

Recitation and Meditation

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I am immensely grateful to Shantikunj, Haridwar for conferring upon me the honor of translating into **English, Guruji Shri Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya's** learned treatise on the subject of "**Recitation (Jap) and meditation. (dhyan) - the two stages of worship**". It is indeed a privilege to be associated with any exercise that is undertaken with the purpose of acquainting wider world audiences with the richness, scholarship and piety of Indian philosophical thought. In rendering the complexity and subtlety of **Guruji's** expressions, into English, I have endeavored throughout to remain true to the contents of the original text, even if it has occasionally meant using simpler terms and phrases for the sake of clarity.

It is my earnest wish that this translation would prove to be of great help to the serious student in Indian philosophical thought; to those involved in spiritual pursuits, and also to the lay reader.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all those persons without whose active efforts this translation would not have been possible. In this regard I extend my heartfelt thanks to **Km. Juthika Patankar, IAS, Joint Magistrate, Muzaffarnagar**, who contributed greatly to the completion of this project with her suggestions in drafting and composition, even taking dictation for eight hours at a stretch and correcting the proofs.

5th June, 1992

J.S. MISHRA

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SYSTEMATIC EVALUATION OF RECITATION (Jap)
AND COMMUNION WITH GOD

There are a variety of methods, practices and procedures adopted in the symbolic worship of God, the Almighty. Depending upon the social evolution of races, people practice different modes of worship in different places. Some practice meditation, contemplation, recitation of Mantras (jap), chanting of sacred verses and singing hymns, in praise of Lord and His glory, while others find solace in undertaking pilgrimages, bathing and anointing idols, participating in religious processions and offering homage to the deities. These various methods, practices and procedures of symbolic worship comprise the first stage of divine worship.

The next step lies in advancing from the earthly to the spiritual plane where instead of using tangible and visible objects and practices, the worshipper adopts more sublime, intellectual means to reach the Divine. Meditation (dhyān) and the recitation of hymns and verses, are used as intermediate steps to reach higher levels of realization. This combination of recitation and meditation lies at the heart of all the modes of divine worship prevalent in every society in the world.

The ultimate stage of worship excludes any form of physical or mental activity on the part of the worshipper. Ultimate bliss is attained solely through self-realization, empathy and resolution. This is known as the calm steadiness of the senses, or a state of trance. This is the stage when one is in perfect communion with the Supreme Being. This is the zenith of self-realization when the **Atman** and **Brahma** are one and the same. Having attained

this, the worshipper realizes the ultimate aim of oneness with the Lord, the Supreme. This is possible only by gradual evolution of the Soul-the **Atman**.

Impatience and haste resulting in unmethodical meditation or the adoption of many already prevalent practices to realize God, betray childlike efforts and lead nowhere. One whose body is engaged in good deeds and whose mind is absorbed in noble ideas may be able to attain higher levels of self-realization and through this, reach divine bliss and experience the Divine.

As one continues to tread the sacred path, there are umpteen unseen divine forces in the universe which guide and help one in purifying one's tangible efforts and elevate the subconscious level of one's mind. This elevation should be the real objective of the worshipper and all the numerous practices and procedures lead one only up to this point. Having reached this stage one may depend upon the grace of God and the direct guidance of the Guardian of the Universe, the **Almighty God**. Now the **Atman** arrives at a stage where further journey is undertaken on its own, like a rocket traversing its desired path after crossing the gravitational frontier of the earth. Thus one completes the remaining part of the journey to the Absolute Bliss.

Excellence in thought and idealism in deeds form the core of the whole exercise to reach higher levels of self-refinement. Nothing is achieved by mere rituals and adoption of various religious practices and procedures. These rituals and practices help one to advance further along the path as do the toys and entertainment equipment used in kindergarten for taking children forward on the road to education. These tools are both necessary and useful, but one has to bear in mind that they do not have magical powers in themselves. They only help a healthy body in enhancing its strength and attuning the chosen objectives in life.

RECITATION (Jap)

Recitation of hymns, of God's name, *mantras* and the sacred scriptures is nothing but an effort to retrace and revive our relation with God. This recitation is akin to the mewing of a wandering cat who seeks its young or the search undertaken for a lost child with the help of its name and other physical details. Recitation of God's name fulfils this purpose. The human being is lost and he seeks God by recitation.

