in short, lit for such a Lord, and that you are responsible for its structure (indeed, there is no structure of such beauty as a pure soul, full of virtues, which shine like gems) and that in it dwells the great King, who has condescended to be your Father and seated on the precious throne of your heart. This may appear to be childish, but is necessary for us so that we may grasp firmly the fact that there is something in us more precious than all the precious things that we see in the world outside. Let us not presume that we are empty within. I consider it impossible that we could give ourselves up to the ephemeral things, if once we become conscious of the presence of such a Guest within, because we shall then see how paltry these things of the world are."

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MEDITATION AND THE INTELLIGENT ASPIRANT

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

A young man comes rushing in for an immediate interview. Reason? His examination is closing in, he can't get his mind to his studies and wants to be taught meditation. An elderly official, just retired from government service and very much agitated, seeks instructions regarding meditation. The next time he appears after a long interval he is no more agitated. Effect of practising meditation? No. After two days he could get re-employed! Men and women, confronted by problems and sufferings—often self-created—distracted and desperate, wish to try 'meditation' as a possible and instant remedy for their ills—whether physical, mental, social or economic.

Meditation is surely in great demand today, as a panacea for a variety of ills and evils and so it is not surprising that there has been a mushroom growth of 'Yogis' or 'masters', organizations and courses catering to these customers; it is not surprising that it has also become a large-scale business, and export-oriented as well. Besides, the occult and romantic expectations from meditation have made it an attraction for the sophisticated and so-called educated even more than for others who are considered superstitious. Undoubtedly meditation and the Yogi have acquired a glamour and glitter, which makes it all the more essential to sift out and understand, as far as we can, what are the facts and what is right and correct.

* * *

What is meditation? What is its real goal and purpose? What constitutes its right and fruitful path?

"The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation. In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation," says Swami Vivekananda, the master Yogi of modern times, whom his Guru Sri Ramakrishna used to term as a *Dhyāna-Siddha*, a past-master in meditation. At the very beginning of Patanjali's "Yoga-sutras", the basic traditional authority on the Yoga of Meditation, we find it clearly stated: "Yoga is the stopping or elimination of thought-waves. And then one is established in one's own glorious, essential nature." Elsewhere, meditation is explained by other teachers as a continual thought-current directed towards a particular worthy object, and to the exclusion of all other thoughts.

From the above statements certain facts stand out clearly:

- i) Meditation is a very high state, bordering on the divine, if not actually so.
- ii) Its main goal is not so much concentrating the mind on anything 'else'; not so much acquisition of any object or state, however covetable otherwise, external to oneself. It is taking off all and every thought of the external, to cease depending on the external, to come back to one's own essential blissful core and rest in it, free from any kind of dependence, want, fear, doubt or discontent.
- iii) All that the earnest aspirant should aspire after, or all that is worth aspiring is deep within oneself, an integral, inalienable part of oneself. As such, all his effort should be directed

towards extricating the mind and its thoughts from getting involved in, and running after, the petty, transient external world, the 'non-self'. And then one should direct the mental energy thus mobilised, the thought-stream resulting from it, to one's inmost self where it will rest. Time and direct experience will reveal that this inmost self is the gateway to all that man really aspires after, to all that he really needs; it is the gateway to all the peace and happiness he eternally hankers after, to all the power, knowledge and joy that he seeks; it is the gateway to the seat of all the 'gods' he may be trying to propitiate or praying to—and to 'God', the Supreme Spirit, who is the highest object of the devotee's love and devotion.

* * *

What happens when one succeeds in meditation of the right kind is beautifully and succinctly stated by the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "One rejoices in one's Self. One experiences that ultimate and pure happiness, which is beyond the range of the senses. Having gained that, one finds there is no greater gain to enquire after. Established therein, even the heaviest of sorrows are not able to shake him. This Yoga, in fact, takes one beyond even contact with pain. And it is this Yoga (and 'meditation' or 'Dhyana' which immediately leads to it) that is to be practised with resolute enthusiasm."

An intelligent aspirant will always be able to discriminate clearly and make out what is the real goal of any Sadhana and what constitutes the proper means. The goal of true meditation is the experience of complete freedom or total independence which makes one deeply calm and contented, of unalloyed inner bliss which manifests as spontaneous love and service, and an illumined understanding which eliminates all doubt and fear. When one has attained to these virtues, what else is he but 'divine'? And all that works and helps towards this would constitute the means.

So wealth or creature comforts, health or longevity, powers of intellect or other talents, enjoyments of the most intense pleasures and even the possession of psychic powers—each and all of them can never be the end in themselves; they cannot be the 'goal' one seeks in Meditation. Rightly and discriminately used, they may serve as temporary stepping stones or passing 'mile-stones' on the path, at best. But he who, forgetting the great and sublime goal of freedom, independence and pure bliss, seeks to make meditation a means to lesser ends is misguided, an object of pity. He is bound to end up in ultimate frustration, though for a brief while he may think that something wonderful has been achieved and for which others too may glorify him.

The genuine, wise aspirant will, therefore, never consciously seek the petty and passing things which the ignorant go after, will not encourage the presence of such seekings while meditating and will never offer prayer for such things. His seeking and prayers will be only for light, more light, for truth, higher truth and for real freedom which makes him rise above all limitations.

Worldly problems and situations have to be countered at their own appropriate level. Most often the remedies to our sufferings lie in a more intelligent, understanding of the situation, avoidance of unhealthy habits and ways of life, and cultivation of healthy ones. But people fail to do what is to be done at the appropriate level and ignorantly seek easy and instant remedy through 'meditation' or 'prayer'.

* * *

Even the genuine aspirant has to realise that meditation requires a reasonably healthy body and nerves. And he will have to keep them in constant good repair by proper control and care regarding his food, sleep, work and recreation. Meditation requires the finest and most powerful component of human energy; it is not just a process of relaxing, forgetting and retiring. Good, positive habits are very essential and that not just for a day or two, but over years and years, perhaps a life-time.

As such the tendency to seek instant and easy remedies and short-cuts to spiritual 'boons' should be relentlessly eschewed. One should constantly remember the wholesome advice given by Patanjali: "Thoughts have to be controlled by practice and non-attachment. Practice means continuous struggle to keep the thoughts restrained. And this practice becomes firmly grounded only by long, constant and enthusiastic effort." The key to success in Sadhana is love and enthusiasm for the objective to be achieved as well as for the path to be trodden, and not a grudging, strained and impatient approach which is ever thinking how soon all the bother would be over. There is no holiday in spiritual life, no retirement. Who would ever seek a holiday from that which is after one's own heart? The right aspirant, on the other hand, would feel bad were he to be forced to take a holiday or retire from it.

* * *

Among the many obstacles which one encounters when taking to the path of meditation, not a few of them are the result of either lack of the needed preliminary equipment and preparation or of wrong approaches. In this context, it would be well to note specially that in Patanjali's eight-stage scheme of Yoga, meditation is the seventh stage, just before the grand culmination of *samādhi*, and the aspirant is naturally expected to have reasonable grounding in the earlier six stages before reaching the seventh.

Leaving aside the third and fourth stages relating to posture and rhythmic breathing (which because of their physical nature have received attention out of proportion to their importance in, and, relevance to, the entire Yoga scheme), one should pay special attention to the first and second, and fifth and sixth stages. The first two steps dealing with ethical virtues and inner purity are the very foundations of Yoga—without which no worthwhile superstructure can be built. They lay down that one who proceeds on the path of meditation should be inclined, naturally or by practice, towards truth, non-injury or kindness, non-acquisitiveness or greedlessness, and chastity; to cleanliness, contentment, readiness for an austere life of striving, and a humble spirit of self-surrender to God.

An assiduous practice of these virtues is indispensable; for on the one hand their absence makes right meditation impossible; on the other, even if one does not take up meditation, in themselves they are great assets for man to succeed in any walk of life, sacred or secular. When we bear this in mind, it becomes clear how misleading and dangerous certain self-styled teachers of Yoga can be when they either play down, ignore or brazenly declare as unnecessary, the need for moral and ethical purity. One who is well-grounded in these virtues classed under *yama* and *niyama* is already halfway on the road to success; and perfection in them easily leads him on to *samādhi* itself. Such a one is bound to be a blessing to oneself and to society.

The fifth and sixth stages, termed, *pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā* are also very important for the aspirant. In fact, what most people try to do, when they are said to be 'meditating' can, at best,

come only under these two heads. *Pratyāhāra* is the detaching and withdrawing of the senses from their external objects; it is the checking of mental energy from its dissipating outward movements. And *Dhāraṇā* is the focussing or concentrating of the mental or psychic energy thus saved on some worthy object. It will be obvious to any thinking person that if he is not reasonably grounded in the virtues of *yama* and *niyama*, he will not, or cannot, detach himself from the undesirable pulls of the external world, and as such not much energy will be available for concentration. And remember, only sustained and intense concentration of a high order can lead on to real 'meditation'.

Apart from the unfitness of the morally impure person to achieve any degree of meditation, even his efforts at concentration may lead to adverse results including strain, breakdown, and also undesirable social consequences.

Many of us freely mix and interchange the terms 'concentration' and 'meditation'. In this context, it may be noted that 'concentration' of mind, again, is a means and not the end. There is concentration and concentration, good and bad. A person's thoughts, when subject to lust or anger or greed, are concentrated indeed. Many vicious persons and enemies of society can have very concentrated minds. It is those without moral purity, but with power of concentration, who turn out to be demons, our mythological *Rāvanas* and the like. Even if one can concentrate the mind without moral purification, the concentrated energy will go to feed only the vices, as in an unweeded garden most of the water and manure supplied will go to nourish the weeds, useless or poisonous, and the regular plants will remain starved or smothered. So what is needed is concentration *with* purity, never *without*.

Actually many of the complaints of those who try to practise concentration and meditation arise from this direction, *viz.*, lack of sufficient purity, of clean and healthy body and nerves, of sense-control. Meditation as such is not only no strain, but intensely refreshing and joy-generating. The strain one experiences in Sadhana is due to the downward pulls caused by uncontrolled senses and wrong life-habits. The solution lies not in diluting or giving up 'meditation' but in having more and more personal purity, of control over senses and habits.

