

41. Meditation

To get at the core of God at His greatest, one must first get into the core of himself at his least, for no one can know God who has not known himself.

After seating oneself in a comfortable and stable posture, steadying the breath, *prathyaahaara* (withdrawing of the senses from the sense objects) and *anga nyasa* (purification of all the organs of the body) is to be done. Light is the greatest purifier, for it dispels all darkness. Light is made to traverse throughout the body, purifying all the limbs and senses, and is installed in the lotus of the heart in which is to be enshrined the *bhaavachithra* (mental thought picture) of the Form of the Lord for the purpose of *dharana* (concentration) which would lead to *dhyaana* (meditation) and ultimately to *Samaadhi* (the state of super conscious bliss).

First, when you sit for meditation, recite a few *shlokas* on the Glory of God so that the agitated mind may be calmed. Then gradually, while doing *japam*, draw before the mind's eye the Form which that Name represents. When your mind wanders away from the recital of the Name, lead it onto the picture of the Form. When it wanders from the form, lead it onto the Name. Let it dwell either on that sweetness or this. Treated thus it can be easily tamed. The imaginary picture you have drawn will get transmuted into the *bhaava chithra* (thought visualisation), dear to the heart and fixed in the memory. Gradually it will become the *saakshaathkaara chithra* (Vision of the actual Form) when the Lord assumes that Form in order to fulfil your desire. This *saadhana* is called *japa sahitha dhyaana* (meditation-cum-recitation of Name), and I advise you all to take it up, for it is best form of *dhyaana* for beginners.

Body is a temple where God is installed

Within a few days you will fall in line and you will taste the joy of concentration. After about ten or fifteen minutes of this *dhyaana* in the initial stages, and longer after some time, have some *manana* (contemplation) on the *shaanthy* (peace) and the *sowkhya* (happiness) you had during the *dhyaana* (meditation).

The human body has been secured as a reward for many lives of meritorious activity. Being valued as a boat which can help us cross the ocean of *samsaara* (constant change), it has to be tended with grateful reverence. The Bhagavathgeetha calls the body '*kshethra*,' which means, a field. One can sow holiness or sin, and gather a harvest commensurate with the particular quality. Choose the crop you need before you sow the seed. *Kshethra* also means 'the entire earth.' Another significant meaning of the word is 'a holy place.' We say, "*Kaashi-kshethra*," "*Prayaga-kshethra*," etc., to indicate that those places are sacred. The body is also a *kshethra* since it is a temple wherein God is installed and worshipped through thoughts, words and deeds. The temple has to be cleansed and kept healthy and pure.

Use every sense organ within its limits

Purity is to be preserved and promoted not by multiple baths or by avoiding contact with others condemned as 'untouchables.' You cannot be pure by the observance of the superficial taboo, 'Don't touch.' The body can be clean if washed with water; speech can be cleansed if it is saturated in truth; life can be purified if it is sanctified by *thapas* (religious austerity), and the intellect can be cleared of blemish through *jnaana* (spiritual wisdom). Above all, the conviction that you are not the body but only a resident of the body, has to grow in you. If you identify

yourselves with the body you carry about with you, you are inviting sorrow and suffering to overwhelm you, instead of the joy and peace which are awaiting to bless you.

Now about the *indhriyaas* (senses). They are known as *maathras*, which means 'measures,' for each sense has the capacity to cognise a certain measure of experience, A dish of *dhal* (lentils) must have some salt to make it tasty. The tongue tastes it and pronounces judgment whether the quantity of salt is more or less or just right. "This face is pretty but the nose is a little awry," pronounces the eye. "This song is sweet, but that one was atrocious," declares the ear. *Maathra* also means 'limit.'

Every sense organ has to be used with the consciousness of the limit inherent in it. Beyond the limit it becomes misuse, sacrilege of a God given instrument. For example, the nose is to be used legitimately to help in breathing and for the selective enjoyment of fragrance, but many stuff it with snuff and degrade its real purpose. The tongue is polluted by using it to eat *raajasik* and *thaamasik* (passion-rousing and inactivity-inducing) food and to swallow intoxicants which demean man. All sense organs are thus spoiled by man through improper, unauthorised or illegitimate use. The consequences for man are mental distress and physical disease.

The body is an inert composite of matter. But it grows, it gets weak and it declines, all on account of a consciousness that operates from within. Otherwise an inert heap of matter can undergo changes only by addition or subtraction through external agencies.

