

## THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATION – Man Know thyself-

### *Atmanam atmana pasya "Raise the self by the self"*

What is meditation and why should one meditate at all?

Modification of the thinking principle...

Beyond all the mental and psycho-physiological benefits of meditation as we witness in the society the ultimate goal of meditation is to “to bring the lower personality in conscious touch with the Higher Self, thus making it increasingly aware of its divine origin, destiny, and nature” and for every man of every race to realise through such a practice that the Spiritual Self of man is forever an integral part of the Spiritual Self of the Universe”

“These three, meditation, concentration, will, have engaged the attention of Theosophists perhaps more than any other three subjects. A canvass of opinions would probably show that the majority of our reading and thinking members would rather hear these subjects discussed and read definite directions about them than any others in the entire field.

They say they must meditate, they declare a wish for concentration, they would like a powerful will, and they sigh for strict directions, readable by the most foolish theosophist. It is a western cry for a curriculum, a course, a staked path, a line and rule by inches and links. Yet the path has long been outlined and described, so that anyone could read the directions whose mind had not been half-ruined by modern false education, and memory rotted by the superficial methods of a superficial literature and a wholly vain modern life.”

~ William Q. Judge, *Meditation, Concentration, Will* ~

“Let us divide Meditation into two sorts. First is the meditation practiced at a set time, or an occasional one, whether by design or from physiological idiosyncrasy. Second is the meditation of an entire lifetime, that single thread of intention, intentness, and desire running through the years stretching between the cradle and the grave. For the first, in Patanjali’s Aphorisms will be found all needful rules and particularity. If these are studied and not forgotten, then practice must give results. How many of those who reiterate the call for instruction on this head have read that book, only to turn it down and never again consider it? Far too many.”

~ William Q. Judge, *Meditation, Concentration, Will* ~

The mysterious subtle thread of a life meditation is that which is practiced every hour by philosopher, mystic, saint, criminal, artist, artisan, and merchant. It is pursued in respect to that on which the heart is set; it rarely languishes; at times the meditating one greedily running after money, fame, and power looks up briefly and sighs for a better life during a brief interval, but the passing flash of a dollar or a sovereign recalls him to his modern senses, and the old meditation begins again.

Since all theosophists are here in the social whirl I refer to, they can every one take these words to themselves as they please. Very certainly, if their life meditation is fixed low down near the ground, the results flowing to them from it will be strong, very lasting, and related to the low level on which they work. Their semi-occasional meditations will give precisely semi-occasional results in the long string of recurring births. ~ William Q. Judge, *Meditation, Concentration, Will* ~

There must be in us a power of discernment, the cultivation of which will enable us to know whatever is desired to be known. That there is such a power is affirmed by teachers of occultism, and the way to acquire it is by cultivating concentration.

~ William Q. Judge, *culture of Concentration* ~

**“Anger, vanity, envy and fear are hindrances for successful concentration”**

~ William Q. Judge, *culture of Concentration* ~

“For the self is held to be that designated in the Indian books as Iswara, which is a portion of the eternal spirit enshrined in each human body. That this is the Indian view there is no doubt. The *Bhagavad-Gita* in ch. xv says that an eternal portion of this spirit, having assumed life in this world of life, attracts the heart and the five senses which belong to nature. Whatever body Iswara enters or quits, it is connected with it by snatching those senses from nature, even as the breeze snatches perfumes from their very bed. This spirit approaches the objects of sense by presiding over the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste, and the smell, and also over the heart; and in an earlier chapter, the Supreme spirit within this body is called the Spectator and admonisher, sustainer, enjoyer, great Lord, and also highest soul; and again, the Supreme eternal soul, even when existing within — or connected with — the body, is not polluted by the actions of the body.

Elsewhere in these books this same spirit is called the self, as in a celebrated sentence which in Sanskrit is *Atmanam atmana pasya*, meaning, "Raise the self by the self," and all through the Upanishads, where the self is constantly spoken of as the same as the Iswara of *Bhagavad-Gita*. Max Müller thinks the word "self" expresses best in English the ideas of the Upanishads on this head.

It therefore follows that such a thing as culture of this self, which in its very nature is eternal, unchangeable, and unpolluted by any action, cannot be. It is only from inadequacy of terms that students and writers using the English tongue are compelled to say "self-culture," while, when they say it, they admit that they know the self cannot be cultured.

What they wish to express is, "such culture or practice to be pursued by us as shall enable us, while on earth, to mirror forth the wisdom and fulfil the behests of the self within, which is all-wise and all-good."