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Even to aspirants, well qualified, certain doubts and difficulties present themselves. What is to be the object of concentration, whether a black dot or a candle-flame? 'within' or 'without'? and in which 'centre?' While some of the details and proper directions should be obtained only through personal communication with one's spiritual guide, some general observations would not be out of place. All 'objects' of concentration are only aids to concentration and not the goal. An inner object is better than an outer, and a living one better than a non-living. Best of all is a holy personality. The purpose of concentration is not a strained focussing of thought, but rather the elimination of the many and distracting thoughts and then finally even the division of thinker, object and thought. A successful concentration will unify the thought and focus it on a worthy object; in right meditation this unified thought will mature and ripen and finally dissolve into pure consciousness, which transcends all objects, outer or inner.

The aim of spiritual meditation, again, is not just focussing of the mind on anything and everything but on only that which helps in the unfoldment of holy virtues and the divine

attributes like infinite purity, truth, knowledge, bliss and freedom. As such a holy personality, living, radiant and blissful would be a most desirable subject for meditation. One may start with an external representation, such as a picture or image but before long the 'chosen ideal' should go inside and must become one's inmost self, the soul of one's soul. In fact the holy, or divine personality should eventually take shape out of that radiant, blissful, living consciousness which is the essential core of the meditator himself.

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Another problem raised by meditators is that relating to the formless aspect and to making the mind 'blank'. Holy life, spiritual life, God, truth are all whole and positive entities and one should beware of slipping into wrong implementations when apparently negative terms are used, or practices indicated.

The ultimate aim is to rise above all limitations, from the partial to the whole, and as such both our ideal as well as our practices should be oriented accordingly. 'Formless' is to be rather taken as that which is not limited by any particular form. Making the mind 'blank' should not mean becoming thoughtless or going to sleep; it is freeing the mind from all partial truths and distracting thoughts, so that pure consciousness alone, self-effulgent and blissful, manifests itself spontaneously, making one experience real inner calm, power and peace. Renunciation is giving up of the lower in favour of the higher, the smaller for the larger, the finite for the Infinite. Going inwards means, detaching oneself from all the external coverings, hiding and distorting the blessed reality of the Self.

Samādhi is being established in the consciousness of one's glorious infinite and inmost self or 'divinity'. Meditation is the continual current of pure thought in this direction to the exclusion of others. Concentration is the attempt to repeatedly bring back the thoughts from wandering away from this one Divine Self and externalising, and to holding it on the holy object. Steady posture and rhythmic breathing are meant to make the body and nerves calm and fit for the ensuing mental exercise.

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And much depends upon what kind of person is he who has taken his seat to start meditation. It will soon be discovered in many cases that while one may sit physically unmoving, the mind may be in a whirl, protesting and straining, 'meditation' becoming a most tiring and exasperating experience, instead of a relaxing and refreshing one. Why?

Because during the rest of the day, the mind and senses have been allowed to pursue an almost diametrically opposite path, going after the transitory, petty objects, externalising, stressing likes and dislikes, and continually opening oneself to passions, sensual desires, resentments and greed. The body and senses have been pampered, nerves exhausted by self-centred exertion or so-called pleasures. For the practice of meditation to become fruitful and joyous, it is very essential that as far as possible one should also extend its mood over the rest of the day. Moderate and self-controlled in food, sleep, activities and recreation, striving to be simple and honest, kind and chaste, non-acquisitive and generous, cultivating an attitude of contentment and patience and reverent self-surrender to the Lord, and keeping the mind ever alert and discriminating, one will find it a joy to go in for meditation; one will find it a real blessing, really fruitful.

And finally, another distraction which plagues many aspirants—viz. measuring how far they have ‘progressed’. Let it be remembered that real meditation is not a journey to anywhere else, it is not even a pilgrimage to some distant holy land. Even when it is described as an ‘inner’ pilgrimage it is but figurative and indicative. We only reach and become our own divine Self. We only become aware of what we really are all along. It is a question of giving up the wrong, distracting thoughts, feelings, actions. The only progress is to intensify the thought of the ‘Sat’, the real, good and auspicious which is our very stuff and core. It is healthy not to be diverted by even these distractions which come in the form of a frequent desire to measure and judge one’s progress. Nowhere perhaps is Bhagavan Sri Krishna’s teaching on Karma Yoga so relevant as in this context: “Your concern is with the work on hand—never with the results.” Leave the care and anxieties about the results to the Lord, who is none other than the Soul of your soul—and with a quiet and confident, yet humble and reverent, faith apply yourself to the *sādhana*. And be not surprised if unconsciously and unheralded, you slide into perfection!

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MEDITATION AND SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

The sages of the Upanishads have a firm faith in the essentially spiritual nature of man. Hence, in their opinion, the true purpose of human life is to realise this essential nature. The method for this purpose, as suggested by them, consists of Sravana, Manana and Nididhyāsana.

Sravana is not merely hearing the truth from the preceptor. It also implies ascertainment of the fact that the Sruti establishes the one Brahman without the second. Manana or reflection refers to (i) rational thinking on self or Brahman already heard from the preceptor and (ii) removal of all doubt by rational argumentations. Nididhyāsana is constant musing on self or Brahman. The quest for the self is the real quest of the human life and realisation of one's own nature as self or pure consciousness is the final goal.

Purpose of Life

So long as man is not aware of who he is or what his true nature is, he is not in a position to realise fully the meaning and purpose of his life as man. He is unable to apprehend his final fulfilment and is also ignorant of his real good. Owing to utter ignorance about the true nature of his being, he is also unfit for the realisation of his real relation with the world as a result of which his reactions to the world are generally confused and often become perverted. In other words, a man is not able to determine correctly his purpose and position in the world without having a clear knowledge of his own self. If he possesses wrong knowledge about himself, then his perspective of the world is bound to be vitiated. His value-sense, too, gets confused and he moves on the ocean of life precariously in the absence of appropriate guiding principles.

The Upanishads have declared repeatedly that man is nothing but the self infinite (*Tat tvam asi*). If this meaningful saying of the Upanishads can be grasped fully by a man, then he is sure to get inspired and is also sure to undertake an enquiry into the nature of his own true being. Sankara, too, has advised us to enquire into the meaning of *tvam* at the outset of our search for Truth. The search for the knowledge of self, however, involves self-analysis which is to be carried out rationally and in a regulated manner. If an aspirant can follow the path laid down by the Upanishads, with single-minded devotion, then only can he realise that beyond the conscious and the sub-conscious levels, there is another horizon of pure consciousness which constitutes the horizon of his real life. Nididhyāsana or repeated meditation on this illuminating light, opens the doors of his perception and he becomes fully conscious of his own true being. When repeated musing becomes so deep that thought process on the nature of the self appears as an unbroken flow, then this is called Meditation or Dhyāna. The Yoga-sūtra 3.2 has thus defined Meditation:

"Tatra pratyaiikatānatā dhyānam" Meditation yields psychical power which can be utilised to obtain knowledge of any object of quest. It enables a man to have a correct and expert knowledge about the object of meditation. In meditation, only a single idea is present and the knowledge is continuous.

Discipline Of Meditation

To have correct knowledge of the self, meditation, therefore, is essential. It is the discipline of meditation that leads to the intuitive realisation of the spiritual truth in man. The psychical power, yielded by the process of meditation, illumines the mind from within and this inner illumination, then reveals to the meditator, the secrets of his real being and his relation to the world. It is only when this secret is revealed that an aspirant can understand fully that he is not a merely physical being, having only an unconscious heritage like other material things of the world. He is also not merely psychophysical in nature as he appears to be, from a superficial point of view. Both physical and psychical aspects are “not-self aspects”, which have no essential and inseparable relation with this true self. Self or spiritual light is his true essence which lies beyond these physical and psychical aspects of his personality. The true ‘I’ is the pure consciousness, unconditioned by space, time and causation. It is different from the empirical ego which is the real actor in the drama of the world. It is only the knowledge of the self which can make a man free from all false notions that he has built up through ages of conditioning. Such self- knowledge, however, cannot be gained without meditation. Beyond the physical and the psychical, a man must go to discover his immortal spiritual being.

Meditation needs as its pre-requisites (i) the purification of the mind and the intellect, and (ii) full control over the body and sense- organs. The body, mind and the intellect should become *Sāttvika* and it is the *Sāttvika* Buddhi which is the only mirror that can reveal the self in its true form. Hence, in his attempt to discover his own true being, a man has got to acquire moral qualities on the awakening of which the impurities of the intellect, emotion and will are completely wiped out. Moral good is closely and essentially linked with the good of the spirit. One who meditates on the true nature of the self and has his intellect, emotion and will purified and harmoniously balanced, naturally becomes a man of elevated personality. He is regarded as a spiritually enlightened soul. With his enlightenment, he can visualise himself and the world around him correctly and clearly and the horizon of his spiritual vision becomes wide and universal. The world, then, unfolds itself in its true colour to the wise man and does not therefore cause uneasiness to his mind. Thus one who seeks to know the truth, must, first of all, make his mind pure and well balanced. Spiritual enlightenment, attained through meditation, pre-supposes moral awakening and moral progress of man. The mind of the meditator becomes calm and steady through constant practice of meditation. His mind does not get disturbed even in the midst of the vortex created continuously by the waves of the worldly life. The external world, with all its vibrating currents, is always viewed by him as external and is never identified with the inner world. Such a person is truly perfect and he never entertains any sort of illusion regarding the relation of the world with man. In fact, to enjoy the world in a detached but lively way is the real art of living. It enables the perfected personality to put necessary limitations and restraints on the different forms of enjoyment of the world. This he can do, because he understands life from a deep awareness of his spiritual nature which has been revealed to him through meditation on his own true form.

We should remember that meditation and spiritual enlightenment are essential not only for those gifted persons who embrace the life of total renunciation or Sannyasa, but also for all ordinary people, involved in active worldly life. One cannot achieve real greatness in the mundane life without being able to control his mind and sense organs and without having a

correct awareness of himself and the world. It is only when a man can attain the state of control and steadiness of the mind that he can hope to reach the apex of glory of his empirical life and can discover that he has acquired the power of making even the insignificant events of the world happy and cheerful. He has freed himself from the clutches of his lower ego and has attained the power of looking at the world in an objective way. In fact, to be free from the clutches of a low, self-centred perspective of life is real freedom and this real freedom cannot be enjoyed if one is not spiritually enlightened. It is only in the state of his spiritual awareness that a man rises above the level of his limited individual self and prepares himself for the noble task of sacrificing his good and acting with energy and devotion for the good of the world. When a man can grasp clearly the distinction between the changing lower self and the unchangeable higher one, he attains the power of sacrificing his smaller ends for higher goals of life, whether empirical or transempirical.

