

WHAT IS MEDITATION ?



Vimala Thakar



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What Is
Meditation?

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What Is
Meditation?

*Talk given at Mount Abu,
24th March, 1992*

The word meditation in the English language has one meaning, and the word meditation in Oriental languages has quite a different meaning. The English word "*meditation*", derived from the root "to meditate", implies a person who is the meditator, and a subject or a theme upon which the person meditates. To meditate is to reflect and to analyse. It is an activity of the mind to contemplate. So, there is a meditator, there is the activity of meditating, and there is the state of reflection or contemplation, which is called meditation. So it is an activity, a verbal activity. In Tibet and China, it became Chan. The word '*DHYANAM*' travelled and became Chan. It travelled to Japan, and the word became Zen.

Whether you call it 'Dhyanam', or by any other oriental word in any oriental language, it is a way of living - an alter-

native way of living - not merely an activity of the brain, of the mind. The way of living includes the state of consciousness, and the state of the sensual movement when consciousness and its quality get expressed through the sense organs.

The sensual movement and the movement of the consciousness together express themselves in behaviour or in the movement of relationship. The state of consciousness, the state of the sense organs or the physical body, and the actual quality of behaviour, the texture of behaviour, the quality of the movement all together become the way of living.

So this word has a different meaning in different languages.

You are asking me : What is meditation? As I understand, it is a state of consciousness in which there is no centre as the 'I' or the 'me'. The consciousness through which we function usually has the centre the 'I', the 'me',

the 'self'. The subject, which divides life into the 'me' and the 'not me', the 'I' and the 'thou', the subject and the object. The very perception of the consciousness divides life into two, the subject and the object. Such a dividing centre is not there in the state of meditation. There is only a holistic awareness, which does not divide life. No division into subject and object. The awareness of the whole permeates the being, percolates to the sense organs, to the sensual level, and the sense organs in their behaviour, manifest that non-dual consciousness, manifest that awareness of the unity of life, manifest that holistic awareness.

The present dimension of the 'I' consciousness acquires knowledge, then stores the experiences in memory, uses them, if and when necessary. The experiences, the knowledge become the criteria by which you judge the behaviour of other people. The accumulation of knowledge and experience develops

patterns of behaviour. Different groups have different patterns of behaviour, different patterns of reactions and different value structures.

Our present way of living is like this - the 'I', the acquisition of knowledge, experiences, storing them in memory, converting them into norms, into criteria judging others, reacting to the behaviour of others according to our norms and criteria. Some of the norms and criteria are provided by economics, some by politics, some by religion, some by tradition, but that is how we live.

Meditation is a dimensional transformation - not the destruction of the 'I' consciousness. It is the silencing of the centre of the 'me' and through that silence, there is the emergence of a new energy of awareness. This new energy of awareness can be in the world, can see the world, can act in the world in a non-dual way without dividing life. So meditation is dimen-

sional transformation, from the dimension of the 'I' to the dimension of the 'It' the Life. There is an awareness of Life and not only the body. The Whole includes the body. The Whole includes what you call the 'me' and the 'not-me'. But it is an awareness without division, without fragmentation. So this is what I understand by meditation.

*GETTING ACQUAINTED
WITH BODY AND MIND*

How does that dimensional transformation take place? You are asking, what is its relevance to living? I say, it is a new way of living. It is an alternative way of living. No question of its being relevant or irrelevant. It is a revolution in the way of living. It is a revolution in the content of consciousness. It is a revolution in the texture of our perception and our response.

Now, how does that happen? First of all, a person who is interested in an

alternative way of living or meditative way of living, will have to get acquainted with himself - the body and the mind and find out how they behave? Not only knowledge from the books. One may read the books, but one will have to observe the behaviour of the body, the behaviour of the brain. How do they move into relationship? Is there freedom when they move? Are they approximating their behaviour to some patterns? Is there a spontaneity? So, observation becomes the first step of education for that holistic revolution. It becomes the first step to equip ourselves for the inner mutation. We can borrow that word from the science of physics. Meditation is a mutation in the whole human being - in the behaviour, the speech, the consciousness, etc.

The first step is : I observe. When I observe I see that the physical body moves when the mind shows an inclination to movement, when the mind says I

want to see, I want to look, I want to know, I want to obtain. The mind, then the modification and then the movement this is our way of living.

We do not know anything else. We have been trained from childhood. We have been given sets of motivations. We have inherited patterns of reactions. We have inherited norms, criteria. All this is a part of our inheritance. So what I call living is the movement of those patterns. It is the movement of those value structures, those conditionings. It is the movement of inheritance - inheritance from parents, inheritance from the community, inheritance from the race, inheritance from the country, and so on. But it is the inheritance that moves. That is one factor behind my movement.

Then there is what I have been taught. The unbringing and the conditionings resulting from the upbringing, is another factor which is behind the movement.

Then, I have acquired and cultivated certain ideas, I become a capitalist, I become a socialist, I become a religious person, I become a Hindu, I become a Buddhist. You know I acquire, I cultivate, I assimilate intentionally, reading books, attending talks, going to camps, travelling around, using the videos, the electronic media, - all that together. So, acquired and assimilated motivations and patterns, inherited motivations and patterns of behaviour, inherited knowledge, acquired knowledge - all this is behind the movement.

