

On Meditation
and
Discipline

PAVITRA

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On Meditation

Select a quiet and secluded place where you will feel secure and undisturbed for at least three quarters of an hour to one hour.

Sit in a chair or an arm chair with the back resting or, if you prefer, cross-legged on a cushion or a carpet. A straight body is preferable but without strain. In fact posture is of little importance. What is important is to feel at ease so that the body can be rapidly forgotten. Recumbent position is not advisable, except in case of illness or incapacity, as it induces sleep.

Always begin the meditation by an inner call or a prayer, an aspiration towards the Divine.

a) A first method consists in watching the thoughts as they swarm about in the mind. Your mind is like a public place across which thoughts move in and out. A few attract your attention and remain a longer time. Observe their play without identifying yourself with any of them. You will become aware that your consciousness – that is your mental self – stands apart like a “Silent Witness” separate from the movements of the mental nature in you. On one side this “Witness Consciousness”, on the other the mental nature in you.

Because you refuse to identify yourself with the thoughts, their motion and insistence gradually weaken. The waves of the mental nature subside and after a time you enter into a state called “quietude” or “quiet mind”. Thoughts still occur but they are subdued and do not disturb inner perceptions.

b) Another method of mental control consists in creating a void in your mind. It is quicker and more radical than the first but also more difficult. You have to banish altogether all thoughts from the mind. As soon as one comes in, push it out or discard it right away, before it has time to settle down. Not only should all reasonings be excluded in this way but all memories and associations too. Your mind enters gradually into the peace of “quietude”.

You should know that such an attempt to forcefully control the

mind results at times in an apparent increase or the mental chaotic condition. Don't be disturbed but persevere.

It is possible to bring the mind to a state of complete "silence". But it is very arduous task and after all it is not indispensable, at least in Sri Aurobindo's "integral Yoga", which does not aim at leaving the body in trance, but at reaching the same experiences in a perfectly conscious and wakeful state.

c) Mental control can also be brought about by concentration, that is the fixing of the mind on a single object so strongly that the mind unites, so to say, with the object. From this identification knowledge about the object arises in the mind. The best object of concentration, the most worthy of knowledge, is surely the Divine, the Supreme. It matters little whether it is the Impersonal or the Personal God or, subjectively, the One Self. An Idea that will help you is "God in all, all in God and all as God". When the mind wanders away. you have to bring it back to its object quietly but persistently. Here also you dissociate yourself in a way from your mind.

You may also use a word, a significant sentence, a prayer, the silent repetition of which will quieten the most mechanical part of your mind. Such a repetition (the name of the Beloved) is frequently resorted to by those who feel a devotion for the Divine.

It is best to use these three methods concurrently according to the need and as it seems easier at the moment. In any case regular practice is necessary every day, preferably at the same hour.

One day you will become suddenly aware of an inrush of unutterable happiness, a sweetness to which nothing in the world – no human joy or pleasure – can be compared. It is an impersonal state, without an object, and still there is a Presence, invisible but penetrating into the depths of the soul, or perhaps descending from the highest ranges of the Spirit.

All doubts have disappeared, problems vanished. Instead there reign security, confidence, certitude.

The world, things and beings no longer require to be explained; their very existence is their own justification. They "are" – from all eternity – and they will never cease to be, now or ever. Death has

become an absurd impossibility.

Of the wonderful experiences that one reaches in this state a number of descriptions have been given which vary according to the depths that have been reached, the aspects that came forward, the individual conditions and spiritual needs of the time and accompanying occurrences (such as light, opening to a universal consciousness above the head. etc.). What is spoken of here is not visions – visions are of a quite different nature – but “states of mind” or rather, “states of consciousness”.

Mystics of all countries who have lived these experiences have given them various names: the Great Peace, the Lord’s Peace, the Divine Presence. Discovering the True Self, the Blossoming or Blooming of the Soul. Second Birth, the Repose in Brahman, Entering into the One Reality, Cosmic Consciousness, Illumination, Direct Knowledge, Nirvana.... A New Life is truly beginning. The inner world becomes more real than the outer world.

