



MEDITATION

Become a detached observer

Extract from 18/2/04 Satsang

Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha

Meditation is a very beneficial technique. If you practice meditation regularly your habits will start to change.

An observation made by many seekers is that while meditating they feel inner conflicts and become aware of thoughts to a much greater extent than in daily life when they are not meditating. When they are not meditating they do not have inner conflicts, but as soon as they start to meditate their minds become full of all sorts of rubbish – conflicting thoughts, ideas, emotions and memories. They may think that the meditation is not doing them any good, but rather it is having a bad effect because it causes these problems. However, this interpretation is wrong because all that rubbish was already there in their minds. It is just that they only become aware of it while they were meditating.

The fact is that, when you meditate, your attention is focused on yourself instead of on an outside object. Meditation implies that you start to inquire into the nature of your inner being with the objective of finding out what you really are. However, when your attention is focused on your own self, your mind becomes occupied with confusing currents of thoughts, memories and sensual impressions from the past, which are mostly trivial, useless and of no relevance in the present. What is happening with you is that you are now facing the real state of your inner self – the mind – and you have to become a detached observer. When you say: “I have unpleasant thoughts” it means that you are separate from your thoughts. You think that they are your thoughts but you are different from your thoughts. If you remain a detached observer, gradually step by step, these thoughts will calm down.

How long will it take? It takes no specific time but varies from person to person. It may happen in a few weeks, but it may take a few months, twenty years or more than one life! So, will your present life be useless? It will not be useless because whatever progress you make on this path is permanent and you have to do it in some life. Whenever you want permanent peace in life, you have to follow this path, and there is no other way. Therefore, it is excellent that you have already come and started on your journey. Why should you postpone it? It has got to be done and you have to rise above these problems – that is the point.

There is nothing to be afraid of. You should remain indifferent to the thoughts. If you associate yourself with the thoughts or emotions and become one with them, they will never go away. However, if you observe them with detachment – or rather indifference – they will gradually become weaker and start to fade away. You should pay no attention to the thoughts. If they come, all right; if they go, all right!

Perhaps you have a troublesome child at home. If you tell the child to be quiet it will just make more noise. We have all had this experience. But if you ignore the child, it will calm down in a few minutes. The same principle applies to the thoughts. When we try to suppress or struggle with them, we give them energy. The correct method is to be indifferent. For some people there is another method, if they have an inner relationship with the Divine or someone

more evolved then they can focus on them in meditation. There are other techniques also but this indifferent observation is the obvious one.

Thoughts are not your existence. They are either memories from the past that no longer exists, or they are desires for the future which does not yet exist. In both cases, the past and the future do not exist at the present time, because in neither case you are in the present. So, you should ignore them. You should understand that whatever thoughts arise during meditation, they are just trying to find a release in the process of inner purification. This is what will happen, and there is nothing to worry about.

Many different techniques are applied for this very object – the process of purification. For example, what else do you do in *Vipassana* meditation? You become aware of sensations in the body and then of the mind. Those of you who have practised *Vipassana* meditation will already know about this. Another movement which has become popular all over the world is called ‘The Art of Living’ by Shri Shri Ravi Shankar. Their technique includes elements like *pranayama* and the mantra ‘*So Hum*’ for the purification of the subtle body.

People ask me why I do not introduce any new technique. I have not done this, firstly because I have no time for that, and secondly because my system includes all the techniques. For this reason I give everyone the freedom to practise any technique they wish. Whatever technique that suits you can be of benefit.

If you asked me what was the most important element, I would say ‘love for all mankind’ – to be ready to do anything for anyone out of love. One of the most important points is that not every technique is equally suitable for everybody. The example I often give is of a chemist shop. There are many medicines available and all are effective but the real question is which medicine is suitable for you. What would happen if you needed a medicine for a cold, but you took a medicine for indigestion? Only a doctor knows which medicine is suitable for you, and this is why it is necessary to have a guide on the path of spirituality.

.....