



MEDITATION
Purpose of meditation
Extract from 20/8/93 Satsang

Om Shri Paramatmane Namaha

Q: Why do we need to meditate at all?

A: We need meditation because every one of us wants to be happy. Nobody can be happy without knowing his true nature, and it is through meditation that our true nature gets revealed to us. Only the experience of our true nature is permanent and everything else is temporary. Nothing that is temporary can ever give us true happiness. It is natural that whatever we become, other than our own Self, cannot be permanent. Changes in the world around us are bound to happen. When there is change and the change is according to our desires we feel happy. But when the change is contrary to our desires, we feel unhappy. It is never possible for a change to be always according to our desires, because the lives of different people are so often at variance – “I become rich while somebody else becomes poor; I get promotion in my company or government service while somebody else loses his job.” There is competition and when there is competition there is bound to be frustration. Life is like that.

We must get to know who we are in reality. This means that we become our own Selves. This is the method for realising the essence of our own existence, which is nothing but the essence of the existence of all Totality. We are part of the whole. When we realise our harmony with the whole and there remains no conflict between us and the whole, then we feel permanent peace. Changes will happen even then because nobody can stop them. Changes are bound to come. It is the law of nature. However, our reaction to the changes will be different. We shall realise that changes are like waves on the surface of the ocean, coming and going, but not affecting the ocean. The ocean remains calm, peaceful and happy. It takes time to reach this state of calmness, and wise are they who start the journey towards the realisation of this goal. They alone are wise! I have no hesitation in saying that those who do not start the journey are misguided and are wasting their lives.

Having explained the need for meditation, I should like to make one or two very small points. When we are not meditating, our energy flows from within us to the world outside. The mind, through the senses, becomes something other than our own Self. We sense the outside world through sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. In the first stage of meditation, we try to retire consciously from the outside world and we take up a special posture. The term in Yoga is ‘to have an *asana*’. The definition of an *asana* given by the great seer Patanjali is – ‘the posture is steady and comfortable’. He used these words. There are many other postures which are practiced in yoga but they are not mentioned by Patanjali because they were developed at a later time. They are good for keeping the body healthy and making it receptive to the Divine force for further progress, but it is not essential that one should practise these postures in the beginning.

Asana is one of the limbs (*anga*) of the eight-fold yoga path described by Patanjali:

yama

social restraints

<i>niyama</i>	fixed observances
<i>asana</i>	posture
<i>pranayama</i>	breath control
<i>pratyahara</i>	abstraction
<i>dharana</i>	concentration
<i>dhyana</i>	meditation
<i>samadhi</i>	trance or spiritual absorption

Thus *asana* (posture) forms one part of this system.

One more point. Many people consider that this half an hour of meditation is very long for them, they feel as if it is never going to end. They do not have this feeling when talking for as long as one hour to a friend, but when meditating, half an hour often seems very long: “Maybe this professor has forgotten that we have been sitting for such a long time? Has something happened to him?” If such ideas come, they should be ignored.

Meditation happens to us by God’s grace and not through effort. We try to meditate and the result is that someday meditation happens to us. Effort is not compatible with what is known as the state of meditation. All efforts end at the time when real meditation happens to us. It seems to be a paradox or contradiction but it is not. All that we are trying to do is to make an effort to discipline ourselves so that someday we experience our true state.