To further elaborate the need and importance of recitation; in Indian mythology, the distress call of **Draupadi**, wife of the **Pandavas**, while being disrobed in the assembly of the **kauravas** and the repeated distressed trumpeting of **Gaja**, the elephant, to retrieve himself from Grah, the Crocodile, serve as lucid examples. The physical disrobing of **Draupadi** was an echo of the assault upon her honor which exposed her to the crude public gaze of the Assembly. Recitation of God's name may be equated with the anguished cry of the elephant seeking physical protection and the distraught appeal of **Draupadi** to guard her honor.

Today man is in great pain and anguish, as he is leading life at a very lowly level of existence, engulfed in greed, lust, anger and desire, causing sorrow and mental restlessness. But very few of us realize this. The result is that his relation with God is totally snapped and constant dwelling on worldly desires and pleasures deter him from adopting the path to God. He is in utter darkness and needs light to emerge from this state of limbo. This light may be that of God alone. The enunciation of God's name and chanting of sacred hymns is known as the path of recitation to reach God. But mechanical and uninvolved recitation not followed by good deeds and ideas leads to nowhere. It is like

electrical energy which when harnessed properly and utilized in a disciplined way, provides many comforts but if handled carelessly and thoughtlessly, proves destructive and damaging. Likewise, God, in his form of **Rudra**, punishes those who involve themselves in immoral and unkind activities. It would be too simplistic to conclude that God can be propitiated by mere mechanical recitation. The grace of God can be achieved only by adopting the right path, through self-refinement of the individual.

Man is affected by the forces, tendencies and ideas prevalent in a particular social system. In a world where desire, greed, lust and anger reign supreme, some daily exercise to cleanse the mind is a must. To invoke God and His Glory is of paramount importance. This can be achieved in the first stage by chanting His Name or by the recitation of hymns and sacred scriptures in praise of God. Psychology has shown that recollection leads to the establishment of a mental co-relation which in turn leads to attainment and the realization of the idea or the object.

There are four basic steps to educate the consciousness. The first is learning. At this stage basic awareness and memorizing is emphasized. It is not sufficient just to read and listen. In order to internalize the basics, one has to learn and repeat what one has learnt, over and over a certain period, that is, learning by rote. That is why parade is compulsory for the Army. Sports persons, musicians and artistes perform their daily exercise. Repetition is an integral part of learning. Likewise, to realize God and attain the necessary light, one has to resort to the repeated chanting of His Holy Name in the initial stages. This would help in consolidating the effort and make an indelible impression of God and His Glory on the so far uninitiated, and not fully receptive, human mind. This is a very crucially important step in the realization of God, the Supreme.

The second basic step is called Retention. Retention is the internalizing of what one has learnt and making it a part of oneself. The third important step in this sequence is Recall which means sifting and co-relating the fragmented pieces of memory and coalescing them together to form a picture. This leads to the fourth and last stage in the process, known as Recognition. This consists of transplanting this picture from the level of the unconscious to that of the conscious, connecting to it into a belief and, in turn, into a conviction.

There is restlessness in life because of dissociation of self from the universal self, just like the zig-zag and undirected flight of a kite whose string is broken. If the link is broken neither can the puppet display its dance nor can electrical equipment operate in the absence of its connecting wires. The relationship between soul and God is eternal. But owing to the excessive involvement in the senses, resulting in illusion, this relationship has been forgotten. To be conscious of this and to re-establish the link, one has to resort to the fourth and the last stage, that of Recognition, in which the individual self realizes the Divine Light within and is able to realize the concept of 'TAT TVAM ASI' - 'Thou art that'. Having arrived at this stage, a soul behaves in a divine way and ultimately attains Divinity. This is the stage of oneness with God or the union of the self with the Universal Self.

There has to be a tremendous effort at a conscious level to achieve the ultimate realization of God. The story of **Prahlad** depicts the importance of recitation of God's Name and the results accruing there-from. Similar is the instance of **Yudhisthir** who insisted only on reciting 'Satyam Vad' 'speak the truth' whereas his fellow students completed the prescribed course of studies. His conviction lay in imbibing the value of the truth inherent in ideas and deeds and thereby attaining perfection. The main idea is, that by recitation, one is

involved with God and regular practice instills a belief in His greatness and affects His closeness, which leads to the attainment of Divinity. We daily observe that soaking a garment overnight in a dye colors the garment, the proximity of a shrub to a sandalwood tree results in the fragrance of the tree spreading to the shrub and the falling rose petals invariably scent the earth upon which they drop.

