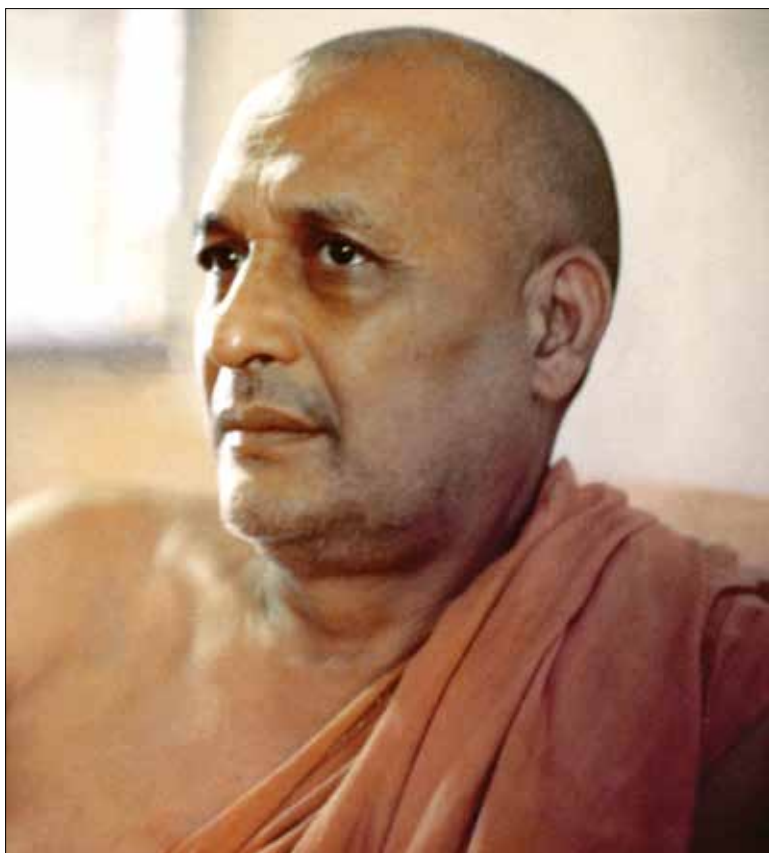


Satyam Speaks Dhyana



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Satyam Speaks
Dhyana

With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

Satyam Speaks

Dhyana



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Satyam Speaks Dhyana

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

© Bihar School of Yoga 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, transmitted or stored in a retrieval system, in any form or by any means, without permission in writing from Yoga Publications Trust.

The terms Satyananda Yoga® and Bihar Yoga® are registered trademarks owned by International Yoga Fellowship Movement (IYFM). The use of the same in this book is with permission.

The purpose of this book is to provide relevant information regarding yoga practice; it is not a practice book and it is not to be used for teaching oneself or others. All yoga training is to be learned and practised under the competent guidance of a person well versed in the practice. It is the responsibility of the practitioner to choose the teacher and the manner in which the classes are being conducted. Bihar School of Yoga is not responsible in any way for the individual's choice.

Published by Yoga Publications Trust

First edition 2022

ISBN: 978-81-955776-7-5

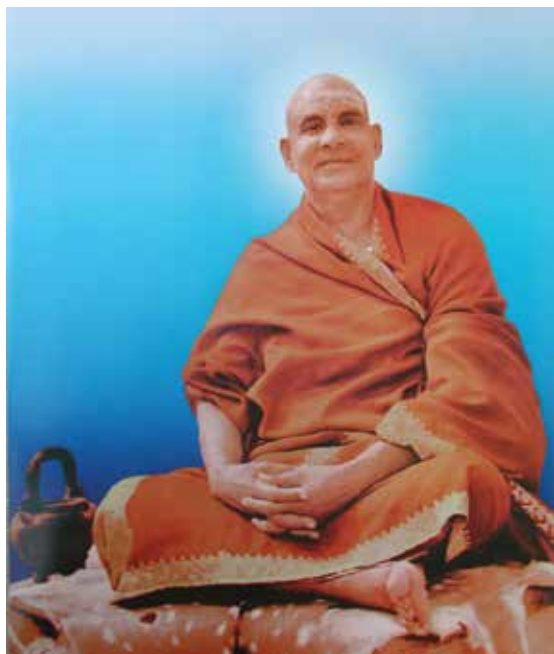
Publisher and distributor: Yoga Publications Trust, Ganga Darshan, Munger, Bihar, India.

Website: www.biharyoga.net

www.sannyasapeeth.net

www.satyamyogaprasad.net

Printed at Thomson Press (India) Limited, New Delhi, 110001



Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*



Dedication

*To our guru Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati
who continues to inspire and guide us
on our yogic and spiritual journey.*

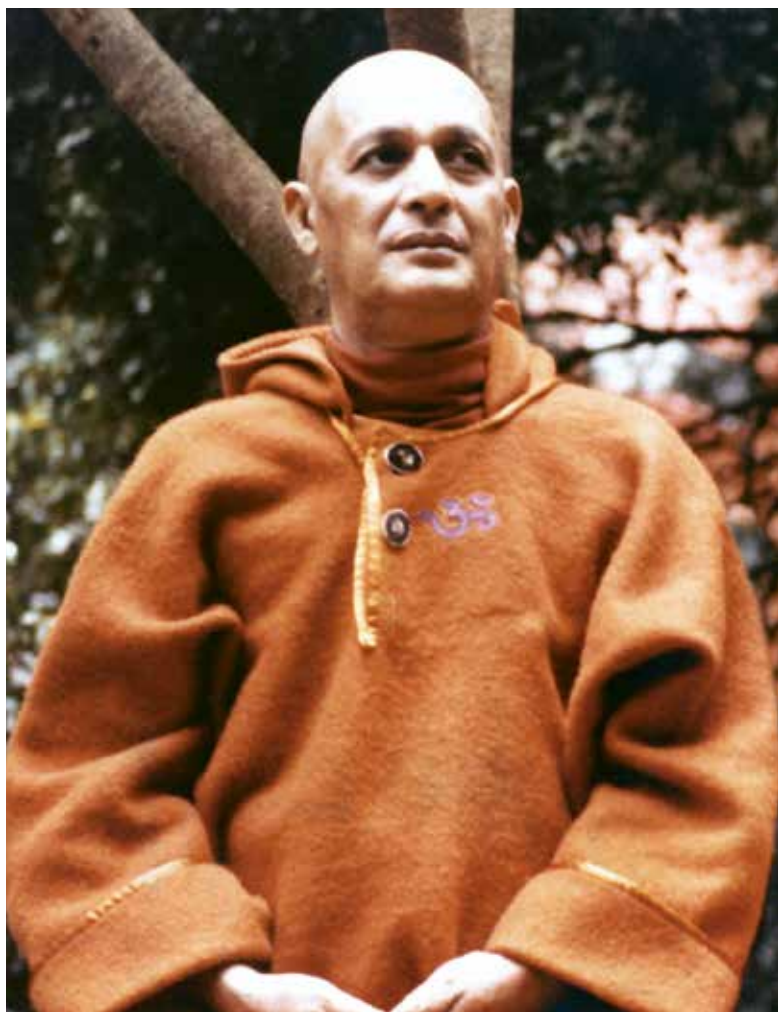
Contents

Preface	<i>ix</i>
1. Introducing Dhyana	1
2. Exploring Dhyana	14
3. Dimensions of Dhyana	32
4. Preparing for Dhyana	53
5. Benefits of Dhyana	64
6. Applications of Dhyana	75
7. Scriptural References	83
8. Approaches to Dhyana	92
9. Dhyana in Other Traditions	110
10. Conclusion	115

Preface

Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati dedicated twenty years of his life to the propagation of yoga, and thus fulfilled the mandate given by his guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, 'to spread yoga from door to door and shore to shore'. He travelled around the globe many times bringing the message of yoga to people of all walks of life, regardless of caste or creed. Master of yoga vidya and creator of the Yoga Chakra, he adapted his knowledge and understanding of yoga to the needs and abilities of people. Swami Satyananda simplified valuable techniques and complex processes by giving systematic and clearly defined sequences. Everyone could understand and progress following the theoretical explanation and practical instructions. Everyone was able to benefit from yoga.

Satyam Speaks Series presents compilations of Sri Swami Satyananda's teachings on yoga. Each book explores a specific topic, concept or practice. The aim is to provide an easy way to understand and incorporate various components of the immense science of yoga vidya into one's daily life. For some titles, more information is provided of specific conditions or applications, which are for the information of the aspirant only and not for practice. These have been included to show the depth of understanding and experience Sri Swami Satyananda had of yoga vidya.



Satyam Speaks Series is a tribute to Sri Swami Satyananda, his teaching and to yoga vidya. *Satyam Speaks Series* is an invitation to all sincere aspirants to live yoga and thereby make the world a better place.

Learn from an accomplished yoga master, not from a book. This series is a knowledge guide and a yoga master is a practical guide.

1

Introducing Dhyana



I remember a parable. There was a blind man and he was wandering around inside a fort. He wanted to get out of the fort, which had four gates. He asked a wise man how he could get out. The wise man said, 'Hold the wall of the fort

and keep on moving. The moment there is a gate, you will know and be able to get out'. The blind man held the wall of the fort with his hand and kept on moving. Unfortunately, when he came to a gate he began scratching himself. He went on further, again holding the wall, and when the second gate came, he scratched himself again. In this way he missed the gates, but they were there. I think we are like that. Many times in life we have passed by the gate, but we started scratching and missed it.

If we are to find the gate, we have to know and realize that the most important thing in yoga is dhyana. Meditation is the answer, the way. When, through meditation, you are able to transcend the idea of the body – when you are able to forget the notion of the name and form – when you are able to rise above the memories of the past, and when you are able to have even a blurred vision of something which is a non-physical experience, then you are on the path. Those who are able to see the light, to experience the space or sound within, are on the path.

The beginning of spiritual life

Spiritual life begins when I start to doubt my definition of myself. It starts when I pose this question again, 'Who am I? Am I the body? Am I the mind? Am I the senses? Am I the experience of pain and pleasure? Am I time? Am I space?' Finally, you have to come to the answer, 'No. I am not this. I am a seer of this. I am not the body, but a seer, a witness of the body. I am not the mind, but I see the mind. I am not the pain and pleasure, I see them. I am not this, I am a seer of all this. I am not a flower, but a seer of the flower. So I become a seer, a witness. When I close my eyes I see what I see as a seer. With my eyes open whatever I see around me, I see, but I am not part of it.'

One has to separate oneself from all those elements that are subject to time and space, objectivity and duality. It is for this purpose that everyone has to experience the depth of meditation. The little experience you have in meditation is

transitory; it's not abiding. The experience has to go through a series of changes. Every day, every week, it can be different. All of the experiences which you go through when you are practising meditation are not the ultimate experience.

The series of experiences are in a sequence which will ultimately lead to the self or the spiritual experience, the experience of non-duality, of oneness. In between the experience which we have achieved up to this moment, and that experience which I am talking about, there are thousands and thousands of experiences which a spiritual aspirant necessarily has to go through. For this purpose, the ways and paths have been laid down, and they are known as meditation. Our spiritual efforts should be dedicated to this purpose. Everything in life is all right, but it is not final. You must have something more. Through the practice of meditation, you must develop the powers of consciousness.

Yoga means meeting or union. It is a state where you are united and have become attuned with the real existence. The way is meditation – that is the express highway. Just as in driving you have red and green lights, you drive in first, second or third gear, and often in reverse, and you have the occasional accident, so in yoga, the expressway is meditation, never forget it. Yoga is meditation and meditation is yoga. It is the point of experience when everything becomes *shoonya*, void.

What is meditation

Meditation is a difficult task. Merely closing the eyes and withdrawing the consciousness from the objective realm of experience does not constitute meditation. The ancient term for meditation is *dhyana*, which means, 'total awareness', not partial awareness, not diminished awareness, nor hypnotic awareness, but total awareness. Dreams, for instance, do not represent total awareness; they are partial. Neither do psychedelic experiences represent total awareness.

Closing your eyes and withdrawing your mind from the senses and sense objects is preparation for meditation

and not meditation itself. The glory and importance of meditation has already been judged and investigated in every possible manner in relation to body, mind and consciousness. The hundreds of books that have been written by religious, yogic and scientific authorities attest to this.

Dhyana literally means 'unbroken awareness'. Yoga and dhyana are synonymous terms; there is no difference between them. Dhyana is yoga and yoga is dhyana. In English, dhyana is translated as meditation, because there is no other word that is comparable, but actually this is not an adequate or clear translation. It doesn't mean contemplation. It doesn't even mean meditation. We do use the word meditation because everybody is accustomed to this word. This tradition of using the terms contemplation and meditation came from the great philosophers, and later continued within the precincts of the churches.

When cognition is extroverted, you have perception, you see matter, you see the vast world with its names and forms in all its diversity, sometimes logical and sometimes illogical. When the perception is extroverted, you experience that world of names and forms, subject to change, to actions and reactions, to emotions and feelings. This same perception still functions when it is withdrawn from matter and fixed on an inner symbol. When the mind is comparatively tranquillized and the sensual activities minimized, when the pranas function in balance, when the body becomes steady and the awareness of the inner symbol becomes constant, then meditation begins.

When the difference between external perception and internal perception ceases to exist, that is dhyana. In the same way as you can see an object outside, you can see an object inside, with the same quality of perception, and when you do, that is dhyana. Therefore, I say that meditation is an uphill task.

Meditation is not shutting the mind. Meditation is a process through which you evolve the mind. The mind becomes a better mind. The better mind becomes a higher



mind. The higher mind becomes a supermind, and the supermind becomes the Self. This is called evolution.

Defining dhyana

For many years I have been trying to find the correct meaning of dhyana in English, Spanish, German, French or any other language. Dhyana is not only Sanskrit. It is a universal word meaning total awareness. When you expand the possibilities of your knowledge, of your mind, this is known as dhyana. In Patanjali's raja yoga it is said that when an idea flows constantly without any interruption, without awareness of a second object, and stretches without any division or separation, it is called dhyana.

Dhyayatah, thinking, is derived from *dhyān*, awareness of. Dhyana means attention, awareness, complete awareness; not divided awareness, not dissipated awareness, not split awareness, not broken awareness, not wavering awareness, but one-pointed awareness. When your mind is thinking, aware, seeing, conceiving, experiencing just one object, just

one thing, just one item, and everything else is dead, this is called dhyana. Dhyana, therefore, is constant awareness.

When the consciousness becomes constant, when it is not intercepted by any other form of consciousness or awareness, when the meditator becomes unaware of his egotistical existence, when he has transcended the triple functions – the meditator, the meditation and the object, then it should be known that meditation has taken place. When the consciousness becomes constant the flow becomes unbroken, when there is just one form of consciousness and the self is experiencing the self without any difference or distinction. That is the state of meditation. That is the classical definition of dhyana, meditation, in the yogic scriptures.

The purpose of dhyana

Through the path of meditation or dhyana yoga, we can achieve higher awareness. Yoga must be understood properly. Yoga means union and communion. The path of meditation brings you closer to yourself. When you are not meditating, you are far from yourself. You are united with the objects, with the things outside, with the external world, the sensorial world, the empirical world. In meditation, as you transcend the external boundaries, the awareness of name and form, you gradually come closer to yourself.

Meditation is communion with the inner self. It is the means of expanding our consciousness, transcending the external being and becoming one with the infinite source of light and wisdom. Meditation is not a process of self-forgetfulness and escape; it is not entering into total darkness, total nothingness. Meditation is discovering oneself. Patanjali defines meditation as that state when the mind becomes free from the awareness of subjective and objective experience. It is only then that meditation has dawned. Therefore, side by side with the life you have been leading so far, you must diligently pursue and follow the path of dhyana yoga.

Your self is very important. What you know about yourself is not your self. The concept or the idea which you

have, or the way you understand your self is not the true understanding about your self.

Dhyana yoga is not concerned in any way with your religion. It is a practice through which you can train your mental forces to unite. Mental force is a concrete force. It is energy like radioactive energy, electromagnetic energy or any other form of energy. It is not an abstract thing. Mental energy is not merely psychological. Mind, mental energy, thought, emotion, these are all forces. Just as you produce energy in the external field and that is again transformed into various forms, in the same way, within us is that energy which we call mental energy.

How can such a mind be developed? How can you train your thought currents? This science is known as the science of meditation – dhyana yoga. All the forms of yoga which you learn from your teacher are preparatory to dhyana yoga. Of course, hatha yoga is very good for the physical body, it makes the body supple, energetic and healthy, but that is not the primary purpose; that is a by-product. Yoga therapy is a by-product of yoga. All the forms of yoga are actually preparations for the practice of dhyana yoga.

In yoga, practices are given by which the homogeneous mind becomes the subject matter of experience, and once you are able to experience the mind, you are on the right road. The practice which is suggested is meditation, traditionally we call it dhyana yoga, the yoga of meditation. It is the royal road, the direct link, the highway, where the individual consciousness travels at a steady speed, traversing time and space and associations of the senses and sensual pleasure. Transcending all of these, he leaves behind the knowledge of space, ego, duality and multiplicity.

Mind and dhyana

In the practice of meditation, you are supposed to concentrate, to consolidate the tendencies of your mind at one centre or one point. The individual consciousness keeps on moving from point to point and from object to object. If

you carefully observe yourself you will find that mind is full of diverse awareness, and it is not possible for the mind to maintain the awareness of one object for a period of time.

If you try to think about a rose and decide that you will only think about a rose for about five minutes, it will not be possible for you. You will be thinking about the rose but at the same time there will be other thoughts that will be interfering with the process. One train of thought, or continuity of thought is intervened, is intercepted, which is known as distraction. This is one of the weaknesses, or one of the drawbacks, or limitation of the human mind. If you can cure this particular state of mind, then the mind becomes very powerful.

When the mind is brought to one point it becomes very powerful, but it is not possible because there are patterns of awareness in human consciousness. These patterns of awareness in human consciousness are embedded in the subconscious, unconscious and also in other planes. The consciousness of man is full of experiences as well as forms of knowledge.

We have to tackle the mind, but we have never thought about it. In general, we know the symptoms of the mind. What we know about the mind are the manifestations of the mind, not the mind itself. Therefore, in yoga, we have to visualize the mind and its wholeness. Emotion, passion, anger, jealousy, hatred, happiness, compassion, love and so forth are functions of the mind. They are the *vruttis*, the modifications of the mind, and not the mind. Mind is not a static substance, it is a dynamic substance subject to evolution. It can be comprehended through the practices of dhyana yoga.

Meditation is the name of a state of mind and there are various methods which can develop that state of mind. What is that state of mind? When the mind is aware of one and only one object, when there is no interception of any other thought form including even your own awareness, and the purpose of meditation becomes eliminated, then the object which you have chosen for yourself alone shines within.

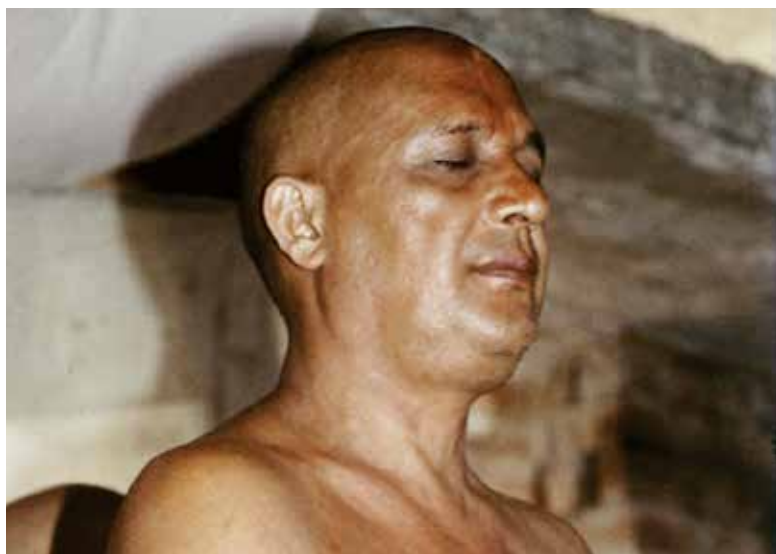
All forces of your consciousness are consolidated in their totality. The energy, whether it is pranic energy or mental energy, or whatever the forms of energy are, they are concentrated at one point. These forces or *shaktis* are seen in the form of the object, and this state is known as dhyana, meditation. One will see what is there, that's all.

Awareness and dhyana

At this moment we live in the body; we know by the senses; we think by the mind. We are alive externally, but we are dead to the inner consciousness. Can you experience inner life? Yes. I experience this world. I am aware of time, space, objects and duality. I am. I know. Therefore, I am alive. But what about the inner consciousness? Am I aware of it? No. Do I experience it? No. In meditation I see many things, but I know they're not that. They are the way to that. All that you see in meditation, all that you experience in dhyana yoga from light to candle flame, flower, angel, sky, moon, gardens and oceans, none of them is that. That experience has no form, no attributes, no comparison.

If, when you visualize a rose, the internal experience of the rose appears to be the same as the external experience, the quality of the experience will seem to be the same. However, there is a difference in the realm of experience. When you look at the external rose you perceive it through the senses, and when you visualize it internally, you perceive it without the senses. This is known as the living experience, which means inner perception, and in raja yoga it is called dhyana. Dhyana means total experience.

There is a difference between the words contemplation and meditation and awareness. It seems that awareness has something to do with your inner self, with the deeper depths of your mind. This awareness at times is dissipated and at times scattered and broken. By the practice of dhyana and with the practice of yoga you try to bring about a state of total awareness, when you become aware of yourself. It is also said that when you as the seer become aware of yourself and



nobody else, that state of yoga is achieved by meditation or dhyana.

Your consciousness contains an infinite number of specific forms of knowledge and awareness pertaining to the experiences of this life, and the awareness is spontaneous. When you think about the rose, the thought about your friend or about your business or about other affairs will spontaneously come in your mind. So this interception or intervention is a hindrance in the process of one-pointed awareness. In the practice of yoga, we try to maintain continuity of consciousness and when you maintain continuity of consciousness then the subconscious forces rise up. The inner part of your personality which is hidden, which includes complexes, inhibitions, great and powerful faculties, they all express themselves; and this is the secret of yoga.

Although meditation might mean unfluctuating and one-pointed awareness, this is rarely the experience of meditation practitioners. The moment they start concentrating the mind, their energy levels are disturbed and they get involved in watching the changes in the energy patterns. During

meditation some people see light or a divine being; they hear heavenly voices or music. These experiences are nothing but the energy patterns that are waking up from time to time in the ocean of consciousness. When you practise meditation, you are opening up the channels of energy. In order to develop that state of mind you cannot just jump into it, because there are so many problems which you have to face. One of the most important problems is that when the mind loses its awareness of multiplicity or duality, it enters into a state of rigor mortis, *shoonya*. Consequently, you enter into a state of deep sleep. That has to be avoided.

Difference between meditation and sleep

What happens when you sleep at night after a hard day of work? You forget all about your name, don't you? You transcend name, form, environment, past, present, future. You transcend everything for 4, 5, 6, 7 hours. Some brave people transcend for 12 hours. That is exactly the quality you need in meditation. That means you can meditate for 12 hours, not just 10 minutes. If you understand how to do it, you can meditate for as long as you have been sleeping. Because meditation and sleep have something in common, but everything is not the same. In sleep you are able to transcend all that and in dhyana you also transcend but in dhyana there is something else which is not there in sleep.