WHAT IS THIS "I"?

I observe this much, and I proceed and say, "But what is this 'I'? What is this 'me'?" There are eyes, there is a nose, there are ears, there are inner organs like liver, kidneys, pancreas glands. Yes, they are there. But what is this 'I'? Where does this 'I' live in my body? Is it in the chest? Is it an organ? If you so observe, you might notice that

it is not a physical organ. Where did the word "I" come from? Where did the idea of "me", "mine-ness", "I-ness"-where did it come from? If we observe that, if we want to learn about it, then we will see that when a child is born, the parents give it a name. They see whether the body is male, female, and they give it a name. The name is given to the body, to distinguish it from other persons. Then you call and address the child a hundred times by that name. So the first consciousness is, I am Harry or Robert or Nixon - or whatever name I have been given. I am that. It is an identification with the name.

Then the parents say: the child is very beautiful. "I am beautiful" - another identification. (or I am ugly). Parents go on describing qualities of the brain. it is brilliant, it is dull - and the child goes on absorbing that identification, and feels really, "I am that."

Then, the parents say : you are

Hindu or you are Christian, you are an Indian, you are a woman, you are a man, you are boy, you are a girl. The descriptions of the biological organism, the cerebral organism are given repeatedly so that identification takes place, and the child begins to respond to that.

Identification goes deeper and becomes stronger with every response, and we feel that, yes, there is a 'me' the 'self', the ego, inside and it must be preserved. How do you preserve that ego? You preserve the body by feeding it, by clothing it, by allowing it to sleep, giving it exercise. How do you preserve the ego, the 'I'? You begin to give yourself everything that the 'I' demands. By providing the demands, gratifying the demands of the 'me', we feel that we are keeping the ego alive. The 'I' says, "I don't like that person," and we turn away, "I like that person", and we have that person with us. So the preservation of the 'I' consciousness is really gratifying its demands, its wishes, trying to fulfil its ambitions.

And you feel that the 'I' is moving.

The movement of the 'I' takes place through these gratifications, provisions and acquisitions. I want money, I want a house, I want this, I want that, (I want to experience) always acquisition. It is an acquisition of knowledge, acquisition of material goods, acquisition of experiences, and so on. That gives inner satisfaction, and I feel, "Ah! Yes, now I am alive." The 'I' feels alive only in movement - movement of acquiring or movement of reacting. Leave a person alone somewhere in a cave, where a person does not see another human being, does not have any objects around just the food to eat, no one to speak to, nothing to look at, nothing to read, nothing to experience, and the person will feel starved. The sense organs feel starved. The speech feels starved because it has no occasion to speak. The mind feels suffocated because it cannot experience anything.

For us, living is a movement of acquisition, storing it in memory, possessing, acquiring, owning and using it. Acquisition of what? Anything and everything - goods, knowledge, money, fame, power. That gives us the sense of doing, and we feel that living is taking care of the body and taking care of the inner ego. That is what we have been doing - looking after first the individual ego, then the ego of a group (the collective ego) - the Hindu ego, the Muslim ego, the Christian ego.

The human race has lived by this centre, building a circumference around it, for its protection. Has this given the human race peace, love? Has it enabled the human race to live in friendship and peace with one another?

Different groups occupying the planet in different parts have compared themselves with one another, competed with one another, tried to dominate over

one another. That is how there have been wars and violence due to comparison, competition, jealousy, the desire to dominate, the necessity to depend upon aggression, violence. Comparison becomes the preoccupation of consciousness, and competition becomes an industry. This is our way of living. We have lived in wars. We do not know how to live as human beings in love, peace and friendship. We do not know how to co-operate with one another.

So there is something missing. Perhaps we grew out of simple consciousness which exists in non-human species, into self-consciousness, and we equated it with the wholeness of Life. We stopped half way. Perhaps this contrivance of the 'I', using the ego as a psychological contrivance was a necessity, but it is not the wholeness of Life. Perhaps it is necessary to go beyond the centre.

EDUCATION IN SILENCE

The necessity to go beyond the center of "I" was felt in Oriental countries - Tibet, China, India, Lanka, what they call now Pakistan, Bangladesh - the Oriental hemisphere. The ancient wise people felt the necessity. They said to themselves, "What will happen if this 'I', the centre, which moves constantly does not move? "It is thinking, it is reacting, it is imagining, it is wishing, it is anxious, it is worrying, it is remembering, it is doing something, it is constantly moving. This movement is a very living movement, because when a thought travels in the body, it consumes nervous energy. When an emotion travels in the body, it affects the chemical system, it affects the health. What will happen if we educate the 'I' consciousness not to move? So education in silence, education in the art and science of remaining inwardly empty, completely empty, completely silent - that education began.

In the East, people first educated the body with yoga asanas, with Pranayama - breathing exercises, providing proper kind of food to keep the body light, supple, healthy. They allotted time to sit down comfortably. In order to help the breathing system to function smoothly, you sit in such a way that the spinal chord is quite erect, straight, the neck is straight. So, the breathing is not hampered. If you sit in a tilted way, then the incoming breath and the outgoing breath cannot move freely. This study came about, keeping the body healthy with proper diet, proper exercises, proper oxidisation. People in the ancient days, in the days of Rishis, in the days of the Vedas, of the Upanishads were quite a healthy community. That one can see from their literature in the Sanskrit language. They were very much concerned about what they used as food, about how they used speech, how they walked the body, made the body to sit, made the body to stand. Their concern was a

holistic concern. So they prepared the body.

