

# Meditation as a Means to Self-knowledge

by

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*The following article was written by Gopi Krishna during a visit to Europe in March, 1972.*

What I am presenting before you now is based on a remarkable experience I had thirty-five years ago, which has continued undiminished till now. This experience shows that there is a Divine Key, a psychosomatic lever in the human brain and nervous system which, with meditation, worship and prayer, coupled with self-discipline, can lead to a beatific state of Higher Consciousness.

It is safe to assume that the desire for meditation is an innate tendency of the human mind and has been in evidence for the past many thousand years. Meditation, in the generally accepted sense of the term, is concentration with a spiritual objective. Patanjali, the most renowned authority on Yoga in India, divides meditation into three parts. *Dhāranā*, which means concentration in the preliminary stage. Then *dhyāna* which means stabilized concentration for a certain length of time. Finally, *samādhi* which means complete absorption in one thought or object to the exclusion of every other thought, and even sense impressions. During Samadhi one becomes oblivious to the world. The object of developing the practice of meditation to the point where only one object remains, as the focus of attention, and all other flow is arrested, is to create a condition of stillness in the mind so that the Reality behind our thoughts, fancies, passions and desires becomes manifest. When this unveiling occurs a new, glorious world is opened before the inner vision of the seeker practising the discipline.

A definite tendency to absorbed states of mind at times is also noticed in children and infants. We often see the chubby little things looking at some object that has excited their curiosity, with an expression of deep absorption on their sweet faces, as if trying to probe into the very depth of it. Sometimes the state of absorption is so deep that the least disturbing noise or the close approach of somebody wakes them up from their abstraction with a start. The idea prevalent in many countries is that the child has the possibility of entering into other planes of being, enwrapping it in golden dreams and visions which it sees and raptly contemplates at times. This can be possible because the mind of the child is not too much agitated by the fret and fever of the world. The human child, during its growth does not only repeat the aeonian history of the race, but also symbolizes the distant future of mankind, by its beautiful

abstracted states at times, pointing to the age when man shall have learned to explore the inner universe of consciousness, more extended and more marvellous than the universe perceived with our senses.

In all the intellectual and creative work, concentration and absorption play a most important role. In fact, creative talent or genius is inseparable from absorption. We have heard of or read the stories about the intense states of absorption of men and women of genius, like Newton and others. During the creative periods of a talented individual, an abrupt interruption or disturbance is not only highly disagreeable but may also cause a shock. It was necessary to mention these facts to show that meditation or sustained concentration is a natural process. The same is true when meditation is used for God-realization. If we now turn to average men and women, we find here also that it is the moments of intense absorption that provide them with the happiest, most beautiful and most harmonious intervals in their life.

A few illustrations are enough to make clear what I say. Everyone knows with what concentrated attention one reads a most interesting and fascinating novel or story. We are absorbed in it heart and soul for the time being and, not un-often, postpone our other work just to have the time to complete it without disturbance and distraction. When we listen to enrapturing music, when we see a masterpiece of painting or sculpture, when we watch a fascinating drama or a motion picture, when we see a grand panorama of Nature, when we read of the exploits of space travellers and from their eyes, see the pictures of our earth as a small rotating globe far away, we often enter into deep, absorbed states of our mind, and then forget ourselves and our surroundings in the intensity of our feelings, for the time being. The same happens in the play of love. We forget ourselves and the world in the ecstasy of this contact and remain in a state of intense absorption all the period while the contact lasts, forgetting even the flow of time.

I have dwelt on these aspects of deep engrossment of our attention to show that, apart from its religious or spiritual significance, meditation or a deep state of absorption of the mind plays a signal role in our lives. But why is it that this state of deep concentration is necessary for the intellectual and the man or woman of genius for their creative activity, and also for the average men and women of the happiest, most thrilling and most beautiful moments in their life? It is because at such moments we come nearer to our soul, the Fountain-Head of all knowledge, all science, all art, all music, all happiness and all the exquisite sensations which we enjoy. They do not come from our learning, skill or practice, or from the instrument and object which we employ, but from the unfathomed depths of our own being, which is a drop in the Ocean of Infinite Existence.