On Discipline

The experiences just now described are fugitive! A short time after the meditation is over, they lose their living force and, in spite of all efforts at retaining them, they fade away. This transience comes from the composite structure of our being. We are made up of several pieces each pulling in a different direction. Below the highest aspiration and will are the mental and the vital beings, then the material body, and each of these is itself a compound of many parts. All these parts react differently to the solicitations of the outer world. These cross currents blur the memory of spiritual experiences.

The force, peace, light and bliss perceived or received during meditation can only remain alive all through our ordinary engrossing activities, if all the parts of our being are organised harmoniously to accept their guidance. To this end a strict discipline is indispensable; it alone can allow this “unification” of our being and prepare it.

You will soon realize that unification is an arduous task. It goes against all normal habits which consider sense life as the only reality. A long and insistent discipline can however break down all resistance and bring about a transformation of our being, the crowning experience of which is a decisive reversal of our waking consciousness.

Here is an outline of Sri Aurobindo’s “Integral Yoga”, which perfectly answers this need:

“The personal effort required is a triple labour of aspiration, rejection and surrender,

- an aspiration vigilant, constant, unceasing – the mind’s will, the heart’s seeking, the assent of the vital being, the will to open and make plastic the physical consciousness and nature;
- rejection of the movement of the lower nature – rejection of the mind’s ideas, opinions, preferences, habits, constructions, so that the true knowledge may find free room in a silent mind, –

rejection of the vital nature's desires, demand, cravings, sensations, passions, selfishness, pride, arrogance, lust, greed, jealousy, envy, hostility to the Truth, so that the true power and joy may pour from above into a calm, large, strong and consecrated vital being – rejection of the physical nature's stupidity, doubt, disbelief, obscurity, obstinacy, pettiness, laziness, unwillingness to change, Tamas,¹ so that the true stability of Light, Power, Ananda,² may establish itself in a body growing always more divine;

– surrender of oneself and all one is and has and every plane of the consciousness and every movement to the Divine and the Shakti.³

In proportion as the surrender and self-consecration progress the Sadhaka⁴ becomes conscious of the Divine Shakti doing the Sadhana⁵ pouring into him more and more of herself, founding in him the freedom and perfection of the Divine Nature. The more this conscious process replaces his own effort, the more rapid and true becomes his progress. But it cannot completely replace the necessity of personal effort until the surrender and consecration are pure and complete from top to bottom,”

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Mother*)

The practical means of applying this comprehensive advice is within your reach, which does not mean that it is easy. Here it is:

Offer to the Divine, to the Supreme all events and circumstances big or humble of your daily life, accept them as they come. without any distinction between good and bad. pleasant and unpleasant. If you are sincere in your offering, in your surrender, your life will change utterly. You will discover that an unseen Hand (the Shakti)

[1] Inertia.

[2] Bliss.

[3] The conscious creative Energy.

[4] One who follows a yogic discipline.

[5] Yogic discipline.

guides you, and has always guided you throughout the years. A new joy will rise for you every morning.

a) During your meditation you have experienced that your mental self can stand aloof from the mental nature in you and is therefore separate – on one side: you, yourself; on the other: your thoughts, ideas, opinions (are they really yours?).

b) You can now extend this dissociation to the realm of emotions and feelings. This is better done in the daily life itself. When you feel an emotion – disgust, anger, greed or passion – rising in you, stand aloof and observe. You will at once notice that the emotion or feeling loses its grip on you or even vanishes, This realization brings you. the means of controlling your (are they really yours?) feelings, emotions, cravings – the vital nature in you.

c) Then comes the third realization, the distinction between you and your physical body – the most difficult of the three. Stand aside from your sensations and observe that your self is the same whether they come or go. Dissociate your self alike from the pleasant and the unpleasant or painful. Realize that none of them is able to move you unless you accept it and identify your self with it.