They would allot time, morning and night, to sit down quietly and relax completely. No action. The whole day we are moving, physically acting, mentally acting and there is exhaustion in the body. To wash out the toxins of exhaustion they invented this technique of sitting quietly, educating the physical body to be still completely. Still but not stiff. Relaxed but not passive. Relaxed but alert. Still, steady, not rigid, not stiff. It is quite an education.

Then they closed their eyes. So the eyes did not see any objects. The perception stimulates memory, so they used to close the eyes. In order that memory does not become active, they also would not speak. So there was abstinence from verbal speech, abstinence from seeing, abstinence from hearing. They would sit in a quiet place,

where the impressions of sound, impressions of light, impressions of vibrations of the presence of other people, would not be there. A quiet place for educating oneself in a meditative way of living.

The outward quietness, stillness was there. But then they noticed that the mind moves. Without the spoken word, the mind moves. So they would observe the movement of the mind, not trying to stop it, not arresting it, not trying to suppress it. Just observe the movement of the mind. What would that do? The mind is moving all the 24 hours, but now I sit and there is the observation. Throughout the day the mind demands and I act upon it. Now the mind moves and I do not act. It is a new relationship between the mental movement and my awareness. The perception is there, the observation is there but there is no reaction. I do not touch the movement of the mind, do not act upon it, do not condemn it, do not praise it. There is a

new relationship, when you do not move though the past in you is moving. It is a replay of the conditioning, but your awareness, your attention, your perception does not get affected by that. A steady flame, a very steady flame of attentiveness, irrespective of the objective situation is kindled in the consciousness. Generally we look at things we want to look at, we listen to things we want to listen to. It is a selective perception, a selective audition and selective responses. There is no response, just the watching, that watching becomes a flame of attention.

There is physical relaxation and at the same time there is a flame of attention, which is not choosy, which is not selective. Non-subjective, non-objective attention is there. So, steadying, watching, observing and then with the withering away even of the observation, there just remains a flame of alertness, of sensitivity. That is what we call silence. Com-

plete relaxation of the known, of the past. The 'I'-consciousness is not moving. It moves when you want to acquire something from someone, when you want to acquire pleasure. When you do not want to acquire anything, when you do not want to react, then naturally the 'I', the 'me', the contrived, conditioned structure which we have inherited, goes into non-action. Silence is the non-action of the ego. Silence is the total relaxation of the ego, the 'self', the 'me'.

In the beginning when you sit down, you feel, "I am observing. I am watching. This happened to me. I saw the light. I heard the sound". One goes through all this. So in the beginning there is consciousness. Then I am not even conscious that I am perceiving, there is silence.

Non-action of the ego, going into abeyance of the 'self', the 'me', the 'I' consciousness, is really non-action of the total past contained in me, non-continu-

ation of acquired knowledge and experience, which is also the past that I have created in my life. It is a movement of the past. Now that movement comes to an end. This is what we call silence. It is not meditation yet, but it is silence. Discontinuity of the movement of knowledge, experience and inheritance, is silence.

*HEALING ENERGIES GET
ACTIVISED*

When thought does not move, when emotions do not move, when there is no pressure on the nervous system or the chemical system, when there is that holistic relaxation, complete relaxation, then the curative and the healing energies in the body begin to move. Does not that happen when you sleep? When you sleep profoundly even for two hours without dreams, when the mind does not move, then rejuvenation, refreshment, recreation of cells in the body takes

place. It is the relaxation that has healing energies. It is relaxation that activates the creative energies, the healing energies. Rejuvenation takes place in the person. You sleep for 7-8 hours and in the morning you say; "Ah! I feel so fresh." "I did not sleep for two days, I am feeling tired," This is because the nervous system did not get any chance to relax. And when there are no thoughts and no emotions, my friends, the breathing - the inhaling and the exhaling of the breath - becomes rhythmical on its own, by itself. Even without studying pranayama, it becomes rhythmical. So that rhythmical breathing in relaxation, that activation of healing energies, that activation of creativity takes place in the dimension of silence.

From the dimension of speech we have moved into the dimension of silence. From the dimension of constant motion we have moved into the dimension of stillness. Normally we were al-

ways with some people - father, mother, child, brother, husband, wife, boy friend, girl friend or the members of society. We are always there in some relationship. From the dimension of relationship and its movement, we have moved into solitude. Solitude, silence, stillness. It is a dimension for which we are not educated in the modern world, and therefore, there are imbalances. Somebody says something and immediately I get angry. Something happens against my wishes and I get disturbed, I get annoyed, I get impatient. We lose balance every second minute. Meditation is a way of life in which you never lose your balance. It is an inner equipoise, an inner steadiness, an inner balance which is spontaneously there. That is the state of meditation that can be the normal dimension of the human race if it educates itself for dimensional mutation or dimensional transformation.

