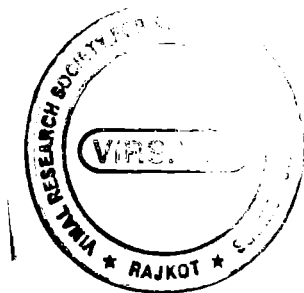


THROUGH SILENCE TO MEDITATION



Vimala Thakar



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SILENCE
TO
MEDITATION

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THROUGH
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(Talks Given In Sri Lanka - 1987)

*IS SITTING IN
SILENCE A NECESSITY?*

Sitting in silence is a way to learn to relax the body and the 'I' consciousness - not through passivity, not through activity but just through being. You are alert but not active. You are neither inactive nor passive. That is one way of saying that the movement of body and mind is one aspect of life and the relaxation of the body and the mind is another aspect of life.

Silence is not something negative. The motionless in silence, the movement freeness in silence is not inactivity. It may be non-action but not inaction. We have

to appreciate the difference between inactivity and non-action. Inactivity is a reaction to activity. When the body is too exhausted it gets inactive. In exhaustion and inactivity there will not be the energy, the vitality of alertness. In silence there is the vitality of alertness and yet no activity, no voluntary movement, no voluntary activity. So you transcend beyond activity and inactivity and you transport yourself into a dimension of total relaxation which is non-action.

We are looking at life now as consisting of movement and non-movement, motion and non-motion, action and non-action. These two together make the wholeness of life. There is no dichotomy - there is no opposition, our mind has created opposition, a sense of opposition and tension where it really does not exist.

If you observe, the light of day and the darkness of the night together constitute the wholeness of life. Pleasure and pain together, dying and being born

together - they constitute the wholeness of life. Can you imagine life without death, dying? Can you imagine life without the movement of birth? There is this movement of birth, growth, decay, death - the cycle moves. The movement of birth and the action of death - they supplement and complement each other. There is no opposition, there is no contradiction. Death supplements what you call life and life complements what you call death. They are intertwined they are inter-mingled, together they make the whole.

You feel your heart moving in your body. You feel your lungs are moving and functioning in your body. The lungs have their separate existence and so has the heart, so has the liver, the pancreas glands, the digestive organs, the kidneys. They are functioning separately and yet in harmony with one another. If there were tensions in the functioning of the organs, if one predominated over the others there would be no health. Health is a spontaneous harmony of autono-

mously working organs in your body. The heart is perfect and whole by itself; it has its way of functioning and so has the brain. But those tiny wholes are in the one big whole of what you call your body. In the same way, in the cosmos, there are many wholenesses moving and operating.

Movement is one part of life. If you would like to taste the totality of life, will you not have to learn to keep a distance with the movement, the motion? Will you not have to set yourself free of all motions and be with that which is motion-free?

If you are interested, then I would say, as you take time for cooking meals, for bathing your body, for washing your clothes, for your sleep, take time for sitting. Let it be a part of your daily schedule - to spend some time in a room or in a corner of a room or in a garden just by yourself. Now, we are learning to set ourselves free of move-

ment and find out what happens in that which is motion-free? So you will put yourself in a room. It is better to investigate this when the body is fresh after a good night's sleep and you are fresh. You bathe your body, you wear fresh clothes and retire to a room where you can be alone with yourself.

First you have to be physically alone and then when you are alone, you will have to keep aside the identification with functional roles. Physically being alone and without a movement is easy. You can sit down in a room. But now, the next step begins. For learning to be in silence, the next step is : you ask yourself, 'what is the movement of the mind?' The mind moves, it has identified itself with various roles in life. For instance if you are born in India or Sri Lanka you move like an Indian or a Lankan. There is an identification with an image of a Shri Lankan or with an image of an Indian, an Englishman or a Dutchman. You are wearing that image and you move.

Now when you are alone in the room, throw that image away - brush it aside. You are no more an Indian, an American, a Dutchman, an Englishman or Lankan. You are just a human being. For a short time throw away that image to which you try to approximate your actions. You try to react like an Indian, like an American or Russian. So put that away.

Then one has an idea that one is born in some family - A Muslim family, a Hindu, a Christian, a Buddhist - so you have an image of being a Buddhist or a Christian or a Hindu - put that away.

You are trying to find out what is left when all these identifications imposed upon you by society or accepted by you because of tradition or cultivated by you because they are fashionable in society or absorbed by you unconsciously are put aside. You are putting all that away to find out what remains. You are trying to find out what is the nudity of your consciousness. What are you when you

are not a Hindu, an Indian, a Muslim, a son, a daughter, a husband, a wife? These are functional roles, and we have identified ourselves with these roles to such an extent that the idea and the memory of the functional roles goes on moving all the time inside. The mental movement is due to the adoption of so many functional roles.