Gurus must meditate at least once a day

Next, the mind. *Mananam manah*---"The mind is that which remembers, recollects and ruminates." This mental activity results in the formulation of resolutions or in their *dissolution*---*sankalpa* or *vikalpa*. The mind has, as warp and woof, assertion and negation, do's and don'ts, *sankalpa* and *vikalpa*. It has no existence apart from these. It is ever engaged in them until sleep stops its activity. Sometimes when the resolution or the determination behind the resolution becomes too strong, the mind overleaps its limits and man is rendered insane.

In order to calm the mind and keep it on an even keel, *dhyaana* is prescribed as a *saadhana*. *Dhyaana* is the process by which the positive and negative aspects of the mind are regulated out of existence. Man enjoys unlimited bliss when the stage of *nirvikalpa samaadhi* (highest stage of superconscious state of bliss) is reached. A taste of this is offered to man during his deep, dreamless sleep, when no wish or want, no desire or denial can disturb him. How much more satisfying should be the Bliss when we attain the *nirvikalpa* stage through *dhyaana*! The *Aanandha* (bliss) that fills us then is characterised as *bhaavaatheetham*, *thriguna rahitham*---"beyond the range of imagination, without any trace of the three types of attributes."

You, who have dedicated yourselves as *Gurus* to lead the children into light, must practise the discipline of *dhyaana* at least one session a day in order to earn this bliss and equanimity. Those who have earned the gift of *aanandha* alone, can confer *aanandha* on others. How can a mendicant support another mendicant? No beggar can make another beggar rich. A person rich in *aanandha* can share *aanandha* with those around him. Therefore your duty as *Gurus* is firstly to *earn* and secondly to *offer aanandha*. A life of *saadhana* is a must to every *Guru*.

The role of Guru is a blessing of God

There are three groups of *saadhanas* which you have to take up---personal, social and universal (*vyakthi*, *samaaja* and *vishwa*). A single flower cannot constitute a garland, nor a single tree a

forest, nor a single individual a society. The individual's spiritual success, his beneficent nature and his virtues, when pooled with those of many others, become the wealth of society, the common property of all. Each one has to revere and serve all. The Divine in each is pooled into the concept of the Infinite Divine.

The *Guru* should not give room to conceit in his heart. As the indispensable teacher of innocent, illiterate and half-blind children, the *Guru* should not occupy a chair of authority. Egoism is the throne which is proudly appropriated by authority. Be humble before the children and renounce the tone of power. This is the *saadhana* for you. Revere the role of a *Guru* as a blessing of God. This attitude alone can ensure the success of the journey for the individual, the society and the world.

Calamities happen when *buddhi* is not alert

Be aware of the transitoriness and the inter-relationship of the body, the senses and the mind. What of the *buddhi* (intellect)? It is the source of man's decision-making capacity, and is known as the *anthah-karana* (inner consciousness). It reduces confusion, calms conflict and determines doubt. When we say, my inner voice has resolved thus, it is *buddhi* that is referred to. *Buddhi* is also referred to as the *antharaathman* (inner self). On the lowest plane of existence is the body, the physical sheath. On a higher plane is the sense complex---the five senses of perception and the five of action. The mind is on a still higher plane and the *buddhi* on an even higher one so that it is nearest to the core, the *Aathman*.

When a chauffeur is sought for, the owner of the car will select a person who is an expert in the art of driving, a man of character and a person who will be obedient to his employer. In all respects he must be a good and useful employee. When the chauffeur of the material car is expected to be so skilled and virtuous, how much more so must the *buddhi*, the chauffeur of the *Aathman*, be! *Buddhi* has no right to give a ride to anyone without the knowledge and permission of the *Aathman*.

Buddhi should subject to scrutiny all the wishes of the mind. It is only when *buddhi* is lit by the splendour of the *Aathman* that it can recommend the course of action to the senses, through the mind. Calamities happen only when the *buddhi* is not alert or is circumvented by the mind. Let *buddhi* take all the time it needs to sort out the pros and cons. Haste makes waste; waste results in worry; so do not be in a hurry.

Haste leads to confusions and blunders which cause disappointment and anger. Anger has to be overcome by guiding the mind on to peace and equanimity, "*Shaanthih! Shaanthih! Shaanthih!*"--that *manthra* (sacred peace chant) will quieten the waves of anger.