Everything is withdrawn as it is every night during sleep, but the consciousness is awake inside, it is not asleep. It is not the 'I' that is awake inside; it is the consciousness without name, without form, without dimension, without any definition, without demarcation of land, without any demarcation of the body. It is the light, it is the experience, and meditation is the way. Every spiritual seeker, every devotee of yoga, every aspirant who is devoted to any spiritual path, should not forget that meditation, dhyana yoga, is the way to that experience.

You can close your eyes, you can plug your ears, you can tighten the body, but you can do nothing with the mind. Even

if you try to concentrate very hard, the mind just enters into the subconscious plane and wanders. For thousands of years, people have been discovering methods, ways and means to meditate. People have discovered wonderful methods, absurd methods, obscene methods, dangerous methods. People have tried to chemically influence the mind. However, except yoga, everything has failed. To hypnotize the mind is easy, to influence the chemistry of the brain is also easy. Take any drug, it happens. But meditation is not shutting the mind. Meditation is not influencing the chemistry of the brain. Meditation is a practice in which you create an evolutionary process in the mind, the brain and consciousness.

There is no doubt that meditation is the highest achievement of man. Sleep is not the highest achievement of man. Work is not the highest achievement of man. When you are able to get out of this objective experience and are able to experience the inner light, inner mind or inner feeling, that is man's accomplishment. This external mind through which you are operating in your life has its limitations. Those who know how to get rid of this mind and at the same time develop that inner mind, are the people who have created history. As you travel within yourself, you find that a great flood of energy is within yourself and that you are not the limited man or the sick man. But the point is, how to meditate? When you close the eyes, the mind runs.

Dhyana means 'total awareness', it is the seventh step in raja yoga. It is not the first step. I know that most of us would like to learn meditation and practise it then and there, but according to raja yoga, one doesn't practise meditation – meditation happens. It is the result of having prepared your body, your emotions, and your mind.

That is why I have already been telling people that they do not need to meditate, it happens. So, you have to try to withdraw your mind. You have to try to fix your mind on a point, but you do not have to meditate because it happens spontaneously. Meditation is a result of successful concentration. When the form upon which you transfix

your mind absorbs the total consciousness of the mind, the transformation that takes place is meditation. That is dhyana. Dhyana is not created . . . it happens. It occurs spontaneously when the mind is free of grasping and egotistical motivation. Expectation creates tension in the mind, which prevents dhyana.

Conclusion

Many people say, ‘We are householders and we have no time to practise dhyana yoga. But if we do our duties correctly, isn’t this enough?’ No, this is not enough. The work of a housewife, businessman, doctor or lawyer can be converted into karma yoga and give peace of mind. Karma yoga is also conducive to God-realization. But remember that dhyana yoga is an incomparable science. It doesn’t matter whether you are a karma yogi, bhakti yogi, hatha yogi or jnana yogi, if you don’t practise dhyana yoga, you cannot experience that incomparable state of mind.

Those who know how to practise dhyana possess the key of life and are able to handle this restless mind properly in all situations. In the Upanishads, *Gita* and *Ramayana*, in fact, in every religious book, dhyana yoga has been spoken of. Dhyana yoga is one of the most important sadhanas that India has given to the world. Today, in both the east and the west, millions of people are practising dhyana.

The effect of dhyana yoga is the wine of Omar Khayyam. He said in the Rubaiyat. “What kind of wine do you drink and still remember the pains of the world?” What kind of pooja or worship do you perform, what kirtans do you sing, what religion do you follow, that still you are unwell, unhappy and unfulfilled? Millions follow Christianity, Islam and Hindu dharma, yet they are still suffering today. This means that something is wrong – either the practices are not correct or else they have lost their purpose and their aim. People are shooting in the dark, but the solution is simple – just ten minutes of absolute quietness.

2

Exploring Dhyana



In the animal kingdom the consciousness is evolving at a very slow rate because there is no awareness and no effort to develop, but in human beings the consciousness is evolving at a greater speed. This speed can be accelerated and the time for evolution can be shortened by the practice of yoga, particularly by the practice of dhyana yoga.

Dhyana yoga – the yoga of meditation

There is nothing priceless in life except meditation. Material things can fail you, life can fail you, anything can fail you, but not meditation. However, meditation is very difficult to practise if it is not understood properly. When properly understood, it is the easiest thing that one can do, easier than sleeping or thinking, but we think that to control the mind and fix it on one particular point is meditation and concentration. No! If you study the main text on the mind by Patanjali, the *Yoga Sutras*, he says that you do not have to control the mind, you cannot control the mind and you should not try to control the mind.

Meditation, perfect or imperfect, is essential for all. Why? The mind is like a pond of water and even a little breeze of thought can disturb its surface. Constant thought waves create tensions which bring on ageing, which in turn ebbs away the strength in a short time. Man is not a mere bottle of blood, a mass of flesh and a bundle of bones. He is full of likes and dislikes, ideals, faith and feelings. From the cradle to the grave he goes on filling his basket of life with agreeable experiences. His mind thus becomes very much a lumber room of sensations, perceptions and conceptions. All these overpower his divine nature.

Through practising meditation we begin to realize that the cause of our disappointments, unhappiness and problems is not the outside, material world. The cause of our restlessness and turmoil is internal. Once we know this we can avoid wasting energy on improving our external environment and can start to look deeply within ourselves. We then discover the way to tackle all our problems.

Meditation is dhyana yoga. It is not the yoga of unconsciousness, it is the yoga of complete consciousness of all that is happening within you. First you develop the awareness of seer and become a witness of the thoughts. When this awareness is developed and the mind is completely withdrawn, then it is time to focus the awareness on an object like a flame, star, point, sound, idea, experience or mantra.

Then you need to develop the total awareness of that object. When this happens, you will spontaneously enter the state of meditation. Go on meditating and transform the gross mind into the subtle mind. Then transform the subtle mind into the causal mind, to such an extent that the cosmic mind is drawn to a point. This is bindu, the nucleus of creation.

If this process does not take place, take the help of other forms of yoga, because they all prepare you for developing this faculty. But don't expect it to be easy. The mind is the greatest force and in order to tame and harness this wild stallion, you must be ready to travel a lot.

Dhyana is a dynamic state of awareness. It is a state of awareness in which you know nothing of this lower existence, but you know everything is one. Dhyana is at once total awareness of the one, and total unawareness of everything else but the one. Then meditation comes to the point of fulfilment.

Dhyana versus hypnosis

Hypnosis will probably make itself most useful in the healing professions and in the study of altered states of consciousness and their effects on mind and body. With time, newer and more sophisticated techniques may be developed so that hypnosis takes its rightful place in the present scientific milieu. In terms of spiritual life, hypnosis and especially autohypnosis are good adjuncts to help us attain dhyana through meditative disciplines.

Everybody is aware of the efficacy of meditation. There are a lot of books on this subject available today and throughout the world, scientists, psychologists and people working in every field are talking about meditation. In many countries they are experimenting on the effects of meditation and they have found that it is a powerful tool provided by nature, if only you know how to use it. According to the philosophy of yoga and tantra, tranquillity of mind, peace of mind and relaxation do not represent passive states. Tranquillity and peace are active states of mind. Therefore, meditation is not a passive condition of mind.

When meditation is practised passively, then it is hypnosis. Hypnosis creates passivity and meditation creates activity. Therefore, when I talk about meditation or dhyana yoga, I'm not talking about a way by which you can attain passivity of mind.

Dharana leads to dhyana

Sage Patanjali's treatise on raja yoga, often called the eightfold path, is comprised of *yama*, self-restraints, *niyama*, self-observances, *asana*, pranayama, *pratyahara*, disassociation of consciousness from the outside environment, *dharana*, concentration, *dhyana*, meditation, and *samadhi*, identification with pure consciousness.

In the practice of meditation there are two important phases – negation of consciousness and expansion of consciousness. In the first phase, there is an act of negation or withdrawal of the senses to a central point. This is the progression from *pratyahara* to *dharana*. Once this withdrawal has taken place and the self or consciousness has transcended sense awareness, this consciousness must expand inwardly. *Dharana* extends into *dhyana* when one is able to maintain a smooth, unfluctuating flow of consciousness towards the inner symbol for a period of time.

There is a fine difference between *dharana* and *dhyana*. In *dharana* the mind continually tries to think of things other than the object, and the practitioner has to bring the awareness back to the object; distractions still exist in one form or another. In *dhyana*, however, the mind has been subjugated and is totally and continually absorbed in the object. The depth of concentration in *dhyana* is far greater than in *dharana*. It is through the regular and continual practice of concentration that *dhyana* spontaneously manifests itself.

When meditation is matured, when the consciousness blooms within, at that time awareness does not die. The light of the soul does not get extinguished, but a great revolution takes place within. One dies, surely one dies. It has been

hinted at in the Bible, “By God, I swear I die every night.” The death of normal consciousness takes place and at that time the inner consciousness blooms. When inner awareness flourishes, external awareness, which leads to the knowledge of time, space and objectivity, dies. So, here in meditation you die and here you are reborn.

Meditation must come to you as a matter of evolution of consciousness. Just as your body is evolving, the matter is evolving, the mind is evolving, the consciousness is also evolving. External objects relate to five types of experience and these experiences relate to form, sound, smell, touch and taste. As long as you are aware of these sensory experiences you can't withdraw, you can't go inside. However, the moment you are able to withdraw yourself from these five types of sensory experiences, you begin to go into the depths of your mind.

Man is miserable because he has been unable to perceive or achieve atma shakti, and his mind is unable to achieve a state of equipoise. Even if one is absolutely selflessly dedicated to one's work, stability of mind will not be achieved unless some time is spent every day in the practice of dhyana yoga. The mind has to be taken from outside, where it is wandering here and there among the sense objects of the world, the temporary things that are so nice in the beginning and so bad in the end, and directed inside to atma shakti, where the innermost part of the personality is full of illumination, knowledge and peace. Just sit in a quiet room and forget your accomplishments, failures, personality, social status and happiness or lack of it. After some time, you will be able to understand the language of the mind, not the outer mind but the inner mind, the part of the mind that has a much greater control over our lives.

What does meditation do? Does it make you forget your life? Does it enable you to escape from reality? Or do you become unconscious? What happens in meditation? The great seers of old and the modern-day scientists have said that during the practices of meditation, a great

transformation is taking place in the practitioner's mind. This transformation facilitates the process of evolution in man's consciousness.

However, the most important effect of meditation is that it awakens the dormant centres of the brain. And surely every man's aim is to illumine the silent areas of his brain so that he can live and enjoy life with full knowledge and awareness. The easiest way to practise meditation is to become totally aware of one object within you. Then the whole brain begins to function. So this is the aim of dhyana yoga – to evolve the total consciousness of man.

Knowing the mind

What is the mind then? Mind is a reflection of supreme consciousness. The mind that is free from disturbances and psychotic manifestations, free from all its so-called attributes, the mind as it is, a thing in itself – that mind is a clue to the supreme consciousness. Indeed, the person who has been able to visualize the mind without its external manifestations can reach the highest experience. Yoga means equanimity of mind and this is achieved by control over the patterns or modifications of the mind, but not over the consciousness or the mind itself. So, dhyana does not mean unconsciousness. Dhyana means innermost, total consciousness.

Meditation is a state in which you experience your mind directly and this mind is so important for everybody. For most, mind is a mystery; it is a demon. Many people have compared the mind with a monkey, but I don't think the mind is a monkey. The mind is the reservoir of great power, and we know only a little bit of this mind. When you are angry, when you are unhappy; when you are sorry, then you become aware of your mind. You think, 'Oh, my mind is very unhappy today', or 'My mind is depressed'. But that is not the mind. You have to realize the totality of mind in the practice of meditation. In order to realize the mind, you will have to decrease the frequency, the speed of fluctuation, and this is not easy, but it is possible. If you can completely

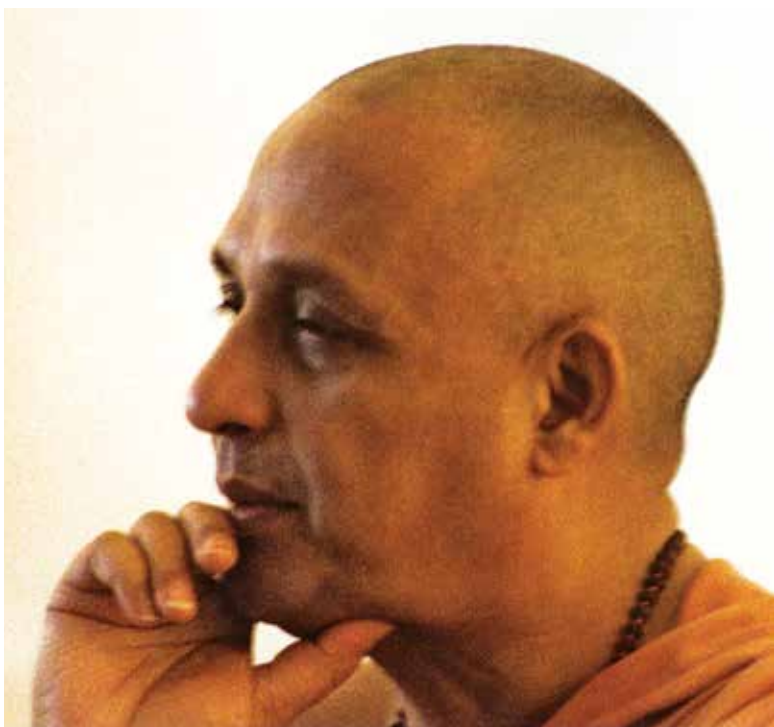
remove thoughts and ideas, you can see the mind. If you can completely control the element of unconsciousness, then you can see the mind.

Therefore, the first thing in yoga is discipline. The second thing is total control over the tendencies of the mind. The third is becoming aware of your inner being. The fourth is becoming free from the day-to-day turmoil that makes you move like a shuttlecock, from this end, to that end, or like a boat on the ocean. Although thoughts are a part of the mind, ultimately they have to be resolved. The mind in meditation has to be consumed in its totality by awareness of the object on which you are practising dhyana. The mind which is otherwise aware of all and sundry becomes aware of one thing, one form and one object. When the awareness of one object remains in the mind for a particular period of time, if it stays there, transformation takes place. This transformation is known as dhyana, meditation.

This is one important thing about meditation. Once the mind becomes constant, unbroken and unflinching, enlightenment takes place from inside.

The various realms of the mind: the conscious mind, the subconscious mind and the unconscious mind, all three have to be harmonized. When you close your eyes you are not able to get the proper direction because the waves of the mind are so turbulent, so restless. The science of meditation known as raja yoga, teaches us various techniques to help develop deep and profound meditation. By suppressing the mind you cannot achieve meditation. If you force your mind, even then you cannot achieve meditation, but there are ways, methods and techniques which automatically give you the experience of meditation.

The message of yoga is to exercise the mind every day, just a little, so that you have conscious control over the reactions of the brain. The method is dhyana. It can be done by each and everyone. It is not necessary, nor is it right to say that only sannyasins, saints, monks and mahatmas can practise it. Everyone can and should do it.



The nature of the mind

The mind is not thought or emotion. Thought and emotion are patterns of mind. Happiness is a state of mind and so is depression. Mind is consciousness, awareness. Mind is a storehouse of energy, *shakti*. Pure mind is pure shakti.

Mind is much more than thought or feeling. Mind is like an iceberg – only a small portion is visible, the remainder lies submerged under the ocean. According to modern psychology, the mind exists in three spheres: conscious, subconscious and unconscious. In Vedanta we call them *sthula sharira*, *sukshma sharira* and *karana sharira*.

We have always understood the mind as a process of thinking, but according to tantra, mind is not thought. Thoughts and feelings are expressions of the mind, and not the mind itself. Just as the waves of the ocean are an expres-

sion, a manifestation of the ocean; they are not the ocean. Thought and emotion are the *vruttis* or patterns of the mind. Anger, passion, greed, jealousy, love, memory, judgment, are all patterns and not the mind.

First you must realize that the mind is a creative force. A thought is an expression of creation and you don't know it. You think a thought and something happens somewhere. Therefore, man's unhappiness, physical illness, intellectual limitations, emotional breakdowns and lack of many other faculties in his life can all be attributed to incorrect handling of the mind. In order to handle the mind, we must first develop the faculty of seer. Unless we do this, we can never manage the mind.

The mind can be purified and corrected through the practice of dhyana yoga by following the methods most suited to our personality. Those who are very strong can take up the path of kundalini and kriya yoga. For others who are not so strong and who haven't yet developed much understanding of yoga, there are other ways like mantra or japa yoga.

Mind is consciousness, a substance holding infinite potentiality within its depth. It is the totality of awareness, karmas, emotions, thoughts, and every action and reaction. Now, it is your mind that tells you what to do. It forces you to act sometimes even against your own wishes. The mind should not be suppressed, ignored or condemned because chitta is shakti, a great force in man which has to be tamed for evolution to continue. Once you learn to handle the mind through the practices of yoga you will be able to handle yourself like a master and not like a slave.

Matter and mind

The purpose of meditation is to discover the unseen spirit in man. Through meditation we are able to transcend the world of name and form and then we can come to a world which has no boundaries and no limitations. Therefore, we should remember that meditation is like a bridge which takes us from this shore to the other shore.

Man has discovered hundreds of sciences throughout history and through these sciences he has uncovered the mysteries of nature and matter, but the greatest science that man has discovered is the science of meditation. Matter is not ultimate, mind is not ultimate, thought is not the ultimate substance, emotion is not the ultimate aspect of the activity of the mind. Even as a scientist in physics is able to split matter and release nuclear energy, in the same way, in meditation a yogi splits the mind and he releases spiritual energy. Matter is composed of elements. The mind is also composed of many elements.

Mind is not one entity, mind is a composition. When a scientist splits matter he separates it into the component elements. In the same way, in meditation we separate the elements of the mind. Emotion is one element. When you sit for meditation, so many thoughts come to your mind. They are the composition of the mind and therefore in meditation you should never control the mind. I want to repeat it again: in meditation, the mind should not be suppressed, thoughts should not be blocked.

The practices of dhyana yoga begin with the mind. In the same way as the scientist spends his time separating the elements and analyzing the potential of matter, in dhyana yoga the mind is regarded as matter and the whole personality is dissected, analyzed and separated. Therefore, we must understand that dhyana yoga is an act of harnessing, knowing and using the mind. This is what mankind has failed to do up to now.

Mastering the mind

Through meditation practices we seek to master inner movement, and through movement we can aid the growth of the awareness and control necessary for mastery. For example, it is well known that all movement, especially when continued to exhaustion, can carry us into meditative states. This is why meditative practice is better after a day of hard work. Senses that are dimmed and exhausted allow us easier

access to the inner realm. Sensory deprivation, ritual, sleep deprivation, drumming, fasting and chanting are all means of exhausting the senses and pushing the individual into altered states of consciousness.

People practising meditation have been shown to produce various types of brainwaves, most commonly alpha and sometimes theta. However, these people, whether they practise yogic meditation or biofeedback are not in a meditative state. The practices merely instigate new skills, new faculties of awareness, but they do not change the substratum of the mind and the essential nature of man, which is a result of the true meditative state – dhyana. Alpha training through biofeedback is simply relaxation, the first step to meditation. Even this first step induces a powerful experience, producing feelings of wellbeing and the associated good health that goes with it.

The role of the guru

The Sanskrit word *guru* means ‘remover of darkness and ignorance’. It is a negative term in that it does not say that the guru gives you anything, only that he removes something. He removes the mental blocks and obstacles that prevent the spontaneous effulgence of the light of truth. The guru’s role is to remove the veil, the ignorance, the preconceived ideas and mental conditioning that prevent the already existing light from shining through. The more this accumulated dross is removed, the greater will be our awareness of ourselves and existence.

In a personal relationship between a guru and a disciple, the guru by virtue of his higher awareness can clearly see the mental blocks that the disciple himself cannot see. He takes steps to help the disciple remove them, by any means that are suitable and justified. The guru supplies the strength which makes progress possible in spiritual life, and the divine love which makes it so rewarding and joyful.

The goal of spiritual life, no matter what religion or philosophy, is to transcend the individual self and become united with the infinite nature of the guru. The guru is the

gateway to the infinite through which the disciple tries to pass. The guru is the instrument of the God we are all striving towards. He is not interested in his disciples from a personal point of view. His interest is to take us all beyond ourselves to the personal realization of the eternal truth.

The one who ignites the dormant bhakti in your personality, the guru, comes first in spiritual life. Once the bhakti is accomplished, dhyana yoga becomes spontaneous. You close your eyes and things start happening.

Elimination of samskaras

The faculty of dhyana is a faculty inherent in us all. It is the distractions that have to be removed, and it is on this point that many aspirants are misguided. When, during meditation, through their mind's eye, they only witness distractions, they become very perturbed and disheartened in their efforts. They do not realize that the process of exhaustion of distractions entails witnessing and experiencing as they pass up from the memory store.

Just as you cannot tell of the existence of snakes in the summer until it rains and their holes are filled with water and they come out and spread all over the earth, similarly, when the samskaras of the mind are destroyed by dhyana yoga, the buried, suppressed samskaras, memories and flaws of personality begin to surface and appear in dreams or in meditation. Just as butter comes to the surface when you churn buttermilk, so also do the oldest of memories, buried deep within, come to the surface and are seen as dreams when the mind becomes one-pointed. If your mind becomes one-pointed, slowly begin to take it towards the past. Refresh the memory to the extent that it remembers the time of birth and the foetal stage. Practising in this manner, gradually try and retrieve the memory of past events. These experiences remain in the human mind in molecular form. They are known as karma or samskara. As long as these samskaras remain in the mind, they are going to influence your destiny and your day-to-day life.

These samskaras that are hidden within act as powerful barriers to spiritual enlightenment as well as day-to-day happiness. Once these samskaras are removed, neurosis, mental conflicts, complexes, frustrations and tensions also go, and the power and wisdom which lie dormant within begin to manifest. Therefore, in dhyana yoga the first process is to give a release to these karmas and samskaras. This is how meditation is practised. If samskaras are annihilated, it is easy for the spiritual aspirant to go through the states of dhyana and samadhi.

If you can stop the day-to-day samskaras from entering the mind then the samskaras will not be able to form layers. Along with this it is essential to keep eliminating the previously accumulated samskaras through dhyana. As more and more impressions are exhausted, the mind develops concentration, fewer distractions are evident to it. This concentration, in the beginning, only lasts for a few seconds on one particular object, and only after some time does it increase to about ten seconds. It is at this stage that the meditating aspirant reaches the classical second stage of meditation termed dharana, or concentration. At the point of dharana, mental and physical relaxation is complete and only deep-rooted emotional tensions remain. By regular and consistent practice the aspirant exhausts more and more impressions, which are the obstacles to pure one-pointed concentration. The experiences become deeper and deeper and the point of dhyana, one-pointed concentration for a great length of time, is reached.

Yoga will liberate one from the shackles that bind. Through yoga one can fathom the unconscious and remove layer after layer of the samskaras which hold one back and block the natural self-expression. One who is full of samskaras gains no benefit, but one who has no more samskaras gains merit. When the storehouse of karma is absolutely empty, and the awareness is passing through the unconscious state, there will be no difficulty in crossing the river of death, or unconsciousness. Only a person of

avidya or ignorance finds it difficult to go beyond that river. If the samskaras are annihilated, it is easy for an aspirant to go through the states of dhyana and samadhi. One who overcomes all the obstructions of the samskaras will have an unobstructed passage and will attain the ultimate union, yoga.