All spiritual exercises and all methods of meditation, all modes of worship and prayer, enjoined by the founders of religions and great spiritual teachers, are all directed to achieve one purpose and one purpose alone, and that is to reach the deeper levels of the soul, and through it to God or the Universal Spir-

it, the Eternal Source of all. The mystic in trance or the yogi in Samadhi attains to a state of concentration where he is entirely absorbed in the contemplation of this Source of all beauty, all harmony, all life and all happiness in the universe. It is for this reason that it is called *sat-chit-ananda* or Existence-Consciousness-Bliss by the Indian sages. It is a concentrated state of blissful consciousness, impossible to describe.

It might be asked what are the surest means and infallible methods to reach this Sun of Happiness, this glorious, Cosmic Plane of Being in which the mortal lives constantly in contact with his immortal soul, free from fear and grief. I have no answer to this question nor, to the best of my knowledge, is there a positive answer to this question in the revealed scriptures of any faith, nor in the Bible, nor the Vedas, nor the Bhagavad-Gita, nor Quran, nor Dhammapada nor in any other scripture.

The reason is that we do not deal here with material objectives. We do not aspire here to have wealth, to cross an ocean, to make a discovery, to climb a mountain, to gain power or to visit the Moon, but we are here aspiring to gain approach to the Ocean of Consciousness that feeds all life in the universe, the Lord, the Creator, and it is not we who can decide when He will grant the audience, but it is for Him and Him alone. All we can do is to hope, to aspire, to make right effort, to have the longing in our heart and to shape our whole life in a way to make this dream possible.

There is no secret entrance, nor royal road, no magic key to reach the Author of our Being. We have to try for it, with all our heart and soul and leave the decision in His hands. There is no magical formula or mantra or secret method of meditation that can work miracles and carry us to higher states of consciousness by the momentum of our own efforts without Grace Divine. This is a point on which all religions and all systems of Yoga and other religious disciplines are agreed. The door must be opened from the inside. We cannot force it.

A realization of this point is of greatest importance in our approach to meditation and the choice of the methods employed and practiced. We should realize that we can only knock at the door and continue knocking till our prayer is heard and the door is unlocked. An understanding of this fact can be of greatest help to us and save from pain and disappointment. Viewed from this angle, meditation becomes a part and parcel of our lives, a life-long occupation, a permanent duty that we owe to God. We have not to hurry, we have not to find magical methods, but we have to tune our mind so that the thought of God and the Divine is never far from it.

We can attend to all our occupations and duties without the least hindrance and, perhaps, even more efficiently if divine thoughts always occupy a place at the back of our minds. This is Sahaja Yoga, the easiest and most effective form of spiritual discipline. It is prescribed by every great religious teacher of the past. This is what Christ means when he says love your God with all your heart and soul, because a beloved object occupies a permanent

place in the thoughts of the lover. When we are able to think of a beloved sweetheart a hundred times a day, without impairing the efficiency of our work, we should also be able to do it with the Divine if our thirst is real. The same is taught by Buddha and the Bhagavad-Gita. Keep the Divine always in your mind.

This is the safest method, for no force is necessary. The mind can become habituated to it with slow, gradual practice. As I have said, this has to be a life-long practice and search. The constant remembrance of God, the holiest of the holy, is to be followed by purity in thought and conduct. The world has not to be given up, the desires have not to be totally denied. They are a part and parcel of human life. But moderation has to be exercised to keep the thought on God. Otherwise, desires and passions consume all our energy and time. Moderation and purity of mind are therefore essential and form an integral part of meditation.

But wherefrom comes this desire for meditation, this urge to attain to an inner state of peace and beatitude or to experience God? This is because our brains are still evolving, because mankind has to reach a higher state of consciousness for which there is a special arrangement in the brain and nervous system of man. This mechanism is not yet known to scholars. It is my earnest wish to make this divine power-reservoir known to the world of science. It is because of this possibility in our brain that our meditational exercise succeeds. It is necessary that this knowledge should become well known, because once it is known, meditation for gaining a higher state of consciousness by stimulating this centre in the brain, known as *Brahma-randhra* in India, will become an integral part of human life, leading to a glorious state of consciousness, conducive to peace and happiness of the world.