You are going to bathe in the ocean of silence, so brushing aside or throwing away these clothes - identifications with various roles - is vitally necessary.

Inside these identifications is another layer of identifications which keeps moving, 'I like this' 'I do not like this' 'I hate it'. 'this is good' 'this is bad'. We have identification with norms and criteria, with standards, with values, special personal preferences and prejudices. They are all acquired. While moving through relationships, we have acquired all of them. What happens if they are

thrown away, if they are brushed aside just for an hour?

The likes, the dislikes are gone, the conclusions are gone, the functional roles are gone. What are you, when nothing is left? Then there is no movement. Do you see what silence is? The silence is the emptiness of your consciousness when all this paraphenalia that has been collected is brushed aside.

There is sheer motionlessness. No thought moves, no feeling, no sentiment, no emotion is moving. And this is not a theory, this is not something out of speculation when I say there is motionlessness. Let me go a little further into it.

Have you watched and if you have not - will you please watch what happens to you when a thought stirs in your body, an idea stirs in your body, an emotion or a feeling comes up? Just watch for the fun of it to see what happens.

We are getting self acquainted.

Atma parichaya - self - acquaintance; Atma gyanam - self knowledge, Atma bodham - self understanding; Atma Sakshakaram - self realisation. These are the steps that one has to follow for learning.

When an emotion, any emotion like fear or jealousy or annoyance or irritation comes up, where do you feel it? You feel it in the stomach. You feel it in the chemistry of your body. The chemical balance is disturbed when an emotion comes up in the body. A particular kind of chemical disturbance takes place in the body when fear visits you. Something shrinks in you. You feel it in the pit of your stomach. On the other hand, if you get angry, you will feel tension in the stomach - one kind of sentiment and emotion stimulates disturbance, turbulence and another kind of sentiment creates tension. You feel tension in the brain, you feel tensed in the eyes, your blood pressure rises, you feel heat in the body and also in the brain when you are angry.

Have you watched yourself when you get angry? Right from the big toe to the crown of your head you become very tense. And that tension requires an outlet. So either you shout, you scream, or you want to slap someone or you want to abuse someone.

You are creating an outlet for that tension. Please do watch, please do observe these happenings in your daily living. So a movement of thought is equal to tension in your whole nervous system. Any movement of emotions and sentiments is equal to chemical turbulence in the body.

A person who is brooding all the time about what has happened in the past, brooding about the pain, the pleasure, going on and on recalling the memory of the past, or the person who is always afraid of the future, afraid of, what will happen tomorrow, next hour - their bodies remain so tensed that the tension affects their digestive organs. Such people most often suffer from con-

isn't it? Nearly ninety nine percent of us carry innumerable tensions and pressures and conflicts due to those tensions. That's the stuff of our life.

Now just take one step further with me. When you are tensed, when the whole nervous system is tensed and you are trying to look at something or listen to something, are you capable of an honest perception or an honest audition? The whole system is tensed. Tension is an imbalance. Anger or jealousy or fear these are all imbalances - neurological and chemical imbalances. We have knaively believed that you cannot live without anger and fear and jealousy, that we cannot live without these imbalances and the impurities stimulated by those imbalances.

It seems possible to the speaker to live in relaxation; It is possible to live in that inner state of relaxation and then move into relationship without the relationship creating a tension or a pressure.

That's the way of living. Meditation is a way of living where relationships are movements of relaxation and not tensions and pressures.

If and when you observe that every thought, the slightest movement of thought upsets the balance, slightest movement of feelings and sentiments upsets the chemical balance, you will appreciate the necessity of spending some time by yourself when you will not suffer from tensions. First you will have to taste that tension-free and pressure-free state.

So you allow the mind to relax. It doesn't relax immediately, it keeps on moving. You look at it, you watch it, you don't touch it. And when you do not touch your reflection, when you don't touch the movement, then the movement loses its vitality. It feels there is no fun to keep it moving and the movement subsides on its own. Silence is a tension and pressure free state of your being.

stipation - partial constipation or chronic constipation. Because the mind and the body, are not two separate things, they are the gross and the subtle levels of one entity.

If a person is given to excitement, getting afraid, getting excited every now and then, getting impatient, annoyed - they suffer from sickness like diarrhoea, dysentery. Now if you ask the doctors, they will categorise nearly 75% sicknesses as psychosomatic.

If you have observed this, you will now understand that when you sit down and allow the mind to relax into non-action, your body or will be free of tensions and pressures. The pressures of the chemical upsurge and the tension in the nervous system - is the stuff of our life. The whole waking consciousness is spent in the movement of tensions and pressures. You are never relaxed. All your relationships are adjustments within those tensions and pressures. That's our life,

Do we not need this, even on the physical level?