To make sincere efforts to have a vision of the unchangeable and unaffected self of man is what is regarded as spiritual *Sāadhanā* according to Indian tradition, and this *Sāadhanā* in due course, finds its completion in spiritual enlightenment. Meditation is an essential limb of the spiritual discipline, because through meditation alone, man can discover his indwelling consciousness as his real being. When this spiritual gain is attained, a man is in a position to perform all his actions from a sacred sense of duty which is not linked with any egoistic motive of gain, arrogance, hatred and pride. A mind which is free from all impurities of thought, emotion and will is a healthy mind and its attitude towards the world is also a healthy one in the sense that he lives his life in this world in a planned and organized manner which is in tune with his own spiritual being. He understands in proper perspective his duties and responsibilities to others as well as to himself. He is prepared to discharge them sincerely so as to be able to promote effectively the solidarity and enduring welfare of society. The Mahābhārata has asserted that good character and good behaviour are the result of true knowledge and to attain true knowledge, one has to practise meditation along with all its necessary parts. Disciplined mind and virtuous conduct are the results of true knowledge of the self and the world. Spiritual awakening does not inspire a man to shun the world completely. On the other hand, the spiritual training makes a man conscious of his true being as a result of which he can link his empirical life with his life of the spirit in a harmonious and fruitful way. The self-knowledge gives him strength and courage to face the world. His soul being purified by true knowledge, he returns to active life with a longing to do good to the whole of mankind. Swami Vivekananda has said: "The spiritual ideal is for life and this must be lived in all spheres, private, social and international."

Yogic Postures

In the present age, a great emphasis is being laid on the practice of Yogic postures as a form of highly effective physical exercise for keeping the body healthy and also for driving out germs of diseases from it. This no doubt is a very laudable step, because nobody can do any good work without being the possessor of a healthy body. Again, if a man fails to preserve his physical health in a proper manner, his mental health too suffers degeneration. Practice of Yogic postures is very efficacious in curing physical illnesses of different kinds.

If, however, we get interested only in the practice of yogic postures with the sole aim of keeping our body healthy and do not make efforts to cure our mind from perverse thoughts

and emotions, then our confused mind is sure to exert adverse influences on our physical frame. It is only when a man is ignorant of his true, immortal being that he becomes an easy prey to egoism, greed, hatred, fear, etc., which make his mind unhealthy and unhelpful. With such a diseased mind, nobody can hope to do any good work in his social life. A man should not only be physically healthy but he should also be spiritually awakened. The material basis of life is intimately connected with its spiritual flowering and so it is necessary for a man to have a healthy mind in a healthy body.

The ardent followers of Yogic postures have, no doubt, realised to a certain extent the need for the steadiness of mind which they aim at attaining through concentration (*dhāraṇā*), but they have failed to realise that this concentration should be directed to the realisation of the true nature of man and not to the things of the material world. Concentration on the things of the material world only, may result in an increase in the power of vision, but it will not enable the aspirant to grow in knowledge and pure emotions. The goal of Yoga is self-realisation which enlightens and elevates the mind and character of the Yogi. This is spiritual achievement that enables him to discover the higher truth which is embedded in him. He can also grasp fully the meaning and purpose of life and can develop a dispassionate love and liking for things and beings of the world. When spiritual enlightenment penetrates each and every corner of a man's multicoloured life, he becomes a truly balanced person of profound serenity, who is in a position to overcome all divisions and rifts which trouble mundane life. Such an enlightened person alone can develop a liberal outlook and a spirit of toleration so as to be able to accommodate others' views and others' needs. He gives up the habit of hankering after wealth and property and whatever he does, he does for the good of mankind. It is only when a man can realise his essentially immortal nature which is wholly unaffected by colourful waves of the world that he can cultivate a detached but highly tender attitude towards life and the world. We should not forget that there is no gap between the empirical and the transempirical. The transempirical is to be sought by remaining in a social order and promoting social good. The empirical life, if led thoughtfully in the light of spiritual wisdom, will find its spontaneous completion in the transempirical state of liberation.

Hence, it is desirable that in adopting Yogic postures as a technique for healthy living, both concentration and meditation on self should be adopted as essential parts along with all other moral practices. The method of Rāja Yoga is moral through and through, because without the destruction of impurities of thought, will and emotion, the mind can never be turned towards self-knowledge. The five forms of restraints which constitute the first limb of Yoga are moral restraints. Again *tapas* (which is essential) implies moral discipline and control over thoughts, feelings and actions. Awakening of true knowledge through purification of mind is imperative, if the health of the mind is to be preserved.

What, after all, is our aim in practising Yogic postures as a form of exercise? We definitely want to be good and healthy members of the human society with noble tendencies and inspiring thoughts and emotions. Yoga should therefore, be followed as a practical method for the development of both the body and the mind in such a manner that higher fields of experience may be opened to the person who practises it. This will necessitate incorporation of concentration and meditation on higher truth of life so as to gain spiritual enlightenment. The Yogic training should give not only a physical poise but also an insight into the real nature of the self and the world, so that the practitioner may be able to cultivate correct attitudes

towards all things and beings of the universe. In order to enjoy beauty and bliss through all relations which exist between man and man, one should not only be physically healthy but should also have a calm and pure mind, shining with the glow of knowledge and truth.

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MEDITATION: A SCIENTIFIC APPRAISAL

DR. SAMPOORAN SINGH

The superficial conscious mind is occupied with its daily activities, with earning a livelihood, deceiving others, exploiting others, running away from problems—all the petty daily activities of our existence. To observe and understand our hidden motives, responses, thoughts and feelings, there must be tranquillity in the conscious mind, so that the deep layers of the sub-conscious mind are projected at the conscious level. The mind cannot bring about tranquillity, stillness, peace by mere regimentation, by compulsion, by discipline; it can bring it about only by understanding its own activities, by observing them, by being aware of them. The right understanding of the deepest inner layers of the subconscious mind—the racial instincts, the animal instincts, the concealed pursuits will bring tranquillity and stillness; when the whole mind is unconditioned, unburdened, unfettered by all past memories, then it is in a state to receive the eternal. It is only through dispassionate observation and feelingful-understanding that this tangle can be unravelled and order can prevail. This is real meditation—understanding the nature of thought, not verbally but with our whole being. It is being aware of what is going on without any distortion, without any choice, without any resentment, bitterness, explanation or justification—the mind must just be aware. Meditation is to observe every movement of thought, attentive to its every detail.

Meditation is to see the fact in totality. The very seeing of it is the action; and for that one needs a clear, sharp, sensitive mind, which comes from intelligent awareness. The mind must act without any resistance, without any form of friction. Resistance is conflict, division. Resistance creates other forms of distortion, violence begets more violence. To see or observe a fact is to understand it in its totality; it is not a matter of overcoming or suppressing its resistance; true observing is a resistanceless or frictionless flow. Then the mind is meditative.

Since Nature is really one and our mind is part of it, it would be interesting to study the parallelism between the psychological field of the mind and the field of energy as comprehended by modern physics.

Super-conductivity: One of the most powerful methods discovered for working out the fine details of solid structure is through the use of very low temperatures. Under these conditions the thermal fluctuations of the lattice become small and effects which would not otherwise be noticed become obvious. Super-conduction, which is the vanishing of resistivity as the temperature approaches 0°K, is shown by a number of elements, such as zinc, gallium, titanium, cadmium, mercury, lead, tin and niobium, and many alloys and compounds. The flow of electric current without resistance at sufficiently low temperatures in certain solids is called super-conductivity. In super-conductivity, the specimen undergoes a phase transition from a state of normal electrical resistivity to a super-conducting state. The temperature at which the resistance disappears, in zero magnetic field, is called the transition temperature. The transition occurs over a very narrow temperature range. Its onset takes place at the highest temperature 11.2° Absolute in the metal technetium and at 7.2° Absolute in lead. In a super-conductor an electric charge can pass without any measurable voltage between its

ends. The extent to which the flow of electric current in a super-conductor is frictionless has been demonstrated by an experiment in which a persistent electric current has been observed to flow without measurable decrease in amplitude around a super-conducting lead ring for over 2 years. If a bar magnet is lowered near a lead dish which is at the temperature of liquid helium (-452° F), it hovers in the air, the chain slack. The magnet has induced a current in the lead; as it meets no resistance, the lead becomes a powerful electromagnet, repelling and holding the magnet above. Very strong magnetic fields destroy super-conductivity, and the strength of a field that does this is a function of the temperature. This leads to the belief that the phenomenon is related in some fashion to the magnetic properties of the material. As a matter of fact, conductors in the super-conducting state exhibit perfect diamagnetic properties.

Super-fluidity: The behaviour of liquefied helium when it is cooled below 2.1° Absolute is most surprising, and this frictionless flow of matter is called "superfluidity". Liquid helium can flow without any apparent friction through slits so small that ordinary liquids and gases can hardly pass through. The liquid gas flows with ease through the finest capillaries and will siphon itself out of a container by flowing uphill in a film which quickly climbs over the container walls.

Parallels Between Mind and Modern Physics: The strange world of absolute zero showing frictionless flow of matter (Super-fluidity) and flow of electric current without resistance (super-conductivity) appears to have fascinating correspondences with the resistanceless and frictionless state of the mind. The parallels are: First, just as the properties of the material, *e.g.*, superfluidity and super-conductivity, change within one hundredth of a degree centigrade, similarly the characteristics of the mind change when mind moves from a state having resistance to a resistanceless state. Second, the sudden transformation of properties in matters appears to be related in some fashion to the magnetic properties of the material and change of the ions in the metallic lattice, but these transformations are far from clear. Similarly, the sudden transformation of the characteristics of the state of mind with resistance to a state of mind without resistance appears to be due to some psychomagnetic changes (cortical neuronal changes) and change of circuitry due to some flip-flop switches, but we know nothing about it. It is an example of weak causality in the micro-cosmic region. Third, the strange world of absolute zero exists at the material plane. It appears that the properties of matter at low temperatures are controlled by the new set of physical laws which are necessary to describe atomic behaviour. The new set of physical laws will take into consideration the behaviour of elements and their compounds when the friction or the resistance is zero. The mind without resistance or without friction bestows on us the pure perception and gives us vision of the Absolute, the Truth. Thus the Truth self-manifests at the subtlest plane. It is not amenable to an experimental verification even with the help of the latest artifacts, due to its subtlest plan.