I was saying that the dimension of silence is a dimension neglected by the

human race. Education has taught the techniques of motion, movement, speech, and so on. But the parents or the schools never educate the child into this science of solitude, stillness and silence. They do not teach this essential science.

Silence is a part of life. Stillness is a part of life. Solitude is a part of life. Life would be incomplete without them. People in modern societies feel lonely if they are alone. They feel afraid of being alone with life. They need some company. If a human being is not there, they will switch on the radio, the TV, the video, because they do not want to be alone. They are afraid of being with themselves. They are afraid of being with life. In the name of civilization we have created fears. If they do not move, they do not think, they feel lost. They must think about something - worrying, anxiety, memory, thinking or reading a book - they must expose themselves to the thoughts of other people or their own

thoughts. So, the modern human being, whether in Norway or in India, coming out of the colleges and universities, is an imbalanced person intrinsically. Inwardly there is an imbalance. If I am afraid of silence, if I am afraid of solitude, if I am afraid of motionlessness, if I am afraid of thought-free consciousness, obviously I am living incompletely, I am living partially. What we have to learn, is to live not partially and fragmentarily, but holistically, in the wholeness of our being.

THE ENERGY OF EMPTINESS

If one allows oneself to be in the dimension of silence, then the energy of Intelligence or Awareness, the energy that is born of the non-duality of silence, begins to vibrate in the body. Meditation is a state where you get a new energy - not the energy of thought, not the energy of word, not the energy of sound. Sound is an energy, thought is an en-

ergy. Thought is matter that emanates from you body, and every matter contains energy, so we are acquainted with that. And we have lived by the energy of impulses by the energy of sentiments, the energy of sound, and so on. Beyond all these energies is the energy of emptiness from which the universe has come into existence. The energy of emptiness is the energy contained in space, in silence.

So what happens in the dimension of silence? When you get moments of leisure, when you sit down, relax and plunge yourself into that dimension of silence, that dimension of healing energies, then Intelligence or perceptive sensitivity gets activated in the body. Meditation is a state of consciousness which has a perceptive Intelligence. The content is not thought, knowledge, memory, experience. The content is the emptiness of silence which is full of Intelligence. In India they call it 'Atman', 'Paramatman'.

These are words you might have heard. Some call it the sound energy. But we are communicating in the era of science, let us not take those words. We do not know any other name, except that it is a energy subtler than that. Let us call it Intelligence. Thought is intellect which is a cerebral energy. Impulse is a biological energy. Thought is an energy created by the past inheritance. Intelligence is an energy born of the emptiness of silence, of the space of silence.

So the person has a sense of being alive. The person has a sense of belonging to the planet, belonging to every being that is living. You open your eyes in the state of meditation, and you see the whole earth as a being. You feel that the cosmos has a beingness. A tree is a being. The earth is a being. The mountain is a being, the consciousness may be mute there, it may not participate, it may not express itself in our language, but it has its own language.

They are not things to be used, misused and abused. They are not only for our pleasure. They are our fellow beings. We share the planet with them. So in the study of meditation, you feel Life around you. Every thing becomes living.

In the study of meditation there is the awareness of Life. We are organically related to that Life, as a hand or arm is related to the body. The hand or arm is not a part of the body, like the brakes or the wheels in a motorcar are - they are parts of a totality. Here it is an indivisible organic being. The fingertips are life, as the light in the eyes is life. It is a holistic whole, it is an organic whole. Life is wholeness, Life is beingness, everything inter - related, not inter-dependent like the parts of a machine. They are interlocked. So Life is shared.

Only in meditation there is a con-

sciousness where the psychology of peace and friendship is possible. On the level of thought, on the level of ideologies, on the level of philosophies, there can be conviction, there can be adjustments through law and order, there can be a sense of justice. But it is only in the state of meditation that love can flower, that compassion can flower. You become an expression of cosmic life, as a drop of water is an expression of the ocean. They have the same quality.

*WHEN IS A TECHNIQUE
NECESSARY?*

Let us turn to the third point-techniques. When is a technique necessary? When you want to move then a technique or a method or a procedure is necessary. When you want to return from the state of motion into non-motion is a technique or a method necessary"? Techniques and methods have been considered necessary because the word

meditation is misinterpreted and misunderstood to mean concentration. Here, in the Orient, there is a science and art of concentration. It is a very important, significant part of the science of yoga. So, if you want to learn Asanas, Yoga asanas, if you want to learn Taichi, there is a method, there is a technique. It is related to motion, and one has to learn how to move. If you want to have physical training, gymnastics, there must be techniques and methods. If you want to sing, there is a method, there is a technique.

As there is a word Dhyanam, which means meditation, there is a word Dharana, which means the art of concentration. And in India they used to teach children how to concentrate. They would put a light before the children and say "Look at that." A small light in which you would put clarified butter and a strip of cotton. In my childhood also it was taught in practically each household. By

the time the child becomes five, parents used to initiate the child into concentration. You look at it. The you stare at it. You hold your gaze there. That would steady the sight, strengthen the sight.