As the use of this term "self culture" demands a constant explanation either outwardly declared or inwardly assented to, it is wise to discard it altogether and substitute that which will express the practice aimed at without raising a contradiction. For another reason also the term should be discarded. That is, that it assumes a certain degree of selfishness, for, if we use it as referring to something that we do only for ourself, we separate at once between us and the rest of the human brotherhood. Only in one way can we use it without contradiction or without explanation, and that is by admitting we selfishly desire to cultivate ourselves, thus at once running against a prime rule in theosophic life and one so often and so strenuously insisted on, that the idea of a personal self must be uprooted. Of course, as we will not negative this rule, we thus again have brought before us the necessity for a term that does not arouse contradictions. That new term should, as nearly as possible, shadow forth the three essential things in the action, that is, the instrument, the act, and the agent, as well as the incitement to action; or, knowledge itself, the thing to be known or done, and the person who knows.

This term is CONCENTRATION. In the Indian books it is called Yoga. This is translated also as Union, meaning a union with the Supreme Being, or, as it is otherwise put, "the object of spiritual knowledge is the Supreme Being."

There are two great divisions of Yoga found in the ancient books, and they are called Hatha-Yoga and Raja-Yoga.

Hatha-Yoga is a practical mortification of the body by means of which certain powers are developed. It consists in the assumption of certain postures that aid the work, and certain kinds of breathing that bring on changes in the system, together with other devices. It is referred to in the 4th chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* thus:

Some devotees sacrifice the sense of hearing and the other senses in the fires of restraint; some offer objects of sense, such as sound, in the fires of the senses. Some also sacrifice inspiration of breath in expiration, and expiration in inspiration, by blocking up the channels of inspiration and expiration, desirous of retaining their breath. Others, by abstaining from food, sacrifice life in their life.

In various treatises these methods are set forth in detail, and there is no doubt at all that by pursuing them one can gain possession of sundry abnormal powers. There is risk, however, especially in the case of people in the West where experienced gurus or teachers of these things are not found. These risks consist in this, that while an undirected person is doing according to the rules of Hatha-Yoga he arouses about him influences that do him harm, and he also carries his natural functions to certain states now and then when he ought to stop for a while, but, having no knowledge of the matter, may go on beyond that and produce injurious effects. Then, again, Hatha-Yoga is a difficult thing to pursue, and one that must be pushed to the point of mastery and success. Few of our Western people are by nature fitted for such continuous and difficult labor on the mental and astral planes. Thus, being attracted to Hatha-Yoga by the novelty of it, and by the apparent pay that it offers in visible physical results, they begin without knowledge of the difficulty, and stopping after a period of trial they bring down upon themselves consequences that are wholly undesirable.

The greatest objection to it, however, is that it pertains to the material and semi-material man, — roughly speaking, to the body, and what is gained through it is lost at death.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* refers to this and describes what happens in these words:

All of these, indeed, being versed in sacrifice, have their sins destroyed by these sacrifices. But he alone reaches union with the Supreme Being who eats of the ambrosia left from a sacrifice.

This means that the Hatha-Yoga practice represents the mere sacrifice itself, whereas the other kind is the ambrosia arising from the sacrifice, or "the perfection of spiritual cultivation," and that leads to Nirvana. The means for attaining the "perfection of spiritual cultivation" are found in Raja-Yoga, or, as we shall term it for the present, Culture of Concentration.

When concentration is perfected, we are in a position to use the knowledge that is ever within reach but which ordinarily eludes us continually. That which is usually called knowledge is only an intellectual comprehension of the outside, visible forms assumed by certain realities. Take what is called scientific knowledge of minerals and metals. This is merely a classification of material phenomena and an empirical acquisition. It knows what certain minerals and metals are useful for, and what some of their properties are. Gold is known to be pure, soft, yellow, and extremely ductile,

and by a series of accidents it has been discovered to be useful in medicine and the arts. But even to this day there is a controversy, not wholly settled, as to whether gold is held mechanically or chemically in crude ore. Similarly with minerals. The crystalline forms are known and classified.”

~ William Q. Judge, *culture of Concentration* ~

### what technique of meditation should one who wishes to meditate practice?

#### Patanjali Raja Yoga system “Yoga Aphorisms”

True yoga practice , is not something physical at all but is a mental and spiritual exercise leading to ever-increasing re-union in consciousness with our Higher Self, which is one and the same in essence and identity as the Supreme Self, the ONE Infinite Divine Life.

A person who wish to meditate must live a life conducive to Meditation.

the need for physical, moral, and mental preparation in order to be able to meditate effectively. The Theosophical tradition also emphasizes as part of spiritual practice the gradual adoption of a pure and healthy lifestyle; the development of emotional maturity, which comes from moral living and lessening our attachments, passions, and lower desires; the cultivation of an understanding of oneself and the universe; and the development of an unselfish attitude. This, of course, does not mean that one cannot meditate starting right from where one is at this moment. On the contrary, when the approach is holistic, the practice of meditation will aid the efforts in these areas, and vice versa.

