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The Importance of Meditation

Why is it so important to meditate?

by Christopher Benjamin

The spiritual teacher Paramahansa Yogananda says it in very easy and clear words:

Meditation is The Way to God

You can never have a truly happy life both inwardly and outwardly unless you use the God-given power of concentration to reclaim the forgotten image of God within you. Only then can you solve the mysteries of life and control destiny. Through the art of meditation one learns how actually to contact Divine Bliss – which is God – by the faithful application of the science of spiritual law. The material scientist experiments with cosmic laws in nature to find out the secrets of her creation; and the spiritual scientist ought to apply his divinely bestowed powers of concentration, meditation, and intuition to investigate the divine laws by which he may learn the SECRETS OF SPIRIT.

The Universal Brotherhood of Light compares meditation with the following examples:

A diver descending to the ocean bed needs enough oxygen to be able to work for a long time under water and, for total security, he is continuously linked to colleagues above who keep him supplied with air and are always on standby to pull him out in case of danger. He cannot work unless these conditions are fulfilled.

We, too, are plunged within an ocean exactly like divers and this ocean is called the world. It is an ocean full of dangerous reefs and monsters who occasionally delight in devouring us. Therefore, for our own safety we must have a sufficient supply of oxygen and a system through which air can be obtained from the surface. In other words we must have a means by which to establish and maintain constant contact with the divine world. To establish this link we must meditate and pray, because these practices create air passages and safety lines. Some may say, 'I've had enough of praying and meditating. I'm bored with the same old thing – a change will do me good.' These are the very people who end up lost in the ocean of life.

Or with this picture:

There are occasions when a family man is not able to find enough work in his own country to provide for his family, so he goes to work abroad. He works there for a few years and when he returns, having made a lot of money, he is happy to be able to provide a secure future for his wife and children. He has, however, had to leave them for a certain period of time. The same happens when a spiritual person meditates, prays and unites with God: One could say that he also goes abroad, the difference being that it is not for months or years, but for just a few moments that his spirit distances itself from his physical body. By being too tied down to his body he is not able to do a great deal for himself, so he leaves to earn money or let us say; to gather light. When he returns he brings this light to his body and to its inhabitants: He illuminates them, enlivens them, purifies them and regenerates them.

We nourish ourselves through prayer, meditation and ecstasy. These forms of nourishment allow us to savour that heavenly sustenance, ambrosia, which is the food of immortality. It is an immaterial food, whose equivalent on the physical plane alchemists call 'the elixir of immortal life'. The sun disseminates this elixir everywhere in nature. It imbues the whole of nature, and when we watch the sun rise each morning during spring and summer, we drink of that ambrosia spread by the sun throughout the universe. All living creatures – rocks, plants, animals and human beings – unconsciously absorb some particles of this

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quintessence; now we must learn consciously to drink this precious fluid which the light of the sun brings for us.

Why do you sometimes feel so fulfilled and content after a meditation? Outwardly, objectively, nothing has happened, and in appearance you have received nothing.

Yet you feel immersed in this state of plenitude. It is because your soul and spirit have been given food and drink. These 'restaurants' of the soul and spirit differ from those where, several times a day, the physical body goes for sustenance. The sublime regions of the soul and spirit provide nourishment that satisfies, day after day. The divine world contains elements of such richness that a single taste could provide a feeling of plenitude that would never leave you. Then, nothing could take away your conviction that you had tasted eternity.

I realize that it is very difficult to say something what is not already said! These two spiritual teachers said in their lives so much, what I don't want to repeat. I prefer also here to give their statements because they talk for themselves. What I can do is only to tell you: "Read these following thoughts, reflect them and do the effort to get your personal experience. You will never repent it!"

