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**Dhyana Yoga**

*How can he, who surrenders to the internal  
enemies ever vanquish the external foes?  
Man becomes blessed when he cognises the  
Truth.*

**T**he mind derives its Sanskrit name *manas* because it is continually engaged in the process of *manana* or thinking. Impulses are generated in the mind. Very often, however, the mind is led astray by conflicting impulses that are generated in it. The fickle nature of the mind acts as an impediment to man's spiritual progress; therefore, it is imperative that every spiritual aspirant gains control over his mind if he is to drench himself in the delight of his soul.

The mind travels faster than even the wind. Just as we apply brakes to halt a fast-moving vehicle, we have to curb the flow of our thoughts.

Arjuna prayed to Krishna to teach him the art of mind control, in answer to which Krishna elaborated on the subject. The mind is strong and mighty. It carries with it the accumulated tendencies of innumerable births and therefore, tries to gain dominance over the soul. But with such a mind, running amuck with desires, it is impossible for man to attain Divinity.

The mind is like a bee. Though small in size, a bee can bore its way through thick wood or even through a human body as it did in the case of Karna. However, such a bee, when it sits on the lotus to suck the sweet honey contained therein, gets caught within the delicate petals of the flower as they close around it and finds it impossible to escape. Similarly, our attempt to conquer the mind is bound to prove futile unless it is led to the Lotus-like-form of the Lord, wherein it gets eternally trapped.

The sixth chapter of the *Gita* is entitled *Atmasamyama Yoga* or the *yoga* of controlling the *Atma*. This is a misnomer in as much as it is neither necessary nor possible to control the immaculate, eternal embodiment of the Truth—the *Atma*. The word *Atma* in this chapter of the *Gita* has been used to denote the mind. In the *Atmasamyama Yoga*, the art of mind control is dealt with in elaborate detail. *Dhyana* is mentioned here as the principal means to achieve control over the mind.

In the *Atmasamyama Yoga*, Krishna emphasises the need for maintaining absolute cleanliness at the place

where meditation is practised. It is not your house or the forest that is to be kept clean, but the immediate surroundings of the place where you perform meditation that should be kept clean. The *jiva* dwells in the body whilst the Lord resides in the heart. Therefore, as meditation is not so much performed in external environs as it is within the heart—it being an internal process—it is more vital to rid the heart of all impurities and render it a fit abode for God. In our daily lives, when we have to sit somewhere, we choose a clean place and cover the ground with a handkerchief or a newspaper. Such being the care we take in cleaning a place to sit in for ourselves, the need for keeping the heart clean to seat the Lord therein and to achieve the purpose of meditation, is all the more important. The necessity for man to cleanse his heart arises because of the taints of *thamas* and *rajas* that have been associated with him over several births.

There are three states relating to the mind: *soonyathwa* (emptiness), *anekagrata* (simultaneous pulls of multiple thoughts), and *ekagrata* (one-pointedness). These three states are referable to and arise from the three *gunas* in man. While *thamo guna* (indolence) brings about a blankness in the mind, *rajo guna* (the quality inducing animated action) provokes the mind into wandering hither and thither. *Sathwa guna* (the quality that promotes the sacred aspects of human life) stills the mind into one-pointed contemplation. Thus, it is only those who cultivate *sathwa guna* that can undertake meditation with ease.

When we think of meditation, three things are involved, First, there is the person who meditates, the *dhyata*; secondly, there is the object of meditation *dhyeya*; and thirdly, there is the process of meditation itself, *dhyana*. In true meditation, all these three should merge. The person who is meditating should identify himself totally with the object of meditation and should be unaware of even the fact that he is meditating. When he is meditating, his attention should be so rivetted to the *dhyeya* that he loses his own identity and forgets his involvement in the action (*dhyana*), too.

Meditation is often misunderstood to be the same as concentration. Concentration is essential for ordinary sensory perceptions and it is something that we have and utilise while performing the most ordinary and routine acts. For example, we concentrate when we read a book, write a letter, drive a car or eat our food. Concentration comes naturally to us in the process of perceiving through the five senses and no particular exertion or special practice is required for it. It is incorrect, therefore, to equate concentration with meditation at which only the spiritual adepts excel.