Not doing one's best is treason to oneself

Man can have no fear when he negates his objective composition, declaring, "I am not the body, the sense, the mind or the intellect." There is no benefit if a man flees to the forest to escape attachment to the non-real. Renunciation can be cultivated without such an extreme measure. Doubts, too, will haunt a person until he cognises the Truth. When doubt enters through the front door, faith departs through the back one! Doubt comes upon people like a heart attack; it overwhelms a man all of a sudden. The Geetha says, "*Samshayaathmaa Vinashyathi*" (the doubter is destroyed). So *Gurus* must enter upon their task with full faith.

The ideals of the Bala Vikas (child development) movement are the highest. The task of fulfilling them is the holiest of tasks. Knowing this and yet not doing one's best, is indeed treason to oneself. Mere talk cannot go far. Man is concerned with the Moon that is hundreds of thousands of miles away, but he is not concerned with his nearest neighbour. Do not instruct or instil in children magnificent ideas and colossal thoughts. Teach them small, practical ideas and simple modes of behaviour through your own example and loving exposition.

Only the teacher of teachers can direct the Bala Vikas *Gurus*. That is to say, only he who has mastered the process and problems, the significance and secrets of education, can so direct. He must be able to correct the *Gurus* and convince them. It might happen that State Presidents may not all have these abilities, though their abilities might well be great in other aspects of organisation. They might have specialised in other fields of service. So my suggestion is that the State President should not be related in any way with the Bala Vikas. He has to organise, supervise and give guidance to the *Bhajana Mandali*, the *Seva Samithi*, the *Seva Dhal* and other service units. The Bala Vikas *Gurus* will benefit more through the very apex of the organisation.

Gurus should not indulge in jealousy

Women in charge of the Bala Vikas are easily moved by excitement or dejection, so it is better they do not immediately carry their problems to the State President; by the time they communicate with the central authority, the emotion would have cooled down. They can be directed more firmly by the centre and they will follow the directions more willingly, if they emanate from the centre. So they have, hereafter, to write to "The Convenor, Bala Vikas *Gurus*, Prashaanthi Nilayam," for advice, direction and redress, and send a copy of the letter to Indulal Shah, Secretary, World Council. I shall look into all these letters myself.

Of course our Bala Vikas *Gurus* should not indulge in jealousy or fault-finding. They can undertake the task of teaching only after they rid themselves of such traits. If *Gurus* talk ill of other *Gurus* and promote misunderstanding and factionalism, the children can never improve. So resolve now to adhere to the right path. If two *Gurus* quarrel or become unfriendly, both will be removed. No inquiry is necessary; we condemn both for having been involved. One poisonous insect can destroy an entire crop. Since we have not been very strict all these years, we find the number of Bala Vikas pupils is very low even with such a large number of *Gurus*.

Teach children equal validity of all Faiths

Each *Guru* must serve at least a hundred pupils in one year, only then can we have at least a hundred thousand or more getting the benefit. There are nine crores and twenty-six thousand children in our country, boys and girls, aged below ten. Those below sixteen are twenty-two crores and six hundred thousand in number. At the rate at which we are training the children, when can we teach the crores? The present tortoise speed will not help.

The aspirations and ambitions of youth are being inflamed at great speed, and you have to canalise them at equal speed. Only then can a balance be secured. The rains fall profusely; the water seeps in and is stored underground. But man pumps the underground water faster and in greater quantity than it is collected below the soil, and so drought intervenes. Therefore go fast, but be steady and sure about your work.

Another point: You have to teach the equal validity of all faiths. Teach them through quotations from the Bible, the ideals of Christianity. So, too, use the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism,

Buddhism, Islam, etc., to acquaint them with the ideals held aloft by those faiths. Also tell them the stories contained in the scriptures of all religions. Do not belittle any one religion or give predominance to another. There was a suggestion that children must be taught the entire Geetha. That is a mistaken view. Of course if they desire to do so through their own ardour and enthusiasm, do not stand in their way. But what we have to do is to place before them in sweet, simple style, the teachings of all faiths. The Sai religion is the harmonious blending, through love, of all religions. Though some followers of other faiths feel that the Sai religion is contrary to theirs, we should not entertain similar feelings. Ours is the totality, the Sun. So we should not limit or restrict our vision.

Lead the children along the joyous path of truth. Let your faces ever shower smiles, springing from the bliss you earn from seeing the happy faces of children. Do not fall into the traps of anger, jealousy and pride. You can avoid this through steady and sincere attention to the task you have undertaken. May the children you serve become heroes in the revival of the ancient glory of their motherland.

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All good things have to be done the hard way. Ease and elevation cannot go together.

Sri Sathya Sai