Influence of the gunas

You will never win the fight with your mind because its very nature is a composition of the three gunas – tamas, rajas and sattwa. When the state of tamas predominates the mind is dull, inactive and tense. When rajas is predominant the mental condition is scattered and dissipated. When sattwa is in command the mind remains quiet and concentrated.

Asana, pranayama, and all other forms of concentration are accessories; they are aids for the different categories of the mind. Involvement in activity, restlessness for acquiring something, desiring to have something which you have already experienced is all rajasic. When you have a rajasic nature, direct meditation is not possible. Then you have to go through the practices of sense withdrawal which are known as pratyahara in raja yoga. If you have a tamasic nature, which is full of procrastination, laziness and too much sleeping – going to bed late at night and waking late in the morning – then the sadhana, the practices, are different.

But kindly remember that we are never just a single quality. We are a mixture of the three gunas or qualities of nature. All three qualities compose the structure of the mind, and we are a combination of them while being either predominantly sattwic, rajasic or tamasic. When we are predominantly sattwic, we have to follow the course of meditation directly. Close your eyes and bring the mind to one point. Please note this point carefully. But we have some rajasic nature in us too. We have ambitions and passions – we can't deny it. The natural interplay of the three gunas exerts a great influence on the mind. If the mind loses one of these characteristics it is finished, it is dead.

The ego

They say that the individual mind is present in waking, sleep and dreams. These three states represent the egotistical state of mind. When you are able to develop a state which is neither waking, nor dream, nor sleep, that is dhyana, or meditation, which is none of these three. That fourth state is called turiya. This turiya state is a state of total awakening. I am using the words – total awakening. Waking, sleep and dream, these are not the states of total awakening. They are partial states.

You should be a witness of all the states of mind – waking, dreaming and sleeping. The seer is the self, the spirit, but it identifies itself with the three states. In order to experience these states as distinct from the self, you have to separate yourself from these objective or subjective experiences. How is that done? When you practise dhyana yoga you should simply observe the behaviour of the mind as an impartial spectator. That is why I tell everybody not to run after the mind, not to chase the mind, as if it were an enemy. Do not try to suppress the impressions, the impulses and the patterns arising from the depths of the mind.

These states are not homogeneous. Therefore, the ego is individualized by the circumstances of the mind, the body and the senses. When you are able to develop a constant state of awareness, when you are aware not only of the external life but at the same time you are aware of an inner universe, then you are not only able to see a river, but you are able to see the ocean which the river is meeting, the confluence of both, the confluence of individual consciousness with universal consciousness. It is at that time that the universal consciousness embraces individual consciousness.

The ego dies when meditation is born. The ego dies when bhakti is in her full bloom. The ego dies when awareness becomes overwhelming. Out of the death of the ego is born darshan. Out of the death of the ego is born *atmanubhuti*, spiritual perception, and *aparoksha jnana*, direct knowledge.



Time and space equals mind

In physics it is said that when time and space, which are the two exactly opposite, objective realities, come closer to each other, that is called fusion. Now this process of fusion and the word yoga can be compared. In yoga also the two realities unite with each other, and at that time there is an explosion within the realm of the universal mind. Universal mind is an internal as well as an external object. We have the three categories of time, space and object, in yoga as well as in science. When you practise dhyana yoga, you are utilizing the same possibility which was inherent in the scientific process of nuclear explosion.

In meditation also you are bringing time and space closer together, whether you are concentrating on a dot, on the light of a candle, on any of the chakras, or even on shoonya. Whatever your object of concentration, you are not merely bringing your mental energies together. You are not merely changing the brain waves from beta to alpha, theta and delta. Of course, we do say that during concentration and meditation the brainwaves change and their ability to influence the physiological cycles also changes. This is true, but it is a very superficial matter.

In meditation something more can happen, and does happen. Even though in the practice of meditation, you still

the body and the mind, it is something more than that. Time and space are the two realities that constitute the mind. You cannot separate mind from time and space. If there is no mind there is no time and space. With the hypothesis of time and space, you have the existence of the mind.

So these two poles, time and space, are inherent in the reality of the mind. When you try to concentrate the mind on one point, to withdraw the total awareness from the external periphery to the centre point, you are in fact bringing the inner time and inner space together. And if, by virtue of meditation, you are able to bring time and space together and unite them on the inner dimension an explosion takes place there too.

The yogic nuclear bomb

As the explosion takes place in the nuclear realm of matter, similarly the explosion takes place in the nuclear realm of the mind. Mind represents the inner realm and matter the external. Now, when the explosion takes place in the inner realm. It is not just an hallucination, or a psychic vision, it is the awakening of kundalini.

Kundalini, the seat of which is in mooladhara chakra, represents the total gross matter, the total existence. Through the practice of meditation when the awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra, and the arising of kundalini begins, it is the beginning of the inner life. This is how the atomic explosion can be compared to the inner awakening. One belongs to the external matter, and the other belongs to the mind.

What have time and space to do with evolution? Are time and space qualities of the mind? If so, what is mind? Is mind a concept? That's the question.

Yoga has the last word on it. Individual mind is a concept, a hypothesis – there is no individual mind. Surely, the lights are burning in this hall, and the mike is functioning, but they are only a manifestation of electrical energy. They are not independent. In the same way, the individual mind is

nothing but the universal mind. This universal mind is not a philosophical concept. It is something which we know. It is something which we are. It is something which we can handle. It is something within the reach of our human understanding and imagination. It is absolute existence. The practices of yoga develop the whole area of perception in this way. This is the fundamental basis of yogic philosophy.

Meditation in action

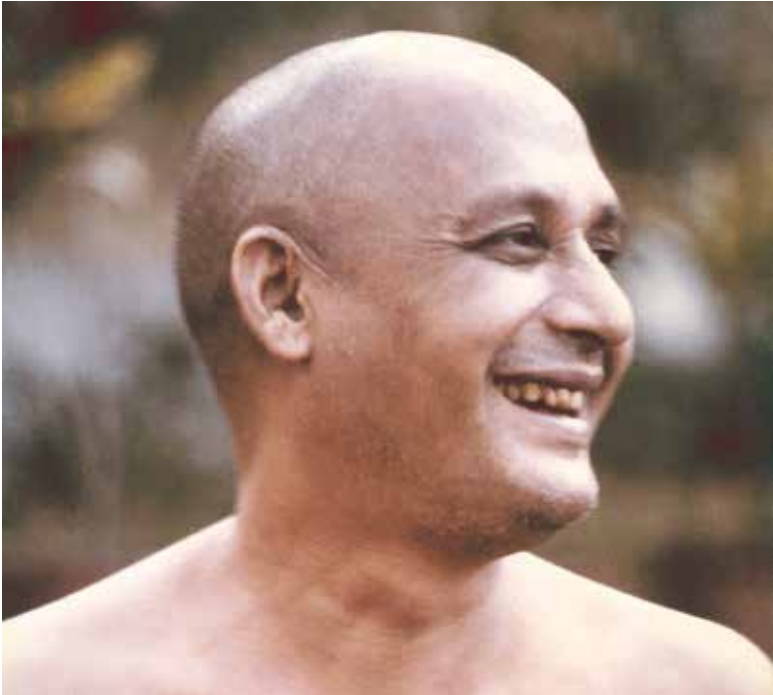
For the individual who has made dhyana a constant state of mind, every moment is meditation. Whether asleep or awake he has access to the transcendental, to inner knowledge, to the space between the moments where timelessness and time meet. Every moment is fresh and spontaneous and he lives in a state of mindfulness, alert, active, balanced between the inner and the outer, between stillness and movement, in a state of dynamic peace. He is able to give each action full concentration, total involvement, and the utmost effort, while at the same time maintaining relaxation, alertness, awareness and flexibility. This is meditation in action.

Meditation in action is uniquely summed up by the beautiful image of one of the appellations for the Zen monk, Insui, which means 'cloud water', he drifts like a cloud and flows like water. On the spiritual path one strives to drift through the mind, to wander in the forest of one's thoughts, to wonder. Thus the reflection of the inner and outer voyage is seen in the two words 'wander' and 'wonder'.

Meditation allows us the time and opportunity to view the constant and simultaneous process of birth and death in everything, from the molecular and cellular to the interpersonal level. It is a process of going within, but unlike sleep we must remain alert and fully conscious. When we come out of this state we retain an extended awareness of ourselves and our roles in the world. Eventually this process culminates in dhyana and samadhi, a state of perpetual awareness which continues into the deepest sleep and beyond.

3

Dimensions of Dhyana



Meditation is communion with the inner self. It is the means of expanding our consciousness, transcending the external being and becoming one with the infinite source of light and wisdom. Meditation is discovering oneself.

Patanjali defines meditation as that state when the mind becomes free from the awareness of subjective and objective experience. It is only then that meditation has dawned. When you are no longer distracted by external images appearing in your mind, when you can no longer hear external sounds and when the sense objects do not bother you anymore, you are in a state of meditation.

The meditator is acutely aware but his awareness is focused far from the external world. His mind is completely controlled, intensely but effortlessly concentrated on one point. He has transcended normal limitations of the mind and has obtained complete oneness with his object of concentration. It will take some time to attain this state, maybe months, maybe years, but anyone who practises regularly, sincerely and without expectation can and will reach great heights in meditation.

Synthesis of yogas

All the paths of yoga lead to dhyana. First one must have prepared the body with hatha yoga – asana, pranayama, and so on. One must have purified the mind of the effects of the samskaras by living a life of karma yoga, and one must have steadied the mind with bhakti yoga.

There must be a synthesis of the paths – karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga and jnana yoga. There must be 70% karma yoga; 20% raja yoga, hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, etc.; 5% jnana yoga and 5% bhakti yoga. Karma yoga purifies the chitta; bhakti yoga eliminates distractions of the mind; jnana yoga removes avidya; hatha yoga removes the possibility of suspension of mind or *laya avastha* and raja yoga helps to integrate and concentrate the wandering tendencies of the mind.

Hatha yoga is not only asanas and pranayama. Technically speaking, hatha yoga means those practices by which you bring about the union of the two forces in the body – *Ha* and *Tha*, sun and moon, ida and pingala, or sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. The ancient science of yoga fully realizes that the spinal cord and the brain constitute the

central nervous system, and therefore strives to keep them in a healthy condition. In yoga, the proper functioning of the endocrine glands and the chemical reactions in the body are considered important. The aspirant, therefore, cheerfully subjects himself to a voluntary moderation in life, not necessarily denying the basic necessities of life, nor even resorting to suppressions of his instinctual urges, but by making a steady and assiduous effort in always trying to transmute these urges towards a higher purpose.

To maintain balance of ida and pingala, it is necessary to combine karma yoga with dhyana yoga. Continuing to act in the world is essential for spiritual awakening, but the work and actions should be done with as much awareness as possible. Work is the means to recognize problems, and it also helps to express and remove them. Do not think of rejecting work or action, but remain detached and transform mere work into karma yoga. Try not to be affected by the ups and downs of work, and do not stop working. One becomes a person of inner knowledge while acting in the world. Both karma yoga, the yoga of action, and dhyana yoga, the yoga of meditation, are combined and integrated into one's life.

Patanjali makes it very clear that if you want to have total control over this fantastic energy called the mind, then you must employ two techniques. One is disidentification and the other is the actual practice. The actual practice is related to raja yoga, which is a system of graded practices in eight steps, and the seventh step is known as dhyana yoga. It is such an important subject. Everybody knows about it and wants to meditate every day with their eyes closed – to stop thinking, to see something inside, to experience psychic things, inner things.

Dhyana yoga or the yoga of meditation is the highest form of yoga. Though the practices of meditation are concerned with the mind, they also have a direct influence on the physical body. When you are meditating, you are not only dealing with the mind, you are dealing with the whole of yourself – the body, mind, intellect, emotions, feelings,

psyche, and so on. Various forms of yoga, like karma yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, are preparations or preliminaries.

Bhakti can intensify the effectiveness of other paths of yoga, for if you feel devotion towards something, then your attention and interest will automatically flow in that direction without any effort. There will be a natural attraction towards the object of love. For many people, it is difficult to maintain awareness of the breath or the psychic centres or whatever during hatha yoga and raja yoga practices, because there is no natural attraction. The awareness is distracted in other directions, preventing success in one's yogic sadhana. But if you feel devotion and love for an object, then you will have no choice but to be aware. The object of devotion will overwhelm your whole being.

Jnana yoga is the path to self-realization for seekers who have a predominantly intellectual nature. In jnana yoga, the seeker follows the rationalistic method of distinguishing the truth from untruth and the real from the unreal by using the power of discrimination and analysis. In order to follow this path, an adamant willpower is required, as transitory and non-essential phenomena must be wilfully and firmly negated and rejected in order to know the permanent or absolute state of reality. The emotions must be firmly controlled and regulated. In fact, no emotional expression is necessary for a jnana yogi, because it presupposes duality and plurality.

A jnana yoga practitioner must constantly remind himself of unity. To achieve this, one must develop the powers of concentration and will. For this reason, jnana yoga is generally considered to be the most difficult yet most direct of all the yogas. Jnana yoga meditation is centred in the realization that the self is something away and beyond anything related by the senses, the emotions or the intellect. Jnana does not deny the universe in which we live, but leads to a higher understanding of its underlying nature. The jnana yogi realizes that the world of multiplicity and individuality is the result of imperfect understanding and clouded perception of the underlying unity of all creation.

Hatha yogis start their sadhana with the body and prana, by practising asana, pranayama, mudra and bandha. Their theory is that by controlling prana, the mind can be controlled. Raja yogis start their sadhana directly with the mind. They improve the quality of the mind by practising yama and niyama. They control the vrittis; they make the mind blank. Gradually they take up the practice of dharana and dhyana in sadhana. Jnana yogis start their sadhana by enquiring into the higher mind and divine will; the jnanis see themselves in all. Bhaktas start their sadhana with devotion, faith and self-surrender. They express their compassion for humankind in selfless service. The bhakta visualizes his deity in all.

However, not one but all the ways must be taken up because one way is never an efficient way, so the practices are combined. A synthesized practice of hatha yoga, raja yoga and bhakti yoga must be taken up side by side with other yogas.

Psychic symbol

Every meditation practice utilizes something that the mind can grasp. It can be the breath; it can be a mantra, a koan or a personal symbol. There are three types of symbols or forms – gross, medium, subtle. You have to find a symbol for yourself. Some use an inverted triangle, a mandala, a flame; some have a tiny little shining star, an *Om* sign, or a Shivalingam; others concentrate on the heart, a lotus or a yin-yang sign, some on the cross, on Christ, Shiva, their own guru and so on.

There has always been a controversy about *saguna* or using a form and *nirguna* or formless meditation. Most people who believe the reality to be formless have a serious objection to accepting an object for meditation. They say that if the supreme consciousness is formless, how can a form help you to achieve that experience? Regardless of whether the absolute reality is formless or not, in order to maintain steady spiritual progress and to be able to have a grip over all the transforming states of consciousness, meditation on a

form, saguna, should be practised. Concrete awareness is a very important factor of dhyana yoga.

Many people sit for meditation without an object on which to fix their attention. They merely close their eyes and allow their mind to wander aimlessly. They either brood on their problems or fall asleep. As one progresses along the path of meditation, the tendency to sleep seems to intensify. Loss of awareness and sleep are the biggest obstacles for the meditator to overcome and one means of eradicating this tendency is to utilize a psychic symbol.

A psychic symbol guides the mind through the recesses of consciousness. When the consciousness passes from the external to the internal terrain, there is absolute darkness, there are no supports whatsoever. As long as you are able to visualize the object in the subconscious or unconscious plane, you are on the right path. The moment the symbol vanishes you are lost, which means that you have to come back again to mundane consciousness. Let us illustrate the importance of the psychic symbol with a story.

It was monsoon period and there was incessant rain and tumultuous winds. A crow was asleep at the top of a big tree beside a large river. During the night the wind was so strong that the tree was uprooted. It fell into the fast flowing river and was swept away. The crow, however, remained fast asleep and had no idea that the tree was being swept out to sea. The wind subsided and the sun shone brightly. The crow awoke and was startled to find that he was surrounded by water. In all directions all he could see was water. He wanted to find land but didn't know in which direction to fly. Finally the crow decided to fly east. He didn't find any land in this direction so he decided to fly west for an hour or so. Not finding any land to the west, he decided to fly south. He flew south, then north, but still couldn't find any signs of land. He felt very tired and realized that there was no place where he could rest. All he could see was water. The crow immediately thought of the tree. But where was it? Instead of looking for land the crow now desperately sought the tree from which he had

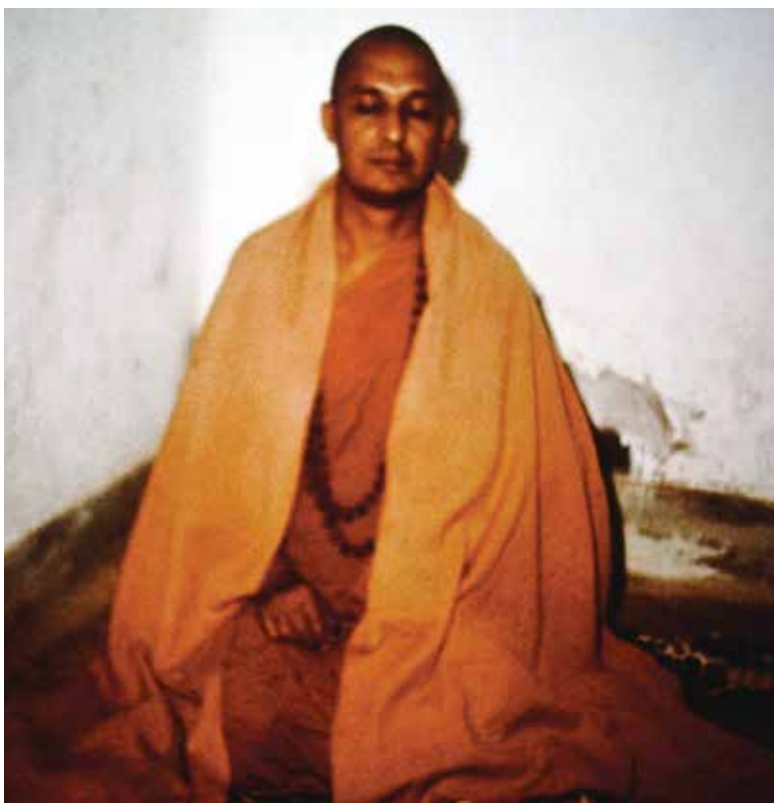
started his search. After some time and effort, he found the tree and rested.

The crow was an intelligent bird, it learned from previous mistakes and experiences. Therefore, when it again felt strong enough to continue the search for land, it carefully remembered the location of the tree. It flew north and found no land, so it would return to the tree and rest. Then it would explore the other directions, always returning to the tree to rest. Eventually it sighted land and was able to fly directly to it and forget about the tree. The tree had served a purpose and was no longer necessary.

The crow represents the practitioner of meditation. The ocean is the mind. The tree is the psychic symbol and the land is meditation. At first the crow tried to find land haphazardly without maintaining awareness of the position of the tree. It nearly got lost in the great expanse of ocean. In the same way, if a person tries to explore the mind without the help of a psychic symbol, he will surely get hopelessly lost.

For the inward journey a guide is necessary and the guide is your psychic symbol. You must have one that is fixed and permanent. It is your inner guru and just like your outer guru, it should not be changed. Your inner guru is the shining light of your symbol at a time when you are totally dead to the outer life, when time and space have been transcended. At that time, the light is needed and this is why sages have always emphasized the need for a symbol. When you are practising meditation and utilizing a mantra, the mantra will bring you to a state where your awareness is internalized and possibly lost in thoughts and visions which are thoughts in symbolic form. When this happens you must immediately awaken your symbol and try to visualize it. Supposing your symbol is the flame, you must try to see it inside when your eyes are closed. It should be seen just as if you were looking at an external flame.

At first it will be difficult, but you must try to stabilize the flame, make it constant. As you try to maintain awareness of your symbol, visions will float through your mind. As



awareness of the symbol intensifies, the number of visions and fantasies that come before your mind will increase. These symbolic manifestations of pranic energy in the mind are known as *vikalpas*. They are the greatest barriers to spiritual awareness and are not easy to eradicate. Sometimes these visions can last for hours, with the practitioner forgetting all about himself, his mantra and the psychic symbol.

As this consciousness, this mental awareness, becomes progressively purified, the symbol will also become more clear. When you can visualize a rose as clearly as you see it outside in the garden and if the qualitative perception does not differ, you will have reached a very high degree of concentration. If you are unable to see the rose clearly inside,

your mind is not crystal clear. It means that between the thought of the rose and yourself there exists a barrier, and this barrier has to be removed.

When the awareness of your psychic symbol remains constant and unfluctuating, there is a moment when there is just the symbol. You see it very clearly and as distinctly as possible. At that point meditation begins. You are no longer practising meditation, you are meditating!

Mantra

The word *mantra* means ‘revealed sound’. According to the ancient texts, mantra means a sound or a combination or sequence of sounds which develop spontaneously. These sounds were revealed to rishis and other pure beings in psychic states or in very deep meditation, when all consciousness of the self was lost and when nothing but inner light shone in front of them.

Mantras do not have any specific meaning. Their power is not in the words themselves, but in the sound vibrations created when the mantra is uttered verbally or when it takes form in the mind and is not expressed with the voice. Mantras bring about a state of resonance between the individual and the depths of his inner being. They allow the individual to unleash inner cosmic powers, forces and knowledge. The sound patterns of the mantra stimulate a certain effect on the mental and psychic nature of an individual. Each mantra will create, or draw out, a specific symbol within one’s psyche.

Mantras for spiritual evolution must be practised for a set amount of time every day. The purpose of mantra repetition is not to develop concentration but to withdraw the senses and still the mind. Let the mental remembrance of the mantra evolve as a natural aspect of your being, so that even during sleep you continue to repeat the mantra. Do not, therefore, forget the mantra even for a second. Whenever the mind feels inclined to meditate, try to concentrate. Close the eyes and feel the presence of the divine power and realize the mystic vibrations all about you. In this way, when you are fully

saturated with the divine inflow, bring in the form of your ishta into the vacuum. This is the way to perfect meditation.

The structure of dhyana yoga is built on the twin pillars of mantra and psychic symbol, and they have to become very solid pillars. They do not fluctuate or change, they remain steady.

We are not aware of the resonance of the mantra because we are either too gross or the frequencies are not very high. If the frequencies are very high and our mind is very subtle, you can hear the higher resonance of the mantra you are repeating. Mantra is one item through which you can attain success in dhyana yoga. Otherwise, it is very difficult to control the mind as you know very well. It is a very fluid substance. You hold it together for a period of time, say one month or two months, and you are trying to control the mind and after some time you discover that it has already slipped out of your hands. This is the experience of most of the people and if you try to use your willpower to control the mind with strong will force, it goes in so deep that it almost goes into a state of void, *shoonya*, nothing-ness, which is also not the definition of dhyana.