For me meditation became one of the most important exercises every morning and night. Without my unions in the morning I would not be able to live my day with perfect guidance. But after my meditations I feel prepared, instructed and well equipped to face life and happenings which the day will bring! So meditation helps me to act even if I react. It helps me to feel the presence of God and let me feel to be a son of God, his servant on earth through whom I ask him to act. Every morning and also before going asleep I consecrate myself into his hands, into his service.

Thanks meditation I feel this link and this joy comes again and again. It is for me the same as for you! You will realize that every catastrophe has deeper meaning with new advantages and challenges which we have to master.

Thanks my work on self-mastery and meditation I am stable and able to look forward happily to every situation which will come along. In joyful expectation of the service I should do!

So read the following thoughts about meditation and what kind of advantages you gain while practising it:

Only when we become able to remain in the centre will we acquire true strength. When you feel darkness and cold descend on you, there is no point in asking yourself why, because the answer is there: you have distanced yourself from the centre, from the sun. So all you need to do is hurry back to the centre and you will feel light, warmth and life grow in you.

In us, the centre, the sun, is the highest point of our being, our spirit, our higher Self. The periphery on the other hand is where we encounter unrest and distress when our consciousness moves away and abandons everything that is our true Self. This is why we must always be vigilant and say to ourselves: *'Let me see, where am I today? Oh, I feel I have wandered off towards the periphery. What awaits me there?'* Nothing that is any good, that is certain. So hurry back to the centre. How? Through prayer, through meditation, by consciously establishing a link with the sublime Centre, with God.

WHAT IS THINKING? ...

To think is first to be able to free ourselves from daily preoccupations in order to concentrate with detachment on a subject of a philosophical or spiritual nature. To think must help us progress on the path of understanding of a human being, of the universe and of God Himself. And this understanding is not possible through purely intellectual work, an observation of the material world, reading or discussions. It is in the silence of meditation that the ancient knowledge, which is buried deep within us, gradually reaches our consciousness and only this work can justifiably be called 'thinking'.

SEEK THE ABSOLUTE.

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Seek that which you can never obtain or achieve, because thanks to your seeking you will obtain a little more every day. Of course, you will never have everything, but when you fix your sights on an unattainable goal, you are obliged to follow certain paths and cross certain regions, and that is what counts. You ask neither for knowledge nor a kind heart, neither health nor happiness: you ask only for the Absolute, for God Himself, and you will get all the rest without asking. Suppose you were determined to know all there was to know: you would shut yourself up with books, growing paler and thinner by the day and losing all your hair! But you would never know all there is to know, and, in the meantime, you would be depriving yourself of all the rest: beauty and love and so on. So that is no solution. You must tell yourselves that you are not going to waste your time asking for this or that; you are going to ask for the unattainable, the impossible, God Himself. And in this way you will obtain all the rest because, in order to reach God, you are obliged to follow a path that takes you by way of light, beauty, health, knowledge, wealth, love and happiness, and all the other marvels along the way!

WHAT DOES IT MEAN "TO KNOW SOMETHING? ...

To know something or someone is to enter into their heart, and the only way to do this is to identify with them. If only for a moment, you have to become the person or thing you want to know, and this is not possible if you are content to look at them from the outside. You have to get inside them and sense every vibration of their being. The intellect cannot do this. This is something that only the spirit can do.

Now, for the practical application of this: if you strive every day with your spirit and your love to identify with the Supreme Being, the Source of life, the First Cause, the Father of all creation, one day you will begin to feel that God is living within you, with all His Glory, Power, Wisdom and Love.

Do not let a single day go by without uniting with Heaven, without meditating, praying. For nothing is more important and beneficial for you than to acquire a taste of spiritual activities. Stop for a few minutes, many times a day and try to find within yourself a center of equilibrium, your divine center. You will then begin to feel that, in all circumstances of life, you have within you an eternal and indestructible element. And even if it does not pay off on the material plane, you become inwardly freer, stronger and very confident... you are above the events of your life. This spiritual work is the sole richness, the sole possession that is truly yours. Everything else can be taken away from you: Only your work is yours forever.