There is a physical significance to recitation also. Its importance can be explained on the basis of scientific theories. The human body and the human mind contain innumerable centers and circles of divine power and various levels of consciousness which, if involved and channelised in a systematic and organized way can render extra-sensory and outstanding results. The result of these practices and efforts is the attainment of spiritual prowess. The practice of recitation plays a pivotal role in achieving this spiritual prowess by enhancing the human intellect and the internal divinity of the soul.

The human mouth is said to be a very important centre of fire, the centre of all energy. This fire is described by many names and it connotes all the activities undertaken by the human body system. It includes the various sub-system from the mouth to the intestinal organs. This fire in its tangible manifestation helps the process of digestion in the human body. In fact, the mouth is that divine centre of sacred fire which not only helps the digestion process but is also the origin of the power of speech. The centre of fire in the human mouth at the physical and tangible level helps the digestion process and in its refined form, is the cause of speech. It also elevates the divine consciousness. All three functions are vital and of paramount importance. The importance of digestion and the power of speech need no explanation. But the crucial function of elevating the divine consciousness is not widely recognized and is realized by only the initiated few.

The hymn of **Goddess Gayatri**, widely known as '**Gayatri Mantra**', is accorded the highest recognition in Indian system of thought. It is known as the **Lord of Mantra (Guru Mantra)**. Its recitation is immensely helpful for the refinement of the individual self and the elevation of the innermost consciousness. **Gayatri Mantra** has been termed as '**Vedmata**' 'the mother of the Vedas' as it contains the innermost secrets of sacred knowledge of the Vedas. The whole science of recitation and meditation relates to this concept of mystical power.

Speech does not simply convey information; feeling, expression, sentiment, inspiration and in many situations, even power, is conveyed through it. That is why speech is able to create friendship as well as enmity. It helps in the rise and fall of a person or an organization. Bitter speech leads to anger whereas tragic information affects people in a very decisive and traumatic way. Speeches based on facts, logic and enthusiasm and delivered sentimentally, are able to hypnotize the masses. **Draupadi's** few chosen stinging words uttered to insult **Duryodhana**, caused **Mahabharat**, the Great War, which destroyed civilization. Thus it is evident that speech is not limited to the conveying of information alone. With the flow of words, a certain amount of energy is transmitted which arouses the consciousness of the audience in a desired direction.

In physical science speech is explained as vibration of the waves, but this fails to account for the sensitive power of words which effectively affect the human consciousness. The latter can be interpreted on the metaphysical level only. In recitation this meta-physical effect of speech is utilized in a refined and organized way. The theory of recitation dwells upon the above mentioned metaphysical power of words, which is able to generate tremendous energy of consciousness, capable of affecting the mind and body of the person involved

and which creates mystical vibrations in the cosmos, which in turn affects people, circumstances and the whole atmosphere.

The *Mantras* have been selected on the principle of acoustics. The power of **Gayatri Mantra** is outstanding. But its meaning is quite simple. The main emphasis of the **Gayatri Mantra** lies in its prayer for wisdom. There are innumerable Mantras, hymns and poems in all languages, expressing the same meaning. But these cannot be equated with the Gayatri Mantra and do not produce the same results. The particular combination and interweaving of words has been uppermost in the minds of **Rishis**, who composed these **Mantras**. There are Mantras which may be interpreted to convey some meaning but in fact they do not convey any specific meaning. It seems futile to attempt a meaningful interpretation of words like, *hreem*, *shreem*, *kleem*, etc. These have been composed, based on their potential to create powerful vibrations and an impact on the person involved, by affecting the atmosphere.

In recitation, there is a system of varying the levels of sound and there exists a tradition of mass recitation or group chanting. These practices are devised to create powerful vibrations.

Recitation of *mantras* has an internal as well as an external effect. Fire not only warms up the site of burning but also radiates heat waves in the surrounding area. The sound of recitation creates vibrations like the water currents in the deeper layers of ocean and the air in outer atmosphere. This recitation affects various centers of power in the human body and mind and creates its own effect. Vibrations of a definite wavelength create mysterious forces and wonderful effects.. The march of soldiers in a particular style on a bridge is prohibited as it can create vibrations which can damage the bridge. This illustrates how a simple action can create wonderful effects.