#### BOOK I

23. The state of abstract meditation may be attained by profound devotedness toward the Supreme Spirit considered in its comprehensible manifestation as Ishwara. It is said that this profound devotedness is a preeminent means of attaining abstract meditation and its fruits. "Ishwara" is the Spirit in the body.

24. Ishwara is a spirit, untouched by troubles, works, fruits of works, or desires.

25. In Ishwara becomes infinite that omniscience which in man exists but as a germ.

26. Ishwara is the preceptor of all, even of the earliest of created beings, for He is not limited by time.

27. His name is OM.

28. The repetition of this name should be made with reflection upon its signification. OM is the first letter of the Sanscrit alphabet. It's utterance involves three sounds, those of long au, short u, and the "stoppage" or labial consonant m. To this tripartiteness is attached deep mystical symbolic meaning. It denotes, as distinct yet in union, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, or Creation, Preservation, and Destruction. As a whole, it implies "the Universe." In its application to man, au refers to the spark of Divine Spirit that is in humanity; u, to the body through which the Spirit manifests itself; and m, to the death of the body, or its resolvement to its material elements. With regard to the cycles affecting any planetary system, it implies the Spirit, represented by au

as the basis of the manifested worlds; the body or manifested matter, represented by u, through which the spirit works; and represented by m, "the stoppage or return of sound to its source," the Pralaya or Dissolution of the worlds. In practical occultism, through this word reference is made to Sound, or Vibration, in all its properties and effects, this being one of the greatest powers of nature. In the use of this word as a practice, by means of the lungs and throat, a distinct effect is produced upon the human body. In Aphorism 28 the name is used in its highest sense, which will necessarily include all the lower. All utterance of the word OM, as a practice, has a potential reference to the conscious separation of the soul from the body.

#### Book I

Aphorism 33. Through the practising of Benevolence, Tenderness, Complacency, and Disregard for objects of happiness, grief, virtue, and vice, the mind becomes purified.

The chief occasions for distraction of the mind are Covetousness and Aversion, and what the aphorism means is, not that virtue and vice should be viewed with indifference by the student, but that he should not fix his mind with pleasure upon happiness or virtue, nor with aversion upon grief or vice, in others, but should regard all with an equal mind; and the practice of Benevolence, Tenderness, and Complacency brings about cheerfulness of the mind, which tends to strength and steadiness.

#### BOOK III.

1. Fixing the mind on a place, object, or subject is attention.

This is called Dharana.

2. The continuance of this attention is contemplation.

This is called Dhyana.

3. This contemplation, when it is practised only in respect to a material subject or object of sense, is meditation.

This is called Samadhi.

4. When this fixedness of attention, contemplation, and meditation are practised with respect to one object, they together constitute what is called

Sanyama

#### Some Advice On Meditation

"It is well to pursue some kind of practice, and pursue it either in a fixed place, or in a mental place which cannot be seen, or at night. The fact that what is called Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi may be performed should be known. (See Patanjali's yoga system.)

"Dharana is selecting a thing, a spot, or an idea, to fix the mind on.

"Dhyana is contemplation of it.

"Samadhi is meditating on it.

“When attempted, they of course are all one act.

“Now, then, take what is called the well of the throat or pit of the throat.

1st. Select it. – Dharana.

2nd. Hold the mind on it. – Dhyana.

3rd. Meditate on it. – Samadhi.

This gives firmness of mind.

“Then select the spot in the head where the Shushumna nerve goes. Never mind the location; call it the top of the head. Then pursue the same course. This will give some insight into spiritual minds. At first it is difficult, but it will grow easy by practice. If done at all, the same hour of each day should be selected, as creating a habit, not only in the body, but also in the mind. Always keep the direction of Krishna in mind: namely, that it is done for the whole body corporate of humanity, and not for one’s self.”

In a letter to someone else he wrote, “By setting apart a *particular* time for meditation a habit is formed, and as the time comes round the mind will, after a while, become trained, so that meditation at the particular time will become natural. Hence, as far as possible, it will be well for you to keep to the same hour.”

~ William Q. Judge, Letters That Have Helped Me ~

But here is an advice given by many Adepts: every day and as often as you can, and on going to sleep and as you wake, think, think, think, on the truth that you are not body, brain, or astral man, but that you are THAT, and “THAT” is the Supreme Soul. For by this practice you will gradually kill the false notion which lurks inside that the false is the true, and the true is the false. By persistence in this, by submitting your daily thoughts each night to the judgment of your Higher Self, you will at last gain light.

Mindful of selflessness i.e. becoming aware that the real “I” is not the body, mind, emotions, or any of the changing aspects.