ARE YOU WORRIED, UNHAPPY?

But instead of allowing yourself to be overwhelmed without doing anything about it – because you always believe there is nothing you can do – try on the contrary to respond immediately by uniting with Heaven through meditation and prayer. You can transform the entire world if you succeed in improving your inner state, because you see the world through different spectacles.

WHY IS IT, WHEN PEOPLE ARE IN LOVE THEY THINK THE WORLD SO BEAUTIFUL?

Because within them everything has suddenly become beautiful and poetic, we always joke about people who are in love, whereas we should in fact admire them and say: 'There is so much we can learn from these two!' It is the middle of winter, there is fog, it is raining, but they are meeting each other, and as far as they are concerned the sun is shining, the birds are singing, the flowers are filling the air with their sweet fragrance, because within them it is springtime. You will say this is only subjective. Yes, of course, but be aware it is in the subjective world that God has hidden all powers.

Human beings are busy and often overwhelmed, but they do not consider taking up activities which could improve their lives, such as meditation, contemplation, and prayer. In those who practice them, these activities release forces that can neutralize and transform negative states. Yes, and spiritual activities even have a beneficial influence on health. Obviously you

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can continue to eat, drink, sleep, move and work, but without this intense inner vibration which stimulates and vivifies, gradually even the physiological functions begin to slow down, producing deposits which overload the organism with waste. So, if only to remain in good health, it is advisable to engage in a spiritual activity.

DID YOU ASK YOURSELF ABOUT THE VALUE OF ALL THE MATERIAL PROGRESS WE ACHIEVED?

In the physical realm, human beings have made gigantic achievements: we cannot help but see how scientific and technical progress has transformed life. But this is not enough and humanity is now called upon to realise achievements that are still more important, more vital for them, by means of the faculties of the spirit. Through meditation and prayer, they must learn to make relationship with the world of the spirit, so that light, love and power of the spirit descends upon the earth, within them and upon those beings around them. Scientific and technical progress has limits, and even presents dangers. If all these discoveries are not made to serve a higher vision of things, humanity will be overwhelmed and crushed by them. Scientific and technical achievements are not sufficient to transform life. It is by means of the spirit that life will be truly transformed, because peace, freedom and brotherhood are realisations of the spirit.

And there is something else:

We cannot find truth unless we are led towards it by others who are more advanced and who can communicate to us the fruit of their experience. Orientation, knowledge and all genuine experience come from above. From the beginning of the world initiates and great masters have handed down the same teaching: life is one unbroken hierarchical chain of being, ranging from the smallest atom to the archangels and to God Himself. In this hierarchy each element is linked to all the others. Each element is part of the immense living body of the universe. Each one of us has his own place in this chain of being. We are linked to those above us as to those below. Whether we like it or not this link exists, and it is essential to be conscious of it and work to be in communion with those who are above us and who will lead us even higher.

WHICH FACULTIES CAN YOU DEVELOP THROUGH MEDITATION ... AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT FOR YOU?

The salvation of man lies in his capacity to concentrate on the Divine World. This capacity will allow him to walk forever peacefully on his path. Suppose you are alone and a dark atmosphere surrounds you, preventing you from seeing anything, either your friends or celestial entities. What will come to save you? Your capacity to concentrate on the Divine World. This capacity still remains after death, for it does not come from the brain – it only expresses itself through the brain – it is the spirit that possesses it. When we leave our physical body, this capacity keeps on living in the spirit. It is the spirit that thinks, feels and acts, and it does so through the matter of our physical body. But when the spirit frees itself from the body, do not imagine that man cannot think or feel or act anymore. On the contrary, it is then that his mind really becomes powerful, and if he has gotten into the habit of concentrating on the Divine World while on earth, to think about the Lord or the light will suffice to dissipate confusion and darkness.

THE LAW OF RESONANCE.