Then they would teach some Mantra. Mantra is an organisation of letters or it can be an organisation of words. Indians had studied the metaphysics of sound. Metaphysics of sound is a part of Vedas and Upanishads. How to manipulate it, (The sound energy) how to use it, how it is related to colours, how it affects the breath, what it does to your whole physical organism - they had studied these aspects in detail. Sound is called Naad. The whole Indian classical music is based on the study of sound metaphysics. It is no use telling you about the books. They are in Indian languages and Sanskrit mostly - which books your friend, Vimala, has studied in childhood.

So as the children were initiated

into concentration, through the eyes, they had also to listen to a certain Mantra and chant it. Recite it yourself and listen to it. That was Mantrayoga, Naadyoga. In Dharana, concentration, you focus your energies, gather all your energies together, focus it on a light, or a candle flame. Focus it on a word which they would give. Those who were following the path of dedication, devotion, they would put a statue - the idol of Rama, Krishana, some Goddess, or a teacher, and say, "Look into the eyes of that and concentrate there."

This science of concentration helps the development of the mind, because the flame of perception becomes steady. The audition becomes steady through the Mantra. And when you expose yourself to certain sounds for the duration of half an hour, that sound energy affects your whole being, your nervous system. It can soothe, it can pacify, it can relax the chemistry of the

body. So concentration has many techniques - ancient ones, modern ones - through perception, through audition. They would teach concentration through manipulation of sex energy which is Tantra yoga, through sound energy which is Mantra yoga, through manipulation of the body postures which is Hathayoga, and so on.

I studied concentration as a child. It sharpens your memory. It sharpens your receptivity. You read something once, and you can remember it. For the development of mental faculties, concentration is a very useful science and art. I have been speaking about it in India and other countries of the world, that this state of concentration, the state of Dharana should be introduced in every school at the primary education level, so that the young minds are developed properly. Many hidden powers and faculties of the mind get developed, and can express themselves through the state of concentration.

Concentration requires methods, techniques, whether you turn to Buddhism, to Vipasana or Anapan process methods or you turn to the Zen Buddhist system. There are many systems among the Hindus and also among the Muslims. In Georgia, in the Cansicar Mountains, people study meditation. They call it meditation but they practise concentration. Concentration can be practised, meditation cannot be practised.

*MEDITATION IS AN INNER
MUTATION*

Meditation is the by-product of being in the dimension of silence. It is a mutation that occurs. But concentration, which is a psycho-physical activity, can be practised. So, as regards meditation, techniques, practices, formulae are not possible. It is an education and transformation takes place as the culmination of education. You can concentrate and say, "I concentrate for two hours a day. This

occult power has developed due to concentration." You cannot say "I will meditate for two days or I will meditate for two hours." You can say, "I will sit in silence."

A person who grows into the dimension of meditation, lives in inner emptiness all the 12 hours of the day. As you live at the thought level, at the level of your ideas, ideologies or likes and dislikes, a person living in the dimension of meditation lives in inner emptiness. And when looking is necessary the eyes look, the sight looks out of the emptiness, out of the inner relaxation. There is no tension. There is no exhaustion. Such a person is ever fresh - cerebrally speaking, psychologically speaking. The body may get tired. The body may get old, wrinkled, but inwardly it is always green. The greenness of life, the innocence, the humility, the tenderness of life - they are there till the last breath if the person lives in the dimension of meditation.

The looking takes place out of the emptiness, out of silence. Listening takes place out of inner silence and emptiness. Do we ever listen out of silence? We hear the words of other people, Our reactions come up. Before the person has even completed what he wants to share with us our reaction, our value judgment, our decision, conclusion has taken place. We are always impatient. We have no space within even to listen, to assimilate. So, in the study of meditation, there is inner relaxation, inner peace, inner equipoise. The quality of perception goes through a change.

Meditation is an inner mutation. The human race has travelled from simple to complex consciousness, from non-subjective to subjective consciousness. The development of the ego is not a curse. The development of the 'I', the contrivance of that mechanism, that concept of the 'I' and the 'me', has helped us to develop literature, philosophy, music. It is like your

currency in money. How could we live together if the words 'you' and 'me' were not used? How would we interact if there were no languages? So this development of the 'I' consciousness, its sophistication, its refinement, was necessary and is necessary, to keep civilization and culture alive. But we must know that it is a conditioned structure. We must know it is a structure which is necessary to be used, and that we must grow into another dimension.

So the Intelligence controls the intellect, and the intellectual understanding controls the behaviour of the sense organs. It is in harmony. Everything that the intellect does is done in the light of that Intelligence, that Awareness. Then the thoughts cannot create any obstinacy, cannot become aggressive. The impulses of the body do not make you behave under the pressure of impulses, illogically, irrationally. So the biological organism is under the supervision and obser-

vation of the thought structure, and the thought structure is always functioning in the light and in the awareness of Intelligence. So, the human being changes.

I think it is only after such a mutation that a new human race will emerge. No fear, no acquisitiveness, no desire for ownership and possession, no desire to dominate over others just to gratify the ego - all that will be gone. A new human race, with a new human culture and a new dynamics, a new foundation for human relationship, will be there. The last few years of the 20th century are very crucial for the human race.

Meditation is the essence of spirituality. You do not have to do anything but to educate your physical organism and psychological structure to move into non-action gracefully, voluntarily and see what happens in that state of non-action. Into non-action we move, and once there

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in that state of non-action or silence or stillness then things happen by themselves. It is cosmic Intelligence that takes over the charge of our being.