Meditation is not an extinction of consciousness, it is the expansion of consciousness, using these two forms, mantra and symbol, as vehicles to centre the mind. At the stage of dharana one should fix awareness on a psychic symbol. As concentration deepens, dharana is transformed into dhyana. One contacts the deeper layers of one's being. One reaches the regions beyond the conflicting thoughts of the subconscious mind. One contacts the seat of super consciousness, intuition, bliss and transcendental experience.

Ishta devata

The psychic symbol is called ishta devata. In Sanskrit the word *ishta* means 'desired by choice' and *devata* means 'form of divine awareness'. Thus the two words together mean 'the chosen form of higher or divine awareness'. Etymologically, *devata* means 'that which radiates, illumines, enlightens,

sheds light on, dispels darkness'. The devata is the one who lights up the darkness and reveals the hidden essence.

Whether talking about the universal mind, or the individual mind, time and space are two opposite poles. When one is trying to concentrate to the point of the living experience, one is actually bringing time and space closer to each other. If they come to each other, they have to travel in opposite directions, and when they travel in opposite directions they meet at some point. The point at which they meet is the nucleus. The nucleus is the form on which one meditates.

Time and space meet in the ishta devata. Time and space meet in the symbol. It can be anything – a flower, wife, husband, the guru; it doesn't matter. Christ can be a symbol, Sri Rama can be a symbol, guru can be a symbol, even a pig can be a symbol provided it can hold the mind. Anything that can hold the mind is the best symbol. If it can't hold the mind, the mind runs away. When the symbol is there as a nucleus, time and space are moving closer to each other, and when they move closer to each other at some point they should meet. The point where they meet is the symbol, and the moment they meet there is an explosion. When there is an explosion, that explosion charges the kundalini.

Dhyana means thinking only of the ishta devata. *Dhyana* means 'attention, one-pointed awareness'. If the ishta devata is Sri Rama – his photo, his murti, his *vigraha* or form must be seen as it is outside. The difference between external and internal must be finished. Why can't it be seen within? Because one has only outer eyes, not inner eyes. The inner Sri Rama, inner Sri Krishna, inner Vishnu can be seen only with the inner eyes. In order to develop the inner eye one should concentrate at the eyebrow centre, *trikuti* or *bhrumadhya*, the point between the two eyebrows. That point must be concentrated on.

The ishta devata can be anyone: the guru's form, the form of one's mother, the form of the family deity, the form of a saint or saviour, the form of a rishi, or the form of a tribal



God about whom one may have heard or seen. Ishta devata is an important factor in spiritual practice. It has to be realized within. However, the guru is more important because it is through the guru that inner awareness of the ishta devata becomes effulgent. In the final analysis, guru and ishta devata are one and the same. In the beginning, the guru is the inner awakener and the ishta devata is the form which shines in the depth of meditation.

When all vrittis pertaining to external experiences have subsided, and when one single vritti is prevailing throughout everything, the sadhaka attains the pure stage of meditation. When this stage of a single vritti alone continues, and no other thought or vritti is felt in the least, one is said to have attained samprajnata samadhi. When the entire consciousness of the sadhaka is transformed into the form of the ishta to the extent that he is seen clearly, the ever-glowing darshan is known as *samprajnata samadhi*.

Yantras and mandalas

There is another important practice in dhyana yoga. This is the practice of visual concentration on yantra. There are two types of visual formations: one is called mandala and the other yantra. The mandala is a pictorial form and the yantra is a geometrical form.

The word yantra is derived from the root *yam* 'to hold, sustain', and the suffix *tra* means 'instrument'. *Yantra* therefore means an instrument for holding consciousness or awareness. A yantra is a kind of geometrical diagram which can be made up of triangles, either pointing upwards as Shiva or downwards as Shakti, circles, squares, hexagons, pentagons, etc. Yantras can be drawn on paper, wood, cloth or other material or directly onto sand or earth.

The mind cannot be comprehended without a thought. It is through our thoughts that we come to know our mind. The mind is formless and to comprehend something formless is impossible. When you want to practise dhyana or meditation, then you have to create a substratum or base for the mind so that it does not become vacant. For that purpose, you have three practices in yoga and tantra. One is called mantra, the second yantra and the third mandala. This is important, for if you want to understand the mind properly and realize the whole mind, you have to create a substratum, a basis.

The yantras represent different forms of energy in creation or the universe. There is not a more powerful form of concentration than concentration on the yantra. These yantras are related to or connected with the six spheres of the mind. According to yoga and other sciences, there are seven spheres. One sphere is this sphere in which you are living at the moment. Besides this, there are six other spheres and each sphere has a yantra or geometrical symbol.

The yantras represent the symbol of your unconscious, the symbol of your unknown nature, and there are many types of yantras. If you practise concentration on them you begin to visualize some inner experiences. The concentration on yantra influences dreams, thought and one's way of thinking.

It is not necessary to intellectualize the yantras because you can't. These yantras are present in the universe. In fact, the whole universe is geometrically designed and in your mind also all the thoughts are stored, or rather recorded, in a geometrical shape. It is wonderful to know that whatever I am saying to you is in the form of sound, but when it is recorded in your mind, finally and ultimately, it is in geometric shape.

Just as a mantra must be pronounced correctly to produce a correct sound wave, so also the yantra has to be geometrically perfect for the expansion of consciousness to flow smoothly on its journey to the depths or heights of the unconscious and to unity with the essence of creation. The yantra does not function with your conscious awareness. If it was conscious you could say it was a psychological process, but it is not psychological. The yantra does not work through the mind, through faith. It is not a psychological process, because you may not believe and still it will work. It is like the bullet fired from a rifle, whether you believe it or not, it is going to act upon you.

From pratyahara to dhyana

It is not the mind that we have to tackle first, it is the sensations, the knowledge of the five senses. If you close your eyes, you are only blocking the sensation of form. What about the ears? You can still listen to so many sounds. To give a clear example, if you imagine a little point, and try to concentrate on it, what happens? The senses continue to feed the mind throughout. The messages keep coming to the brain which, therefore, remains in an excited condition. In the practice of dhyana yoga, the first thing you have to do is cut the supply routes which carry sensations to the brain constantly, during wakefulness, sleep and dreams. That is the first stage in dhyana yoga.

In the second stage you have to concentrate on one point. The point can be anything – a cross, your guru, a black dog, a flower, a light, a star. What is important is that the object of meditation which you have selected is an absolutely spontaneous choice of your mind, so that you don't have to

force it. For instance, I find it easy to concentrate on the form of my guru, because I lived with him for twelve years. It is difficult for me to concentrate on a form which I have not seen. It is not the divinity of the object which is important when you are trying to concentrate. It is your fraternity with the object that is important – how close you feel, how spontaneous you are, how comprehensive and intimate your relationship is with that object. If you do not feel these things, then you will find concentration very hard. Again and again your mind will become dissipated.

Dharana means concentration of mind. It is a practice of pictorial conception. There are many objects on which you can concentrate and the effect of each object is different. Most people have trouble maintaining a clear image of their symbol – either they cannot visualize it or the image tends to fade away, this is merely an indication of the state of your mind. It is difficult to visualize inner images with a disturbed mind; you will be able to think about it but not see it. As your mind becomes calmer you will find it progressively easier to visualize your symbol. When your mind is silent, then you will be able to maintain a fixed inner vision of your psychic symbol. This leads directly to dharana.

Dhyana is merely an extension of dharana. There are no techniques for dhyana. It is a state that arises spontaneously. All the techniques are intended to bring about the state of dhyana if they are practised regularly and diligently. There is nothing we can really say about dhyana except it is well worth the effort to attain it. If you have not experienced it, words will only bring about confusion, misconception and over-intellectualization. However, if you have experienced dhyana, then you will know that words are not needed and cannot be used to explain it.

Stages of dhyana

The first part of meditation is a process of elimination or a process of thinning out, or a process of unification. The second phase of meditation is not elimination, it is expansion.

The first process of meditation is to make yourself void, zero, *shoonya*. The second stage is to expand consciousness inwardly, an objectless expansion. By meditation you are trying to withdraw your mind, your sensual impressions, to one particular point, and then erase that point, negate it completely, and become completely *shoonya*, bereft of any perception internally. No subject, no visions, no colour, no symbol, no I, nothing. That is called *shoonya*, that is called void that is called the state of *pratyahara* in raja yoga. There is no awareness of inside or outside, now there is awareness of name and form, now there is awareness of awareness; this is called the *laya* state of samadhi, a samadhi where consciousness has been suspended, a lower samadhi; and in order to avoid staying in this state you should have a symbol.

The second stage is when you concentrate on your symbol and you miss it as the mind runs round and round like a monkey. However, the mind loses awareness of that particular object, and you have a lot of visions, funny dreams, and then you have to bring the mind back again, so that your awareness of the object becomes continuous. There should be no interception, no obstruction, no curves, no difference and no variation. Patanjali says that consciousness should be like a straight line.

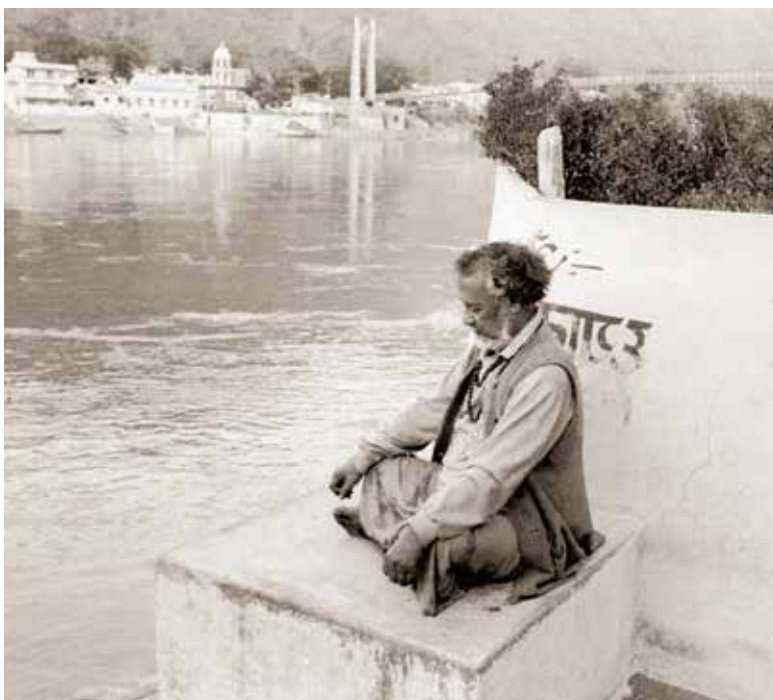
Patanjali says that when consciousness is stretched as one, without any interception, without any break, it is called *dhyana*, meditation. Now, what happens if I think of a flower, and there is a sound from somewhere which intercepts my thought, and then another thought comes and another, and the straight line is being intercepted by other lines; this is what is to be avoided in meditation, gradually, no second thought, but one thought, no second awareness, but one awareness called *advaita anagriti*, non-dual awareness.

The form remains, the consciousness is transformed, the symbol remains, the consciousness undergoes a state of transformation; self-experience is also changing, experience is changing, the dimension of your awareness is changing. There is a moment when I forget that I am Swami Satyananda,

awareness of time is lost, awareness of space is lost, but for some time I remember my name, slight awareness is there, or if this awareness of name and form is not continuous it comes off and on . . . Swami Satyananda . . . a man . . . the awareness of time, the awareness of space, the awareness of name and form, they alternate; it is like waves coming, sometimes there is shoonyata, for a moment one blinks, for a moment one thinks. Inner awareness has to be maintained in some form which is your symbol. Awareness of your symbol is your inner awareness.

If you lose this inner awareness, then you slide into shoonyata. This actually happened in my own case – many years ago I was living with my guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, and one evening I sat down in lotus posture in my room and closed my eyes, and when I opened my eyes at 6 am, I was awfully happy because I thought that I had attained samadhi! Well, naturally, I never knew time nor space, nor name nor form so I thought that I had finally reached samadhi, but it was too early to tell Swamiji, who was still in his kutir, so I wrote down my experience in a large diary and asked the secretary to give it to Swamiji. The diary went to Swamiji and he read it – he is a very experienced and mature man, who has seen life, who has seen everything – and he just kept it. In the evening he asked me what was the matter, and I said that I had attained samadhi, and he said that I had not attained samadhi, but rather a state of tamas, I had entered into inertia.

If you are trying to create a void of yourself, that is not the ultimate, that is only the first part of dhyana yoga. You have to add the second part which is known as dharana, dhyana and samadhi. The senses have been withdrawn, the mind has been withdrawn, the external awareness has been withdrawn, and the personal ego also has been withdrawn. Then you have to develop a kind of consciousness, a kind of higher consciousness internally, which is ego-less consciousness. As soon as this consciousness appears, as soon as this consciousness is manifesting, there is the overwhelming



experience of *anandam*. There is an overwhelming experience of bliss, which is not happiness, which is not joy, which is not ecstasy, which is not an overwhelming emotional outburst, it is a state of absolute peace, sublime equanimity, and it is just a kind of *anandam* in you.

Samadhi is not a state of no knowledge, it is a state of absolute knowledge, *param jnanam* not *ajnanam*. In samadhi you are aware of awareness, but of nothing else. Names die, forms die, time dwindles into nothing, space is annihilated, but there is a total existence of awareness and that is the existence of *atman*, the Self. When that has been reached you have obtained the fruits of dhyana and the fruits of samadhi.

The method of preparing for it may vary according to the mind in which it expresses itself, but what it involves does not change. Although each individual mind is filled with its own concepts and contents and will obviously view

things in its own peculiar way, the conditions laid down for the emergence of dhyana, samadhi and *kaivalya*, the highest progression, must be fulfilled no matter what tendencies and idiosyncrasies the mind might exhibit before higher awareness is realized.

Changing energy patterns

Matter is the abode of energy and energy is matter in manifestation. Energy can be converted into matter and matter into energy. It is only a point of organization as to how nature arranges it. At one level of creation it is matter, and at another level it is energy.

Energy is at the root of every form of awareness. What a man thinks can be interpreted as an energy pattern, a form of energy interaction. When you are angry, your anger can be seen as a dissipated form of energy waves. Besides the energy waves and patterns that we already know about, there are unseen realms of energy, waves behind waves, a whole sequence of energy patterns. This means that you can go on travelling through the different dimensions of energy ad infinitum.

So we are students and teachers of meditation, discovering new forms and dimensions of energy. We are not trying to escape from reality. Sometimes it is said of those who meditate, that they just sit in a corner, close their eyes, and forget that there is a practical life outside. But don't let this be said of you. When meditating, close your eyes, but keep track of the awakening of energy. Follow this awakening and don't miss the link of conscious awareness. This awareness has to become constant and consistent. Any imperfection in awareness has to be avoided. It has to be uniform and endless, no branching off, no junctions.

During meditation we are influencing the pranic energy in mooladhara chakra. Meditation always stimulates the seat of kundalini. Whether you meditate on the eyebrow centre, nose tip, heart or navel centre, the effect is immediately transported to mooladhara chakra, the seat of kundalini. When this centre is awakened in deep meditation, the waves

produced actually rebound up into the brain and influence the cerebral fluid. This awakening releases tremendous amounts of energy and generates internal experiences.

Thus, at every stage of meditation, you will experience changing patterns of energy. What do you do when this happens? Many people find it too difficult to appraise and discriminate their way through these experiences. If you do not have a solid base in yoga, then these experiences of awakening energy can be quite disturbing.

The problem for most people is that they are faced with a sudden rise in the energy level, which is the result of an awakening. Energy doesn't have just one level; energy has infinite levels. In the same way, experience does not have just one level. Every experience takes place at a different level of energy, and energy and the experience of it can be amplified. Just as we can amplify electricity, we can amplify the energy produced within the physical body. We can also convert it, dissipate it, or form it into the pattern of a laser beam.

What we want to avoid in our meditation practice is the sudden explosion of energy, and we can do this by progressing gradually through the yoga practices. When you perform asanas, you hardly notice the awakening of energy. Then you practise mudras, and they have a little more influence on the raising of energy. Next you practise bandhas, and they have more effect. Then, when you practise pranayama, you will find that it has a terrific influence on the awakening of energy.

Samadhi

Samadhi is the state where there is complete absence of both external and internal mental modifications; all that remains is awareness, a state of perfect balance. Samadhi brings self-realization. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, it says (2:53):

When your mind, perplexed by what you have heard,
stands immovable and steady in the Self, then you will
attain Self-realization.

After meditation has been accomplished, you enter the domain of samadhi. When consciousness tries to annihilate itself; when the trinity of experience, of meditator, meditation and object of meditation also falls flat, the boundaries are broken and at that time the principle of life and existence are affected. That is the highest point, called samadhi, nirvana, emancipation; it has no name and it has every name.

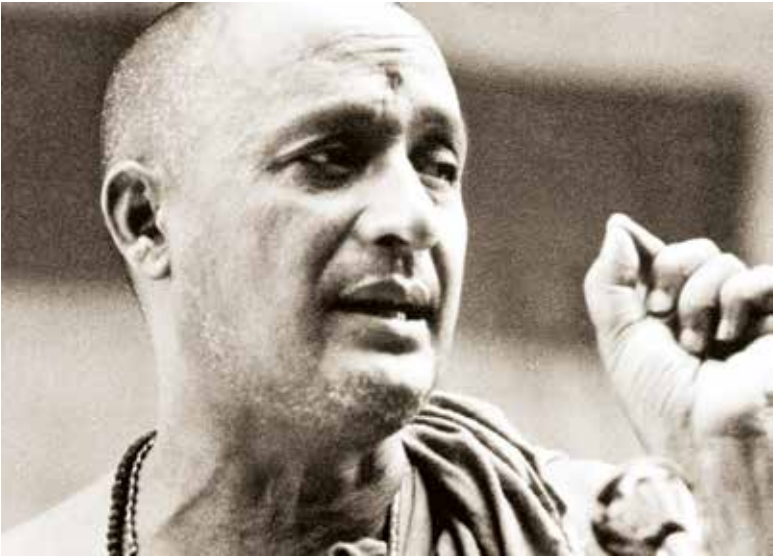
By practising concentration and meditation, one-pointed introversion can be attained, and gradually the mind can be brought under control. Dhyana, meditation, perfects the process of splitting purusha from prakriti. When you are in samadhi, the seven gates are opened and the veils are rent asunder. Once the mind merges and the meditation is keen and progressive, the soul will begin to express itself, and the light is seen clearly. That same soul which makes your body and mind work, comes before you now as *sakara*, with form. At that particular moment you forget everything.

The essence of the path of dhyana is first – the diminution of outer awareness to a point, then the exhaustion of inner awareness until the awareness with the total power of the mind is focused on one inner point, and when this is continued for some time with absolute perfection, the goal of yoga is reached, which is samadhi. This samadhi marks the end of the chain of expression of *samskaras*, impressions, and the experience of the highest form of awareness and the cosmic consciousness. At this level the aspirant has transcended space and time, mind and body, he is limitless without beginning or end, and being fully immersed in the ocean of cosmic consciousness he realizes the three attributes *sat, chit, ananda* – reality, awareness and bliss.

Samadhi is our nature, samadhi is an experience, darshan is an experience, para bhakti is an experience, dhyana is an experience. It is not a practice; it is just an experience which we realize. Dhyana and samadhi are our nature.

4

Preparing for Dhyana



Meditation starts with the preparation of the body: the nervous system, the heart, the respiratory system and the brain. In order to prepare the body, you must practise hatha yoga, which you should never consider as merely physical exercises. It is the means of creating harmony between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. By practising asanas, pranayama, mudras and bandhas, you are preparing yourself for dhyana yoga.

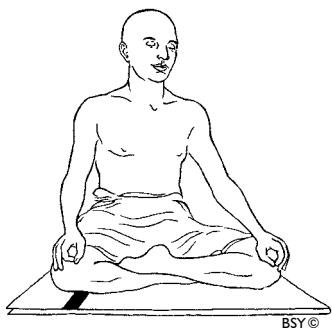
When you start practising meditation, you must know that it is not merely a mental practice. Meditation influences the body. It has an effect on the heart, the digestive system, the hormones and the endocrine glands. It has also been found that during meditation the brain wave patterns alter and the neuronal responses throughout the body are influenced.

Shatkarmas

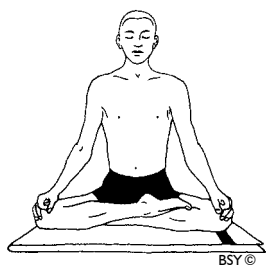
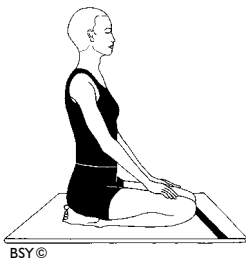
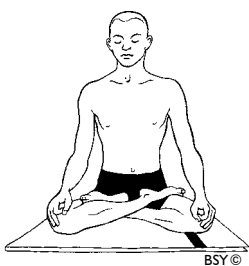
The shatkarmas specifically increase the vital capacity of the practitioner. They were never designed for therapy alone, but to create harmony in the body and mind and to prepare one for further practices. As they bring about smooth and perfect functioning of the bodily systems, it is inevitable that through their practice the mind will become free from turbulence and disturbances and thus be better able to concentrate and move towards dhyana.

Asanas

In order to practise dhyana yoga, we have to keep a few things in mind. First, meditation has to be practised with the spinal column upright and straight. The spinal column is not just a collection of bones; it is a vehicle of the nadis. Ida, pingala and sushumna, the three nadis which control the mental forces, pranic forces and spiritual forces in the body, pass through the spinal column. Therefore, in meditation the spinal column has to be upright and straight.



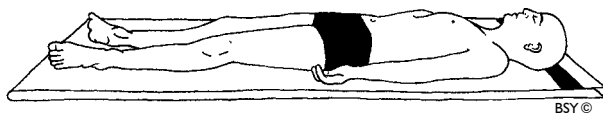
The next point is posture. Some people feel that they can lie down on the bed and practise dhyana. Many people do this but, from the scientific viewpoint, this is not correct. There has to be a very specific posture for dhyana yoga. The best posture for dhyana is siddhasana. In siddhasana the bottom heel presses the perineum and the



upper heel presses the viscera. The second best is padmasana, third best is vajrasana and fourth is swastikasana. If you can't practise any of these, the last is sukkhasana.



Shavasana is beneficial no matter what the condition is, even in perfect health, as it brings up the latent impressions buried within the subconscious mind, and the mind which operates during waking consciousness relaxes and subsides. This is why it is necessary to practise shavasana for developing dharana and dhyana. Even though it is a static pose it revitalizes the entire system.



Preparing the body and mind

Become steady in siddhasana, and then place your hands in either yoni mudra or chin mudra. Learn how to practise moola, uddiyana and jalandhara bandhas, and nasikagra and bhrumadhya drishti. Learn the correct way of practising pooraka, rechaka and kumbhaka, either from your guru or from an experienced teacher. Practise pranayama every day

for five to twenty minutes. This is the easiest and quickest way to awaken dhyana, but the preparation must be perfect.

When these preparations are complete, the practice of dhyana yoga begins. It is believed by some practitioners of yoga that dhyana is a method of concentration. However, in tantra it is said that concentration is an injustice to the free flow of the mind. The nature of the mind is to expand and to flow. You can direct the mind, but you cannot control it.

