

24. Meditation Is Different From Concentration

I have been searching. I have been searching all the time. I was searching then and I am searching now to find one amongst men who has the true spirit of man. There is no dearth of human beings. Looking at man's form, I am not able to find the true nature of the divine. Looking at some wild cotton fruits, we sometimes imagine and are under the illusion that they are mangoes. Looking at wild cane, we chew it under the illusion that it is real sugarcane. Looking at marble stone, we suck it under the illusion that it is candy. We should not be deceived by looking at the external form of man. What is important is not the external form, but his gunas or the attributes.

Divyatma Swarupas, students!

It is essential for us to cognise the distinctiveness that characterises a human being. In order to acquire these qualities, we have to develop concentration, a spirit of sacrifice and faith in God. The wisdom, thus attained, shines like the sun. In our state of ignorance, however, the illumination of the wisdom is covered by the cloud of selfishness. So long as man is not able to push away the clouds of selfishness, he cannot look at the sun of wisdom.

The tree which radiates cool shade does not even think of the benefit it imparts upon the travellers. On the other hand, when man thinks of his body, he thinks of his wealth, his family, his belongings, his wife and his children and gets attached to these belongings. We must make an enquiry and find out who the “I” is when an individual says, “this is my house, this is my money, this is my father” and “this is my body.” We should find out who the individual is who is making such a claim. We should find out whether it is the body which is claiming all these things or whether it is “I” the self, residing in that body which is claiming all these things. If it is the body which is claiming these things, then what is the meaning of saying, “this is my body”. So the body is not he and it is separated from him. The body by itself is lifeless. The life in him is what is claiming all these things.

It is the attempt to find who this “I” inside the body is, which is called *Sankhya*. *Sankhya* means an enquiry into the nature of material objects, but when we enquire into the origin of the “I” the enquiry will be called “*Taraka*”. In the state of *Taraka*, one forgets everything else and enjoys the bliss of the divine *Atma* and this is termed as *Amanaska*. *Sadhana* enables you to recognise the meaning of *Sankhya*, *Taraka* and *Amanaska*.

For example, when we have milk from which the cream is not separated, we cannot see ghee separately. On the other hand, when we convert milk into curds, get buttermilk out of curds, and out of this we remove the butter and melt it, then we are able to see ghee. This ghee, which we have separated from milk, can never be mixed with milk again. Whatever efforts you may put in and whatever trials you may make, the ghee will not mix with milk but will remain separate. So is life. At first *Taraka*, *Sankhya* and *Amanaska* look one and the same and inseparably mixed with the body, but when we perform some *sadhana* and separate them, they will be separated and will not have any desire to mix with the body. In the word “*Soham*” the letter “*sa*” denotes *Paramatma* or the divine. “*Aham*” denotes the *Jiva* or man. When we combine these two and utter them together, we get the word “*Soham*”. We then get to recognise the fact that *jiva* and *Paramatma* come together. It is also common practice in our country to

meditate on the word “*Soham*” in order to recognise the identity and oneness of *jiva* and Brahman.

Free from form and name, being the one without a second, always remaining pure and only as a witness, divinity remains in the realm of *Atma* and is referred to by the two letters “*Thath*”. When man concentrates and meditates on “*Thath*”, out of his meditation will come “*Thwam*”. The word “*Asi*” is always ready at hand to bring these ‘*Thath*’ and ‘*Thwam*’ together. A combination of these three gives the *Mahakavya* “*Thath Thwam asi*”.

The significance of this *Mahavakya* “*Thath Thwam asi*” should be well understood. I mentioned yesterday that “*Thath eva Thwam*” signifies the position of a teacher and “*Thwam eva Thath*” signifies the position of a student. The teacher explains the meaning of “*Thath*” to the students and the student understands the aspect of “*Thath*” by being in the place of “*Thwam*”. The oneness of the teacher and the taught is the destination for the process of learning. Therefore, we must remove our feelings and ideas which relate to external appearances. We must develop the notion of the divine and become one with the divine. What are these external manifestations? They relate to our gross, subtle and causal bodies.

When you utter the sound “*aham*”, it involves the three *gunas*: *sathwa*, *rajas* and *thamas*. This sound which is the same as the ego, when it is associated with these three *gunas*, moves about in the three aspects of the body

and manifests itself as *Brahma*, Vishnu and Maheswara, which are the different aspects of the world.

Everything that we see and experience in this material world must be regarded as *vritthi* or some kind of work. Even listening to someone is also a process and may be called a *vritthi*. But listening to God’s name or uttering God’s name for producing sacred sounds, will not be called a worldly occupation. It is something between *Pravritthi* and *Nivritthi* and it enables one to bring these two together. If you want to change the worldly aspects of *Pravritthi* into detached *karma* or *Nivritthi*, some *sadhanas* and practice are necessary. These *sadhanas* can be referred to as meditation or *dhyana*.

How do we practice this meditation and what is its inner meaning? We have to develop faith in the various paths that lead to meditation. Then only is it possible to reach the object of meditation or understand the purpose of meditation. The word *dhyana* is being interpreted by many people in many different ways. They are also prescribing different kinds of meditation and causing some amount of confusion in the minds of aspirants.

Dhyana stands for the *sadhana* or the practice by which the *sadhaka* meditates upon God and thereby unifies the three constituents, namely, the object of meditation—God, the person who is meditating—the “I” or the individual and the process—the meditation

itself. The combination and oneness of these three is *dhyana*.