So, effort to some extent, relaxation after that. Action to some extent, happening after that. It becomes a dance of effort and effortlessness, action and relaxation, relationship and solitude, speech and silence - they get blended into one whole. A new, balanced human being, who has no imbalances, and therefore no impurities, but who has a grandeur of inner equipoise and a majesty of outer sensual balance, comes into our life.

Mount Abu
24th March, 1992



Part Two

What Is Meditation?

Meditation

Talk Given At Dalhousie, 1987

(Original published under the
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In these morning classes we have been trying to explore the content and implications of religious inquiry and till yesterday we said that, for laying the foundation of right inquiry, it is necessary to study and investigate on the verbal level, with the help of knowledge, experience and memory available to us. As we inherit the total human knowledge and experience in our psyche, it is possible to begin the movement of inquiry with academical and theoretical investigation.

The purpose of study is not acquisitive. Learning does not take place if the motivation is of acquiring, owning and possessing knowledge. Study implies does it not, that you make an effort to know in order to understand? Thought, knowledge can be used as a stepping stone or as a spring board for understanding. Understanding gives you a kind of freedom. Understanding enables you to dodge the overwhelming momentum of the thought structure. It become possible through study and understanding, to move through the structure

of thought, knowledge and memory in an orderly way, without getting imprisoned by the structure. A comparative, relative freedom is the outcome of the action of Understanding.

If an inquirer goes through this academic and verbal study and if he or she arrives at an understanding and the freedom of order resulting from that understanding, then the person is equipped to proceed further. Inquiry is a kind of self-education. Education implies unlearning the incorrect and learning the correct ways of living. If education does not involve learning correct ways of living then it is meaningless. So the movement of inquiry is the movement of self-education. It is the rhythmic movement of learning and - unlearning. As you learn and find out the truth you go on dropping the untruth. As you discover the truth you let the false drop away. If the learning is not accompanied by the act of unlearning, if the discovery of truth is not accompanied by the act of dropping the false, then it is incomplete. Then it will become an intellectual entertainment, a new collection, a new possession.

Now supposing that you and I as

inquirers have done it and I wonder how many of us actually do it . . . but supposing we have done it and we have put the sensual, the verbal in an orderly, rhythmic way of functioning, giving attention to every minutest detail, then do you know what happens when you begin to learn? It is very interesting and great fun. One who is madly in love with learning, discovering, finding out the truth for oneself, the fascinating thing that happens about such a person is, there is no casualness. Most of us live casually. You look and you don't notice three quarters of what you are looking at. Because you look at things, directed by specific motivations, and you just ignore criminally the rest of life. You are obsessed with your motivations. So your listening, your looking your replying to questions, your responses to situations are all casual. In casualness there is no alertness, no vitality. The person casually gets up in the morning, casually takes a bath, casually eats the meals - never totally present in any action. The persons who live casually have no vitality, no passion. Somehow, because they are born they reach the point of death, missing the

beauty of life, missing the touch of the sacredness of life.

Most of us live rather casually. If we are not living casually then we carry a vast variety of burdens. And our act of living is nothing but carrying the burdens. Living for us is a burden. You know what a burden is? A sense of responsibility, 'I must do this, I must not do that. This is a religious compulsion, "I must turn to God". This is an ethical compulsion, "I must tell the truth", otherwise I will go to hell.' There is the social, the economic, the cultural, the religious burden. We look upon everything as a burden, as a responsibility and carry it with us, getting bogged down under the sense of responsibility, getting crushed by it. Living is no more a joy. 'I must go to school, I must have a degree, I must have a job, I must marry, raise a family, earn my livelihood.' We look at all the needs and challenges of life as a burden.

I am trying to share with you the attitude of people. Some are criminally casual, they are not interested in life, they don't love life, they are not careful about the act of living. And for some others, liv-

ing is a task, so they grumble, they groan they complain that they have to live. With them there is a tension. As in casualness here too there is no vitality.

So, you begin to learn, study for the sake of learning. Learning for the sake of personal communion with the fact indicated by words. And communion with facts in order to understand. And understanding in order to be in freedom. You know this is self-education. Spirituality is not intellectual humbug or emotional trickery or sensual and sexual manipulations. It is much more than that. Learning brings about a sensitivity and alertness and a capacity to be attentive. When we say that on the theoretical level learning brings about freedom and freedom brings about understanding, one is very serious. They are not mere words. This is how it happens.

If this is done, if the foundation is laid, you can proceed to the next step. After having arrived at freedom and a rhythm, and an orderliness out of that understanding, let me find out actually and factually : What is thought, what is mind, what is the "I"? The books have served

their purpose, the lectures, discourses, discussions have served their purpose, so we proceed.

The movement of inquiry now has proceeded further from the theoretical investigation. With the help of words, it has proceeded further. It has taken a kind of quantum jump. Now I am going to learn through watching, observing 'what is'. I have learnt about what is through words, now let me find out 'what is' without the intervention of this whole structure of knowledge, experience and memory. So one sits down and one says, 'let me watch, let me observe'.