Prana – the fuel

The body is the vehicle and you have to make sure that it is prepared for the journey inward. Having prepared the vehicle, you must check that you have an abundance of fuel. Fuel is prana. If you don't have *prana shakti*, pranic energy, you will not be able to go high into meditation. Therefore, to accumulate and conserve prana, you must have certain mental disciplines to conserve mental energy. Therefore, every person who wants to go in and realize the greater and deeper states of meditation must find a way to amplify and conserve prana for the inward flight.

What is this prana? It is shakti; it is a vital energy. This prana is responsible for maintaining unfluctuating awareness and steadiness of mind during meditation. If your mind is wavering, if your consciousness is fluctuating, it is due to a shortage of prana. Nervous breakdown, nervous depression, vacillation of mind, sluggishness, lethargy, indolence, all these are caused by low voltage of prana.

Pranayama before meditation

They say that the breath is the indicator, the torchbearer, and that the interplay of consciousness is moving up and down with the breath. Awareness and breath must be integrated and when these two move together rhythmically and you watch the movement quietly, it brings you to dhyana.

There are a number of pranayamas which can be used as an aid to dhyana yoga. Pranayama, which is the fourth step in raja yoga, can lead you to the state of dhyana directly.

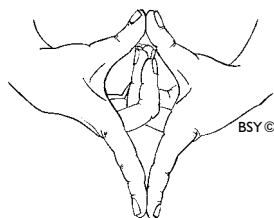
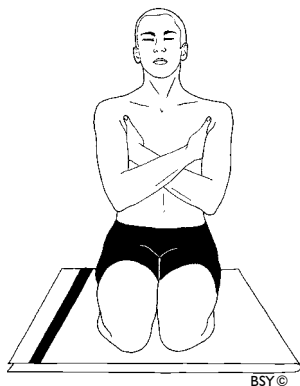
Pranayama appears to be a gross practice but it is not. When practised with the necessary preparation, it will bring about the state of pratyahara. It will create one-pointedness of mind and help to withdraw the mind totally and make you steady in dhyana yoga.

One of the most important pranayamas for meditation is known as chaturtha pranayama, where you must become aware of the ingoing breath and the outgoing breath separately in their natural speed and rhythm. After watching the natural rhythm of breath, you should make it a little deeper than natural. If the practitioner of dhyana yoga is able to combine the force of consciousness with the force of prana during these most natural movements of the breath for all the twenty-four hours, samadhi takes place by itself.

Mudras

In meditation it is very important that both nostrils are free. If for example only the right nostril is flowing and the left is blocked, the mind will run terribly hither and thither like a monkey. If only the left is flowing you will start dreaming after some time or depression may set in. If both nostrils are not flowing freely, place the right hand under the left armpit and the left hand under the right armpit and press. The arms should be relaxed. This is called *swara yoga mudra*. When both nostrils are flowing, the right and left hemispheres of the brain are harmonized and begin to function in a greater dimension. In this way meditation can be accomplished.

If, however, both nostrils are flowing freely when you sit for meditation, you can place your hands in the lap. This is called *yonni mudra*.



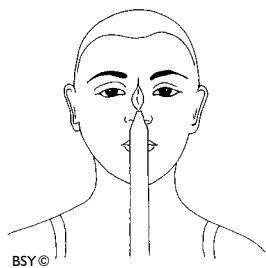


Or you may adopt *chin mudra*, with the thumb and the index finger joined and the remaining three fingers separated, symbolizing the separation of yourself (index finger) from the three gunas of rajas, tamas and sattva, and the joining of yourself to the supreme consciousness (thumb).

Sitting for dhyana

The mysteries of dhyana are only revealed to one who is able to continue the journey inward for two hours and who tries to reach the ishta. The seasoned sadhaka practising meditation for two hours in the morning and two hours at night is sure to experience samadhi.

First you should form the habit of sitting in meditation for two hours at a stretch. It takes half an hour to take the consciousness to the plane of the gods, and one hour is spent fighting against the many temptations and distractions. Then there remains only half an hour during which you have to fight your way with ignorance.



The practised sadhaka should try to open the lock with the help of chaturtha combined with trataka. As soon as the door is opened, it should be locked from inside, and keeping the awareness of the ishta

in front, the sadhaka should proceed. As soon as awareness is mixed, he should, by an effort of will, revive it. He should continue doing so until the end. Desires concealed within the mind can be compared to the boons one asks for, because as soon as dhyana is perfected they are automatically satisfied. Therefore, it is essential for the sadhaka to become desireless. Even if one single desire remains, it is fulfilled at a certain stage of yoga, and the way to further progress is barred.

Therefore, make this firm determination that you shall not leave the asana nor the practice. Even though during meditation external consciousness often comes up again make a firm determination that you shall, during meditation, suppress the inner experiences by the practices of form consciousness. As soon as you go into the sleep state during meditation you will again bring up form consciousness.

Briefly:

1. Make such a determination as sitting in a steady posture.
2. Practise any pratyahara sadhana.
3. Bring up form consciousness.
4. Suppress the samskaras by natural power of the self.
5. Hold fast to the power of the self.
6. Hold fast to form consciousness and go on awakening it.
7. Sleep will overcome you.
8. Keep up steadiness, soul-force and ishta chetana.
9. Sleep will break.
10. Samskaras will rise.
11. Raise form consciousness by automatic inner force.
12. There will be constant appearance and disappearance of the samskaras and causal bodies.
13. Revive determination and consciousness and form consciousness.
14. Finally, form consciousness will be steady.

Psychic symbol

Whether you practise meditation on a religious basis or purely on the basis of raja yoga, the most important thing is that you have something on which to anchor your consciousness. If you practise dhyana, it should be on one symbol. Those who keep on changing the methods, techniques and symbols in meditation every now and then will suffer from the obstacles. Those who are serious about realization, about attaining the deeper stages of consciousness, should understand this clearly. One should not change the symbol of meditation because the process of meditation is only a basis for the consciousness to go deeper

and deeper. There will be confusion if the basis is changed time and again.

Antar mouna

It is very interesting when we realize just how unscientific we are in our approach to spiritual knowledge when we see how most of us would like to practise dhyana, meditation, immediately, without any proper understanding at all. We fail to understand that it is not possible to be in dhyana without the help of the senses and the mind. Unless we withdraw our senses in a systematic manner without any touch of suppression, it will not be possible for us to get into dhyana. Therefore, antar mouna, is one of the practices of pratyahara.

The entire process of antar mouna is concerned with inducing pratyahara as a means to meditation. Without pratyahara, meditation is impossible, and pratyahara itself is not easy. This is why so few people actually experience the higher state of meditation. Remember the order carefully: first pratyahara, then dharana and then dhyana. If you follow the stages of antar mouna in the correct sequence and perfect each stage, then you will automatically tread the right path.

Antar mouna is very systematic. Firstly, it increases one's resistance to external disturbances. Then it allows subconscious thoughts and pent-up emotions to slowly bubble up to conscious perception. One directly confronts the contents of the subconscious mind: long forgotten memories, fears, hatreds and so forth. Thoughts and feelings that have been hidden for years come to the surface and are exhausted. Gradually the mind is harmonized over a period of time. The mind becomes progressively tranquil and one-pointed. The aim is eventually to transcend rational thought. When this occurs, meditation will take place.

Ajapa japa

There are many ways to achieve the state of dhyana, but the easiest way is the practice of ajapa japa. This practice uses awareness of the breath and the natural sound of the



breath which is the mantra *So Ham*. The mind can only comprehend something which is within the scope of its grasp. Therefore, in the practice of meditation it is essential to have a basis in the form of mantra and symbol. Ajapa japa is a complete sadhana in itself, which can take an aspirant from the most elementary level of body and environmental awareness to the highest stages of meditation.

Other practices

The primary preparatory stages, the ethical (yamas and niyamas), the physical (asanas), and the mental-emotional (pranayama and pratyahara) aspects of raja yoga help to re-tone and refashion the entire personality of man and to make him fit for worldly advancements. Its higher stages of dharana, dhyana and samadhi lead him to spiritual enlightenment.

The external as well as the internal elements of yoga are of considerable importance to man for fulfilling his mission in life. The chidakasha dharana combines in its practice both these functions, and therefore, acquires a singularly unique character. If a sadhaka is not to pursue it for a long time and is inclined to leave it after some time, even then he will find that his entire personality was being unconsciously moulded, reshaped and refashioned by this practice.

Lifestyle adjustments for dhyana

When you sit for meditation the inner body temperature falls. This has been noted in scientific studies in recent years. When the temperature dips, the ageing process slows down. In fact, when the temperature dips, all the processes of the body, such as digestion, slow down. Therefore, those who have been pursuing the path of dhyana yoga must take a diet which is primarily pre-digested. The process of metabolism also slows down, so if you insert many toxins in your body, it will find it difficult to metabolize them. Therefore, a dhyana

yogi or a practitioner of meditation must look after his diet properly. The lighter the stomach the lighter is the mind. A light stomach is very important for meditation. Constipation must also be corrected.

Many people think that meditation has something to do with the mind and not with the stomach. They do not understand that we are homogeneous. The stomach and the mind are the same thing. Mind is all-pervading. The two forces, prana and mind, are permeating throughout the whole body. There is not a point in the body where there is no mind and there is no point where there is no prana.

A sincere meditation practitioner should leave at least three hours between a meal and meditation. The best time for meditation is the same which is best for sleep. How nicely you sleep in the morning from four to five o'clock. That is the time when you have a high quality of sleep and that is time when you have the highest quality of meditation. The requirements of first-class sleep and first-class meditation are the same.

Obstacles on the path

People have practised dhyana yoga, mantra yoga, kriya yoga and kundalini yoga, but they have not been able to transcend the mind. The aspirant does not give time to know what the mind is, and therefore he is unable to face the mind's confrontations or look at it directly. They know the mind by anger, happiness, passion and elation. These are not the mind; they are just the *vruttis*, the modifications of the mind.

Sleep and loss of awareness are the biggest problems in meditative practice. This state of unawareness is called *laya* in yogic scriptures. It is the chasm that has to be crossed in order to jump from the stage of normal perception to that which is beyond . . . the transcendental.

In Hindu scriptures, this barrier is often called the 'river of death'. It is also called *baitarni nadi*, the river which Yama, the Lord of Death, crosses and takes people to after they die. This is symbolic and the word 'death' here has a special

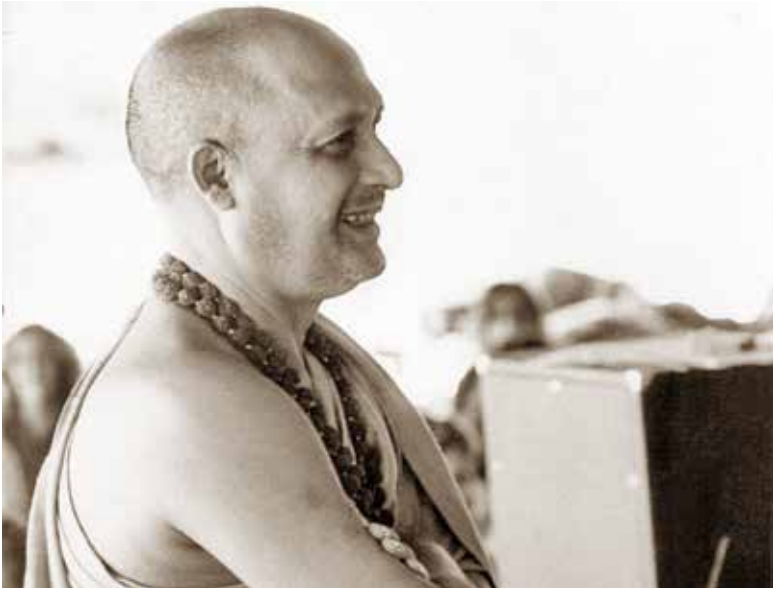
meaning. It means the death or removal of external sense perception, thoughts and unawareness. This river is that which separates normal states of consciousness from higher states. In order to know the experience of dhyana, one must be capable of crossing this river. One must die to mundane experience. The best method is to adopt and use a psychic symbol.

If during meditation the form of the ishta establishes itself firmly, know that your path of sadhana is correct. If the form begins to fade, you are falling asleep. If sometimes you see something other than the ishta, then the chitta is full of impurities. If you maintain mental equilibrium in the midst of worldly life, then meditation becomes comparatively easy for you. If the mind is full of agitations, it wanders during meditation and tries to break away from the objective. But, by consistent concentration upon the objective, it again comes to the meditative stage.



5

Benefits of Dhyana



During meditation one experiences a feeling of no anxiety. One's normal self-interest seems to disappear and one feels the same, if not more, for other people as for oneself. Life no longer seems fragmented by opposing ideas and opinions. Everything merges into one composite whole. External events enter the mind, are absorbed, yet without causing the usual disturbances or reverberations. All things take their normal

course of action, without any unnecessary hustle or bustle. Fear, the biggest troublemaker in life, no longer exists. Even fear of death disappears, and the idea of death seems almost superficial, non-existent and unimportant.

The usual ups and downs of life are replaced by a continual and elevating feeling of the joyfulness of life. Everything seems to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Even normally opposing religious, philosophical and cultural ideas seem to be in unison with one another. Everything fits. The past and future seem to be unimportant. They lack meaning. What is important is the eternal now.

Living in the ‘Now’

Living and experiencing the totality of the present seems to be the only important thing to do. The present is so absorbing that the mind automatically fixes itself on the work or action being done. Efficiency and perfection become the natural course of life’s events. The normal impediments to efficiency, such as worry or anger, no longer block the total absorption of the mind. Under these conditions work becomes play and play becomes work. There is no differentiation. Life becomes so joyful that it needs no ambition, no justification, no reason; it is sufficient just to be.

Remember that it is through frustration, dissatisfaction and unhappiness that we try to find a reason for life, or follow modes of life that are unnatural or contrary to our very being. One does not lose one’s zest, nor does one lose one’s interest in the activities of the world. One merely ceases to worry about things. There may be superficial worry, but internally there is perfect peace. All the preliminaries associated with preparing oneself for meditational experiences no longer seem important or necessary.

Balancing the inner and the outer

The practice of dhyana yoga, which was considered to be a mystical practice in the olden days, is helpful in maintaining a balance between mind and body. Human behaviour,

temperament, sentimentality, sensitivity and knowledge are all affected by the practice of dhyana yoga. Scientific experiments conducted at the Medical College of Barcelona and other laboratories in America and India have brought this truth to us, that the practice of dhyana yoga can change the whole process of thinking, reacting and behaving. Therefore, we must give some time to the techniques of dhyana yoga.

Sustained concentration, or dhyana, is important for stilling the turbulent mind and channelling focused mental energy creatively. Equanimity in daily life can be experienced and later samadhi, the ultimate aim of all yoga practices, is brought about through constant repetition of yogic disciplines. The practice of yoga creates a balance in the total personality.

On the path to meditation you will learn many wonderful things, you will witness yourself developing and expanding, and you will be able to see all your potential blossoming as your inner self unfolds. Daily you will find that life inspires you more and you will find yourself participating in external life more enthusiastically. Many people fear that meditation will make them introverted and less interested in their worldly affairs. But if you balance your activities, not excluding the inner or the outer, you will find that they complement and enrich each other. Your moments of inner silence and communion will rejuvenate and refresh your mind, nourishing you with vital sustenance and energy.

Strengthening mind and body

Meditation restores the vitality of the mind. It makes up the loss caused by aimless and useless brooding and painful thoughts of the day. Thus, meditation helps to wipe out past experiences and at the same time avoids accumulation of new ones. It serves as a useful and sound strategy to guard against unpleasant shocks which we receive in the world. Life is a struggle which is to be won by strengthening the mind as well as the body. Yoga is a burning furnace which gives a new pattern to body and mind and makes them strong enough

to face the tempests and tumults of the world. Everyone has to come out of life with courage and fortitude. Yoga offers sure techniques of controlling the mind, to equip oneself with courage and certitude to face life squarely and to work out one's final emancipation.

It is well known that mind and body act and react on each other. Mental ailments cause physical ailments and vice versa. We allow our senses to run hither and thither to hunt for physical satiety. We identify ourselves too much with the body, which results in neurosis and frustrations. Yoga offers a remedy for the reconstruction of our personality: withdraw the senses from their objects and go within the 'middle chamber', the subconscious of the psychologists. When we contact our subconscious through meditation, one after another, all our deep-rooted past impressions come to the surface and slowly but surely depart from us. This process is entirely in accord with modern psychiatric practices, with the difference, however, that here we are our own psychiatrists.

Effects on the physical body

It used to be that dhyana yoga was considered to be a spiritual practice meant for those people who wanted to know God. Observations, however, have shown that during meditation the brainwaves undergo a fantastic change. Meditation has a direct influence on the heart rate and blood pressure.

Dhyana or meditation has a powerful effect on the human body and mind. Meditation is not only a psychological or spiritual practice, it is an all-round practice for everyone, with or without a religious background. The research that has been carried out on the influence and effects of meditation on the brain have revealed great changes in the brainwaves, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and the entire personality. Meditation is the most important practice for all mental and spiritual progress.

It has been indicated that when the practice of dhyana or meditation is done, changes not only take place in the mind, but in the external, intricate and complex systems of

the body as well. The hormones are influenced and in certain practices, even the production or suppression of sperm and ova is seen. The heart, circulatory and respiratory systems and the process of metabolism undergo definite changes. Therefore, we must understand that when we are practising hatha yoga, the physical postures, the effect is taking place inside the mind and when we are practising meditation or dhyana yoga, the effect is taking place in the physical body as well.

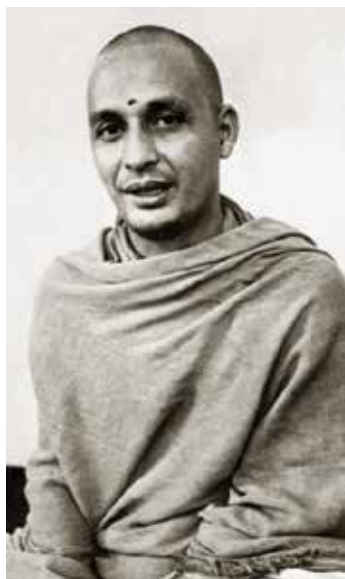
No matter who you are or how intelligent you are, if you are not able to control the flow of energy in the ida and pingala nadis, the behavioural functions of the hormones, or the chemical secretions from the brain into the body, you are going to fall ill. The relief that medical science can give you will be very limited. For this reason, the practices of hatha yoga are of primary importance because they render this physical body free of toxic elements and influence the vital psychic centres. A combination of hatha yoga and dhyana yoga offers a practical solution to the damaging effects of mental and physical disorders due to hormonal imbalance.

The practice of meditation lowers high blood pressure by slowing down the heart rate. The metabolic and respiratory rates are also reduced. There is less consumption of oxygen and less production of carbon dioxide in the tissues. Muscular tension also decreases. Normally when the body reacts to stress, the cells require more oxygen. New investigations are showing that the state of dhyana produces changes in the behaviour of the pituitary gland, the master controller of the endocrinal system. From the results of these experiments we know that dhyana yoga can help to change our whole life pattern.

If you practise simple dhyana yoga for a period of ten minutes each day, the changes that take place in the body and mind are fantastic. Of course, the changes that take place in the mind cannot be measured by instruments, but the changes in the physical body, in the brain, heart and lungs, have been measured by scientists.

The physical body is influenced by the human mind. It is the sentiments, the emotions, feelings and objectives, passions, fears, anxieties and worries in the mind which create physiological changes in the body. The adrenal, thyroid and pituitary secretions have a natural flow and order. A thought can and does influence the workings of our physical body.

The results of the medical research from all over the world on the influence of meditation have shown influences on the brain waves, on blood pressure, on the heart, on the oxygen levels. All sorts of good things are coming out by which we can understand that the practices of yoga and meditation are not only mystic and religious, they are immediately practical and they influence the entire being from heaven to earth. They influence the mind, the spirit and the body.



Research on yoga and dhyana

Besides the research conducted into the effects of yoga on the physical body, experiments have been conducted in USA and Russia into the power and nature of the mind itself. The mind is a force surrounded by a field, in the same way as there are pranic fields, electromagnetic fields and radioactive fields. This has been proven by a number of experiments made in the field of ESP, telepathy and psychic phenomena. In the state of dhyana, the area of the personal field becomes broader and the limitations of the individual are overcome.

There is something more in yoga which still remains to be examined. Among the conclusions reached are three major ones. First, yogasanas are not physical exercises, but postures

which can balance and control the endocrine glands and hormonal secretions in the body. Regular practice of asanas will help to alleviate many chronic and incurable diseases including asthma, high blood pressure, coronary disorders, digestive ailments and constipation. Secondly, the practices of pranayama are primarily intended, not for inhaling more oxygen, but to awaken the full potential of the brain. Pranayama influences and controls the imbalances of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. Thirdly, dhyana yoga is not an intellectual, religious or mystical exercise. The practices of meditation alter the frequencies of the brain waves, lower the pressure in the coronary system and help to adjust the process of metabolism in the body.

Psychic disorders and personality errors can only be eliminated by the practice of meditation or dhyana. When it is said that meditation brings about enlightenment and ultimately self-realization or God-realization, it is true, but at the same time unless there is complete quietness in all dimensions of the personality, God-realization can never take place. Whether one is treating the mental personality or trying for God-realization, yoga is the common method.

Deep state of rest

Meditation induces a deep state of rest which encourages the repair and improved health of all the cells and tissues of the body. During sleep the mind is not properly at rest, particularly when it is involved in dreams. The most beneficial rest is gained when the mind is fully concentrated in the practice of meditation, and once this can be achieved, little sleep is required. Three to four hours will be quite sufficient.

Research carried out at the University of Medicine, Barcelona, has shown that physical changes do take place in the state of dhyana. The mantra *Om* was chanted by a group of people at different times and they pronounced it in different ways. The mantra was chanted aloud and recorded by an EEG machine which broke down the various

frequencies and showed their effects on the brain. The first sound O produced alpha waves, and when the sound M was pronounced, the machine recorded theta wave activity. Both of these states are associated with the more internal realms of the mind which include intuitive and creative powers.

Normally the mind works at a high level of activity and involvement. These frequencies are classified as beta waves. The attention is fully in the outside world, sometimes anxious and tense, and sometimes concentrated. When you close your eyes and start the practice of dhyana, within ten minutes the beta frequencies will change and start altering between alpha and theta. The mind becomes free and enters into deeper states of relaxation.

Clearing of samskaras

In ordinary life it is found that when one thought predominates in the mind, the others are subdued. Likewise, one samskara can prevent other samskaras. When the chitta is full of external awareness, such as seeing, hearing, feeling, that is also a dynamic consciousness, and that is to be prevented. This can be done through pratyahara and dharana as well as dhyana. When the mind is not engaged or concentrated, various thoughts arise.

This is the path of introspection. It is not a good experience for most of us. In practising introspection, the impurity comes up. It is only in samadhi, and not in dhyana, that all the purities such as peace, bliss and light appear. The practice of antar mouna expels negative thoughts because it is a kind of self-eliminator of the negative impurities. You either enter a state of chidakasha where there are no thoughts, a vacuum state, in which you only remember bad acts or you see all the people who caused you pain or trouble. The longer you practise the more experiences you will see. It only becomes clear in the end. Symbolic expressions come up. Events that your conscious mind hates to remember appear. This will only happen when you have stepped into the subconscious.