Look at the life that we live? It is so fast moving and there are so many fronts on which we have to move simultaneously. Your bodies are tortured by those tensions and pressures. I am pleading with you that it is necessary even for the physical and mental health that you reserve sometime everyday when you can dive deep into relaxation and set your system free of various tensions. Physically speaking that is the advantage of daily sitting in silence - you may sit down or stand up or lie down whichever way you like. By being alone with yourself, you are alone with the totality of life around you and within you. You do not belong to anyone, to any country, to any family, to any race, to any ideology, you are just you - an emanation of life, alone with the totality of life. Being in it, you will see the fun of it.

If you are married, if you are

householders, if you have jobs to do, you cannot afford to spend very long time in silence. Find out what time is convenient for you - morning, afternoon, evening or night - when you will have at least fortyfive minutes when nobody will disturb you. And then dive deep into your aloneness. That state of total relaxation, physical relaxation, mental relaxation is a marvellous state.

My friends, being in silence, is being in the wholeness of your being. From the partial and the fragmentary you have moved into the wholeness, the totality. And it's the wholeness that heals. Those who spend time in that inner wholeness will notice for themselves, how even physical sicknesses and diseases get cured just by the holiness of that wholeness. And these are not words. These are facts pointed out with the help of words. That wholeness has a dynamism very different from the dynamism of your thought, knowledge and experience. You are acquainted with the energy of

thoughts, the pleasure of thoughts and feelings. The speaker is trying to point out that there is a different quality of energy in the energy of wholeness, in the energy of relaxation, why not taste it?

Once you find that out then at every moment of leisure you will go back to that state of relaxation and that will become your abode. The energy of wholeness activated through relaxation begins to function. Wholeness heals, wholeness is holy - sacred.

You study silence in the beginning, you are in silence, say an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening. Then you go back to it whenever you have leisure. If you study this way, then silence will become your normal dimension of living. You live in the emptiness, you are always relaxed. When it is necessary to move into relationships you move out of that wholeness, not out of tension, not out of fragmentation but you are in your wholeness all the time, ex-

Is Sitting In Silence A Necessity?

cept the time that is needed for relationships. If you want to plan and organise the day, you sit down and work it out - what am I going to do today? - you organise, but you do not go on thinking and worrying about what you are going to do even while bathing, making the bed, cleaning the room, you don't keep worrying. You know, we have a habit of carrying tensions, we have a habit of carrying inner conflicts and tensions and we suffer so much.

This psychological suffering has become a way of our living. Carrying tensions and pressures is a way of living with us. And as a friend, I want to point out - its not necessary. Psychological suffering can be ended, tensions and conflicts can be ended. Living in relaxation - the healthy way is possible and within the reach of each individual.

*WHY IS OBSERVATION
SO DIFFICULT?*

When you sit down to relax, you find it very difficult to observe. Because mind has been trained for naming, comparing, evaluating, accepting, rejecting whatever comes before it. Now, when you sit down, you are not there to acquire any experiences nor are you there for acquiring any knowledge about anything, so the consciousness that there is nothing to be done voluntarily helps relaxation. In the beginning, people tell that when they thus sit down, they find the thoughts are moving. Therefore one says, observe them; Then they say, we can't observe because as soon as the thought comes, the naming and the comparison, the evaluation comes up involuntarily. If

that is the difficulty, one says, 'get busy watching the breathing process'.

When attention, when that non-evaluatory perception is sustained, then the help of the breathing process will not be necessary. You have learnt, and one will be in that state of pure observation while sitting down quietly. That is the first step.

Let it be very clear, one has to learn how to observe - we don't know. Our perception is contaminated by evaluation. At the very moment of looking, listening, the evaluation and the judgment does come up. To purify the process of perception, to set it free from the subjective momentum of identifying, comparing etc., we have to learn. Does that become clear?

Now, when that is sustained and you notice the movement of thoughts, you watch them, as you watch the

clouds in the evening. Well, involuntarily the naming does take place; watch the process of naming. The evaluation also takes place because of a habit momentum. Why not watch that? You know, one sticks to the point of watching and observing.

The moment you start verbalising and analysing why the thought is going back to the past, why thought is planning, why thought is imagining, the looking stops - we are not there to analyse the thought, I wonder why looking simply, becomes such a problem?

Alright, I get carried away by thought. How do I know that I am carried away by thought? If I am totally carried away, what tells me that I am carried away? Out of a habit I get carried away or I am carried away for a fraction of a second and then suddenly I become aware - 'goodness me, I was carried away',

so I come back. In the duration of learning there will be many such lapses.