You begin with watching. The watching is not synonymous with observing. Have you ever watched a team play cricket : What happens to you? You are watching the game. You are not going to participate. And yet, if somebody hits a sixer you get excited. This kind of watching where, psychological involvement accompanies the watching is not observation. So as a learner, when you sit down and say 'let me observe', you see that in watching there is psychological involvement, so you brush it

aside as that is not observation.

Then what is observation? *Observation is perception without psychological involvement, without any kind of reaction.* Reaction implies evaluation, judgement, condemnation, comparison. When you sit down, and want to learn to observe, you observe how the movement of evaluation, comparison comes up. Do you see what is happening? The 'I' consciousness is involved in watching and is also involved in observation. Observation as a movement of the 'I' consciousness is a part of self-education. And observation without the movement of 'I' would be growth into the dimension of observation.

Observation as a part of self-education and observation as a dimension of consciousness, these two things have to be distinguished very clearly. In the beginning there is bound to be the movement - the movement of inquiry. The movement of 'I' consciousness is bound to be there. Only the movement now has changed. From the theoretical plane it has come to the practical. From the verbal it has come to the non-verbal. From reactions, evaluations, judgments it has come

to non-evaluatory perception. Do you see? But it is still the movement of the 'I'. It is still the movement of the Ego.

An inquirer learns first how to perceive without a reaction, without a comparison. One sits down and continues the observation. When one looks at a thing memory may come up, one becomes aware of it, and memory subsides. One observes again, and some kind of prejudice or preference comes up. One becomes aware of it and it is brushed aside. You know that is how you learn.

Gradually the perception of 'I' consciousness becomes steady. It does not get distracted anymore by the content of memory. It does not react any more. So first, there was the psychological involvement, the actual participation psychologically with what you were watching. Then there is non-participatory perception. Yet it is polluted by memory. This is the first and second phase. And the third phase would be : steady flame of perception, unpolluted by any reactions. And yet, you are conscious that you are observing. So observation is still a movement of the 'I' con-

sciousness, the 'I' is looking at its own content. As you look at your reflection in the mirror, you are not two persons, you are looking at yourself. In the same way, when the perception is steadied with no distraction, with no distortion, there is total attention. Then that is the moment when the 'I', the 'Me' is looking at its own content innocently, non subjectively. The very perception goes through a qualitative change, and yet it is the 'I' that is looking at its own content.

Now it has learnt what observation is. So it looks at its own behaviour. It looks at its own reflection in the mirror of the movement of relationships. Not only while sitting quietly in the room for an hour or two - that was a part of learning - but now you have learnt and the perception has been steadied, it has been intensified. So the movement of observation gets carried over from the room where you were sitting quietly to all your relationships throughout the day, in waking consciousness. Whatever you do, simultaneously you are also observing. You are doing and you are observing.

Do you see the new faculty? There is a change in the quality of perception. There is a change in the quality of response, because there is wholeness of perception, wholeness in your attention. Every moment a new sharpness, a new edge, because the doer is not absent-minded, not distracted, nothing is done casually. So doing and observing at the same time. It is a dual capacity of the 'I' consciousness.

If this is allowed to happen then every relationship brings to the notice of the observer, to the 'I' consciousness its own mechanism. You cannot understand the mechanism of the mind in abstraction. You may read a thousand books, but it is only the intimate personal encounter with the nature of the movement, while it is taking place, that reveals to you that the movement of the 'Me' the movement of thought, of memory, of knowledge is repetitive and mechanistic.

The discovery of the mechanistic, repetitive movement of the whole thought-structure is absolutely and urgently needed. What you had studied through

books now you observe as facts. Knowledge is organised information about the facts. Observation is personal encounter with the fact. So the knowledge about the facts gets converted into understanding of facts. No indirectness now. You don't say that the movement of mind is repetitive, mechanistic because Krishnamurti has said it or because Patanjali has said it. You don't have to say that because now you have seen it. This seeing, this perceiving is very necessary. Unless you go through these phases, observation as a dimension, where there is no observer cannot get stimulated in your psyche.

Supposing that one has gone through this phase and supposing every step of learning results in deepening and intensifying the vitality then the nearer you are to the vital force of Life. The further you are from the unessentials, the mechanistic, organised and structured things the nearer you are to the vital force of Life. The vitality is not poured into you from anything outside, by anything outside of you. When you leave moving round and round the circumference and leave the unessentials,

you are getting nearer to the essence, to the source of all vitality. If an when necessary you move through the non-essentials also. But as you do not identify yourself with them they cannot bog you down nor can they arrest the flow of understanding taking place in you, the flow of vitality coming up in you.

You see for yourself that every movement of the mind, the 'Me'. the 'I' is mechanistic - whether it moves in the direction of society, of politics, of economics or in the direction of sex - the movement is mechanistic. You understand that the mental movement now is irrelevant. The perception, the observation brings the 'I' consciousness to this point: that my movement corrupted by the content, is bound to be mechanistic, is bound to refer to concepts and is bound to create a new measurement to measure the divine. My movement can be only relevant on the conceptual level but it is irrelevant for further inquiry.

The inquiry as a movement of the 'I' has served its purpose. It has seen its own limitations and therefore it stops. The

relaxation of the mental effort, the relaxation of the mental movement as a fact has to happen within. Because of the inner urge to learn and to live - which is a non-rational, non-calculated urge - because of that urge the 'I' consciousness is now willing, is now inclined to stop moving.