Dhyana and cancer

Yogic relaxation, yogic breathing or pranayama, and concentration of mind or dhyana yoga all have a direct effect on the cancer cells through the white blood cells. Dhyana also brings about a profound and sustained reduction of anxiety, which allows the individual to isolate cancer and mobilize energies to fight it. Some very interesting findings in the Medical Journal of Australia, actually show photographs of a cancer reducing its size after three months of intensive meditation. This is a big achievement. From this you can realize how effective and powerful the practice of dhyana yoga is. Therefore, throughout the world, hundreds of yoga teachers are engaged in teaching yoga for the treatment of diseases.

You are That

One normally sees oneself as a small, insignificant part of the universe, as a small cog in a large wheel, a small particle in unending space and time. One often feels completely isolated and often alienated from other parts of existence. One feels alone, and very mortal. One never even suspects that one can overcome this situation. Most people merely shrug their shoulders and fatalistically accept their fate.

Meditation changes all this. One realizes through meditation that one is a necessary, intimate and important part of the universe. One starts to relate deeply to everything that exists. They are no longer separate entities. You are That. This is a mystical state of meditation.

The faculty of intuition is the medium of knowledge. Objects show their deeper and essential characteristic. Everything assumes an attitude of friendliness and the universe assumes a state of helpfulness; opposition to one's nature no longer exists. Every atom shimmers with life and vitality. The progress of time and immensity of space lose their fixed meaning; they are seen as nothing more than a manifestation of the universe. Time begins to stand still and the outer depths of space no longer seem so far away. The stars come within grasping distance. Infinity and eternity become almost tangible. Existence is seen as the permanent aspect of everything. One realizes that one's being is intimately bound up with everything that is. As such, the ego no longer seems important or even a reality.

Awakening dormant potential

The practice of yoga should be done in order to awaken the dormant potential in us, so that we do not continue to have infirmity of will and suffer as we have been suffering. The point is clear: within himself man has all the possibilities of creative intelligence. This creative intelligence can be expanded beyond frontiers.

There is no end to it. In one state of manifestation the mind is weak, but if the same mind undergoes a process

through yoga and meditation, then it becomes a powerful tool in man's hands. After all, mind is energy; it is not a bundle of habits. Thought is not the mind, emotion is not the mind, anger is not the mind, dreams are not the mind. The mind is aware in its absolute totality. As we free this mind from its limitations, it becomes powerful, just like in physics. How do you release the energy in science? You separate matter. When matter is separated there is energy. When the grossness of mind is eliminated, when the sensuality of mind is extricated, then what remains is called energy. On the path of meditation, in dhyana yoga, when we concentrate, we try to remain aware of one point, and everything else that comes into our mind is rejected. It is rejected as though everything was matter, and finally there is the awakening of *shakti* or energy, or inner spiritual life.

So long as we remain within the confines of the individual mind, we cannot understand the universal mind. Through the practices of meditation, however, we begin to go beyond the individual mind and experience or perceive the cosmic mind, the total mind. This total mind is the experience of samadhi. They say, there is no thought in samadhi, but this is not so, there is thought. In samadhi the awareness of the total mind emerges and in the realization of that cosmic mind, the birth of inner vision takes place.

When you give sight to a blind person he can see many things. He can see trees, mountains, rivers, men, animals, everything. Similarly, meditation opens the inner eye. With those inner eyes you have certain experiences, and you realize the whole universe. You realize many vibrations. Then this experience stops and you experience your true nature, not your name and form, but your true nature. Then you begin to feel that you and the universe are not different. You experience the whole universe as your expression. Then there comes a moment when all experiences die. The vibrations totally stop. There is no consciousness of the self or anything. It is at this time that you have experience of the divine. The moment you have experience of the divine, everything stops.

6

Applications of Dhyana



Everyone should understand that meditation is a very important practice. There are various practices which you can learn according to your capacity. It is therefore important to encourage yoga and meditation for beginners and old students alike. If a few people are in touch with yoga, this will be doing them a great service, because man must know his own self. Without this he cannot extricate himself from the tragedies of life. Happiness is within, and that one has to know by practical experience.

Though man has tried everything, he has failed to secure happiness so far. Man has been following a mirage, a world of delusion. He should realize the world within, the happiness which is non-material does not depend on the object. There is a greater happiness which is homogeneous and absolute, and that is the self, beyond the mind.

For those who think that there is something lacking in their lives, a feeling of incompleteness and an inability to understand and solve their problems, dhyana yoga comes to them as a master key. For some time, this science went underground and eventually it became unknown. Now it has come forth again, throughout the world, as a panacea for many physical and mental ills of human life.

Unify the body, mind and spirit

In the science of yoga, meditation is the culmination of all the spiritual efforts of man. You might think that meditation is just an act of devotion, but it is much more than that. Body, mind and spirit are an integral composition, and meditation balances the dimensions of energy on all levels, allowing them to function as one harmonious whole.

Meditation for a few minutes is a tonic for everyone. The mind feels relaxed during concentration. During meditation, persistent efforts made to bring the mind back again and again to one and the same object save the energies of the mind from being wasted. Instead of shifting from one thought to another and generating waves of different frequencies, it begins to revolve around one object, generating waves of one and the same frequency. This practice of meditation economizes mental energies.

The practice of meditation should never be considered only in terms of a psychological or an emotional exercise. In meditation the various energy waves of the body are slowed down and harmonized. This has a natural and powerful effect on the centres of the brain which control all the internal organs. Meditation results in peace, joy, health, rest and power.

Meditation is the practice of mindfulness. And when you have perfected this practice and mindfulness becomes constant and unbroken, it culminates in samadhi. Awakening of the frontal brain is very important for human evolution, and when you practise dhyana yoga, the process begins to take place in the frontal area of the brain. Therefore, in dhyana yoga, one of the most important practices we teach is concentration on the mid-eyebrow centre – the site of the third eye. The third eye represents intuition. The second eye represents the intellect and reasoning and the first eye represents instinct and automatism. Animals move by the first eye, human beings move by the second and yogis move by the third eye. One of the ultimate purposes of evolution is to develop the third eye.

Calm the restless mind

When people begin to practise dhyana yoga, they always face the same difficulty. They try to concentrate on one point again and again, but the mind wanders away. Again they bring it back, but again it escapes. They go on like this, alternating between pleasant experiences and states of total unruliness, every day for many years, but they never achieve dhyana. This battle between you and yourself will last a lifetime. You are not fighting with the mind and the mind is not fighting with you: remember, you are the mind and the mind is you. When you withdraw and struggle with the mind, you are only creating conflict within yourself.

People ask, “How can we make the mind still and attentive?” As long as the mind is distracted by the external senses, it will remain in a disturbed, restless state. The eyes, ears, nose and tongue run after the sense objects throughout the day and night. Even while sleeping and dreaming, the mind and body do not find proper rest. The way of dhyana yoga is to collect the wandering tendencies of the mind around one central object for ten to fifteen minutes daily. With regular and continued practice, the pressure of accumulated tensions exerted on the brain, the heart and the nervous system is decreased.

We have to come to understand and believe how important dhyana yoga is for the evolution of man, for gaining total control over the pranic and mental forces in order to enable him to cast out diseases and soothe the mind. I am not talking about a miracle, but about how the mind controls itself through dhyana yoga.

It is also very important that a systematic practice be followed at home. Those who are practising should continue. Those who are new, must remember that what we have done so far with our lives has not paid any dividend. We have been groping in darkness, and it is time we opened ourselves to a new type of life, which does not hinder the external life, but which opens the beatitude of the inner life.

Transform the mind

What is the secret of life, the master key which opens all the doors? *Yogaschitta vritti nirodhah* – absolute control over the functions of the mind, not just the passionate or jealous mind, the frightened or fearful mind, but the total mind – *chitta*. *Chitta vritti nirodhah* is yoga and this is the science which humanity is in need of now.

Whether you are a businessman or a housewife, rich or poor, you have a mind and it is capable of causing all kinds of hallucinations and problems. You may have thought that it was the absence of prosperity that was causing the problems, but we have seen prosperous nations fail hopelessly to experience ‘total living’. Now people everywhere are realizing that neither prosperity nor poverty, disease nor good health, bad family nor good family, matter – nothing matters except the state of your mind.

People in different parts of the world have tried to change the mind through religious beliefs, practices and moralities. It is not possible to change the mind by intellectual imposition, by fear or by law. Real change is only brought about through a process of transformation in the very structure of the mind. If you take a blind man and superimpose a set of eyes on him, he is still a blind man, but he looks like a man

who can see. In the same manner, you cannot transform the mind by imposing religious morality. Religious morality is conducive to a so-called healthy society, but transformation of consciousness is something else.

Now is the right time for you to accept dhyana yoga as part of your daily activities. Don't say that you have no time or that, when you sit for meditation your mind escapes you. No. These are only false excuses. Who are you deceiving? Who are you betraying? What happens to a man when he goes to hospital for fifteen days? Where does he get the time from? When you pass sleepless nights worrying about the problems of your family, your business, your love and hatred, where do you get the time from? In order to practise yoga, all you need is five to twenty minutes daily. If you don't have it, then borrow it. Even if you have to pay high interest, the benefits you will receive in return will amply pay it back.

Dhyana for women

One of the most important forms of yoga for women today is dhyana yoga. It is ideally suited for those in need of mental peace, one-pointedness, freedom from tension, and for those who want to transform the basis of their nature. By meditation I don't mean just closing the eyes and forgetting everything. Dhyana yoga is a process by which you expand the dimensions of your mind. It is total awareness, not lack of awareness, total attentiveness, not unconsciousness.

When you are afraid, your adrenal glands secrete hormones to prepare the body for attack. When you are worried, the pancreatic glands react. When passions arise, the ovaries or gonads are stimulated. With states of anxiety, the heart, thyroid and pituitary glands react. A thought is not only mental; it also influences the bodily mechanisms. It can create peptic ulcers, insomnia for days and even cancer. On the other hand, a thought can also induce a calm and peaceful night's sleep. Such is the power of thought and this is why dhyana yoga is so important.

Dhyana for children

There is a general opinion prevalent in western countries, and certain circles in India as well, that through the practice of pranayama, dhyana, yoga nidra and antar mouna, the mind of students can be improved. In Switzerland, educationalists have been working on this and on the behaviour of archetypes in the brain. These archetypes are in billions and trillions in the brain and seem to become a barrier in expressing our mental personality. Many times you feel that you understand things better, and sometimes you don't understand. At times you are experiencing total clarity whether you study geography, mathematics or history, and at times it seems everything is clouded and you don't understand. In this connection you will have to study the behaviour of that mechanism which is the seat of understanding, and this is the brain.

If the practices of dhyana yoga were introduced into the educational system and into our own personal program, we would have a society based on truth, not hypocrisy; a society which is one in thought, speech and action, and not a society of double standards.

Dhyana for businessmen

Dhyana should be an important discipline for any businessman, because he has to mobilize all his mental, emotional and psychic energies for managing the conflicts, worries, competition and financial problems that he faces daily. Sometimes your spiritual energies are also needed, for without intuition you will not succeed in business affairs. Business is not only dependent on logic and mathematics. Although they play an important part, they do not always work as well as intuition. These energies combined constitute a state of dynamic tranquillity. When the mind is made wholly dynamic through the practices of dhyana yoga, it gives you excellent results. A concentrated yet relaxed mind can do the most intense work for long periods of time without tiring. It is less disturbed by both outer and inner distractions and

is able to remain focused on the work in hand. This one-pointedness renders the mind more powerful, enabling it to act and think with great force. The practice of dhyana yoga can also be done in the evening when you return home from work exhausted.

Practise a meditative technique for ten to twenty minutes, not more, instead of reading the newspaper, turning on the television or relying on the cigarette. Please do not think that I am against these things. Yoga does not disagree with smoking, after all, Lord Shiva also did it! Yoga only questions one's dependence on it and its effectiveness in helping a person to relieve tensions.

In the course of these last few years, the possibilities and faculties of yoga have been extended into mental hospitals, jails, educational systems and lately into the field of drug addiction. What the seers and rishis of the past knew intuitively, scientists are now beginning to discover through their experimental work.

Evolve with kriya yoga

The purpose of kriya yoga is to accelerate this process of natural evolution, so that man may be able to experience the supermind, that higher state of being, right here and now. Through ignorance, man has lapsed into this dissipated state of being. However, this state is not the finished product of nature. Man has much farther to travel before he jumps over the present state of mind and develops a higher mind.

Therefore, the rishis of the tantric tradition evolved a series of practices that could be easily adopted by every type of aspirant regardless of lifestyle, habits, beliefs, and so on. Of course, there are many practices belonging to tantra, but of them all, kriya yoga is considered to be the most powerful and suitable for a modern-day person who is enmeshed in this world. The awakening of energy, prana or kundalini, the dormant potential in man, can best be accomplished through the simple practices of kriya yoga. This is one of the most important methods for the people of our age, because it is

not possible for most people to keep their mind on one point all the time. Their minds are so powerfully swayed by rajasic forces and the dissipation is so great, that even if they want to concentrate for a particular period of time, they find they are not able to. The techniques of kriya yoga offer a smooth and relatively risk-free means of expanding your awareness and awakening the dormant areas of the brain.

That is man's destiny; that is what he must do, if not now, then in the course of 10,000, 20,000 or one million years. Nature is evolving through man's consciousness.

Know Thyself

Through the practices of dhyana yoga, by practising meditation, what we achieve is the total awareness of the entire mind. This is possible only when the consciousness is isolated, and this isolation of consciousness is very important.

There is no doubt that physical disease and mental problems are great difficulties faced by humankind. But the greatest problem is that of human consciousness. How can we expect to get out of the problems of life unless the whole consciousness is transformed? This is the greatest problem that yoga is going to solve for all of us. Consciousness is an important matter in the practices of yoga, particularly dhyana yoga. Awakening of kundalini is nothing but a stage of evolution in the scheme of mind and consciousness. Behind the body and mind, there is a universal and fantastic awareness within all of us.

This great awareness is not realized by us because it exists like an iceberg, only a little is seen and the rest is completely concealed. Man knows his thoughts and emotions, but not his awareness. Thought is not awareness. It is an aspect of awareness; it is a manifestation of awareness. This awareness is the most important subject matter of dhyana yoga.

7

Scriptural References



The Upanishads

It has been said in the Upanishads, that as soon as consciousness is attached to the exterior things, it experiences pain and agony. But when you follow the process of dhyana or meditation, then the consciousness is withdrawn from the objects and is attached to the inner consciousness, the *atman*.

Now, therefore, in the Upanishads, the main theme is the realization of the Self.

You have to withdraw yourself from lower consciousness, and this process of withdrawal from the lower consciousness and communion with the higher consciousness is known as meditation. In Sanskrit we call it dhyana. The word *dhyana* literally means awareness. It is through meditation that one can commune with higher consciousness.

If the guru tells you all about the higher Self, and you understand it through the mind, through your intellect, it is not enough. The supreme Self, the great atman, must not be only understood but it should be experienced for yourself. The experience of the higher Self, the experience of the Supreme Atman, or the experience of the Supreme Being, can come only by practice. When the guru has taught everything to the disciple he asks the disciple to go into seclusion and to practise meditation.

Within all Upanishads there are many systems of meditation. But in those days, the word meditation was not known as dhyana. Now we have dharana, dhyana and samadhi. But in the vedic days it was not known as dhyana, but as vidya, and there were many vidyas, meaning many systems of meditation. I can give you a few names. Ashwamedha vidya, the meditation on the horse sacrifice vidya. Panchagni Vidya, meditation on the five fires. Madhu vidya, meditation on honey. Udgita vidya meditation on the raising of the sound that is *Om* is also a system of meditation. Besides these there are many vidyas or systems of meditation practised by the people at that time and these vidyas are narrated in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* and the *Chandogya Upanishad*.

ISHAVASYA UPANISHAD

Large numbers of yogic-tantric scriptures proclaim the importance of a psychic symbol in meditative practice. Probably the briefest and profoundest explanation is given in the *Ishavasya Upanishad*. In slokas 9, 10 and 11 it emphasizes

the importance of balancing ida and pingala, and the importance of karma and dhyana yoga.

*Andham tamah pravishanti ye avidyaamupaasate;
Tato bhooya iva te tamo ya u vidyaayaam rataah.*

*Anyadevaahurvidyayaanyadaahuravidyayaa;
Iti shushruma dheeraanaam ye nastadvichachakshire*

*Vidyaam chaavidyaam cha yasatadvedobhayam saha;
Avidyayaa mrityum teertvaa vidyayaamritamashnute.*

Those who worship *avidya* (ignorance) enter into darkness and those who worship *vidya* (knowledge) enter into still greater darkness. (9)

The result of *vidya*, they say, is distinct and so is the result of *avidya*. Thus we have heard from the wise, who have expounded this subject to us. (10)

He, who knows both *vidya* and *avidya* together, crosses death through *avidya* and attains eternal life through *vidya*. (11)

HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA

By the process of hatha yoga the yogi attains a perfect physical body. *Bala vajrasam-hanana kaya sampat* – “The perfection of the body consists in beauty, grace, strength and adamant hardness.” The power to bear extreme cold and heat, the power to live without water and food and other powers come under the category of *kaya sampat*, perfection of the body.

Since the body of the hatha yogi is perfect and firm, his mind is also firm and one-pointed. By practising dharana and dhyana he reaches the highest rung in the yogic ladder and attains immortality through yogic samadhi. The yogi who has reached the highest stage, will have the eight major and all the minor siddhis. This is stated in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (3:8):

*Aadinaathoditamdivryamashtaishvaryapradaayakam;
Vallabham sarvasiddhaanaam durlabham marutaamapi.*

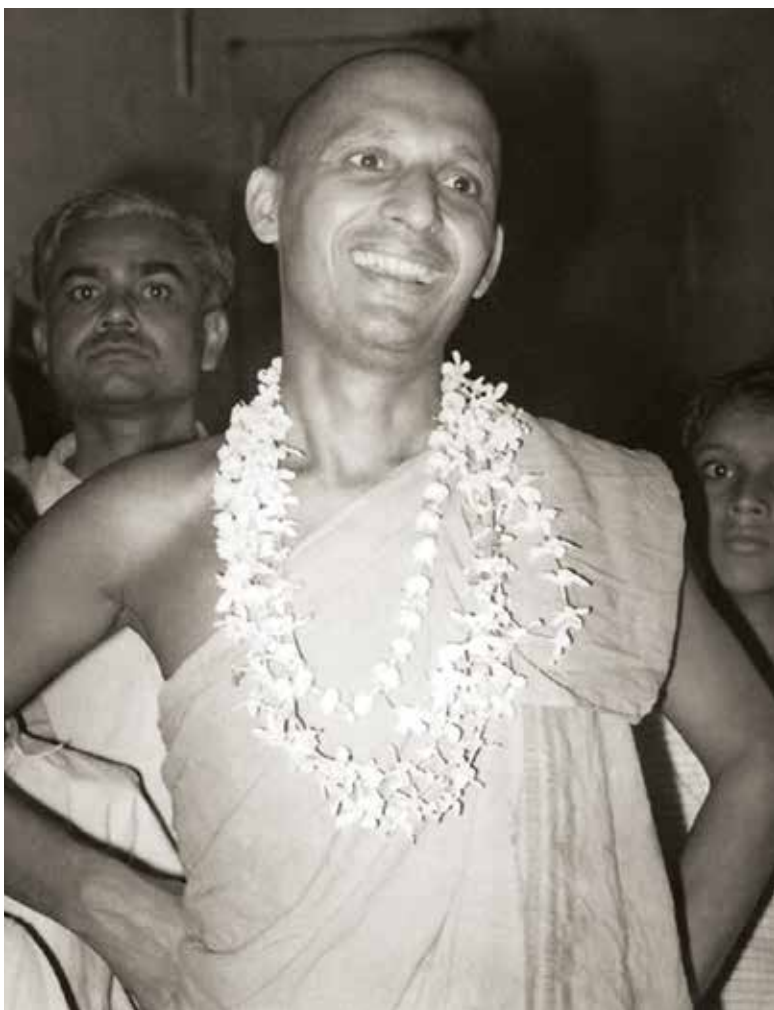
Adinath said they, the mudras and bandhas, are the bestowers of the eight divine powers. They are held in high esteem by all the siddhas and are difficult for even the gods to attain.

BHAGAVAD GITA

The *Bhagavad Gita* is a yogic scripture par excellence, and is applicable to people throughout the world and in every walk of life. It maps out in concise, but specific manner, the yogic paths of *karma yoga* or the path of action, *jnana yoga* or the path of intuition, *bhakti yoga* or the path of devotion, and *dhyana yoga* or the path of meditation.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is an unparalleled document on yoga, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna, “Merge your mind and intellect in Me and there is no doubt that you will be one with Me.” Thus, the Lord has asked us to merge the mental personality with the divine. In order to realize the supreme self, the vagaries of the mind are to be checked. The mind should be perfectly calm and unruffled. Then alone, during the hours of deep concentration and contemplation, does the light of the soul dawn on us. In simple words, dhyana – meditation and contemplation – is the only way to realize the self or super-conscious perception.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said by Krishna to Arjuna: “O Arjuna, whenever your mind becomes restless and unsteady, then and there you should control the mind and bring it under your subjugation.” This is the central principle of yoga. However, it cannot be made universally applicable to every type of aspirant. The quality of aspiration of Arjuna is not the same as the quality of aspiration of many people that one comes across. So, whereas Arjuna was told by Krishna to bring back the mind under personal control then and there, for extremely rajasic sadhakas we have to say something else.



Further Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, “After you have practised yoga, after you have perfected yoga and reached a certain point of evolution, when the mind has been rendered subtle and pure, then I will give you buddhi yoga.” Buddhi yoga is grace; it is a yoga which is in the form of enlightenment. It is not intellectual yoga, not intelligence or the normal buddhi through which right and wrong are known.

PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRAS

In the *Yoga Sutras*, Maharshi Patanjali said that through the practice of concentration of the mind one acquires knowledge of certain things. Dhyana variously rendered as 'contemplation' and 'meditation' means, according to Patanjali, an 'unbroken flow of thought towards the object of concentration'. Perfect concentration is attained only when the three, the meditating self, the process of meditation and the object of meditation merge into each other. Perfection of concentration is dhyana, or meditation.

(Samadhi Pada, sutra 39) – Or by meditation as desired

Yathabhimatadhyanaadvaa.

Or else by meditation as desired (mind can be steadied).

Here complete freedom is given. This is because dhyana on an object that one likes, such as the object of devotion, is the surest way of making the mind steady, controlled and peaceful. It is immaterial what object one takes for dhyana. It may be the cross, or the swastika, or an idol, or simply *Aum* – whatever is agreeable, *abhimata*. An aspirant should choose for himself that object on which he can concentrate his mind.

(Vibhooti Pada, sutra 2) – What is dhyana?

Tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam.

Uninterrupted stream of the content of consciousness is dhyana.

Pratyaya means the basis of consciousness which may be an idea, a sound, or any object, subtle or gross. If in dharana the consciousness becomes continuous so that there is no break or interruption due to any other thought, then dharana is replaced by or turned into dhyana. Sometime we experience dhyana when we are practising dharana. In dhyana there is an uninterrupted flow of consciousness. If you are visualizing a particular object, you should not visualize that

object alone, but you should also visualize that you are practising dhyana. This is important. Sometimes you may become oblivious to the object also, but there is the awareness of dhyana, which is called *sakshi bhava*. Otherwise, what usually happens is that if your mind slips away during concentration, you do not know it. This should not happen. Thus *dhyana* includes two things: one, an unbroken continuous flow of consciousness of the single object, and two, the awareness of dhyana; that is, the awareness that you are practising unbroken concentration. These two kinds of awareness go hand in hand.