Recitation is done in a certain organized pattern and its results and effect can be illustrated scientifically ¹ in a laboratory. Recitation of *mantras*, in methodical order, creates wonderful results. The different organs and various centers of power in human body are affected by recitation and the resulting vibrations stir the consciousness and create a unique awakening and sharpen the intellect. One feels elevated, awakened and supremely confident. This exercise has a direct impact on one's psyche. The whole exercise can be compared to typing on a paper with the help of a typewriter, where words are in the mind, and the matter is printed on paper with the help of fingertips.

It is a well-known fact that when we rub both palms together, both heat and energy are produced. Even an elementary student of science knows that friction leads to heat and electricity. Likewise, in recitation, steady and modulated chanting of *mantras* creates a type of friction which, in turn, affects the breathing process and regulates the circulation of blood. The activated friction process affects the body and causes a rekindling of the internal consciousness of the man, just as a runner's body is warmed by initial exercise to prepare him for the race. This rekindling does not merely represent hyper activity at the physical level; it also contains the seeds of divine attainment.

There are some sound waves beyond the audible range of the human ear. But their vibrations can be experienced with the help of certain equipment. Such sound waves are called supersonic waves.

Man has limited ability to receive and absorb sound. But the universe contains innumerable, powerful, sound waves beyond the audible range of the human ear. Had the human ear the power to catch all these sound waves, life

would have been unimaginably difficult and unlivable. It is a well-known fact that light travels much faster than sound. That is why one sees the smoke first and then hears the sound of the cannon when it is fired. Everywhere, where light and sound are together, sound reaches after the light has made its impact. But the same sound in a radio broadcast, travels with the velocity of light and is heard at the same time all over the world when these waves are superimposed on electromagnetic waves. Likewise, electromagnetic waves are used to control and direct, transmit signals and to monitor the flight of a rocket launched into space from an earth-based station. These waves acquire tremendous power after being converted into laser rays. The extensive use of laser technology in the medical field is well-known.

Recitation produces and co-ordinates such supersonic waves which are beyond the audible range of the human ear. The *mantras* recited with faith, devotion and determination undergo a similar process and create a very powerful effect just as the messages broadcast at a radio station can be heard all over the whole world when superimposed on electromagnetic waves. This is the unique feature of the recitation process, that it not only transforms the world but illuminates and radiates the personality of the person involved. This does not happen either at the radio station or in the instruments producing laser rays. But the recitation process has this dual power to affect the environment as well as the person involved, that is, the '**Sadhak**'.

In recitation, generally the **Gayatri Mantra** is used. Another practice of recitation involves no direct use of any *mantra* and in this process meditation and recitation are used simultaneously. This method of recitation is known as unrecited recitation or "**Prana Gayatri**" (*ajapa jaap*). In meditation the regulated breathing process creates peculiar, but inaudible sound waves, which can be experienced or even heard after a consistent and long term practice of

meditation. This practice is termed as *nada yog*, in which those practising it. develop the capability to hear different sounds such as even the sounds of several instruments and of nature. This unrecited recitation is also termed as "**SOAHUM SADHANA**". This may be understood as "words produced without any impact". There are two theories about the sound waves as *nada yog*. According to one theory these waves are the reaction of the interplay of five elements of Nature and of `Sat', 'Raj', and `Tam', the three virtues. The other theory lays down that these words are created due to the vibrations and waves resulting from the circulation of blood, the contraction and relaxation and the inhaling and exhaling processes of respiration. Thus these are the results of some kind of impact. The sound produced and the *mantras* recited result due to the play and interplay of tongue, lips, palate and vocal chords and thus recitation may also be understood as the result of impact produced.

More importance has been attached to the sound waves not depending on impact, as these are produced or caused by universal consciousness, whereas those depending on impact or vibrations originate due to interplay of natural forces and elements.