The movement of the mind from a state with resistance to a state without resistance is called the quantum jump of the mind from logical and scientific reason to unfettered philosophical reason; or from relative state (conscious-state) to an absolute state (super-conscious state); or it is a leap from the lower plane of relational knowledge (intellectual knowledge) to a higher plane of ultrarelatational knowledge (intuitional knowledge). As there is no matter which is self-effulgent, so we assume that the neurons of the mind receive

illumination from the self-effulgent Self, the Atman, the Universal Consciousness. The state of mind with resistance is capable of receiving partial illumination, a state of mind without resistance is capable of receiving full illumination from the Self and as such is fully illumined with the pristine glory of the Self, and as such is fully bathed with truth. The state of mind without resistance is capable of pure perception and as such the mind perceives the present moment of the chronological space-time continuum, and there is a continuous flow of the present moment only, this is the vision of the Absolute where there is neither time, space, nor causation. This is the realisation of the eternal values in the chronological space-time continuum, which means, the attainment of the state of detachment, selfless service and eternal love for the entire humanity.

Meditation is a liberation from the resistance of the mind, which is the past conditioning. It is a movement of the state of mind with resistance to a state without resistance, or in other words to transcend the past and live in the present only.

The conditioning is due to the psychological knowledge, memories, total thought process, which implies resistance. Intelligence implies freedom, which means that intelligence will use knowledge when necessary and yet be free from knowledge. Meditation is the ending of resistance, which means ending of psychological knowledge, memories, the past, the observer. The state of mind without resistance functions in a different dimension altogether which is intelligence. Intelligence implies freedom; freedom implies the cessation of all conflicts; intelligence comes into being and conflict comes to an end when the "observer" is the observed, for then there is no division, no resistance, no friction; this is the self-manifestation of love. Love can only come into being when there is real freedom from the past as knowledge. Meditation is a movement from resistance to resistancelessness, from friction to frictionlessness, from psychological knowledge to intelligence, from bondage to freedom.

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MEDITATION ACCORDING TO MAZDAYASNA (Zoroastrianism)

B.S. SURTI

Introduction

Mazdayasna attaches very great importance to Meditation.

A human being is a conglomerate of three functions, *viz.*, **Thoughts, Words, and Deeds**. Mazdayasna gives the first place to **Thoughts** (Meditation) because it comes first in order of sequence, *e.g.*, a man first thinks, then he reveals his **Thoughts** in words, spoken or written or both, and finally he translates his avowal into action. This sequence is always maintained in the immutable Divine scheme of things although in some cases the thinking may be so shallow or lacking so much in depth that a person's words or deeds may appear to have sprung spontaneously without any thinking at all. Whenever we say that a certain person is incapable of thinking what we mean is that that person is not capable of deep or serious thinking (Meditation). It is obvious that words and deeds arising out of deep and serious thinking (Meditation) will be a higher quality, and more responsible in nature, than those springing from shallow and frivolous thinking, *i.e.*, absence of Meditation. Therefore speaking or writing or performing deeds without Meditation is considered to be an irresponsible or irreligious act according to Mazdayasna.

Saadi (1184-1292 A.D.), in his Persian classic "Gulistaan" which is still regarded as a model of choicest Persian prose writing, relates the following story:—

A deputation of learned men from India had gone to the court of Emperor Naosheerwaan the Just (531-579 A.D.) of Iran, called Chosroes I by Greeks, whose sense of Justice and Impartiality has been praised by the Holy Prophet Mohammad. They held discussions there with Naosheerwaan's Prime Minister, Buzurgmeher, considered to be the wisest man of all ages. When asked to express their opinion about Buzurgmeher's reputed wisdom, the Indian savants declared that he was flawless except for the fact that he took a long time to answer any question, thereby taxing the listeners' patience. When Buzurgmeher was informed of this he explained: "**To think what I should say is better than to repent why I said it**". Saadi sermonizes on the basis of the story:

"Sakhundaan-e parwardah peer-e-kuhan"

(An experienced and cultured conversationalist)

"Ba-yendeeshad, angaah ba-gooyad sukhan"

(Thinks, and then speaks)

"Mazan bi-taammul ba guftaar dam"

(Do not open your mouth to speak, without reflection)

"Neko gooy, gar deer gooyi cheh gham?"

(Answer rightly and to the point; what harm is there if you do so somewhat late?)

“Be-yendeesh o angah bar aavar nafas”

(Think well, and then open your mouth to speak)

“Vazaan peesh bas kun keh gooyand bas”

(And stop speaking before the audience asks you to stop).

Meditation should be Positive or Constructive

According to Mazdayasna, Meditation for the sake of Meditation is of no value. Meditation should always be a means of expression in words (spoken and or written) and of performance of deeds, and not an end in itself.

It is clear that the quality of words and deeds will depend upon the quality of Meditation. Negative and Destructive thinking, called **Dush-mata** in Avesta, will lead to words that will injure the feelings, called **Duzh-ukta** in Avesta, and to deeds that will pollute the body, debase the mind, and dampen the spirit of the thinker as well as that of the persons around him. Such a deed is called **Duzh-varshta** in Avesta.

That is why Mazdayasna places the utmost emphasis on Positive Constructive thinking, called **Hu-mata** in Avesta. **Hu-mata** by itself, is useless unless it is followed by **Hu-ukta** *i.e.*,

Positive or Constructive words, and **Hu-varshta**, *i.e.*, Positive or Constructive deeds.

Importance of Righteous Meditation

Since Thought Force is capable of limitless possibilities and potentialities, both for Good and for Evil, Mazdayasna severely warns against evil thinking and exhorts Righteous thinking with single-minded devotion and concentration. The Holy Prophet Zarathushtra, while meditating on the top of Mount Ushidarena, exerted his utmost at every step to ward off evil thoughts and licentious reveries that were threatening to overpower him. It was only after fifteen years of superhuman struggle with evil thoughts that he felt that he had conquered evil passions and harmful emotions sufficiently to come down from the mountain, and proclaim to the world:—

“Vispa Hu-mata, Vispa Hu-ukta Vispa Hu-Varshta baodho varshta”.

(All Righteous Thoughts and their sequelae, *viz*, all Righteous Words, and all Righteous Deeds, spring from Wisdom).

“Vispa Dush-mata, Vispa Duzh-ukta, Vispa Duzh-varshta, noit baodho varshta”.

(All evil thoughts—and their sequelae such as—all evil words, all evil deeds **do not** spring from Wisdom).

(Prayer in Khordeh Avesta)

Henceforth, therefore, in the course of this article, the word “Meditation” should be understood as meaning Righteous Meditation, **Hu-mata** and not evil meditation, Dushmata.

The seat or source of Meditation is the Mind, called **Mano** or *Manas* in Avesta. Since it is Righteous Meditation that we are extolling, the Mind which is the seat or source of such

meditation is called **Vohu Mano**(Righteous Mind).

In one of the three most ancient Mazday-asnian prayers, dating back to thousands of years before Zarathushtra, known as **Ahuna Vairya** it is revealed:

“Vanghe-ush dazdaa Manangh-ho, shyo- thana-naam anghe-ush Mazdaa-ee”.

(Righteous Meditation enables one to do Righteous Deeds for the Good of the creation and the Glory of God) (Yas. 27: 13)

Zarathushtra, himself, exhorts his followers in the following words:—

‘Sarotaa- ge-ooshaa-eesh vahishtaa’

(Hear properly with your ears)

“Ava-entaa soochaa mananghaa”

(Meditate with Pure Mind)

“Avare-naao viochith-hyaa narem narem khakhyaa-ee tanoo-ye”

(Let every man, individually, choose what is best for himself).

(Yas. 30: 2)

Zarathushtra reveals, thus, the importance of Righteous Meditation in upholding the dignity of the individual, and in not following blindly what others say without thinking for oneself. Faith without Reason is prohibited according to Zarathushtra’s interpretation of Mazdayasna.

Zarathushtra’s Yearning for Righteous Meditation.

Zarathushtra prays to God:—

“Daao Ashaa Vanghe-ush maayaa-o Manangh-ho”

(Give us Purity through Righteous Mind [Meditation].) (Yas. 43: 2)

Again, he prays:—

“Daaeedi Ashaa taam Asheem Vanghe-ush aayaptaa Manangh-ho”

(Give us Purity which is the reward for Righteous Mind, *i.e.*, Meditation).

(Yas. 28: 7)

As an earnest pupil imploring his teacher, Zarathushtra pleads with Ahura Mazda(Avestan name for God):—

“Sees haa naao Ashaa patho Vanghe-ush khwaitengh Manangh-ho”

(Yas 34: 12)

(Teach us the path of Purity through Righteous Mind, *i.e.* Meditation) (Yas. 34: 12)

So impatient is he to attain Purity that he finds it difficult to exercise self-control and exclaims in desparation:—

“Ashaa kwat thwaa daresaani Manascha Vohu va-e-demno”?

(Purity! when shall I see thee through the eyes of Righteous Mind. *i.e.* Meditation?)

So much importance is given to Purity that it is regarded as the only Path to God realization:—

“Aevo Pantaao, yo Ashahe; Vispe anyeshaam apantaam”

(There is only one path, that of Purity; all others are no paths.)

(Yas. 72: 11)

Ahura Mazda and Amesha Spentas.

Observant readers might have noticed in the Gatha passage quoted above, just before last, and must have wondered why, Zara-thushtra, instead of asking Ahura Mazda as is his wont, addresses Purity (**Ashaa**) directly in this case! To understand the rationale and logic of Zarathushtra’s action one must have a clear-cut idea of the term **Amesha pentas**. Amesha means immortal. Spenta means Holy. **Amesha Spentas**, therefore, can be translated as Immortal Holies. Who or what are these Immortal Holies? and how many are they?

Answering the second question first, they are seven in number, hence they are called Haft Amesha Spentas, haft means seven. The nature of the **Amesha Spentas** will become manifest as we describe the seven one by one:—

The first and foremost of the seven is named **Ahura Mazda**. **Ahu** means Life or Spirit, from the root **“Ah”** meaning “to be”. **“Ra”** means “giver”. The Sanskrit equivalent of **Mazda** is **“Mahada”**, (**“Maha”** meaning “great”, and **“da”** meaning “give”. **Ahura Mazda**, therefore means “Life giver, the Great giver”, *i.e.*, “the Great Creator”. So, **Creation is the first and foremost and most important attribute of Gods**.