Your getting carried away and your becoming aware that you are carried away - means, you come back to the state of observation. It is sustained for some seconds and again you get carried away, again you come back. If I were a student, I would watch even the process that I am getting carried away, that I have come back. All this will be just observed in a very simply way. Then the frequency of being carried away will be lessened, the duration of the period of being carried away will decrease and if there is the intensity of enquiry and if one is spending reasonable amount of time in learning to observe, I think one gets over this obstacle of the deep rooted habit.

*WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE
FLOW OF THOUGHTS?*

We have to presume that the body is steady, we abstain from verbal speech, and close the eyes, so that - the contact with the outer world is no more there. You are now alone with the inner life pulsating in you. Now what happens? You close your eyes, you don't see the outer objects and then you see something else. You notice that though there is not voluntary effort to think, though you do not want to acquire any knowledge or experience, thoughts are moving.

The movement of thought structure is independent of your volition, is the first discovery. Do you see, what a tremendous discovery it can be? The dis-

covery that what I call my thoughts, my feelings, my memory have a movement and a momentum independent of me. This discovery has a dual effect. One, the pride and vanity that 'I think', that these are 'my thoughts' - that vanity disappears. If you are an enquirer of life, enquirer of the meaning of life, every discovery creates a qualitative change inside you - because you are investigating for that transformation to take place. So one aspect is, a humility that comes about - "my goodness me, my mind is not under my control". The mental movement has a momentum independent of myself. Let me find out from where it got that momentum'. There is now a dual realisation. A realisation of the limitations of the activity of volition and the immensity of the thought structure and its movement.

Uptil now, I called them "my thoughts", there was a relationship of I

and mine, but now I realise that they have an existence independent of me. So, the relationship of I and mine has receded. Secondly, whenever the thoughts came up, I acted upon them. A demand was made upon me by memory, by a wish, by a desire, by a sentiment, by an ambition and I jumped and acted. Please so see this. First I called them mine and secondly I gratified their needs, I acted upon them.

There is a new relationship that is coming up. I recognise their independent momentum but I do not jump and act upon them, I do not evaluate them, I don't judge them. Do you see, even whilst sitting in silence, how step after step is taken by life itself? Life is a master par excellence. If we have the sensitivity to look at life and learn from life, its an ever present master by your side and in your heart.

If I am not going to act upon the thoughts, what do I do with them? I do NOTHING with them. I look at them. If they

are moving without my volition, if they are deeply rooted in the marrows of my bones and everywhere, let me look at them. The radical change in relationship takes place in a few minutes if a person is honest. So I look at them - not to judge, neither to accept nor to reject, not to act upon them, not to change them - I just look at them. I look at the trees, I look at the sunshine, I look at the clouds. In the same way I look at the movement of thoughts in utter freedom. There is no pressure on me to do anything with those thoughts - to suppress, to repress, to change, nothing. So there is a space between the movement of thought structure and a part of thought structure that was calling itself 'I'.

The marvellous thing is, when you look at the thoughts, structure in simplicity, not claiming them, not rejecting them, they lose their grip on you. And when there is that relationship of unconditional freedom between the movement of thought structure and the observer, a

very funny thing happens. You feel inwardly as if you are sitting in front of a mirror and you are looking at yourself. You realise that all those thoughts, memories, experiences, preferences, prejudices, conclusions - they are you and you are not separate from them. The reflection in the mirror and you, are the same. In the same way, it is not only the physical body that is you, but also the whole thought structure. The tremendous momentum had created an illusion of a separate thinker, a separate looker and observer - but they are the same. The thinker and the thought are not separate. It's only the speed, the momentum of the flow of thought that has created an illusion of a separate 'me'. This has to be gone through by every person if the discovery has to take place, if the words are not be reduced to an idea.

So through observation, there is a tremendous event of liberation from an illusion that there is a thinker and movement of thought separate from each other. What does that mean? That there is noth-

ing like an individual mind, that there is nothing like an individual 'I' consciousness. Thought is the product of collective human effort through centuries.

If that psychological fact is grasped, then will there be any attachment to thoughts that come up or will there be an awareness that every thought is a response of memory conditioned by the past? All the evaluations, the norms, the criteria are conditionings fed into us. If the fact is grasped and the truth is sensed, then will there be any attachment, any identifications with the cerebral way of behaviour?

You do not have to make an independent effort to get rid of attachment. Attachment is only a maladjustment with facts. If the fact is seen correctly, attachment is bound to evaporate. So when it is seen that there is a racial consciousness and a racial momentum of knowledge, experience and thought and there is nothing like an individual ego, the self, the me, there is a sense of great freedom within.