The process and significance of *dhyana* these days is being misinterpreted and is being equated with concentration or single-mindedness. For acquiring concentration, we do not have to meditate. In fact we are concentrating all the time. Drinking, eating, writing, reading and walking involve concentration. Concentration refers to something which is subservient to the various senses of perception, namely *sabda*, *sparsa*, *rupa*, *rasa* and *gandha* (hearing, touch, seeing, taste and smell). If you have to read a paper, your eyes will have to see the paper, the hand has to hold the paper, and finally the mind has to synthesise all the perceptions. It is only when all these acts are brought together through concentration that we can read the paper.

If we have to walk on the road, we have to watch for the traffic and we have to note if there are any obstacles or pits or snakes or scorpions. Similarly, when we drive a car, an enormous amount of concentration is required. Therefore, this kind of concentration with which we are familiar in everyday life cannot be called *dhyana* or meditation.

To have the divine as your objective, to rise above your senses and keep your mind well above your sensory organs will be called meditation. Meditation is thus superior to your sensory organs and concentration is

subservient to your sensory organs.

There is a small example for this. There is a rose plant and in it you have the leaves, thorns, branches and the flowers themselves. In this context, the ability to distinguish between thorns, leaves, branches and flowers can be termed as concentration. After looking at all these things, we can identify the flower. Once you are able to locate the flower and concentrate on it, then you can pluck it out without touching the thorns. Once you have plucked the flower, there is no relation whatsoever between the flower, on the one hand thorns, leaves and branches, on the other. The separation of the flower from these other parts of the tree is called contemplation.

You will take this flower and offer it to God. After you have offered the flower to God, the tree, the branches, your hand and even the flower do not exist at all. This offering, where others have disappeared and God alone exists, is called meditation.

Your life is like a rose plant. All your relationships are branches in this rose plant. Your qualities or *gunas* are the leaves and your attachments and desires constitute the thorns. Your *prema* is the flower of the plant. The exercise of keeping the flower of your *prema* away from the thorns of attachments and the branches of relationships is contemplation. The moment you offer this *prema* to God, you have achieved the oneness of all three. This *prema* is pure *prema*. The reason is that in

the process of obtaining it, you have separated out the thorns and leaves from the flower. What you have in your hand is therefore a pure flower of *prema*.

So long as the material desires lurk in you, your affection will be considered as lust. True and pure love will manifest itself when lust is withdrawn from your affection. This type of love will be expanding, since it will be selfless. The contracting type of love is based on selfishness. You can cultivate pure love by remaining in good company and by putting into practice directions of our *Vedas* and *Upanishads*.

You should consider your intellect as a mirror and try to keep it clean. The true nature of yourself as a man can be seen only in the mirror of your intellect. It is only when you regard this entire world as your own house and regard everything in your house as your own that you can give a shape to your *prema* so as to make it an expanding *prema*.

There are three types of *sadhanas*. The first type is a *sadhana* which the monkeys practise and is called the *Markata sadhana*. The second is called *Vihanga sadhana* and is typical of *sadhana* practised by birds. The third is called the *Pipeelika sadhana* or the *sadhana* practised by the ants. So far as the monkey is concerned, it goes to a tree, plucks a fruit but does not eat it then and there. It then jumps from one branch to another. In this process it loses this fruit altogether! This is a kind

of *sadhana* where we want quick results. We want to see God quickly and in this process we go on changing the objective of our *sadhana* every day and change from place to place like a monkey.

The second kind of *sadhana* can be compared with the behaviour of a bird. A bird swoops down on a fruit and hits it so sharply that the fruit drops on the ground. In the process, the bird loses its objective.

The third type of *sadhana* is typical of what an ant does and is called *pipeelika sadhana*. As is well known, an ant breaks up all items it wants to eat, into very small bits, carries each bit slowly and steadily and brings them to its own location. It is always successful in acquiring its food. Even in *sadhana*, we have to be slow and steady, and that will enable you to attain your objective. Just as these ants cut their food into small pieces, bring them back home and eat them at leisure and fearlessly, so also we must not swerve from our path, we must keep the object in our mind and we should not let our vision flutter. Thus, for our spiritual progress we should maintain discipline and keep the mind under control. We should do everything in the name of God.

Students!

In this age of yours, you must develop sacred ideas. The reason will become apparent to you when you listen to the following incident. One *Vedantin* and one exponent of *Dwaitha* philosophy came to me after

arguing with each other and asserting that the theories of each one are superior to those of the other. They asked me to decide who was the superior amongst them. In their foolishness and ignorance, they asked me whether it is better to follow the *Dwaitha* philosophy or it is better to follow the *Vedantic* preachings. I told them that the validity of the *Dwaitha* does not depend upon the individual who is supporting it, and the validity of *Vedanta* and the *sadhanas* prescribed therein, do not depend on the individual who is supporting them. If this individual supporting *Dwaitha* changes his mind, is *Dwaitha* going to become weaker? Similarly, if the person supporting *Vedantic* thought changes his mind, the *Vedas* are not going to become weaker. The strength of *Dwaitha* and of *Vedanta* depends on their respective contents and not on arguments of individuals. I told them that these arguments are in the nature of exhibitionism and thereby they are only securing food for themselves.

Today good and bad is being coloured by our own attitudes or prejudices. We shall start seeing good everywhere if we promote good ideas in ourselves. Do not let the books master you, but instead fill your hearts with love. I bless you that you will be able to do so.