The learned believe that the inner consciousness of the soul, by its very nature, remains active and awakened and causes the feeling of unity with the universal consciousness. This feeling of unity may be understood to be the main idea behind the theory of "**Soahum**"; "**THAT I AM**". This theory is supported by the well-established philosophy of *Advait*. This system of worship involves the regulated exercise of breathing known as "**Pranayam**" which is nothing but an effort to rekindle and awaken the feeling of unity with God. The inner consciousness is not able to distinguish between the soul and the body. All the time it is concerned with the pleasure and comforts of the body and objects and persons connected with it. Often the soul is identified with

the body. This is a great illusion and is the root cause for all unjust, unethical and immoral deeds. Ultimately it results in all-round distress and profound sorrow. How to realize it and avoid the pitfalls of worldly pleasures and the resulting sorrow has been of great concern and is the prime cause of attempts to understand 'the real nature of the self. It is precisely to avoid tailing into this illusion and these pleasures, that the concept of enlightenment and systems of worship have been developed.

The concept of "**Soahum**", '**THAT I AM**' is known as divine knowledge or divine philosophy or the concept of enlightenment. This enables the soul to realise its real nature and pre-supposes freedom from illusion. Here "I" denotes the assertion of inner consciousness, the enlightened soul.

The ancient seers have concluded that the soul devoid of illusion and concerns of bodily well-being i.e. an enlightened soul, is itself the **Brahma**.

The object of worship is nothing but cleansing the body of habitual pleasures and lust and purifying the mind. The enhancement of all-round purity of thought and deed is the real effort to realize God. The unity of soul and God is propounded in many religious texts. It is also preached by the spiritual teachers and is understood and widely recognized. But this is not enough. This realization must filter through to the deepest levels of inner consciousness. Conviction, when translated into devotion, activates the mind and channelises the physical forces to convert it into pious deeds. The sense of enlightenment, developed as Supreme conviction of the inner consciousness, transforms the whole being and results in life full of divinity. Then, and only then, will there be real identification and real unity, and the worshipper and God the **Almighty** will be one and the same.

Thus it is evident that recitation is not only the utterance of some particular words or *mantra* but it is the sum total of the interplay of the power of speech, of thought processes, of vitality of the inner self and of the strength of feeling. Such a recitation is the real recitation capable of fulfilling and transforming the life of the person involved. This important system of worship can definitely result in the overall development of the human being.

THE DIVINE POWER OF MEDITATION (dhyān)

The science of meditation is used in the worldly conduct of life as well as in the realm of spiritual attainment. The higher the plane of meditation the greater is its usefulness.

Meditation is of immense value to man in his efforts to acquire and use the resources available, in the best possible manner. This is true in the field of spiritual attainments as well. Meditation enables the realisation of one's inherent abilities and talents. It also sharpens the intellect and acutely enhances our determination to achieve the desired goal.

People generally forget the friends they have not met for a long time. They also forget that which they might have heard or read in the past. But it is very strange that one ceases to be aware of one's real self. This ignorance is surprising. It has made us forget ourselves, forget the blessing of God and the aims and importance of our lives. We are neither aware of our existence nor are we involved in the contemplation of God. We are lost in a labyrinth of darkness and ignorance. Most of us identify the soul with the body. We are not able to distinguish between the two. All our efforts are directed towards the comforts and pleasures of the body, totally forgetting that the body is nothing but the garment of the soul. If we understand the reality of, and the distinction between the soul and the body, then the resulting consciousness would lead us towards self-enlightenment. What is really happening is that we are according far too much importance to the body and the mind which are only the vehicles of the master, that is the inner consciousness (soul) and consequently we have lost our sense of direction.

Spiritual contemplation aims at retrieving us from the situation caused by

our ignorance of our real self and our destination. We are in the same situation as that of the child who is lost in a crowd. This is the root cause of all-round darkness and sorrow. And although we are aware of the divine nature of human life and the fact that we have lost our bearings, we are not doing anything to resolve this crisis. This dilemma dominates every aspect of our lives and causes constant chaos and turmoil.

The aim of life is to attain fulfilment. This fulfilment must be at the divine level. There has to be a mental image of the nature; actions and virtues of God and then, at a later stage, one has to establish nearness, unity and integrity with the **God Almighty**, the Supreme Being. This is the nature of the, process of meditation.

In our daily life there occur many incidents and situations which plunge us into despondency. In such tense situations one loses one's balance and sense of discretion. This leads to irrelevant thought, speech and action which further complicate the issues causing physical and mental sickness and, in extreme cases, even lead to suicide or murder.