*CAN SILENCE LIBERATE
US FROM THE CYCLE OF
BIRTH AND DEATH?*

We are either thinking, or reacting emotionally all the time. Now when you think a thought, it is not necessary that you have agreeable conditions, favourable conditions to execute the thought. Some are executed others are not executed. Do you see, the residue remains in your memory? The same with emotions and sentiments. That's one aspect of thought. But may I take you one step still further into the depth.

When you think a thought, whether you have verbalised it or not, you are emanating matter around you. Thought is an emanation of matter from your body, from your biological structure. It has vibrational existence. Even when you don't speak, the thought travels through the body. The walls of flesh and

blood cannot arrest the movement of thought. It travels outward from your body and gets mingled in the ether around you. I don't want to enter into mystical things but let us go at least as far as science takes us.

So, when you have one kind of vasana - desire, one kind of thought - vichar, repeated ten times a day, fifty times a month, these vibrations in the ether travelling around you, they are amalgamated. They nearly become a very subtle vibrational entity - unfulfilled thoughts, unfulfilled desires they are there as vibrational matter, floating in the ether. The colour, the sound, the velocity of thought, everything has been measured. I am not saying things out of my pocket. Scientists have worked upon this.

When a person dies, that is to say the body is dead, the death of the body does not mean destruction of those vibrations that were floating around in the

ether. They are there. Your predominant, basic, fundamental vasanas, fundamental thoughts are there. When a couple meets somewhere and one of the couple - the man or the woman - if they have the same predominant desires, as the vibrations in the ether, the vibrations get attracted towards the couple and they get clothed again in a human form - there is a continuity there. It is the thought that travels, it is the vasana that travels.

If there is an urge to set oneself free of this unending cycle of birth and death due to unfulfilled desires and thoughts, what do you do? You learn to live without the movement of thought. First you minimise the areas where thought has to function. You make your life very simple. Simplicity and austerity recommended by the ancient wise people are not inhibitions or any special conditioning, but it is an aid to minimising the movement of thought. So you minimise the areas where desires, thoughts, feelings have to be

exercised. You live very simply. Even in that simple, elegant life, or elegantly austere life you speak only when it is necessary to speak, otherwise you are back in the cave of inner emptiness - that total relaxation where thoughts do not move, feelings do not move. Do you see what it means? You do not create any new karma, you do not create any new residue in your memory. Whatever has been stored in the subconscious and unconscious is getting exhausted by your act of living. And you do not create a new parabdhā.

Your memory is your parabdhā - the individual memory, the collective memory, the racial memory. "Parabdhā" - that which has been begun before, that which was set into motion before - that is what "parabdhā" means. Because there was thought, the clothing of the body is there. You work out but the parabdhā but while you are working it out harmoniously, you see to it that no new residue goes to memory as a want,

as a desire, as an urge, as a thought,
as an ambition - nothing.

If the emptiness within is maintained and sustained, if you go through an experience and die to it immediately, if you go through the relationship and live the pleasure and pain resulting from it instantaneously and finish with it, then there is nothing left hanging or floating in the ether to be reborn.

I am not entering into theories of re-birth etc. but scientifically speaking it seems to me, that if you make silence - that inner, unconditional relaxation your abode and if the consciousness is there in the emptiness and responds whenever necessary in such a way that it does not create any new attachments, new bondage for itself, then there is nothing left to be reborn. That's why it is said that, the person who lives in the state of meditation puts an end to the cycle of birth and death, that is the way one can proceed.

*HOW LONG
TO SIT IN SILENCE?*

Sir, watching or sitting is not a ritual, it's a way of learning. Because we have to work so hard throughout the day, constantly moving through the mind, the brain, so one says in this busy life, devote a time for learning, observation, spending time with yourself. It is not a question of how many times, it's not a ritual, it's for leaning, perhaps when you have learnt, there may not be the need to sit down, unless you sit down because you enjoy doing it.

But in the beginning one would say, why not begin the day with such relaxation for some time and also end the day with such relaxation? That might help the tortured nerves; the exhausted nerves.

Isn't there a necessity in this world of stress and strain, that one relaxes

mentally so that the relaxation rejuvenates and you come back to this world with a little more strength and vitality? To begin the day with it and end the day with it - first for learning and secondly for physical and mental health seem to be recommendable.

*WILL THE MIND STOP
MOVING ON ITS OWN?*

Yes Sir, if we do not cling to it, if we let the mind relax into non-action. But we don't do that. Suppose you observe and when you come to the facts you begin to react to the facts? If one does not cling to the movement of the mind, if one does not hold on to it, justify it, defend it, then it drops away.