(Vibhooti Pada, sutra 3) – What is samadhi?

Tadevarthamatanirbhasam svarupashunyamiva samadhihi.

That state becomes samadhi when there is only the object appearing without the consciousness of one's own self.

It should be noted that dharana itself turns into dhyana, and dhyana itself turns into samadhi. In dharana the consciousness is broken, in dhyana it is continuous, whereas in samadhi it becomes one with the *artha*, the object of concentration. It may be a gross object or a subtle one. In samadhi there is no consciousness that one is practising concentration.

It is sometimes said that in the state of deep concentration the object disappears, but this sutra tells us that the object does not disappear; on the contrary, it alone prevails. Thus, if you are concentrating on *Aum*, the symbol *Aum*, called *artha*, will be present in samadhi. It will not vanish, but it alone will shine completely in the awareness.

The object of meditation becomes clearer and clearer, its appearance becomes more and more vivid as you go deeper in the stages of samadhi. Then there is another important point: you do not remain aware of your own existence, there is not even the awareness that you are practising concentration. Thus there are two characteristics of samadhi: one, the object alone shines and, two, there is no awareness of the process or of the self. As there is no consciousness except of the object in samadhi, the mind appears not to be functioning, but it is not blank; therefore, the word 'iva' is used.

As the student goes on making progress on the path of concentration, there is concentration in the beginning but it is broken time and time again. Thus concentration continues for some time and suddenly there is a break. This is the first stage. In the second stage there is more dhyana and fewer breaks. In the third stage you start with dharana and immediately go into dhyana, and suddenly there comes a void. This is the first stage of samadhi; you remember the object but there is no other awareness. The mind or consciousness is not annihilated; it only temporarily appears to be non-existent because you are not aware of yourself or of the process of concentration.

(Vibhooti Pada, sutra 4) – What is samyama?

Trayamekatra samyamaha.

The three (dharana, dhyana and samadhi) together constitute samyama.

(Vibhooti Pada, sutra 7) – These three are internal

Trayamantarangam purvebhyaha

The three together are internal in relation to the previous ones.

The trinity of dharana, dhyana and samadhi is internal as compared to the first five parts of yoga: that is yama, niyama, asana, pranayama and pratyahara. Internal means subtler or

finer. The previous five parts belong to the realm of buddhi, character, habits, manners, mind, sense organs and prana. They belong to the annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha and manomaya kosha; therefore, they are called the external parts or outward parts – *bahiranga*. They all belong to the external world.

Antaranga means internal, introverted. When you are standing at the threshold of the door, you are aware of both the outside and the inside. That is pratyahara. When you are not on the threshold but looking outside, then it is yama, niyama, asana and pranayama.

All the five parts up to pratyahara belong to your personal habits; they belong to the external world. They have nothing to do with the deeper layers of your consciousness and, therefore, it is said in this sutra that dharana, dhyana and samadhi together constitute the internal disciplines.

What is this consciousness which has to evolve – from where and to where? When the eyes are closed the mind is open, and when the mind is closed the senses are experiencing. And when experience is also closed, what remains is the self. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, there is a dialogue between Sage Yajnavalkya and King Janaka. The sage is asked by his disciple, ‘Oh guru, how do we see?’ The sage replied, ‘With the light of the sun.’ The disciple asked again, ‘How does one see when the sun sets?’ The sage said, ‘With the light of the moon.’ The disciple asked him again, ‘Then how does one see when the moon has also set?’ He said, ‘With the light of the twinkling stars.’ The disciple said, ‘Guru, when the stars are no more, and the moon has set, and the sun has set, how does one see?’ He said, ‘By his own Self.’ When the eyes are closed, still you can see. When the mind is closed, still you can see, and when the visions are closed, still you can see. When everything is blocked, and everything is closed and has stopped functioning, still you can see – and what you see is the Truth.

8

Approaches to Dhyana Yoga



To know the higher Self, a true awareness of reality has to be developed, which is neither mental nor intellectual. That deeper awareness develops only through spiritual illumination, which continues to intensify with the gradual removal of impurities. The impurity of the mind is destroyed

through the practice of yoga through the vast range of its disciplines. To live according to a higher philosophy, one needs a yogic base. Take up a yogic philosophy of *vairagya*, non-attachment or dispassion, *dhyana*, meditation, and *anasakti*, the process of detachment. These concepts symbolize a dynamic approach to life and the very purpose of existence.

A householder often has no higher goal or philosophy; he is just living. However, the true goal and final destiny of mankind cannot be property, material wealth, provident funds, begetting children and educating them. Although human beings experience unlimited desires, ambitions and passions, which should not be denied, it is the soul or *atman* which has to be realized.

Raja yoga talks about concentration, meditation and the experience of unity. If hatha yoga is practised in combination with raja yoga we will be able to fulfil the problems of our life. Hatha yoga is trying to control, discipline and correct the forces in the body; raja yoga is trying to discipline and control the forces in the mind. Mind is a combination of twenty-six elements. Mind is not homogeneous; it is a combination of many heterogeneous elements. Therefore, when you want to control the mind, you must know how to do it.

You should not suppress the mind. If you suppress the mind there will be repression. Religions teach suppression, social discipline teaches us suppression, therefore you find repression in society, this is the basic difference between religion and tantra. Religions tend to say, 'it's bad, don't do it', but tantra says, 'this is an expression of the mind, observe it'. In religion there is a clear-cut line of demarcation between *yoga*, inner union, and *bhoga*, interaction with external objects, but in tantra this boundary line is completely withdrawn. Tantra says that yoga and bhoga should be integrated. Therefore, when you practise meditation, you have to keep in mind that whatever is springing up from the deep recesses of the mind should not be annihilated, contradicted or even suppressed.

Before an aspirant decides the state of his evolution, he should also practise hatha yoga and karma yoga. If he finds that he is tamasic, he should continue with these practices. If he is rajasic, his sadhana should consist of bhakti and karma yoga and a little bit of raja yoga. And if he is sattwic, he doesn't need any of these practices. Dhyana alone is enough.

The hatha yoga approach

There are two different methods of approaching dhyana – either by meditating directly, without any aid, or by creating the condition through the physical body, which is the subject of hatha yoga. If you have been practising hatha yoga and sushumna begins to awaken, then no other method is necessary. You don't need any sadhana or any technique. Just close the eyes and become meditative.

To practise hatha yoga, there are no conditions, except that the nadis, the digestive system, the breathing system, the elements in the body, must be purified by the six cleansing practices. The benefits of this purification will be felt when asanas and pranayama are practised.

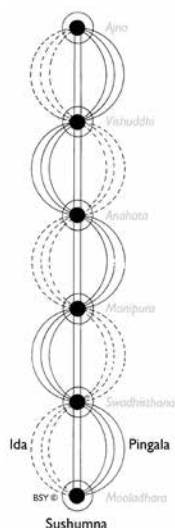
Pranayama is the gateway to dhyana. Through pranayama you can go as deep as you want. You don't have to do anything but go on practising pranayama with jalandhara, uddiyana and moola bandhas and some of the kriyas. You don't have to control or fight with the mind. Just do your practices for 10 or 15 minutes every day and in the course of time you will find that your mind is already in dhyana. This is the hatha yoga system.

The nadis

In the physical body there are 72,000 nadis which carry positive and negative types of energy, called *prana shakti* or vital energy and *manas shakti* or mental energy. Symbolically they are known as Surya, sun, and Chandra, moon, but in tantra they are called ida and pingala nadis. These two nadis are like high tension wires or lines that flow inside the spinal cord. They originate in mooladhara chakra at the base of

the spine, and cross over at swadhisthana, manipura, anahata and vishuddhi as they ascend the spine, finally terminating in ajna at the top of the spine in the medulla oblongata.

Ida flows through the left nostril and pingala flows through the right. They usually do not flow at the same time – sometimes ida flows and sometimes pingala flows. Ida crosses into the right side of the brain, and pingala crosses into the left side. When ida or the left nostril is flowing, then the right side of the brain is active and the left is quiet. When the right nostril or pingala is flowing, then the left side of the brain is active and the right is quiet. Only half of the brain is active at one time. What happens when both ida and pingala flow together? This is known as the awakening of sushumna, when both sides of the brain function simultaneously.



It is said that when ida is flowing, you should do mental work, and when pingala is flowing, physical work. When sushumna is flowing you should not work at all, because the opening of sushumna is the awakening of the whole brain. When sushumna begins to flow, dhyana becomes spontaneous, automatic. You don't have to do anything – just close the eyes and meditation takes place. This is called the direct method, dealing with the mind through the mind itself. For most aspirants, the indirect method, dealing with the mind through the physical body, is necessary to reach it. This is why the practices of hatha yoga are so important for the aspirant of dhyana.

Hatha yoga requisites

Certain requisites are necessary for self-realization, without which life is meaningless. The first is *shodhanam*, purification of the body by removing accumulated toxins. The second is *dridhata*, a strong mind, acquired through the practice

of yogasanas. The third is *sthairyam*, a steady body, which is developed through the practice of mudras and bandhas. The fourth is *dhairyam*, patience and perseverance, which must be cultivated through the practice of pratyahara. The fifth is *laghatvam*, a light body, which is possible through the practice of pranayama. The sixth is *pratyaksham*, direct perception of the object of meditation, which develops through dhyana. The seventh is *nirliptam*, an unaffected attitude towards all events in life, which is achieved through the practice of samadhi.

Single-minded concentration is essential in all the practices, whether pranayama, asana or mudra. It is the essence of perfection in every form of yoga. In every situation, not only while practising pranayama, one must pay attention and become aware of the experiences, actions and thoughts in that moment. Development of awareness whilst awake leads to constant awareness in the deeper states of dhyana and samadhi.

Guru Gorakhnath advised his disciples to begin with the hatha yoga shatkarmas, as due to the changing times, people have forgotten self-control and moderation and find the yamas and niyamas too difficult. When the hatha yoga kriyas have been completed, then the steps of raja yoga: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana and dhyana will take the spiritual aspirant to samadhi. The scientific way begins with gross matter, the body, and culminates in the finest, samadhi.

Raja yoga – mastery of the mind

The author of the raja yoga philosophy was born 2,500 years ago and was a contemporary of Lord Buddha. His name was Patanjali. Although the system of raja yoga existed long before that, it was he who systematized it in a treatise. He wrote a small book called the *Yoga Philosophy* or the *Yoga of the Eight Steps*. Out of all the texts on yoga, the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali have described the states of meditation. In Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* the first sutra says: "The definition of yoga is to be able to control the mind."

Some people say that the definition of yoga is union of the individual soul with the cosmic soul. Others have their own definitions, but Rishi Patanjali, the codifier of raja yoga, defines yoga precisely as having absolute control over the tendencies of the mind. These tendencies are formations on the superstructure of the mind. Mind is consciousness – *chitta*. The homogeneity of consciousness throws out wave after wave – *vrittis* – just as a pond throws out ripple after ripple when pebbles are thrown into it.

Raja yoga describes the process of evolution to samadhi in eight stages. That is why this science is known as the yoga of eight steps. To practise raja yoga, you have to perfect the eight systematic steps of mental purification for samadhi:

1. *Yama*, self-control
2. *Niyama*, self-discipline
3. *Asana*, a steady and comfortable posture which can be maintained for one, two or three hours without moving the body
4. *Pranayama*, which does not mean breathing in and breathing out, but the gap, the period of retention, between inhalation and exhalation
5. *Pratyahara*, delinking the brain from the senses
6. *Dharana*, pictorial conception or visualization
7. *Dhyana*, total awareness of the object of visualization
8. *Samadhi*, a living experience of the object.

Each step is a preparation for the next and requires a different type of training in order to be perfected. Sage Patanjali has reaffirmed the technique of ashtanga yoga in both its aspects – technically known as *bahiranga*, external, and *antaranga*, internal – for the perfection of yoga.

The raja yoga approach

Raja yoga is a branch of yoga which devises the techniques of dhyana for physical, mental and spiritual unfoldment. Meditation is a process of exhausting the hidden, latent and suppressed desires of the unconscious. Man has in him suppressed emotions too. If these suppressed emotions and

desires are not rooted out, they will manifest themselves in the form of personality errors, physical and mental illnesses like neuroses, psychoses, nervous breakdowns and high blood pressure. One has to have mastered one's emotions and feelings, and risen above petty desires.

You may be able to handle the affairs of society, country, the military and the whole world, but can you handle your own mind? If you cannot handle your own mind, then you cannot handle anything. Meditation makes you master of your own self. But how to do it? Everybody talks about meditation, but nobody knows how to do it. Raja yoga deals in detail with the necessary requisites of meditation: the technique, how to sit, and what to concentrate on.

When you close your eyes and forget yourself; that is not meditation. You have to close your eyes and become aware of an inner point; then you keep going in. If your mind begins wandering, you have to be aware of it. Mind is nothing but consciousness, awareness. Your brain has millions and billions of archetypes in it, and these will have to be known, manifested and seen before you can expect any meditation. Therefore, in meditation you don't have to suppress the thoughts, emotions or impressions. You just concentrate and let anything happen to the mind, it does not matter, because the archetypes within the brain will have to be manifested, experienced and gone through completely. When your mind is one-pointed, that is known as dhyana yoga or meditation. This is one of the greatest achievements of man. One who can meditate can control every situation in life. If man does not know how to meditate, he knows nothing about life.

The definition of raja yoga states that it is complete control over all the manifestations, functions or patterns of consciousness, whether they be conscious, subconscious, unconscious, or anything beyond that. This control over all the patterns of consciousness can be achieved by many methods but the most direct method is meditation, which is known as dhyana yoga. Dhyana means complete awareness. It has been translated as meditation, but this does not convey

the idea which is inherent in the word dhyana. One pointed awareness; awareness of one object for a period of time without intervention of any other thought is dhyana. In the practice of dhyana yoga, in the practice of this yoga of meditation, you try to bring all the tendencies of your mind to focus on one point, one object, whatever that might be. You then try to visualize that object for a particular period of time and you see that the mind does not fluctuate, that the thoughts do not wander away, this way or that way. But it is a difficult thing and you cannot start dhyana yoga all of a sudden. You need preparation and the preparation is in raja yoga.

The state of kaivalya

In raja yoga the ultimate awareness, the ultimate purpose of raja yoga is kaivalya. *Kaivalya* means onliness. Not absolute-ness but onliness. Now I am two, matter and consciousness.

If matter is to be separated from consciousness, then we are separating two great principles. If I am successful in separating consciousness and matter from each other that is the state of consciousness only, that is the state of onliness of consciousness. In meditation, in your spiritual meditation, in raja yoga meditation, when you are completely unaware of yourself, the surroundings, past, present and future, you transcend time, transcend space, transcend ego, the individual 'I'. Consciousness must remain without name and form. No name, no form, no attribute, no qualification, no details, but it is there. What is there nobody knows, but it is there in the form of completely homogeneous, absolute non-relative consciousness. If the trace of matter, the trace of time, space and causation is not there, it is the state of kaivalya or onliness. That is the ultimate goal of a yogi when he has surmounted all his mental and psychological problems.

Samyama

There are three steps that are suggested in raja yoga, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. *Dharana* is the capacity of the mind to hold a concept, *dhyana* means total unfluctuating

awareness of that concept. *Samadhi* means merger of the totality of awareness of the mind in that concept. For example, you are concentrating on a flower, you are able to hold that flower in your mind for a particular period of time, but you are not able to forget yourself, you are aware of time and space that is called concentration. When you are able to hold the concept of the flower in your mind and you are able to forget that you are meditating or concentrating and you are not aware of yourself, you are not aware of the process, then it is called meditation. When you are able to hold the concept of the flower in your mind and the flower within you becomes the living experience and no difference is felt between an external flower and the flower in experience that is called samadhi. All these three practices when they are practised at one instant is known as samyama. Dharana, dhyana and samadhi accomplished at one stretch is samyama.

The bhakti yoga approach

Dharana, dhyana and samadhi are the practices of raja yoga. This is ashtanga yoga which is practised only after bhakti yoga. Read the original shastras and find out when the practice of yoga starts. The first sutra of Maharishi Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* says: *Atha yoganushasanam*. Here the word *atha* means 'now therefore'. 'Now' that you have passed your graduation, you may study further. 'Now' that you have practised bhakti yoga we will tell you the discipline of yoga. This is how it is written in all the sutras.

The first sutra in the *Brahma Sutras* is: *Atha ato Brahma-jijnasa*. 'Now we seek to learn the knowledge of Brahman'. 'Now' indicates that you have practised bhakti yoga and have completed the sadhana of raja yoga, 'now' you can study and practise Vedanta.

For many people it is not possible to make the mind steady in meditation. They can maintain one-pointedness for some time, but then distractions come again. That is why Tulsidas says that self-realization is too high up. The scriptures praise it, but it is extremely difficult to attain. Even



if that state can be reached, the question remains whether it is possible to maintain it. The mind can become steady anywhere. In fact, it is quicker to become one-pointed in bhakti. Only in bhakti yoga can the human mind stabilize itself easily. This is because bhakti is based on *bhavana*, emotions, and yoga is based on *sadhana*, practice. *Sadhana* needs to be cultivated, it requires effort, while *bhavana* just needs to be consolidated and channelled. *Bhavana* for your children, your wife, your enemies and for your friends already exists in you. It is strong and deep; it is not superficial. If you hate somebody, you cannot sleep at night, or if somebody in the family is sick, you do not feel like eating. These strong emotions, flowing in all directions, right and wrong, just need to be redirected, like the course of a river.

Bhakti has to be developed. For the awakening of bhakti, guru comes first, second is kirtan, and third is satsang. In meditation there should be nothing in one's mind but guru, nothing but the deity.

According to the great gurus of the past, the mind becomes one-pointed spontaneously by the practice of bhakti yoga, in the form of kirtan, satsang and reading about the lives of great saints. Without adding bhakti yoga to one's spiritual sadhana, dissipation of the mind cannot be stopped. Bhakti yoga helps to concentrate the mind. Without removing the mental dissipation, it is not possible to attain dhyana yoga or samadhi. The spade work has to be done. Just sitting in *padmasana*, the lotus posture, will not help. There has to be preparation.

The karma yoga approach

The life of a householder was designed not merely to enjoy or while away time, but in order to work out the rajasic and tamasic properties of nature. A householder has the opportunity of expressing, releasing, and working out his karmas in the form of passions, desires and ambitions, as well as experiencing the agonies, happiness, fears, frustration, hatred, jealousy and thousands of other traits that belong to the lower mind, to tamoguna and rajoguna. Through the involvement of the ego with every situation, person and experience in life, the lower, dormant nature comes out. Therefore, be involved in everything, and by the involvement of ego with many events in life, work out the karmas.

It must be remembered that without working out these crude and gross karmas, one cannot experience the light that is within. First clean the mirror; then the face can be seen; clean the globe of the bulb and the light will shine through. Thus, within a person the dross has to be cleaned, and that is the purpose of *grihastha* or householder ashrama.

The second way the karmas can be worked out is by going deep into meditation: pratyahara, dharana or dhyana, and expressing or transforming those samskaras in the form of visions. In the stages of pratyahara and dharana a lot of visions and feelings are experienced. This means one has not lost the individual ego. One is still at the level of duality.

These experiences in meditation are only a transformed vision of one's samskara. One is expressing the samskara

in that form. This can happen in the state of pratyahara, dharana, dhyana or in the early stages of samadhi. The deeper one goes, the greater is the fixing process of the samskara.

Karma yoga involves the totality of one's existence. It is a dynamic expression, a dynamic experience which is in keeping with the laws of nature. Dhyana yoga, or meditation, is not in keeping with the laws of nature, it is anti-creativity. This is clearly written in raja yoga. There are two different processes in life: one is the process of creation and experience, the other is the process of dissolution. In dhyana yoga one is dissolving the experiences, transcending or jumping over time and space. In meditation there comes a time when creation no longer exists; it is a process of return. In raja yoga this is called *pratiprasava*, or involution.

Meditation, or any spiritual practice for that matter, will lead one into darkness without karma yoga. Horrible things will be seen in meditation unless *chitta shuddhi*, purity of mind, has been attained. Once we accept ourselves we can begin the true karma yoga of self-cultivation. Pruning, tearing out the weeds and thorny bushes of our personality, and preparation of the soil for future growth can start. From this we begin to know ourselves and to extend our freedom of movement by overcoming our limitations. Once we begin to experience the inner flow of karma yoga and realize that the work we do on the outside is but a reflection of the work on the inside, then every job, no matter how menial, becomes a joy.

When the state of dhyana is achieved we realize that we are not the doer of our actions, for everything is going on around us automatically via the laws of karma, cause and effect. The body and mind are unceasingly engaged in the constant struggles of life. However, the experience of dhyana awakens in us the tangible and totally convincing reality that we are beyond the tools of mind and body – we are the observer. At this point, all external rules and regulations for living, all methods and systems for attaining to higher awareness become obsolete, because we have transferred our

flow of awareness to the internal, and having overcome the pull of the lower nature away from the spirit, automatically live a life of selfless service. This is not because we think we should or because others have said so but because through the realization of dhyana we see there is no other way to attain and maintain joy.

Of course, dhyana yoga has its own importance. However, to equate karma yoga with dhyana yoga is like preparing a kilo of vegetables and adding two kilos of salt. Those who want to practise dhyana yoga for long hours must understand that they are plunging into something over which they have no control. In the course of time, a half-hour practice of meditation changes the biochemical laws of the body.

When a person practises meditation, or dhyana yoga, he is playing with his consciousness, more specifically, the left side of the consciousness. While practising karma yoga, a person is playing with the right side of his consciousness. Ida and pingala are the two wings of a yogi. A bird cannot fly with one wing; it can only fly with two wings. In the same way, karma yoga and raja yoga are the two wings of the practitioner, just as *chitta* and *prana*, consciousness and vital force, are the two wings of the soul.

The approach of tantra

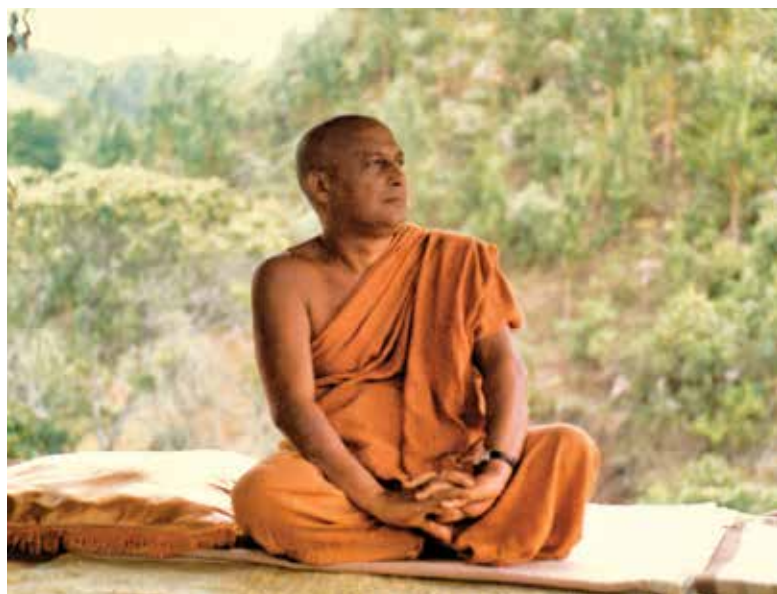
All the practices of awakening the inner life in man consist basically of two methods. One is becoming one with supreme consciousness, forgetting everything that is outside. There is another way which most people have not heard about, and I will tell you about it. The first way is the way of yoga and the second is the way of tantra.