This disjunction between you and your physical reactions is difficult because you have been trained all your life to consider the physical world as the only reality. But once it is achieved, it brings to you an immense gain: the control over the physical nature in you, its obscurity and dullness, its instability and fragility. So long as this disjunction is not there, you are the slave of your body – once achieved you are its master.

The triple-dissociation thus established will allow you to accomplish every action, even the most trivial, to the best of your ability, with great concentration, control and efficiency. You will perceive that, as Sri Aurobindo says. the Divine Shakti is pouring into you “more and more of herself”, founding in you “the freedom and perfection of the Divine Nature”. You will uncover a treasure of concealed Ananda, of which indifference, pain and joy are a triple disguise. She brings thus to you the key to perfection in Yoga and to the transformation of your nature.

It is an excellent habit to include a little reading in your discipline. Take up the books of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother that are

available to you. It is not necessary to read much – half an hour a day suffices. Read slowly, read again if need be, then ponder over what you have read and think of it at times during the day. Try to put it into practice, to *live* it. You will thus gradually come in touch with Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's great Consciousness (they are one for us) and you will begin to understand the hidden meaning of their writings.

Are you troubled by sexual questions? Try to build up a temporary harmony, without arbitrary repressions and suppressions. All this will little by little evolve and become clear and you will reach mastery in this domain as in others. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's booklet on Love will show you the place of Love in the Creation and will help you to find out where you yourself stand. There is no uniform rule for all; each man or woman has to discover his or her own rule.

Go forward, have confidence! In this way you shall build up the unity of your being, and when this unification is achieved, transformation of your whole nature becomes possible. Years, lives no longer count for you, you have set yourself on the road to divinity.

Remember that the aim of the world's long evolution through minerals, plants and animals, and thereafter through successive human lives and civilizations is to make of men beings fully *awake*, individually and universally, that is to say *conscious* and *master* of all that happens in themselves and in the world around, and free from the age-long bondage to opinions, passions and sensations.

The Miracle of Birth

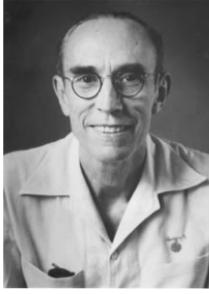
I saw my soul a traveler through Time;
From life to life the cosmic ways it trod,
Obscure in the depths and on the heights sublime.
Evolving from the worm into the god.

A spark of the eternal Fire, it came
To build a house in Matter for the Unborn.
The inconscient sunless Night received the flame.
In the brute seed of things dumb and forlorn

Life stirred and thought outlined a gleaming shape
Till on the stark inanimate earth could move,
Born to somnambulist Nature in her sleep
A thinking creature who can hope and love.

Still by slow steps the miracle goes on,
The Immortal's gradual birth mid mire and stone.

Sri Aurobindo



Pavitra

Pavitra (Philippe Barbier Saint-Hilaire) (from the Sanskrit word for 'pure') was one of the very early disciples of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. He was born in Paris, January 16, 1894. In 1914 he graduated from the École Polytechnique with a degree in Engineering. He served in the army in World War I as an artillery officer, and after the war worked as a junior engineer in Paris, at the Ministry of transport and communication.

He was interested in occultism, and in 1920 departed for Japan to study Zen Buddhism. In 1924 he left Japan and spend time with tantric lamas in monasteries in North China and Mongolia.

In 1925 he came to India and met Sri Aurobindo and The Mother in Pondicherry, where he was accepted as a sadhak, and Sri Aurobindo gave him the name Pavitra ("Clearness"). In 1951 the Mother appointed him director of the just founded Sri Aurobindo International University Centre. He served in this position for eighteen years, as well as the general secretary of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, until his death in 1969. The Mother reports in Agenda (May 1969) that Pavitra left his body in a totally yogic way and merged with her.

Pavitra's page on Auro-eBooks:

<http://www.auro-ebooks.com/authors/pavitra/>