But generally what happens is, the exposure to the psychological facts through the observation creates reactions and we succumb to those reactions. We don't allow the false to drop away. Even after

having seen what is false, we hold on to the false in the name of it being useful to us in our daily living.

Suppose I have discovered that wherever and in whichever field the 'I', the 'me' moves, it is repetitive, what will happen? If I am interested in finding out the truth, if I am interested in letting the false drop away, what will happen to me? Won't it stop sir? I'll say. "I am not going to search, I am not going to look, I am not going to explore with the help of the mental movement". There would be a realisation that the mental movement is not a proper means for further investigation. The realisation will dawn upon me, that the mental movement is repetitive, is mechanical. Every discovery brings about its own realisation, it's like a light in the dark room.

So you are asking me, "Does the movement, the repetitive movement stop on its own? "It does, if I don't say. " Okay, the mind is repetitive but it is necessary.

How can I function in society but through the mind. So let me continue". If I realise the mechanistic nature of the mental movement, obviously there would be a full stop to further investigation through the same mental movement, won't it be? Would I not say, "This is wrong, this is limited, let it stop".

No one is willing to leave the known, however mechanistic or repetitive it might be. The known gives the feeling of security and the unknown stimulates a feeling of insecurity or fear. So we investigate verbally and when it comes to the act of living we go back to the conditioned, the mechanical.

A person says 'when I sit too long in silence I get headache' If I were in the position of the questioner the moment I feel headache, I will get up, leave the asana and walk around the room for some time - five minutes, ten minutes, take a wash, sprinkle some cold water on my face, in the eyes, wash my hands, feet and

then go back to the seat. You sit for some-time again you feel the headache; the moment you feel the headache, just get up and leave the asana. If you are a lover of music, the moment you feel headache, put a music cassette on for a few minutes. That might relax you and the oncoming headache; then go back to your silence.

Really speaking, silence has nothing to do with headache. There is nothing in that total relaxation that can cause a headache, unless there is an inner resistance to sit in silence. If there is a resistance inwardly and you don't like even the idea and you are forcing yourself, that silence could cause a headache. So let us not force oneself into sitting in silence, into relaxing in silence.'

In the name of spirituality, it is not necessary to use any manner of force against oneself. Spirituality, investigation of the ultimate reality, does not require any force, any compulsion, any suppression,

repression, any mutilation of your consciousness. This is the time to learn and therefore in learning without using force, let us rely upon the power of observation, that sustained perception without any evaluation, without any reaction.

WHY ARE WE HURT?

It's a beautiful question. Here, obviously you are not referring to the physical structure.

The other variety of hurt is very much related to and depends upon the 'I', the me, the self, the ego. Let us find out whether there is an alternative way not to get hurt or not to allow the memory of hurt to continue in time.

What gets hurt is the 'Me' and that 'Me' has no factual substance, it is only a concept.

Why are we hurt? It is because we have hundreds of images of ourselves. We

project those images and then we want the other people to accept that image, respect that image, honour that image and when that is not done, then you get hurt.

Supposing I want to strike the space, the emptiness does not get hurt by it. In the same way, when there is no identification with any images whatsoever, then the question of getting hurt, the question of suffering, the misery never arises.

What you call liberation or emancipation is the ending of the psychological suffering. Religiosity is nothing else but the ending of psychological suffering and misery while in the midst of relationships and not by isolating yourself or by moving away from the field of relationships.

So, when you get hurt, you recognise the hurt, the pain, you live through it and do not move away from it. If the event of getting hurt is not given continuity, if it is not converted into memory, then there is no suffering. There is pain for a moment; there

is the piercing pain and agony for a moment. You go through it, but you do not say. "I have been hurt, I have been insulted, I have been humiliated". If you do not keep thinking about it, if you do not give continuity to that which has happened in the time-less moment, then the psychological hurt or suffering can come to an end.

So you live from moment to moment, you die from moment to moment, if you have no image of yourself. Innocence is nothing but the absence of images about oneself and innocency like the emptiness of space can never get hurt.

Human beings are born for enjoying unconditional inner freedom. It is only free individuals who can cooperate with one another. If there is an emotional dependency or intellectual dependency on relationships, then there is no co-operation, there is no living together, there is no sharing.

So when there are images we get hurt, when we have possessiveness in relation to other human beings then we get hurt.

CREATE YOUR OWN PATH

One has to observe how one's mind works, one has to watch one's relationships and find out if one is dominated by intellect and reason. If one is intellectually inclined to analyse things, to find out, to argue etc, then one may start the self-education by reading books, studying them, listening to talks and discerning things for oneself, because one is rationally minded. Another person may be dominated by sentiments, emotions; he may take another path. The third one is inclined towards relaxation, silence, mounam, he may create a path for himself out of mounam.