2. The second attribute is called **Vohu Mano**. **Vohu** means Righteous, and **Mano** means Mind which is the source of Meditation. **Vohu Mano**, therefore, means Righteous Meditation. It is thus obvious that Mazdayasna attaches so much importance to Righteous Meditation as to consider it to be a Divine Quality.

3. We have already quoted from the Gathas that Righteous Mind (Meditations) leads to Purity (**Ashaa**). The third Divine attribute, therefore, is **Asha Vahista**, **Ashaa** meaning Purity, and **Vahishta** meaning highest or ‘in excelsis’. Hence **Asha Vahishta** means Purity in excelsis.

4. Armed with Righteous Mind (Meditation) and the Highest Purity, one is fit to exercise Power as desired for the Good of the world and the Glory of God. Hence, the fourth Divine attribute is **Khshatra Vairya**. **Khshathra** means Power, **Vairya** means “desired”. **Khshathra Vairya** means “Power as desired”.

5. Righteous Mind (Meditation), a Pure Heart, and exercise of the desired Power cannot but foster Devotion which is another name for Love, fervour, rapture, enthusiasm, which is so essential for the Good of the World and the Glory of God. Hence the fifth Divine attribute is **Spenta Aarmaiti**. **Spenta** means Holy, and **Aarmaiti** means Devotion. **Spenta Aarmaiti**, therefore, means Holy Devotion or any of its equivalents mentioned above.

6. One who is equipped with Righteous Mind (Meditation), Pure Heart, Power or Potency, and Holy Devotion, can aspire to the sixth Divine characteristic, **Haurvataat** which means Perfection.

7. All the above six qualities make one eligible to aspire for the seventh Divine characteristic, **Amertaat** which means Immortality.

It must be noted that all the seven qualities mentioned above *viz.*: Creator, Righteous Meditator, Pure, Powerful, Devoted, Perfect, and Immortal, are to be found in to in God Himself. The entire creation, including Human Beings, can only aspire to possess them but can never acquire them to the extent of one hundred percent. The extent to which a human being tries his level best to approach this composite concept of Divinity marks him out as being Godly to that extent.

Meditation on Fire

As mentioned in my article “Essence of Mazdayasna (Zoroastrianism) in *Vedanta Kesari* of July, 1977, it is not possible for anyone except the most spiritually advanced souls to meditate on an abstract entity such as God. A concrete symbol is a ‘*sine qua non*’ for fruitful meditation. Zarathushtra’s exhortation to his listeners: “**Contemplate the Beams of Fire with a Most Pious Mind**” and the reasons why Fire is the most appropriate symbol of Divinity, and what all should one meditate about Fire, have been given in great detail in the article mentioned above.

In the Avestan Prayer, “**Aatash Niyayash**” (Salutation to Fire) it is mentioned:—

“**Vispa-e-eebio sasteem baraiti Aatarsh Mazdaa-o Ahura-he**”
(Ahura Mazda’s Fire carries a lesson for all).

Meditation on Immortality of Soul

If one believes in **Ahura Mazda** as the Universal Soul (**Paramaatman**) who is the sum total of all the souls (**Jeevaatmas**) in the entire creation, it automatically implies unqualified belief in the immortality of individual souls (**Jeevaatmas**). This teaching of Mazdayasna that there is a world of Matter, **Anghe-ush Astavaiti**, as well as a world of spirits, **Anghe-ush Mainyu**, has been corroborated by all the great religions and philosophies that followed Mazdayasna.

Meditation on Death

From the beginning of creation nothing has held people in greater awe or mystery than the phenomenon of Death. Mazdayasna was the first philosophical system to point out that so called Death is nothing but the discarding of its outer vesture, the body, by a soul in the same manner as one discards one’s cloths. The only difference is that if the cloths are removed one can still see the body of the individual because cloths and body are both, material, and can be easily seen with the physical eyes; whereas if an individual removes his own body one cannot see the soul since it is not material but etherial.

Although all religions are agreed about the immortality of the Soul or Spirit, different religions have different opinions about the immediate and ultimate goal of the Soul. According to some, the soul, liberated from a body, puts on a body of the same species, *i.e.*, after discarding one human body it puts on another human body. This goes by the name of

Re-incarnation. After going through a number of such re-births, the highly evolved soul, **Jeevaatma**, finally merges into the Universal Spirit (**Paramaatman**).

According to some others, the soul, which discards a human body, may put on the body of another species, *e.g.*, an animal. This is called **Metempsychosis**.

No religion has clearly mentioned how long after discarding one body the soul puts on another.

According to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, each and everyone of the souls will arise from the grave in flesh and blood on the day of Resurrection, and be answerable for their deeds to God who will sentence them accordingly, to a permanent abode in Heaven or Hell.

Mazdayasna tells us that after shedding its mortal coil the soul passes away into the world of spirits to lead there either a happy or a sorrowful life depending upon its performance in the world of Matter. It remains for ever in the world of Spirits; but always ends its blessings upon us, invokes God's blessings upon us, and helps us to the best of its ability whenever we remember it in our sincere prayers to Ahura Mazda and invoke His blessings upon it. It yearns and feels happy to be remembered by those with whom it was in close contact in the world of Matter.

So, according to Mazdayasna, so called Death is only a "*passing away*" of the soul from the world of Matter into the world of Spirits. The great Mazdayasni poet, Firdausi (935-1025 A.D.) advises human beings:—

“Ze roos-e guzar kardan andeeshah kun”

(Think of the day when you shall pass away)

“Parasteedan-e Daadgar peeshah kun”

(Make worship of God your profession and way)

“Ba neeki garaay-o mayaazaar kas”

(Indulge in Righteousness and harm no one)

“Ra-he rastagaari hameenast o bas”

(That is how your salvation will be won).

Regarding the Mazdayasnian conception of Immortality of Spirit and the desire of the soul not to be forgotten by us, the Mazdayasni poet, Nizaami Ganjawi (1140-1203 A.D.) clarifies:—

“Fishaani tu bar man sarishki ze door”

(Shower a tear from afar on me)

“Fishaanam man az aasmaan bar tu noor”

(And Heaven its blessings will shower on thee)

“Duaa-e tu bar bar cheh daarad shitaab”

(Whatever thy sincere desires may be)

“Man aameen kunam taa shavad mustajaab”

(I'll say "Amen", they granted may be)

"Daroodam rasaani, rasaanam darood"
(Send thou thy prayers, and I shall send mine)

"Biya-ee, biyaayam ze gumbad farood"
(Come here and I'll come from this tomb of mine)

"Maraa zindah pindaar choon kheeshtan"
(Consider me as alive as thou art)

"Man aayam ba jaan gar tu aayee ba tan"
(I'll come with my soul if you come with your heart)

"Madaan khaali as hamnasheeni maraa"
(Think not that bereft of friends I may be)

"Keh beenam turaa gar na beeni maraa"
(If you cannot see me, I can see thee)

"Lab az khufta-e chand khaamush makun"
(Let not thy lips cease to praise those who slept)

"Farookhuftagaan raa faraamush makun"
(Forget, O never, all those who have slept).

A Mazdyasni poet of the Pahlavi regime, whose poetic pen name is Spenta, after frankly confessing that one does not know the purpose of one's earthly existence, where we come from, and whither we go after our earthly existence is over, draws the analogy of a ray of the Sun which, temporarily, gets obscured by a passing cloud and gets cut off from the Sun. Once the cloud passes away, the ray of light once again rejoins the Sun. The poet wishes to convey through this charming analogy the idea of an individual soul. **Jeevaatma**, merging into the Universal Spirit, **Paramaatman**. Here is how he sings:—

"Nadaaneem azeen jaa kujaa mee raveem"
(We know not. from here, whither do we go)

"Charaa aamadeem o charaa mee raveem."
(Why did we come and why do we go.)

"Kas asz sarr-e een raah aagaah neest"
(The secret of this has been revealed to none)

"Pas-e pardah kas raa digar raah neest"
(Behind the curtain there is access to none)

"Judaa shud yeki zarrah az aaftaab"

(A ray of light from the Sun strayed away)

“Nehaan maand yekchand andar sahaab”

(And remained in the cloud quite hidden away)

“Chu az teerah-goon ab re- hasti guzasht”

(When it from the cloud of existence emerged)

Ze khursheed-e taabindah paivastah gasht”

(Into the radiant Sun it merged).

Conclusion.

We may conclude with a quotation from the famous Physiologist and Nobel Laureate Alexis Carrel. We have taken the liberty of substituting the word “Meditation” for “Prayer” in Carrel’s original.

“Meditation is the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. The influence of Meditation on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. Its results can be measured in terms of increased physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigour moral stamina and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships. True Meditation is a way of life; the truest life is literally a way of Meditation.”

MEDITATION ACCORDING TO SUFISM

SWAMI PRABHANANDA

Tradition claims that Sufism was developed by the Prophet Mohammed through his cousin and son-in-law Ali Ibn Abi Taleb, the fourth Caliph, whose abdication led finally to the schism between Sunni and Shia. The Prophet is said to have invested Ali with a cloak of Kherqa and initiated him into the esoteric mysteries. The Koran, the book of Allah's revelation to Mohammed, contains passages of a mystical nature and the Sufis seized upon them 'to buttress their own claim to personal trafficking with God.' As an indispensable prerequisite to mystical communion, the ascetic outlook and practices characterised the life of Mohammed himself and many of his followers. Towards the end of the 8th century A.D. austere Muslims, whose lives were consumed by the fire of God's love, cut themselves off from the mundane world, and devoted themselves to the recollection of God, took to wearing wool to proclaim their other-worldliness and were therefore nicknamed Sufis. Lexicographers, however, offer different interpretations of the word 'Sufi'. Bishr Ibn Al-Harit says, "The Sufi is he whose heart is *safa* (pure) towards God." According to others 'Sufis' are those who can be placed in the first rank or '*saff*' before God through the excellence of their spiritual development. Again, some others opine that Sufi comes from 'suffah' which means a person who is not a slave of desires.

The genesis of Sufism emphasises the esoteric doctrine of the Prophet, as may be found in stray references in the Quran and the Hadis. Some consider it as a reaction of the Aryan mind against a Semitic religion thrust upon it. Some think that Plotinus, who visited Iran with seven neo-Platonist philosophers, exerted this influence on Islam in the time of Naushirwan and the result was the emergence of this faith. Sufism is based on Islamic faith which has six pillars: (a) God exists; (b) God is one; (c) there are Angels; (d) there are Prophets; (e) there is a day of restoration and (f) there is Fate.