Meditation is a process which obtains at a much higher plane than human sensory perception. Being a mental process that involves seeing through the senses, concentration may be regarded as being below or within the realms of the senses, while meditation is beyond or above the world of the senses. If meditation were as

easy as concentration, the great rishis of the past would not have practised various austerities and subjected themselves to innumerable difficulties in the deep forests.

Unfortunately today, however, by the influence of *Kali*, meditation which is the sacred means of attaining union with God, is being considered an alternative for aspirin to cure a headache! What a slight it is for Indian culture!

For one who desires to practise *dhyana* or meditation, it is advisable that *jyothi* (light) is taken as the *dhyeya* or object of meditation and not a form of Divinity such as that of Rama, Krishna, or Easwara; for these forms, too, are subject to change and ultimately perish. *Jyothi* or light does not perish or change. Moreover, a flame can kindle a million others without getting extinguished and is therefore inexhaustible.

In this process of meditation on light, the progression must be from restlessness to tranquillity and from tranquillity to divine Effulgence. One should sit cross-legged and erect to ensure an easy flow of the divine force from the *mooladhara chakra* to the *sahasrara chakra* through the *sushumna nadi*. The aspirant should fix his gaze on the gentle flame and gradually close his eyes, mentally transferring or absorbing the flame into his heart, as it were.

The lotus of the spiritual heart should then be imagined as blossoming in effulgent beauty dispelling

with its radiance the dark forces of life. One should then imagine that out of the heart so illumined, rays of light proceed gradually to all parts of the body, suffusing everything with light and imbuing it with sacredness and purity all over. As the light has reached the hands, the individual ought not to do any wrongful acts; since the flame shines in his eyes, he cannot look at undesirable sights. So, also, since the *jyothi* has permeated his ears, he should not listen to evil talk. His feet, too, since they have been filled with light, should not tread upon unholy paths. Thus, this type of meditation ennobles man and helps him scale great spiritual heights very steadily.

If we keep the mind busy in this manner with the task of carrying light to all parts of the body, it will not wander and will remain steady. The whole process takes about twenty to thirty minutes to complete. This kind of meditation should not be regarded as an exercise in fantasy. No doubt, in the beginning, imagination will be involved; but, by constant practice, it will be transformed into a powerful thought wave, creating an indelible impression on the heart leading to union with God.

The meditation should not end with the individual visualising the light in himself. He should see it in his friends and relatives and even in his enemies. He should see the whole of creation bathed in the resplendent light of Divinity. This would make him live a life full of love and happiness.

If you so desire, you may in the initial stages, picture the form of God which is dear to you, within the flame on which you meditate; you must, however, realise that the form has got to dissolve in the light, sooner or later. You must not try to confine Divinity to any one particular form; you must see God in His all-pervasive form, as the One who resides in the hearts of all Divine beings.

Some believe that only Rama, Krishna, and Sai Baba are God. This can only be attributed to sheer ignorance. You are also God. In order to make you realise that all beings are Divine, that all are embodiments of the Supreme Being, God comes as an *Avatar*. I have assumed this Form to make you all realise your innate Divinity. Recognising this purpose, to fulfil which *Avatars* come, you should take to the spiritual life with ardour and zest.

There are people who feign themselves divinely inebriated and give the impression that they are on the verge of the transcendental state of *samadhi*. But the moment an ant or a mosquito settles on their bodies, they are led into an instinctive act of killing the poor insect! There are others who sit peacefully in meditation for a minute and then immediately shout at their servants for the smallest of lapses! This should not be the attitude of one who desires to meditate sincerely. Ramana Maharshi was once questioned as to how long a person should perform *dhyana* every day. He smiled and replied

that one should perform meditation till he forgets that he is doing so.

We should perform *dhyana* in an unostentatious manner unobserved by others. Fish are sold in heaps at the fish market, but diamonds are carefully preserved at the jeweller's shop and displayed only to worthy customers. Likewise, if we sit for meditation at all places indiscriminately, inviting public attention, we would be reducing *dhyana* to cheap exhibitionism.

Krishna told Arjuna that one should be alone while meditating. The body should not touch the earth or another body. This is because contact with the earth makes the individual lose the divine current generated in him during meditation.

Meditation will be more meaningful if desires are curtailed. Less luggage, more comfort make travel a pleasure; fewer desires make the journey of life easier and happier.