You have to create your own path inwardly-Gynanam, Dhyanam, Mounam, Bhakti. One has to find out what is agreeable to oneself. Finding that out is vitally necessary, otherwise you will go on reading all the books available to you on earth about the path of knowledge, about the path of meditation, about the path of Bhakti. You will

go on reading all sorts of books and there will be a crowd of information inside you, and it will not be possible to educate yourself in any one directions - you will go on changing directions every two months.

Sir, if you have to dig a hole, if you have to dig a well, you don't go on digging in ten different places. You have to dig at one place so that you reach towards the water contained in the earth. But out of curiosity and because books are available, one goes on reading, one goes on listening to talks on yoga, on bhakti, on gynana, on meditation, on this, that, the other and one is at a loss what to do, and in the evening of life, the hands are empty. One says this with a sense of great sorrow in heart. So it is very necessary, urgently necessary to observe one's behaviour. Find out what is your inner spontaneous inclination, and educate yourself through that.

Education is a pathless land. You can create your own path for self-educate

tion and then read books about them, then listen to talks about that. That is one point.

Another very important point is : Whichever path of self-education you follow and you go on educating yourself in, you are bound to get or go through certain experiences. You may see certain lights, you may hear certain sounds, you may get experiences; because you are turning inwards, it's an inward voyage. And in that inward voyage such events of experiences - non-sensual, extra-sensory perceptions, astral experiences - they may happen. Look upon them as inevitable in the path of self-education. Don't give them too much importance. When they have played their role in your life, they will subside of their own. There are so many sounds and so many lights in the human body, if you turn inward and you see them, there is nothing terribly spiritual and remarkable about it, nothing extraordinary about it.

The ego is there and the light or the experience or the sound is distinguishable, so it is an experience. The ego experiences in the inward realm of the subtle body certain things. It's very simple. Nothing mysterious about it. But people create such a fuss. "Oh I sat down and I heard so many sounds and I saw the Buddha, I saw the Christ, I saw the Shiva". 'I' saw it. The importance is about the 'I', not the seeing of it, but the 'I' seeing it; therefore one talks about it to one person, to ten persons; you know, one feels a kind of self-importance in it. Do you see that? It does a great harm because while talking, it is the YOU to whom the event has occurred that is important.

Spirituality is freedom from the centre of the me and if at every step, in every action you go on strengthening the me, the ego, then one can spend one life and ten lives in self education but the me, the ego goes on becoming stronger and stronger.

SITTING DOWN IS A WAY TO LEARN

In order to relax in the emptiness of space or the emptiness of silence where shall we begin? We will have to wind up, first of all the physical movement. Find out some place and sit down, so there is no voluntary physical movement. Sitting down is not a ritual. It's a way to learn, to find out the dimension of silence in which you can later on live when sitting will not be necessary. But sitting is the way to learn, to get into contact with it first hand and once you feel it, once you are in it, then sitting and standing and lying down - all become irrelevant. You live in that dimension of silence. But to begin with, it is not a dimension for us, we are going to investigate and we need some help. So we help the body to sit down somewhere.

It has been asked about the posture. You cannot say that the whole hu-

manity will accept one kind of posture. What is necessary for total relaxation which is the threshold to the domain of silence, is that you keep your spine and neck erect. If you sit erect then the breathing process does not get hampered, it does not get obstructed.

You can place your hands in any way that you like, you can place them on the knees. You know, the extremities of the hands and feet carry the electro - magnetic energy contained in the body. So either you join the palms or you keep them simply on the knees. You can place your hands joining the thumb and the first finger - you can play around with it - it's not a ritual.

Does one close the eyes or does one keep them open? Have you observed what happens when you keep your eyes open? When the eyes are open my friends, the sight contained in the eyes reaches out towards some object. It trav-

els through the space in search of an object, and is bound to bring back some sensation and the mind will get busy interpreting that sensation and then it will start reacting to that sensation.

But you can study and keep the eyes open and teach yourself not to touch objects with the help of your sight. Trataka on the emptiness of space is one of the most interesting things to learn, if one has the time.

Some people believe that even such education is not necessary that you just need to listen to the words, understand them and then suddenly transformation is there. But for that, you require an extremely sensitive apparatus of the body and the brain. If the apparatus is equipped with that total sensitivity, then listening, understanding and transformation happen instantaneously. But as long as the body is not sensitive, the totality is not sensitive, you have to educate yourself in that sensitivity.

How long does one sit in silence? As long as one is not able to live in the silence throughout the day. If the silence becomes your abode, then sitting is not necessary. Please let us not create a fuss out of sitting in silence. Let us understand its relevance, and its limited utility.