Different interpretations of lexicographers notwithstanding, the Sufis regard their Creator as their '*Leah*' or deity and worship Him alone and believe that there is none other than He and no other true relation that exists between them and their Creator. Sufis call the ideas of God, the "essences of things" which when created are called external objects or created things of the world. God is "one", His ideas are "many". Ideas depend on God for their existence but God exists independently. The essence of God is obviously different from the essence of created beings but there exists a relationship between the two.

Ideas of God or "essences" are uncreated, perfect and immutable. Every essence has its own characteristic which is called *Shakilat*. Ibn-Al-Arabi says, "Glory be to God who created things being Himself their essences." External beings derive their attributes like life, knowledge, will power, hearing, sight and speech from God alone. A Sufi in his highest realisation discovers that all these attributes are borrowed and metaphysically applied to himself, whereas they really belong to God.

Though existence is one, the essences are many. A true Sufi knows that he is internally but an idea in the mind of God and he is, therefore, co-eternal with God. Externally he is a created being. In him God has manifested Himself in accordance with the aptitudes or the *shakilat* of

the Sufi.

The Sufistic doctrine that God is the only Being extant has been expressed by Jalaluddin Rumi in his *Masnavi*.

If He makes me a cup, a cup am I,
If He makes of me a dagger, a dagger I.

... ..

If He makes me fire, I give forth heat.....

If He makes me a friend,

I serve my friends.

I am as the pen in the fingers

of the writer,

I am not in a position to obey or not

at will.

The Reality is one, and all apparent multiplicity is but a mode of unity. An existence is merely an objectification of His essence. This realisation is possible only with the progressive annihilation of the individual self which, encrusted with material dross, stands separate from God. The problem of evil has been dealt with by the Sufis in their characteristic fashion. The universe is essentially good. What man calls evil is privation, not-being. In relation to the One it is nothing; it appears only in the phenomenal world. A pool of standing water becomes dirty when some dirt is thrown into it; it takes the colour of whatever it comes in contact with. However, if it is joined with a perennially flowing stream, it becomes purified sooner or later. Similarly if an individual is able to get in contact with the Universal Self, the individual's pettiness and dross have no effect whatsoever on the path of his spiritual progress.

Al-Junaid defined Sufism (*tasawwuf*), "God should cause thee to die from thyself and live in Him." The supreme mystical experience consists in the passing away of the temporal ego into the Eternal Ego. This dying off is *fana* and the life-in-him is *baqā*. By the elevation of the self the mystic is perfected, transmuted and eternalised through God and in God alone. Following the mystic's return to the state in which he was before *i.e.*, union with God, God separates him from Himself and grants him his individuality again. Al-Junaid writes:

So in a manner we
United are, and One;
Yet otherwise disunion
Is our estate eternally.

His contemporary Al-Hallaj's utterance, "I am the Truth" (*ana'l haqq*) illustrates how the intoxicated Sufi got absorbed in serving the will of God—but he was condemned for blasphemy and was brutally executed. Thereafter the majority of Sufis laboured to work out an understanding between Sufism and traditionalism and accepted theology. Like Rābia of Basra, Dhal'l-Nun al-Mesi, the great mystic, fixed a tradition when he wrote,

I die and yet not die in me,
The ardour of my love for Thee,

Nor hath Thy love, my only goal,
Assuaged the fever of my soul.

The doctrine of passing away in God (*fana*) was successfully synthesized with the doctrine of Divine Unity.

Ahmed Al-Ghazali tried to reconcile Sufism with Muslim orthodoxy. He emphasised that the Muslim life of devotion to the One God could not be lived perfectly save by following the 'Sufi' way. In his master-piece, "*Ihyā utum al-din*" (Revival of religious science) he succeeded in assuring the mystical or introspective attitude a place within the framework of official Islam side by side with the legalism of the lawyers and the intellectualism of theologians. The Logos doctrine states that God's vice-regent controlling the internal material universe is the "Idea of Muhammad". If a man aspires to know God he may first achieve union with the "Idea of Muhammad", projected by God in pre-eternity to be His likeness and to lead mankind back to Him. This idea was fully developed by Ibn al-Farid of Cairo.

Muhyi al-Din Ib'n Arabi was the greatest mystical genius of the Arabs. Following Ib'n Arabi's conception of the Unity of Being (*wahdat al-wajūd*), Abd al-Karim al-Jil traces the descent of the pure Being through three stages of Oneness (*ahadiya*), He-ness (*hu-wiya*), and I-ness (*anīya*) and points out that this path can be retraced through corresponding stages of illumination (*tajalli*) till he becomes the Perfect Man, being shorn of attributes, and returns once more as Absolute to the Absolute.

Sufism centres on the questions, *i.e.*, (a) How is man to realize God in himself? and (b) What is God in relation to the individual and the creation? Sufism offers *tariqat* in answer to the first and imparts *ma'rifat* or knowledge which describes God, in answer to the second. It is obvious that importance is attached more to the inner self and its activities than the outward religious practices and rituals.

Sufi psychology, so far as it bears on the ecstatic life, focusses attention to (a) *nafs*, the appetitive soul; (b) *ruh*, the spirit; (c) *qalb*, the heart and (d) *'aql*, the intelligence. The *nafs*, being the seat of passions, is to be fought by means of asceticism. The *qalb* and the *ruh*, though they cannot be clearly distinguished from one another, are the organs the mystic depends upon for his spiritual growth. *Qalb* is a non-material essence whereby the realities of all things are perceived as in a mirror. The more the heart is free from sin, egoism, traditional beliefs etc., the vision of reality becomes more perfect. God alone can purify it perfectly but this act of divine grace becomes more effective when the heart is purged of evil thoughts by means of *dhikr* or method of recollection and *murāqabat* *i.e.* meditation. Hunger, solitude and silence are the chief weapons used to conquer *nafs*. The aspirant has to traverse through a progressive series of stations (*maqāmat*) and the highest end is attained by means of exercises in spiritual meditation and recollectedness which prepare the aspirant for ecstatic experience. Ecstasy here recognizes two aspects of the experience of oneness with God, symbolized by negative terms like *fana* (losing individuality), *faqd* (self-loss), *suhr* (intoxication) and their positive counterparts *baqa* (abiding in God), *wajd* (finding God) and *sahw* (sobriety). To abide in God (*baqa*) after having passed away from selfhood (*fana*) is the mark of the Perfect man, who not only journeys to God, but in and with God, he returns with God to the phenomenal world from which he set out.

Like leaders of other religious traditions the Sufi leaders too considered meditation as

essential for spiritual growth. Meditation does not mean philosophical thought or poetic flight, but something more. It is by means of meditation that an aspirant is able to penetrate the very depths of reality. Meditation is a means of concentration which the aspirant makes use of in order to elevate his consciousness far above the normal plane. In the beginning human consciousness remains intimately attached to the lower aspects of its individuality. In order to effect separation of these two aspects one should gradually warm up the whole of his psychic being, until it has purged out of the inmost layers of our subconscious all evil thoughts.

Meditation demands uninterrupted flow of the same thought of God. The mind easily succumbs to a thought which it is subjected to uninterruptedly for a long time. The human mind is like a laundered cloth which takes the colour of the dye in which it is dipped. Meditation is well-established concentration of mind and it is a useful source of strength. Swami Vivekananda said, "There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point."

To gain control over the *nafs* and for *muraqabat* (meditation) and *muhasab* (self examination) the aspirant follows a struggle called by the sufis al-Jihad al-Akbar (inner struggle). It consists of the following basic stages:

(a) *Muraqabat* (Meditation): It means being alive to the conviction that God sees man and man sees God. Tradition says "Righteousness consists in worshipping God as if thou seest Him; for if thou seest Him not, yet He sees thee." It creates in the heart an all-impelling reverence for God. It serves to exalt the supreme majesty and glory of God, which practice leads man to his absorption in God.

(b) *Muhasaba* (self-examination): The practicant must take account of his actions at every step and examine them carefully. If he finds himself guilty, he must chastise himself, through punishment, lest it should occur again.

(c) *Fiqr* (Reasoning): Reasoning is the essential condition of *muraqabat*. Its utility is twofold. On the one hand it gives knowledge of self and on the other hand it gives rise to the various stages of the self.

These are followed by *Ikhlās* (sincerity) *Sidq* (truthfulness), *Khauf* and *Raja* (fear and hope), *Tawwakul* (reliance), *Riza* (satisfaction) and *Shukr* (thankfulness). At this stage he believes that God is his well-wisher more than he himself and really knows what is good for him.

The mind is a very changeable entity. A man is serene only when he reaches a condition mentioned above in which he has burned his bridges behind him.

The practice of Sufism is built upon two corner stones: (a) Spiritual teacher, *pir*, *murshid* or *Shaikh* and (b) love. *Murshid* is the person who is able to satisfy the seeking impulse of a *talib* (disciple). The love should be voluntary, selfless, abundant, all-encompassing. This love is a way to truth, to knowledge and to action. The initiation into Sufism is considered a second birth or spiritual birth. Suhrawardi recommends a forty days' seclusion for prayer and fasting once a year. Shorn of worldly belongings, the aspirant should pray two *Rakas* in clean dress and sitting on a clean prayer carpet and repent for his past sins with weeping and humility. During his retirement he should regularly perform ablutions; he should sleep only when overpowered by fatigue. He should continue repeating his *dhikr* until he grows weary.

The broad outline of Sufi asceticism as has been dealt by Ghazali comprises an ordinary religious duty of purification, prayers, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage. And to their aid comes additional acts of devotion like recitation of Quran, praise of God (*dhikr*) supplication (*dua*) and vigils.

For attaining spiritual perfection one has to follow purgative and unitive methods—the first one purifies the heart by subduing the passions, while the other leads to union with God by the acquisition of virtues and faculties. Before entering on his novitiate an aspirant must renounce wealth, reputation, mechanical conformity (*Taqlid*) and sin. He must then cling to his *Shaikh* who will provide him with four weapons against the assault of Satan, *viz.*, solitude, silence, fasting and sleeplessness. Now begins the long inward struggle against lusts and passions. When these are vanquished the aspirant should only continually repeat some *dhikr* like ‘Allah! Allah! Subhana’ llah!’ (Glory to God), until the essential meaning of it fills his heart. Then the *Shaikh* may enjoin him to apprehend rightly the divine reality (*Haqiqat*). He will bid him to meditate assiduously in order to have illumination. This is a perilous path and the *Shaikh* has to take great care of his disciple. The weak should stick to simple faith and practical devotion. However, all those engaged in devotion have to be aware of pitfalls, like vain glory, hypocrisy, delight in visions and miracles. After this resume of the *purgative way*, Ghazali treats in detail the various passions and vices, from lust and gluttony to the spiritual pride, their nature, symptoms, diagnosis and the effective remedies in each case.