Uptil now the inquiry was with the help of an effort, now the inquiry will enter the dimension of effortlessness. Silence is effortlessness. Silence is effortless alertness. So the 'I' consciousness says 'I am not going to observe. My observation brought me to the fact of the mechanistic nature of my movement, so I stop.' Does the stopping take place in your life? The integrity and the genuineness of inquiry requires this questioning of oneself. Have we ever allowed that movement to stop, to discontinue? Not when you are sitting in your room but when you are moving through relationships. Has one ever experimented with the present absolutely, defencelessly? "Defencelessly" means without the defence of the past. The past is a kind of defence, and its movement is like a security.

Now the psyche is filled with Si-

lence, not filled with thoughts, concepts, ideas, theories and conclusions. You know, all that is gone. Now the emptiness of consciousness is filled with Silence. One says it is filled with silence because silence is an energy. If you had heard the speaker some time ago you might have heard the words "energy gets stimulated in silence, the new energy of Intelligence gets stimulated in silence". No! As it was pointed out earlier the speaker is growing, learning. Life is infinite and till the last breath the learning shall continue. So there may be changes in expression. I say silence is energy.

The moment you allow your movement, the movement of the Ego to discontinue, not out of any tension, pressure but out of understanding, then relaxation takes place. If that relaxation takes place then, the emptiness of consciousness is filled with Silence. That energy is uncorrupted, un mutilated, unfragmented, unindividuated. Now observation or perception takes place out of the emptiness of consciousness, out of that silence. The energy of silence perceives through the eyes. The energy of si-

lence listens through the ears. That energy is not an identity like 'Me', the 'Ego'. It fills your whole being. There is an observation without the observer.

Observation without the observer is the state of wholeness of perception and wholeness of responses.

Inquiry moved from the theoretical to the practical, where it was still a movement of the 'I' consciousness. You started learning observation. Still it was a movement of the 'I' consciousness. That movement has stopped - again a quantum jump. Now observation becomes a movement of the spontaneity. When the cool breeze moves in and out of the room who is there? Is there an entity? The breeze that comes and soothes your body and relaxes you completely, is there someone who is blowing the breeze towards you? It's a movement of the breeze, it's natural. *So observation as a dimension of your whole life becomes a movement of the spontaneity, of that wholeness.*

Inquiry as a movement of the mind has stopped. You see if the state of obser-

vation, the dimension of observation is allowed to open up in your being then inquiry as an intellectual movement, as a mental movement, as a movement of investigation by the 'I' consciousness, exploration by the 'I' consciousness, has ended.

Has it ended or would one like to carry on the mental movement? Because it is purified by observation, would one like to carry it on for experiencing non-sensual, occult and transcendental experiences and occult powers? One can do it if one wants to. It has nothing to do with religion. You can begin to cash in on the new faculty that you have, as you cash your intellect, your music, your talents - you sell them. So you can begin to sell this new capacity of the consciousness of observing and not allow it to go into non-action. This is what happens to most of us.

After having understood the repetitive and mechanistic movement of the 'I', don't we carry on with it? People come to this point of learning, of observation and still they cling on to the mental movement. Their mind, their ego, their thought structure says : "Beware if you leave me,

if you leave my movement, it is a leap in the dark, it is a leap in the unknown. Who is going to guide you? What will happen to you? Don't take a jump, stand here, stay here. Find out prayers, find out bhajans, chant them, create a new feeling of sensitivity with them. Turn away from sexual, sensual experiences, to the occult". And my friends, the intoxication of the occult is much more, is much deeper than the intoxication of sensual, sexual experiences. The mind turns away from the worldly things and indulges in the so called non-worldly, non-sensual. It indulges in the occult, the transcendental, the invisible. It wants to play around with techniques and methods, awakening the kundalini, the 'shakti-pad', the sensation of experiencing. One creates new patterns and looks upon it as a religious life.

May I dare to communicate?
And I know you won't agree with me and I don't need that agreement. May I dare to say that as long as the mental movement goes on, there is no religiosity about it. You may create a new relationship, new areas of relationship - 'my' guru, 'my'

method. You can select patterns and hang on to it, cling to it, use it as a crutch because there is reluctance to let go. The total relaxation of the mental movement is the death of the ego - there is the fear that I will be destroyed. One is not as much afraid of the physical death as one is afraid of the psychological death, the death of the Ego, the discontinuity of the movement of I. Because, the movement of the Ego has been equated with the movement of Life. And the total relaxation is being equated with death of the ego. And that fear holds you back.

We have come to the point of effortlessness of the Ego. Now further inquiry, if at all it could be called inquiry, would be the movement of the effortlessness, would be the movement of the silence, the mystery of Life.

- Dalhousie

11-6-1987.

WHAT IS MEDITATION ?

Meditation
is the essence of
spirituality. You do not
have to do anything but to
educate your physical organism
and psychological structure to move
into non-action gracefully, voluntarily
and see what happens in that state
of non-action. Into non-action we
move, and once there things
happen by themselves. It
is Cosmic Intelligence
that takes over the
charge of our
being.