

Prepare To Meditate II

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Meditation is the subtlest of human activities and one requires initial preparation for putting it into practice. The mental and intellectual personalities have to be well tuned up before they could be successfully employed in meditation. These adjustments are necessary in just the same way as an aircraft requires adjustments before it is declared airworthy. To ignore the preliminary preparation and attempt at meditation without the necessary background would prove not only futile but detrimental to the premature practitioner.

The time taken for meditation is a small part of the day while, the rest of the day is employed in various other activities. These activities have an influence on one's meditation. If, for instance, they are passionate and ignoble, agitations are created in the mind which causes disturbances during meditation, whereas disciplined and noble actions purify the mind and make it peaceful. For effective meditation, therefore, the day's activities must be so organized as to prepare the inner personality and thereby develop a conducive mental atmosphere for it.

During the course of a day every individual goes through three states of consciousness viz., the waking, the dream and the deep sleep. The mind and intellect function in the first two states and are practically non-existent in the state of the deep sleep. The equipments themselves being absent in this state, man does not react to the external world and hence there can be no conscious effort made toward rehabilitation of his inner personality. But in the other two states the mind and intellect can be prepared and perfected to develop a conducive atmosphere within, for the purpose of meditation.

In the experience of a dream, the mind at times gets agitated and the agitations disturb the peace during meditation. To avoid this, the dream and its experience need to be controlled. Such control is not possible while a person is actually going through the experience of a dream. The control could be exercised only in the waking state. This is successfully executed by remembering the Lord just before going to bed and immediately on waking up. For practical purposes a *mala* (rosary) or any other idol is used for giving a powerful thought of the Lord to the mind, even while in bed, as the last thought of the day and the first in the morrow. When this is done the mind, ere long, retains the memory of the Lord for the whole night, resulting in peace and tranquility during sleep. The quietude thus gained during the night helps meditation in the morning.

Having controlled to an extent the agitations in the dream one has to bestow more attention to and reduce the agitations to the minimum in the waking state of consciousness since it covers the major part of the day. To achieve this, the Paths of Action (*Karma*), Devotion (*Bhakti*) and Knowledge (*Jnana*) are recommended as disciplines for the physical, mental and intellectual personalities respectively. A constant and sincere application in pursuance of these paths makes one meditation-worthy and meditation practiced regularly develops one's capacity to concentrate and pursue the chosen paths. Thus the two aspects of preparation and meditation are cumulative and help to develop each other.

Another important *sadhana* which is suggested as a preliminary course to meditation for neophytes is introspection or self-observation. Introspection is a process of self-analysis of one's own activities performed during the day. It is usually practiced during night, preferably after the meal, by carefully recollecting and observing all the activities—physical, mental and intellectual—which have been experienced by an individual from the time of rising until the moment he is introspecting. In the beginning stages of introspection the seeker fails to recollect all the happenings of the day. In such cases, he should try and remember at least the main events and gradually cover as many details as he can. With consistent and sincere application more activities reveal themselves to his memory until at last he is able to remember and recollect the minutest details of all that he has done during the day with less effort and time. In this process he has

merely to observe the activities of the day without criticizing or correcting them, for such criticism and censure, day after day, create a sort of frustration in life. The correction, however, comes automatically when he becomes fully aware of his imperfections.

The problem that faces man is not in his ignorance of what he should do or not do when a situation arises for action, but the non-availability of his intellect at such moments. In other words, he lacks concentration and his faculty of discrimination is not with him for application to each and every activity. Many a time he commits faults but his own intellect later on regrets the wrong action. When introspection is practiced regularly, the constant observation of his own actions with their merits or faults helps him to remember and observe them even at the time of performance. Thus man becomes conscious and Watchful of all his activities. When any action is consciously undertaken the discriminating intellect is available for application and such actions, performed under the guidance of the intellect, alone are efficient and progressive to pause, to think, to judge and then act needs concentration which introspection provides. Introspection, therefore, prepares the seeker to concentrate and act rightly during the day so that he is able to meditate properly. Meditation, performed with this preparation, again helps him to concentrate and act better. These two practices are therefore like two pedals of a wheel which, when used properly, help man to progress on the spiritual path.

As the *sadhaka* progresses in meditation he develops ethical and moral values, mental equanimity and intellectual poise. With these qualities his concentration is perfected and he emerges successful in any walk of life. The more he lives the right values of life, the more he shall succeed in meditation. Thus the right way of living and meditation promote each other and together they help one to reach the divine abode of Truth.