The *unitive way* may be expounded under the heads, (i) repentance, (ii) patience and thanksgiving, (iii) fear and hope, (iv) poverty and renunciation, (v) unification (*tauhid*) and trust in God, (vi) love, desire, intimacy and acquiescence, (vii) intention, sincerity and truth (viii) contemplation (*muraqabat*) and self-examination (*muhasaba*), (ix) reflexion (*tapkkur*) and (x) meditation on death and what comes after it.

A1-Qushairi, while analysing the moral and psychological advancement of a mystic, pointed out fortyfive steps. His predecessor A1-Sarraaj enumerated seven stations (conversion, abstinence, renunciation, poverty, patience, trust in God and satisfaction.) and ten states (meditation, nearness to God, love, fear, hope, longing, intimacy, tranquillity, contemplation and certainty). Here *Magam* (or station) is a stage of attainment in the pilgrim’s progress to God. It results mostly from the mystic’s personal endeavour. But *hal* is a spiritual mood gifted by God. The aspirant after winning over his animal soul at one *maqam* steps forward for the next with the help of *hal*.

Though each Order has its own rules they generally agree in the following points for every aspirant: (i) an elaborate ceremony of initiation, which is preceded by a long and arduous apprenticeship; (ii) the wearing of a peculiar habit or costume; (iii) a severe discipline of solitude, prayer, fasting and other austerities; (iv) the immoderate use of *dhikr* with the help of music, dancing, etc., to excite ecstasy; (v) belief in extraordinary ‘spiritual powers’ vouchsafed to adepts, which they display by chewing live coals, etc., and (vi) veneration, approaching to deification of the *Shaikh* or head of the Order.

In spite of general agreement there are striking differences in the methods pursued and recommended by great *murshids*. The aspirant’s task is that he should break down the different enclosures by which his ego is isolated from the ultimate Totality. He should be careful that he does not reduce or mutilate his existence; on the other hand he should ensure that it is one of continuous growth and of infinite enlargement. Thus he approaches, step by

step, towards the ultimate truth. The passions, impulses, greeds and desires are the hidden enemies. Subtle thoughts and desires lie hidden in the human mind, waiting to spring up at the first opportunity. We have to keep a great part of our mind free from the domination of derogatory impulses and desires, so that the mind, thus freed, can think of God. Muhammed Amini's method of meditating the *dhikr* formula *lā ilāha illa' llāh* recommends: Keep the tongue fixed firmly to the roof of the mouth. After drawing a deep breath, you should hold it, and make a beginning with the word *lā*. Imagine that you are taking it from below the navel; let it extend along the organs *qalb*—heart, *rih*—spirit, *sirr*—inmost conscience, *khafi* hidden depth, *akhfā*—most hidden depth, and finally bring it up to the rational soul (*al-nafs al-nātiqa*) which is in the first lobe of the brain. Follow this up by taking the *hamza* of *ilāha*—in imagination—from the brain, then let it descend until it finishes at the right shoulder blades; then draw it down the *ruh* (two fingers' breadth below the right nipple towards the breast). Now imagine that you are taking the *hamza* of *ilia' llāh* from the shoulder-blade; let it slide down the edge of the middle of the breast until it finishes at the *qalb* (heart, two fingers' breadth below the nipple towards the side), which may be imagined at this point as beating to the World of Majesty, with all the force of the pent-up breath pressing against the core of the heart, until its effect and heat are felt throughout the body. Its heat will burn up all the corrupt practicles of the body, while the sound particles will be irradiated by the Light of Majesty. This process is to be repeated 21 times, not automatically but reflectively and with due regard to the meaning of the formula meditated. At the end of this exertion, the *jhākir* will experience the result of his *dhikr qalbi*; he will lose all consciousness of being a man and a part of creation, and his pettiness will be entirely destroyed in the attraction of the Divine Essence.

To achieve the perfect view of the Sufis (*Muraqiba-i-Nizami*), i.e., realisation of multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity, the spiritual aspirant has to contemplate on the phenomenal existence. He must be convinced that all things are but shadows or reflections of the ideas of God or essence of things reflected in the mirror of the existence of God. Next he should contemplate on the Divine by being convinced that God subsists in His own self and possesses His attributes. Without any substantive change He has manifested Himself in the form of phenomenal things through the attributes of Light. Closing his eyes the aspirant should contemplate that his well-known self was not his true self. In fact, God has manifested Himself in that form. By meditating on the concept, "I do not exist, God alone exists", he perceives God within. Then contemplating God without he ushers in a state of "self-forgetfulness". The aspirant must devote his life to prayer, contemplation and communion with God, feeling God's intimate presence within and sensing his presence without. When such remembrance continues without break the aspirant enters permanently into the presence of God. The stage is called *Yaddasht*. If God wills, this contemplation may lead to the state declared by the Prophet, "I have sometimes a moment in God which neither the most intimate angels of God nor his Messengers can attain thereto."

A cautious pilgrim is aware that the mind tricks an aspirant in many different ways. The mind like a spirited horse will try to dislodge the aspirant, but upon finding that he cannot be shaken off, it will become his slave. Once the aspirant makes the determination to ride it and this determination is coupled with concentration of mind he becomes sure of victory. A well-disciplined aspirant easily wins over the *nafs* and advances in his journey from the outward to the inward. An aspirant must become aware of what one has always been from eternity (*azal*),

but this is not possible until the entire transformation is brought about in the soul through Divine presence (*hadur*). When the knowledge of divine presence illumines the mind it is filled with the love of God. Together with such perfect gnosis, love and devotion gush up in the mind of the gnostic and in such a state he, though living in the world, enters into Heaven.

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WORSHIP IN ISLAM

MD. ZAINULABEEDEN

1. Meditation, concentration and worship are spiritual exercises that draw man nearer to God and make him dearer to his Creator. In these exercises there is involvement of mind, soul and body. Body is the vehicle of mind, and mind is the mirror which focusses on the divine soul which in its turn guides in spiritual realisation. To hasten this process cleanliness of body to a certain extent, and purity and steadiness of mind to the greatest possible degree are highly essential. Man's living conditions have to be evaluated in the light of the above objective so that the whole human system can be geared to achieve his spiritual goal in a steady systematic manner. Life based on correctly evaluated principles is indeed the successful life. To have what is good in this life, and consequently a good hereafter, are indeed the real objectives of human existence.

2. The Holy Quran teaches an important expression of entreaty to God which is repeated daily again and again by Muslims. "O Lord! give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of fire." (2:201)

3. Worship is a comprehensive term which includes all modes of spiritual exercises practised by the body, mind and soul of an individual or by a group of persons together. This is generally called prayer in common parlance, and is used in respect of God. Prayer means experiencing the presence of God, strengthening bonds of attachment, hymning His praise and humbly expressing gratitude for all the blessings. These spiritual exercises during certain times of day and night infuse a deep consciousness of His beneficent existence, whatever be the other avocations of our day to day life, with all its stresses and strains. This experience is aptly described by Sri Ramakrishna through the example of a servant maid who works in the house of her master, deeply involved in all activities and completely identifying herself with them all the day round; but still not forgetting the fact that she has a sweet home of her own wherein live her children. It all depends on the intensity of attachment one develops, and every wave of consciousness of this attachment to the Divine Presence gives one absolute satisfaction and profound peace. "Verily in the remembrance of God do hearts find rest," says the Holy Quran (13:28). To achieve this lasting consciousness is the fulfilment of human experience; and one has to develop this consciousness and guard it as the most precious possession.

4. In Islam, worship of God is an obligatory duty for every Muslim. It should be very clearly understood, that Islam is a pure and unadulterated monotheism. God is one and to Him alone is our prayer or worship due. This is the first article of Muslim faith. There is no compromise on this. He is the Absolute: His sovereignty is not shared by another. So that in Islam, worship of minor deities, saints and other lesser beings amounts to rank apostasy. The Muslim prayer is a direct relationship between man and God and does not recognise any intermediary. God says in the Holy Quran: "Pray unto Me and I will hear your prayer" (40: 60) "Verily We created man and We know what his soul whispers and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein" (50: 16).

5. The obligatory prayer in Islam called *salat* has been standardised by the Holy Prophet Muhammad under Divine guidance. *Salat* is the humble supplication of the individual to his

Creator, glorifying Him and seeking His mercy, protection and guidance. Evil thoughts and desires are expelled from the minds of those who regularly offer *salat*. The Holy Quran says, "Surely, *salat* restrains (one) from indecent and evil deeds; and the remembrance of God is the greatest (thing in life) without doubt" (29: 45). It is a stream that purifies man every time he takes a dip in it. It results in closer bonds with the Creator and develops submission and peace. In fact it lays the foundations of a real successful life. The call for prayer from every mosque five times a day, includes two significant brief sentences: "Come for *salat*, come for success."

6. *Salat* has to be frequently observed for it to become a regular feature of daily life. The wavering mind can thus be trained to attune itself to constant remembrance of God. "Establish prayer for My remembrance", says God in the Holy Quran (20: 14). Consciousness of God is the controlling force which guards and guides, and maintains the purity of action in human thought, word and deed. Thus human endeavour in any aspect, with this Divine Consciousness, becomes itself an act of worship. While engaged in work in such mental climate, one feels supreme satisfaction and develops perfect peace. The mode of life or the type of work is not by itself the criterion. Tensions, stresses and strains do not come in the way. Avarice and jealousy will be foreign to the aspirant. Such a life in this world is really successful and fulfilling and serves as a good preparation and base for success in the hereafter too. Therefore, response to the call of *salat* is indeed the means for realisation of success in both the worlds.

7. The compulsory standardised *salat* is fixed at five times a day. The first prayer is at dawn, when in the calm and peaceful atmosphere God is remembered and glorified. The day thus begins with a holy consciousness. The next two prayers are in early and late afternoons, when in the midst of worldly activities God is not forgotten. The fourth prayer is just after sun-set, and the fifth and final for the day is at any time before midnight, so that the end of the day's activity is also marked by a prayer. The mode of offering *salat* is also unique in Islam. Mind, word and body are simultaneously involved in the observance of *salat*. It starts with a steady standing posture facing the Kaba (the first house of God in Mecca) with arms folded and with the consciousness of being face to face with God.