One is the practice of going in, and the other is the practice of not going in but developing the inner outwards. One is the practice of ascending and the other is the practice of descending. In the first, you close your eyes; you withdraw your mind, forget the external world and forget everything. Sit down for half an hour, calm and quiet, then come out and face the world. Some people are suited to this way.

The other way involves no concentration, no meditation, no control of the mind, but there is some practice to be done. With this practice the psychic centres in the body have got to be awakened, and when those centres in the body are awakened you develop a state of consciousness so that you live in the world, work in the world, you face the world, the difficulties, the problems, and at the same time you are at a higher level. These are the two methods, eternally known as the systems of yoga and tantra.

Tantra is yoga, because it accomplishes two things. First, it expresses the consciousness, and second it liberates the consciousness. It is possible for everybody, belonging to any status in life, belonging to any religious denomination. Even if you do not believe in God, or belong to any strata of ethics and morality, it is possible to develop something peculiar in man, something unseen and imperceptible in man, that higher experience. This higher experience should be developed as a part of life, not away from life. So the aim of yoga is to develop the higher consciousness in man, and the techniques applied for this purpose should be in accord with your mental conditions and they either belong to yoga or tantra.

Etymologically, tantra is a combination of two ideas. One idea is the expansion of mind and the other is the liberation of energy. The meaning of tantra therefore is a process by which we expand our consciousness and thereby liberate the energy. Tantra may be explained as the most ancient spiritual civilization of mankind. Not only in this century but forever and ever into the past, man has been exploring the possibility of expanding the frontiers of his consciousness. Everybody was not necessarily aware of the terrible limitations of his mind. Even today there are people, and they are in millions, who are not aware of the limitations of their mind. But still we have a growing population in this century who have experienced the limitations of the mind. At the same time, they have had experiences of the unlimited mind, the expanded consciousness. Many have always been trying for these two things consciously, as well as, unconsciously.



If one of your psychic centres is awakened, what will happen? You will see your father as father, your mother as mother, father and daughter, husband and wife as such, your office, job, money, car, television, everything, and nothing will vanish. But the depth of awareness will change.

What is expansion of consciousness? We know that our mind has its limitations. It receives information through the sensory channels, and depending upon this reception it has knowledge, cognition and perception. If you have no eyes you will be unable to see, and if you are deaf the sense of hearing fails. The senses provide stimuli upon the basis of which the mind functions. This is therefore the limitation of human consciousness. The perceptions are dependent upon the quality, quantity and procedure of the sensory activities. Is it then possible, if the sensory channels are disassociated, if the consciousness of the brain is isolated, to have cognition, perception and knowledge? Is cognition a quality of the mind or is it dependent upon the stimuli that is sent to the brain?

In tantra the consciousness is a homogeneous entity. Even without association of the senses, it is possible to have knowledge, cognition and perception. But we do not have it, because our consciousness is not given the chance to experience the homogeneity. The consciousness is homogeneous, yet not all of it is functioning. In this relative world of senses, a part or an aspect of consciousness is in operation. The other areas of consciousness are silent; they are dormant, inactive. If we know the way to operate these silent areas of consciousness then we can experience the homogeneous quality of mind. This homogeneous quality of the mind is the subject matter of tantra.

The most important way in which this is done in the system of tantra is by meditation. Meditation is known as dhyana, and in raja yoga, dhyana is the seventh step. However, in tantra, meditation continues right from the beginning. The usual way to meditate is by closing our eyes and facing our mental perceptions. The consciousness has to expand, to keep on flowing through and through, but you need not come into confrontation with the area of perception. When you practise, an awakening takes place in mooladhara chakra. It does not matter what is happening to your mind. It does not matter what you are thinking. It also does not matter what the nature is of the fantasies and imaginations in your mind. Nor does it matter if your mind is thinking horrible things. That is the nature of the mind.

In raja yoga it is said, “Whenever your mind gets distracted from the object of meditation, bring it back to the point of meditation;” whereas, in tantra, it is said, “Whichever way your mind goes, follow it; do not pull the mind.” If you think of a flower, visualize it; if the idea of a snake comes in your mind, visualize that; if the idea of a skull comes in your mind, visualize that; if there is a happy memory or unhappy memory, visualize everything.

In tantra the science of kundalini is very important. At the base of the spine there is a very important centre known as mooladhara chakra. At the top of the spine is another

important centre known as ajna chakra. In between these two psychic centres are four more centres and the six centres are situated in an important channel known as sushumna. This channel connects mooladhara chakra at the base of the spine with ajna chakra at the top. Sushumna is very important in the practices of yoga in general, and in the practice of meditation in particular.

When the consciousness is isolated, when it is disconnected from the sensory association, then the vibration begins at the bottom of the spine in mooladhara chakra. In tantra the practices of meditation are organized and the system is created in such a way that first of all the energy resonates in mooladhara chakra.

In kundalini yoga the awakening of mooladhara chakra by certain practices has been accepted. That is because awakening at mooladhara chakra causes the waves of energy, *shakti*, to rise high through sushumna nadi to ajna chakra. *Ajna chakra* is the monitoring centre. It is translated from Sanskrit as meaning 'the command centre', 'ordering centre', 'monitoring centre'. You have to know how to monitor ajna chakra, and to close the eyes and bury the perceptions by force is not the right way. It is wrong to consider that thought is psychological stuff. We hate some of them, we do not like them and that sometimes brings a psychological tragedy. We are not aware of this.

For us meditation has reached a state of mind in which everything has become what we call unconscious; as though meditation is not a dynamic process of life. As if meditation is a total elimination of the functions of mind and consciousness. At least in tantra this is unacceptable. What is the fun of eliminating the structure, in hypnotizing the processes of mind, what after all are we going to gain by that? The meditation should be aimed at creating a process of activity, dynamism; in the language of tantra, awakening.

The present state of your mind must follow a process of awakening and not a process of hypnotism. This is the fundamental difference between the process which

most people understand as meditation and the tantric meditation. I believe it is impossible to awaken the mind by suppressing it; by withdrawing the perceptions of the mind. Mind is continuous activity, a continuous flow of events and experiences. Every experience that arises in the mind is in the form of energy patterns. Every experience is the resonance of a wave of energy. A thought is not psychological stuff or a biological action; it is a resonant wave of energy. How are you going to define experience or perceptions? What is cognition? What is knowledge? Resonant waves of energy. And what are you going to do in meditation? You are switching them off and that is not the way. Unless the awakening takes place in the psychic realm of the human being it is never going to be possible to reach those areas of meditation.

The objective of tantra is to awaken the silent areas of consciousness. Tantric meditation is not achieved if you just close your eyes. In the practices of tantra, the practices of kriya are therefore of utmost importance. Kriya yoga practices bring about a change of energy level in the whole structure, and this energy level is known as the level of Shakti. We have therefore been telling people in the east and the west that we have to know the objective of meditation.

There arises a question. If there is a tantric meditation, is there any other form of meditation as well? Sure, there are other forms which are equally effective. Then what is the difference between the tantric and other forms of meditation? In other systems of meditation, emphasis is laid on concentration of mind and control of the *vruttis*, the perceptions. But in tantra we bypass the behaviours of the mind, and do not come into confrontation with the nature of the mind.

9

Dhyana in Other Traditions



Meditation was once a necessary part of man's life and its practice was not confined to any one religion, culture, or select groups of individuals. Though its methods of practice vary, meditation was known worldwide, in every religion and culture from ancient Egypt to the contemporary Eskimo and American Indian.

All forms of meditation and spiritual practice have been a means of turning off the outside world in an effort to open a channel within, through which the higher forces could enter, the invisible could be perceived, or the presence of God could be felt. This channel can only be opened when one can lose one's consciousness of the 'I' or ego and free the mind from its impurities or from its attachment to the material world. In meditation one tries to make oneself pure and humble so as to be open to something higher and divine.

The fundamental principles of meditation are really the same. Since all people, including the Zen masters, the yogis, the monks of Tibet and the dervishes all have the same kind of nervous system, it is not surprising that similarities in techniques should exist.

In many systems, from the time of childhood, meditation was commonly practised by all. A child learned the methods of practising from his family members just as naturally as he was shown the way to interact with others, partake of food and so forth. In other cultures meditation was more of an esoteric practice conveyed only to spiritual seekers by a guru. It is only in the more recent times that methods of meditation have been recorded in books, and even so, written hundreds of years later, much important information has probably not survived such a great time lapse.

Dhyana – a world culture

Foremost among these cultures was ancient Egypt, which supported a highly developed system of meditative and spiritual life based upon the realization of man's nature as an embodiment of immortal universal powers, principles and forces.

Similarly, in the culture of ancient Greece, both the spirit of western philosophy and the modern mode of scientific enquiry had their origins, largely through the teachings of one of the most well-known lineages of jnana yoga gurus in the world, that of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.

Another ancient European spiritual tradition was that of the Druids, the line of ascetics and teachers among the

Celtic tribes of Britain, France and other peoples of northern Europe up to the time of the Roman invasion. Finally, the small communities of yogis and ascetics known as Essenes, who lived in ashram communities in the Palestinian desert adjacent to the Dead Sea, at the time when two of their most well-known initiates, John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ, were wandering and teaching in Palestine.

The cultures of the western world are today learning the art and science of meditation and higher life anew, largely through the influence of eastern spiritual teachers. In fact, there are perhaps more practitioners of yogic meditation in the western countries today than in India. This spiritual rebirth from the east has been necessary because the western world all but lost contact with its meditative traditions during the Dark Ages of European history, when, in the midst of religious persecutions, sectarian wars and political and ideological struggles, whole peoples and cultures lost contact with their own systems of meditation and higher life. Throughout a period of many centuries, those who sought spiritual realization outside of boundaries of the orthodox religious tradition of that time, were in danger of being persecuted. It is largely for this reason that the western meditative practices have remained shrouded in secrecy.

When considered in this light, it becomes clear that the meditative sciences, so crucial for a person's higher development and understanding, are not being suddenly discovered by the western world today, but are making a long overdue reappearance.

Christianity

Some sects of Christianity, notably the Catholic and Greek Orthodox, utilize ishta devata sadhana. Their churches and homes are adorned with many images of Christ, his mother, the various saints and so on. The images such as the cross, or a particular form of Jesus or his mother Mary, become deeply impressed in the consciousness of the practitioners in the same way that *trataka* on a candle flame, a picture or a symbol

is used in yoga to induce sense withdrawal or *pratyahara*. This leads to concentration of the mind or *dharana* and meditation or *dhyana*.

Islam

Islam is almost entirely a devotional religion. It has produced Sufism which is noted for its intense bhaktas. Sufism emphasizes the use of dancing, music and singing. Its followers do prescribe dancing steps while chanting mantras. This purifies the heart and accentuates the feeling of bhakti. Awareness is heightened and the mind becomes more one-pointed. The ego drops away and so in turn does the veil of delusion. This leads to eventual transcendence and realization.

The most well-known mantra used in Islam is 'la ilaha illa'llah' which means 'there is no God but God'. This is repeated over and over again like japa. In Islam this process is called zikr, and it is said that the zikr (remembrance), the zakir (person who remembers) and the mazkur (remembered one) become united through intense practice and devotion. This is exactly the same as in yoga and bhakti yoga and many other systems.

Eventually, with intense bhakti there arises an effortless flow of awareness to the object of devotion. This is called fana, and is comparable to dhyana or meditation. This eventually leads to baqua, which is called samadhi in yoga. This is the exact parallel of raja yoga but in the field of bhakti yoga. There is always emphasis on the ascent of devotion so that it can receive the descent of grace.

Buddhism

Meditation is known as dhyana yoga. This is part of the ancient culture of India. Over 2,500 years ago, Lord Buddha used to teach dhyana yoga to thousands of disciples and his teachings spread all over the world. His disciples carried the practical aspects of dhyana yoga all over the world because that was the central teaching of Buddha.

His disciples went to China and the science of dhyana yoga was established there. The Chinese call it chan, because that is how they pronounce it. Then it went to Japan where it was known as jhana and then shortened to Zen. Dhyana, chan, Zen, meditation, total attention, total awareness – it is all the same.

One of Buddha's basic teachings is that the world is full of suffering. This is not a statement of despair, but a means to wake people up to their current way and quality of life. It was intended to give people a kick so that they questioned their unhappiness and started to seek higher levels of being. The aim of Buddhism is the same as all other systems – supreme knowledge. It is only the methods that appear to differ. Yet its methods are basically raja yoga and jnana yoga.

Buddha taught just one thing - meditation, dhyana. Wherever he went he used to conduct only meditation, and thousands of laymen and ascetic disciples used to practise it. Buddhism as a religion may have mingled with thousands of branches of vedic dharma. It has not ended either in India or in any other country. No philosophy, no dharma, no religion has been lost in India.

Jainism

In some Jain texts, like Subhadra's *Jnanarnava* (800 CE) there are several chapters on yoga as well as long discussions on asana, pranayama, mandala, dharana and dhyana.

In the *Tattvarthasarakopika*, a Jain manual from the fifteenth century, there are various techniques for awakening kundalini and the pranic centres in the body. Aspirants are instructed to imagine lotus flowers where the chakras are situated and to visualize them with different numbers of petals, each inscribed with a letter or mystical syllable. Jains practised *preksha* dhyana as a means of gaining insight into the soul. *Preksha* means 'to go inside and look'. To develop this ability one works constantly at cultivating awareness and freeing oneself from thoughts and attachments, likes and dislikes. It is by releasing oneself from these tendencies that equilibrium results and one's ability to see and understand increases.

10

Conclusion



Today yoga has become a universal culture, a part of day-to-day life. The science of yoga has impressed people so much that it is now well known and accepted by everyone. However, there still remains a powerful and important aspect of yoga to be taught and that is the science of dhyana yoga.

In yoga you have to reverse from matter to energy, from energy you go back to consciousness. This energy needs meditation, *dhyana yoga*. These are the rules: sit down quietly, close your eyes, fix your mind, forget everything and go in as much as you can. Day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, go in. You should not be in a hurry. However, you have to bear in mind that dhyana yoga is the key. It does not mean that you have to put yourself under undue strain.

How do we evolve? What is the way? By thinking do we evolve? No, by meditation we evolve. Which way should we progress, outward or inward? Inward. Inward progress is evolution. Outward progress is not evolution. When man becomes extroverted, he falls from the Garden of Eden. When man becomes introverted, he ascends to heaven. Meditation is a science by which man can evolve into a superman. Being superman is your destiny. Superman is a man who lives with intuition, with inner awareness.

The inner dimensions

When the mind becomes aware of one object continuously without interruption, it is said that the mind has attained the state of dhyana yoga. In the state of dhyana yoga the mind becomes free from the external influences and more and more aware of the inner states. By following the process of dhyana yoga, concentration on a particular point, you are achieving a process of liberation. It is a process of fusion. When you sit down for meditation, each and every thought or emotion that arises in the mind is the form of the mind, and you are withdrawing it.

Concentration is the key to open the gates of that greatest power. When you successfully concentrate on one idea or form, you enter into dhyana. Whether you are a devotee of God or an atheist, you can realize the glory through meditation. A person having faith in God can meditate on any chosen form of God, through which he will realize him. An atheist also can be given a way to reach the destination. He can either meditate on a flower, or on a star, or on the tip

of the nose, or between the eyebrows, or on the heart and so on.

Whichever form you perceive in dhyana is just a sakara roopa of your nirakara atman. Beyond gross consciousness, there is astral consciousness. Beyond even that is the causal consciousness or the *karana sharira*. When a man is awake, his powers are limited. When his sense capacities are withdrawn, the powers are proportionately increased. When he is emptied of all sense capacities, sense experiences and sense vibrations, his omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence find unlimited scope of expression which hitherto was obstructed by impurity, distraction and illusion.

Meditation is not necessarily concentration on God, it is realization of the inner dimension of your personality. You have much more within than you know. Therefore, it is important that everybody should devote ten minutes each day to its discovery. With meditation you start a new chapter in your life. Once you are involved in dhyana yoga and in doing your practices in the correct way, your experiences and personality will become steady and lasting. Your attitude towards yourself and your life will be fantastic.

Tapping into the infinite

The practice will show you the way to the nucleus of your existence, to the centre of your personality. The questions and doubts that people have been asking throughout the ages, "Where am I coming from and where am I going?" will automatically be answered. We have come to understand and believe the importance of dhyana yoga for human evolution, for gaining total control over the pranic and mental forces, in order to enable us to cast out diseases and soothe the mind. More than that, we have to develop the art of dhyana yoga, wherein the eyes are closed but the mind is expanding and becoming more and more brilliant, more aware. Where this little world of name and form alone is not there, but where the infinite existence is before us in an ever-expanding vision of universal life.

As such we should not see it as a practice for sannyasins or yogis who want to achieve advanced states of concentration. Dhyana can be practised by those who believe in a higher reality and by those who do not. It can be practised by those who want to attain samadhi and also by those who have no thought of samadhi but want their brain, heart, lungs and endocrine glands to function properly. This is the importance of dhyana yoga in our modern age. Yoga is ageless and somewhere we have to make a move and the direction is dhyana yoga.

In order to experience the absolute, you have to transcend time, space and matter, for in the absolute realm of existence these concepts do not exist. Bound in the mind, they are relative. Through dhyana we can rise above this relativity, myth, fiction and false imagination, and begin to realize the real life beyond time, space and matter. In the state of dhyana, one does not lose anything. One still maintains knowledge of the waking, dreaming and sleeping consciousness. One doesn't forget them, but in addition *turiya*, the transcendental state, is known.

By dedicating yourself to the spiritual purpose, and by pursuing this path with the utmost sincerity and diligence, you have equilibrium, understanding of yourself, and confidence in what you exist for. All the saints and sages have realized that the real riches, the real prosperity, and the real wealth, lies within one's own self. Therefore, side by side with the outer life you have been leading so far, you must diligently pursue and follow the inner path of dhyana yoga.

The rishis of India realized the relationship between the mind and life. Life influences the mind and the mind influences life. If you can control either one, you are a mahatma or a saint. Of course, you can't control life – it is just not possible. But with the help of dhyana yoga, you can manage the mind. If you are able to manage the mind, then you are a yogi. Our purpose is to listen, to think, to learn how we shall be able to withdraw ourselves to the innermost temple of our being, where a great power resides.

No one who has experienced meditation will be lost in the whirlpool of desires and passion. The senses can't see the chamber of meditation. Experiences of meditation are undying. Pure reason alone can peep into that chamber. No wise man will like to renounce meditation. The eyes see diversity. The ears hear diverse sounds. Similarly, so do the other senses. Not so in dhyana. Because the senses can't exist in meditation. Even as an intoxicated man also discharges his duties, even as a mother engaged with her baby doesn't miss her duties, likewise a dhyana yogi works; of course, the spirit is different. Love of God is the last, fastest and best and the only tamer of mind.

The purpose of meditation is not to find God, but to find the man in life. By the practice of dhyana, by the practice of meditation it becomes possible to come closer to yourself. The barrier between me and the external becomes much weaker. So much so, that in meditation you arrive at a time where you feel, 'I am I.' and that is known as the knowledge of Self.

The purpose of yoga is to develop a higher, a finer, a nobler and dignified awareness in man, and it includes non-violence, it includes purity of intention, and proper integration in your social life and in your society. This higher awareness is not present in us now, because we are passing through a phase which is too dense with conflict and confusion.

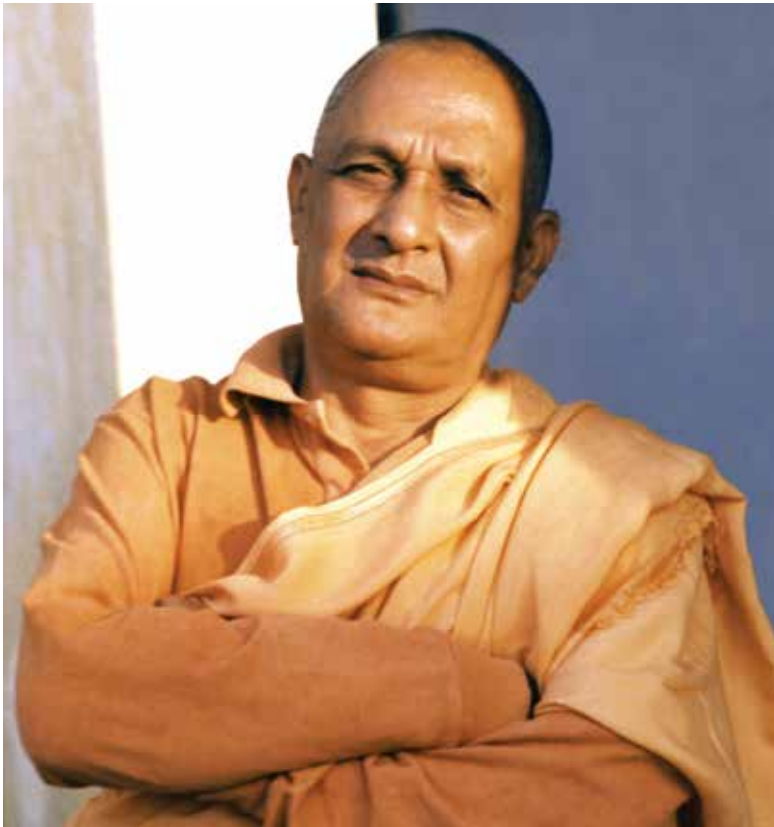
The final point

As a race, we are advancing in our external realization. We have gone far in our scientific advancements and have developed technology and the external material aspects of society. However, it seems that in the last few thousand years we have not stirred a bit on the spiritual plane. It seems that our consciousness has been very static. Why has it been like this? Why have only a few people received enlightenment? Are only a few people destined for illumination? Is truth the destiny of only a few selected people? Is truth only a destiny

for those who are pure and divine? Or is enlightenment the birthright of everybody?

In my short span of life, I have come to this point of realization: man is born for enlightenment. Enlightenment is the purpose of human incarnation. If only he is exposed to a spiritual life, humankind can move from its present state of stagnation. Thus we visualize meditation as an important ingredient of social revolution. Yoga stops with meditation; meditation is the epilogue, the conclusion, and the essence of yoga.

The practice of dhyana yoga is of utmost importance, because it will become the basis of the future world cultures.





Satyam Speaks Series presents compilations of Sri Swami Satyananda's teachings on yoga. Each book explores a specific topic, concept or practice. The aim is to provide an easy way to understand and incorporate various components of the immense science of yoga vidya into one's daily life. *Satyam Speaks Series* is a tribute to Sri Swami Satyananda, his teaching and to yoga vidya. *Satyam Speaks Series* is an invitation to all sincere seekers to live yoga and thereby make the world a better place.

Dhyana, or meditation, the seventh stage of sage Patanjali's raja yoga, is total awareness, unbroken, undivided, not dissipated, complete awareness. This volume outlines the journey towards maintaining continuous awareness and it's aim.

Note: This series is for knowledge only. The practices must be learnt from an accomplished yoga master.