Imagine you have two bottles filled with perfume: as receptacles they are separate, but the fragrances that escape from them rise up and mix.

What is the purpose of this imagery? Well, human beings can be compared to bottles of perfume, in that their bodies are separate but with their thoughts and feelings they are able to meet with other human beings and even with entities from the invisible world all over the universe. Only, we do not simply meet with anyone we like; we can only reach the souls and

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spirits in the visible and invisible worlds that correspond to what we are ourselves, because it is just a phenomenon of resonance that is at work here. The purpose, therefore, of prayer, meditation and all spiritual exercises is that they help us to elevate our inner self and as we do so, by the power of affinity, we meet with ever purer and ever more luminous creatures in space.

But ... how many so-called spiritual people are concerned only with their own interest and not at all with that of the universal collectivity! They have still not understood that when man contravenes the universal order, not only does it harm to others but it always bounces back and harms him as well. It is not enough to know that what you do suits you: You are not alone. Other beings exist who have something to say about your behaviour and if you transgress the divine laws you will be punished in one way or another. This is why it is so important to devote a few minutes, several times a day, to bring yourself back into harmony with the universe. It is not a waste of time; on the contrary, you will be gaining something very precious; you will be getting in touch with forces which will support and help you.

... When you meditate and pray intensely, you send out harmonious waves, and these waves go out to the world to reach men and women who open themselves to this idea of a fraternity, this idea for which we work.

Yes, by the powerful and harmonious waves that you emit, you send messages that are picked up by beings who are receptive and prepared for this. And without even knowing where this impetus comes from, they often make the resolution to work for peace and fraternity in the world, for the propagation of light, for the Glory of God. Wherever they may be and whoever they may be, even if we do not know them, all these beings are linked to us, for it is the design of Heaven that all children of God be united for the coming of His kingdom on earth.

TRUTH AND FALSE EXCUSES:

How many people have I met who say that they have not got the time to do exercises of meditation, concentration or self-discipline! And yet it would benefit them enormously to do these extremely simple exercises. But ... they have not got the time! Well, if they don't have time to live in peace, harmony and light, they will always have plenty of time to suffer and experience disorder and darkness. If there is one thing people can be sure of in life, it is that they will experience unhappiness, sorrow and discouragement. They are far less likely to be happy, strong and serene. And the reason is to be found in that formula which is on everyone's lips: 'I haven't got time ...' Everybody uses it to excuse their laziness and inertia. It is a very convenient phrase: 'I haven't got time ... I'm too busy!' No time to pray, no time to study or to do any exercises ... And yet, when I look at what keeps people like this so busy, I am horrified at the futility and foolishness of the occupations. The blind and the ignorant will perhaps be taken in when you say you don't have time, but you will not fool an Initiate.

DESTINY, KARMA AND PERSONAL FREEDOM:

There are events which people cannot avoid because everything written in their destiny must take place, so in this sense they are not free. If we live reasonably we are granted only one freedom: we are permitted to pay our karmic debts in some way other than previously decreed. For example, suppose we are to be gravely ill and laid low for some time: this illness is a debt that has to be paid for some past transgression. But the debt can be paid in a different way by undertaking some serious spiritual work of prayer and meditation. Therefore, when our illness comes it will be less serious, since part of our debts has already been paid with our work of light and love, and we shall be out of action for only a few days. Our spiritual efforts have strengthened our organism. The same principle applies to all trials of life. The moment we encounter a difficulty caused by some planetary aspect, or the transit of some planet through our astrological chart, if we have already done serious spiritual work, accumulating 'money' – forces and energies – towards the settlement of our debts, we can confront our trials in the best possible conditions.