8. "Lo! I have turned my face towards Him who has created the heavens and the earth and I am not one of those that associate others with Divine sovereignty" (Quran 6:79)

9. The first chapter or *surah* of the Holy Quran containing seven brief sentences is the most important oft-repeated *surah* in the standing posture. This is called *Al Fatihah*. This is followed by any other short *surah* or part of any other long *surah* from the Holy Quran. This standing posture is followed by two other postures indicating extreme humility namely bowing with palms on knees, and prostrating on folded legs with forehead touching the ground, hymning praise and glory of God. This is followed by sitting for awhile in a comfortable position, invoking God's mercy and peace on the Prophet and his kin and on himself and those connected with him.

10. *Al Fatihah* is universal in its scope and profound in its content. It is the essence of the Holy Quran and the heart of Muslim prayer. The rest of the Qurani chapters are a graphic commentary on *Al Fatihah*, whose translation reads as follows:—

1. In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

2. Praise is only to God, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds,
3. Most Gracious, Most Merciful,
4. Master of the Day of Judgement,
5. Thee (alone) do we worship And to Thee (alone) we pray for help.
6. Show us the straight way,
7. The way of those whom thou hast blessed; not (the way) of those who incur Thine wrath, not of those who go astray.

This *surah* can be divided into three distinct parts. It starts with the praise of God, and lays down that He alone deserves praise. This cuts at the root of the tendency in man to praise any other person or object. It mentions the most important attributes of God—Rab, Rahman, Rahim, and Malik. It is difficult to translate these words; but they indicate His Sovereignty, abiding Grace and limitless Mercy (1 to 4). In the second part (item 5) man's relationship is firmly established with that Almighty alone, elevating man to the status of his direct devotee, and affirming the supreme and undivided sovereignty of God. In the third part man beseeches God to guide him along the correct and straight path which leads to success in this and the next worlds. The sequence in the presentation of *Al Fatihah* shows that it is a petition or address to the Almighty submitted by the whole humanity without distinction of caste or community.

11. In addition to the compulsory, subsidiary or optional *salat*, it can also be offered during other parts of the day and the night depending on one's convenience. The Holy Quran recommends offering of optional prayer in the small hours of the night. This is called "*tahajjud*". Some Muslims regularly observe this in addition to the five compulsory prayers. *Salat* can be observed in any clean place treating the whole universe as the temple of God. It can be done individually or in congregation in the nearest mosque. Joining in the congregational prayers is highly recommended, because it develops brotherhood and fellow-feeling.

12. In effect the Qurani teachings and its revelations lead to an understanding of the working of the universe and the universal Power behind. Says God in the Holy Quran: "Lo! in the creation of the heavens and the earth and (in) the alternation of night and day are signs (of His sovereignty) for men of understanding. Such (men) remember God standing, sitting and reclining, and consider the creation of the heavens and the earth, and say "O Lord! Thou did not create this in vain; Glory be to Thee; save us from the doom of fire"(3:190,191).

It should however be understood that this exercise, however intense, does not absolve any Muslim from offering the compulsory *salat*.

13. Another important feature of Muslim worship has also to be emphasised. Mere belief in God's unity and sovereignty, followed however regularly by obligatory prayers, does not by itself lead to spiritual fulfilment. Faith and worship must be followed by righteous conduct. Otherwise this exercise is in vain. The Holy Quran is very clear on this. It says, 'Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of God, are those best in conduct'. (49: 13).

What is righteous conduct is detailed in the chapters of the Holy Quran. Thus, Muslim worship consists not only of *salat* but also of good conduct following it.

SADHANA IN SRI MADHVA'S PHILOSOPHY

Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao

The Philosophy of Sri Madhva is not merely a theory of reality working out a well- rounded system satisfying the intellectual's instinct for consistency and non-contradiction. It is that and something more. It is a way of life for the attainment of *mokṣa*, which state of existence puts not only an end to the threefold suffering man is heir to but also secures him eternal bliss. To secure this, man has to follow a way of life adumbrated by the triple texts. The way is called the Sadhana.

Sadhana is a complex term which blends all the resources of man for the attainment of *mokṣa*. One obtains the knowledge of philosophical truths through reverent study of the scriptures with devotion under the guidance of a competent Guru. Going to the Guru is not an act of formality. It is a spiritual necessity. For the Guru knows the path as he has trodden it. It is called *śravaṇa*. Self-study is not *śravaṇa*.

What is taught by the Guru must be thought out in a dialectical way by the Sadhaka examining its pros and cons until the scripture-taught doctrines become his settled conviction. This is called *manana*. Intellectual examination supported by scripture has a place, though limited, in the philosophy of Madhva. Any belief is not philosophy. Examined belief is philosophy. After *manana*, the Sadhaka contemplates the Lord until such time as he has His direct vision called *aparokṣajnāna*. God-vision enables the Sadhaka to love the Lord intensely because he knows the Lord first hand. He practises *parā bhakti*. This results in the grace of the Lord, *prasāda*, which removes the bondage of the soul, which is real. The removal of the bondage makes the soul realize his own true nature, *svasvarūpatā*. Such a realization is called *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is through grace and not through mere self-effort, which is necessary but not sufficient.

In all the stages of spiritual *sādhana*, right from the *śravaṇa* stage, Bhakti is necessary.

Śravaṇam mananam caiva dhyānam bhaktistathaiva ca
Sādhanam jñānasampattau pradhānam nānyadiṣyate
Bhaktyā jñānam tato bhaktiḥ tato drṣṭistataśca sā-
Tato muktistato bhaktiḥ saiva syāt sukha rūpiṇī:

From Bhakti arises Jnana, from that arises further Bhakti, from that the vision of God. Vision strengthens further *parā bhakti*. That releases the soul, and the state of release and devotion to Lord constitutes bliss. In short Sri Madhva's philosophy is a *bhakti-siddhānta*. Release is obtained only through the grace of the Lord and without it there is no hope for it.

Narāyaṇa prasādamṛte na mokṣaḥ

If it is so, what should the individual do? Should he sit with folded hands or practise intense *sādhana* to obtain the grace of the Lord? Sri Madhva asks the simple question: what should man do after learning the scriptures and understanding their chief import?

Samanvayāvirodhābhyām samjāte vastunirṇaye
Kim mayā kāryamityeva syād buddhiradhikāriṇaḥ

Man, being not an insentient object, has to practise a course of *sādhana*, which goes into

two types—scriptural study and contemplation.

Sopāsanā caidvidhā śāstrābhyāsasvarūpiṇī

Dhyānarūpā parā caiva tadaṅgam dhāraṇādikam

Sri Madhva believes that scriptural study requires more concentration than contemplation. So he is all praise for it. The *sādhaka* undertakes *upāsanā*, worship of the Lord, suited to his svarūpa and worships the Lord according to his eligibility. In the eloquent words of Jayatirtha—“The Lord is unmanifest by His nature. Without the aid of His grace it is not possible to have His vision in spite of a thousand human efforts. Lo! When His grace visits us we have His direct vision by His powers.”

The means for His immediate vision is His grace and blessing. This cannot be had except by worshipful devotion to the Lord who is free of all defects and is full of auspicious attributes. The devotion must be continuous and constant with detachment towards objects and practised for a long time. This is called Nididhyāsana.

Na ca avyaktasvabhāvo bhagavān sahasrenāpi prayatnena śakyaḥ sākṣatkartum vinā
tadanugrahāt.

Prasannastu ananyacintyayogāt ātmānam darśayāti iti yujyate

Darśanasādhanam cānugrahaḥ. Svayog- yaguṇopetasya nirdoṣasya bhagavadvi-
grahaviśeṣasya ādaranairantaryābhyām viṣayavairāgyabhaktisahitāt bahukalo-
pacitāt nididhyāsanāparanāmakāt vici- nvatāt ṛte na labhyate.

The devotee must not sit with folded arms, waiting for the Lord to do everything. He must roll up the sleeves and go to work. Though the Lord does not need man’s work, yet His resolve in the governance of the world is that men should make some effort and ask the Lord for refuge.

Sarvajno’pi hi viśveśaḥ sadā kāruṇiko’pi san

Samsāratantravāhitvāt rakṣāpekṣām pratīkṣate.

Sādhana, Jayatirtha observes, is of two types—that which is there already (*siddha*) and that which has to be attained (*sādhya*) The Lord is the *siddha sādhana*. Man, by his effort and devotion has to activate the grace of the Lord as the wood cutter splits the wood with the axe and the sacrificer derives the fruit by the sacrifice.

Sādhanam ca dvidham, siddhamasiddham ca.

Tatra asiddham utpādyam phalakāmena, yatha yāgād

Siddham tu savyāpārīkaraṇīyam, yathakuṭhārādi.

Siddham ca sādhana bhagavān iti mumukṣuṇā savyāpārīkaraṇīyaḥ.

Having all this in mind. Sri Madhva ascribes a certain limited sense of agency to man (Jivo’pi kārta). After God-vision the individual soul becomes directly aware of the glory of the Lord and practises supreme ‘devotion’, which is a steady continuous flow of deep attachment to the Lord, unsurmountable by any kind of impediment and a love that transcends love of self, love of kith and kin, and love of cherished belongings. He must also be fortified and inspired by the firm conviction of the transcendent majesty of God as the abode of all perfections and free from all blemishes. Such a devotion invokes the grace of the Lord and removes man’s bondage and makes him realize his own svarūpa, which is mokṣa.

Parameśvara bhaktirnāma niravadhi-kānan- tānavadhyakalyāṇa guṇatvatānupūrvakaḥ,
svā - tmātmīyasamastavastubhyo’ nekaguṇādhikaḥ, antarāyasahasreṇāpi apratibaddho

nirantara- premapravāhaḥ. Na casau tat sākṣatkāram antareṇa nipadyate. Loke tathā darsanāt.

The aspirant leads a life of ceremonial purity, which he keeps or cannot keep when he is lost in contemplation, with ethical excellence and constant devotion. Through the grace of the Lord earned through the *sādhana* of bhakti he attains mokṣa.

Ajñanām jñānado viṣṇuḥ
jñāninām mokṣadaṣca saḥ
Ānandadaścamuktānam
sa evaiko janārdanaḥ.

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