A NEW WAY OF LIVING

Personal discovery of truth is the essence of religion, and the religious person is one who has fearlessness to live the truth, come what may. Friends may not understand, there is the likelihood of being misinterpreted, misunderstood and yet fearlessly with faith in life and trust in one's own understanding, with a sense of fellowship with all the species - human and non-human - one walks through the corridors of pleasure and pain, honour and humili-

ation, because life is for living. It is the quality of the act of living which can be either religious or irreligious.

By allowing a psychic mutation to occur in our beings, we would be reducing one area of violence from the globe. By offering our life for that psychic mutation to take place, we might be creating a living cell of a new life style, new way of living. We might be setting into the orbit of human consciousness a spark of love and compassion. So let us not forget that we are embarking upon the adventure of a religious enquiry not for petty little self-centred ambitions or cultivating kundalini power, shakti patha and having astral and occult experiences. But we embark upon that enquiry on behalf of the whole human race.

TRUST YOUR OWN JUDGEMENT

It's an uphill task, this self-education, this sadhana, this religious or spiritual life. It's swimming against the currents. It is climbing the steep hill, because the whole society is addicted to materialistic philosophy. The whole human race has become a pleasure mongering race. The whole importance is for money, security, power, pleasure and the emphasis is on the centre of the ego - that's the society.

And in this society, a negligible minority like you and me want to find out a way to wash out all imbalances and create a flame of sanity within the heart, which cannot be damaged by anything any pain, by any pleasure. In the midst of imbalances and insanity, we are looking for sanity. As you remove the moss on the

water when you plunge into it and then swim, we have to remove so many obstacles and swim against the currents.

It requires vitality and strength of the mind, it requires faith in life. We are not the first enquirers born on this earth. There have been many before us and there shall be many after us. If they could wade through many difficulties and discover the truth for themselves, it would be possible for us also with faith in life, with trust in our own understanding. All you need is - a genuine urge to find out the meaning of life, the nature of truth, the nature of reality, faith in life and fearlessness to carry out and what you understand.

Trust your own judgement. You may commit mistakes but the moment the mistake is realised, the responsibility is to correct it.

NEED FOR A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO VERBALISATION

We need to have a scientific approach to the energy of verbalisation, to the energy of speech which is a very powerful energy in our life. When you speak you are releasing sound energy, you are not only releasing certain meanings of the word, you are also releasing certain sound energies.

One needs to purify speech, and you know what it is to purify? To say what you mean and mean what you say. If there is a motive in your mind, and you use the words, the capacity to speak to conceal the motive, you twist, you distort the facts and you present them not as they are but in certain ways which you think will be beneficial to you, then there is a gap and an inconsistency between the motivation and the speech. Or you say something and you do something else, then there is a contradiction between the words and the

deeds or you do something and you say something else.

Please do see this. Contradiction between action and speech and motivation, or a gap between the three or the inconsistency or disharmony between these causes great impurity in the psychic life.

You may go on singing bhajans and kirtans for twenty hours a day, but if you are using this sacred power of speech to mislead people, to deceive them, or out of fear to exaggerate or understate things, then the singing of the bhajans is not going to create an inner transformation. So, physical purification of verbalisation and purification of this energy body is very important.

The austerity of a scientific approach to everything in life results in purification. And then if these concealed energies, if these potential energies get activated, they don't do any harm, they are easily assimilated by the rest of the body.

If everything is interrelated and interconnected, how can you feel alone or lonely? Faith in the Divinity of life implies, my friends, that when you turn your face towards truth, towards the homogeneous wholeness of life, towards this mystery of life, you are not alone.

There have been many before us who enquired the same way and turned their faces towards truth with the faith that the mysterious inter relatedness of Universal intelligence shall help when help is needed. That faith is necessary for conducting an enquiry on the subtle realm of the consciousness, for conducting an enquiry into the invisible and the infinite.

The whole universe, the life, the divinity is with us, that power of Intelligence is with us and we shall be helped, if and when genuine help is needed. If you are dishonest, if you are a lazy, if your enquiry hasn't got that integrity, if it's not genuine, if it is fake, if it is a game of emotions, if it is only a shallow intellectual curiosity, then the help doesn't come. The Intelligence provides the help when it is really needed.

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THROUGH SILENCE TO MEDITATION

Sitting in silence is a way to learn to relax the body and the 'I' consciousness - not through passivity, not through activity but through being. You are alert but not active, you are neither inactive nor passive. That is one way of saying, that the movement of body and the mind is one aspect of life and the relaxation of the body and the mind is another aspect of life. So you transcend beyond activity and inactivity and you transport yourself into a dimension of total relaxation which is non-action.