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THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEDITATION:

There are several ways to penetrate the spiritual world. Meditation, together with prayer, is one of the most accessible. Meditation, however, implies preparation. If you start to meditate without having first achieved an internal discipline, in other words having achieved control over your thoughts, your feelings and your desires, you will err into the lower regions of the astral plane, disturbing layers of darkness inhabited by entities who are often hostile to human beings. That is how you fall prey to hallucinations bearing no relation to the object of your meditation. Before meditating you should therefore start by putting your mental, emotional and psychic being in order, otherwise even an exercise as useful and beneficial as meditation can become dangerous.

And:

So many people are under the misconception that in order to be spiritual you must devote yourself solely to meditation and prayer. In fact any activity of everyday life can be made spiritual if you can introduce a divine element into it. And equally, prayer, meditation and any other so-called spiritual activity can become very prosaic if there is no sublime idea, a higher ideal behind it to bring life into it. Spirituality does not mean rejecting the physical, material world, but to do everything mindful of the light, through light and for the light. Spirituality is being able to use any task to elevate yourself, attain harmony and unite with God.

And:

True silence is not only the absence of noise. True silence is above words, above music; it is the world of light, a powerful center from whence springs forth all creation. That silence is the very voice of God. Learn to link with silence, to plunge within silence by trying to cease all mental activity. Within that silence, an extraordinary harmony will lodge within you. Perhaps you will even hear the voice of God, for God accepts to speak only in the midst of silence and harmony.

And:

If you try to devote yourselves exclusively to prayer, meditation and mental work, avoiding all forms of physical work, you will become unhinged. We are all created to live in the three realms: mental, astral and physical, meaning, the realms of thought, feeling and action. If we neglect any one of these three realms we disable ourselves, our integrity is lost, and we are incapable of entering the presence of the Eternal as complete beings, with all our God-given potential developed to the full. Furthermore, you should know that if one area is neglected, the quality of the two others will diminish. If you refuse to work physically, you will come up against emotional and mental difficulties.

And:

When you meditate and pray, observe what you feel. Meditation and prayer should give you a sensation of warmth, light, strength, joy and wonder. If this is not the case, then you must find out why.

CONSIDER THAT IF YOU HAVE PROBLEMS TO MEDITATE

Sometimes, when you attempt to strike a match, it does not catch light because it is damp or perhaps the whole box is moist. If a lighter does not work, it is probably out of fuel or the flint is worn out. In spiritual matters, just as in the material world, there is a cause for all setbacks and this must be found. There must be no dampness in the mind, whereas the heart must never be dry. The heart must be hot and humid, and the intellect cold and dry. A dried-up heart becomes selfish and if it is cold, it lacks love. If you heat the mind, it sleeps and if it has too much moisture, it rots. These simple, clear images will help you solve your inner, spiritual problems.

WHERE DOES YOUR HAPPINESS DEPEND ON?:

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People are led to believe that their happiness depends on scientific and technical progress and also on comfort. In whatever domain, they are continually bombarded with publicity; every effort is made to prevent them from making contact with other regions, other entities – the only ones that could bring them the light, love and peace they need. The spiritual world has been so rejected, scorned and held up to ridicule that very few beings feel the urge to search in this world for the necessary elements of their survival. Most people are dying of suffocation and intoxication. For their own good, they must search more and more for a contact with this subtle world so that their soul and spirit can breathe and find nourishment. When we meditate we do not touch anything material; it seems like 'emptiness.' But actually it is in this 'emptiness' that the soul and spirit blossom and find fulfilment.

MY PERSONAL CONCLUSION:

As you see there are a lot of reasons to meditate. But one of the major reasons for meditation is to be able to surrender and to accept the trials you have to deal with. Because you know that everything has a deeper reason and that you finally become wiser, stronger and richer. You sense that everything that happens is for your good and happiness. And you know that you will one day harvest what you have seeded.

It is easier to remain in hope, joy and equilibrium when you meditate, because you feel the presence of your spiritual guidance.

Do you feel ready to belong to us, the

“WORKERS FOR ‘A BEETTER WORTH LIVING WORLD’?”

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