To restore the balance, there is no greater remedy than that of meditation. The mind is often dominated by feelings of anger, sorrow, sensual desires, revenge and frustration and the distinction between right and wrong is blurred. Meditation is concerned with the effort to restore the balance of the mind and guide it in the right direction. In meditation one has to concentrate on a particular deity or a direction. Its success lies in controlling the mind and monitoring and changing its direction. Thus one is able to control one's worldly desires and engage the mind in noble thoughts. There is no better method than meditation to achieve this state of self-control. This proves both physically and spiritually beneficial. Meditation channelises the thought process and helps concentration and absorption, which are crucial to the pursuit of excellence

and the achievement of success in life. The same degree of concentration and absorption is of critical importance in the spiritual realm also, right from rekindling the inherent strength of the individual to the attainment of God, the Supreme Being. The aim of meditation is to invoke the ability to contemplate about the basic nature of the Soul. Meditation seeks to arouse us from our deep slumber and awaken us to our real selves. It consists of remembering God and realizing the nature of one's own self. It refreshes the memory of the communion of the Soul with God. It helps us in understanding the eternal relation of Soul with the Supreme Being who is both **our** Mother and greatest well-wisher. Once this status is achieved and the Soul is able to establish closeness and identify itself with **God the Almighty** all the anguish and anxiety come to an end. Meditation helps us to reach this state. This is what **Lord Buddha** realized as he **sat** meditating under the banyan tree.

It is universally known that we waste most of our energy in baser activities and routine affairs. To take water from a lower to a higher level, against its very nature, one needs a pump and other mechanical equipment. Likewise, to absorb the mind in noble thoughts one has to resort to the process of meditation. It is not a great task to acquire power. The real challenge lies in preserving it and channelising it in the right kind of actions and deeds. To illustrate, here is an example. A lot of water is evaporated, but a limited, quantity of water in a steam engine is able to run a train and be of immense use to the people. The same is true about the controlled use of explosives in fireworks. Like the use of physical energy as illustrated in the above examples, spiritual power also when harnessed and deployed in an organized manner can yield useful results. The brain is like a power house which generates powerful electric waves and its vibrations scatter in the universe without being put to any use. If these vibrations are controlled and focused towards a definite target it can yield wonderful results. This focus and concentration can result in remarkable

feats. Circus performers use this focus and concentration to their great advantage. In such situations it is not the physical power but the channelising, focusing and directing of the inherent mental faculties which enables them to achieve their goal. That is how Arjun the great warrior of the epic **Mahabharat** could hit the eye of the fish and win the hand of **Draupadi**.

Concentration has extra-ordinary powers. **Lokmanya Tilak**, the great Indian freedom fighter's concentration, while reading the **Geeta**, was so great that it acted as an effective substitute for anaesthesia when he underwent surgery on his thumb.

It is an established fact that one acquires the attributes of the object of one's concentration. This is the result of focusing one's consciousness on a pre-determined central point.

A man has innumerable qualities and unlimited capabilities. All the ten senses work like magic. These senses, restrained from diversion, and controlled, planned and deployed in a creative direction can accelerate one's march towards the destined goal. Mind is said to be the eleventh sense. There is no limit to man's mental capabilities. But these capabilities are not used to their fullest extent.

The ability to avoid distractions and harness all the available energy to use it for the desired end is known as spiritual concentration. In the realm of spiritual knowledge this is known as controlling or restraining the mind. Meditation is discussed at length in the context of yogic exercises. Meditation is nothing but the ability to concentrate. Outwardly it sounds insignificant, but when used with ability and skill, one can channelise one's consciousness and achieve wonderful results.

There are innumerable examples to illustrate the power of concentration of physical sciences. The operative principle behind a needle or a nail is that the applied force is channelised and then concentrated upon a single predetermined point. As we dig deeper into the ground the various layers at respective depths provide proper soil, water or numerous precious stones, and many times remains of ancient civilizations, which further enrich our knowledge and understanding. Similarly, deep concentration enhances the effect of our inherent wisdom, power, learning and reputation.

Mesmerism or hypnotism is another wonder of concentration. The experimenter focuses his gaze upon a particular point and transmits his entire will power to that focal point. This in turn creates magic powers, resulting in hypnotism. This has the ability to effect mental changes and make the hypnotized ones behave in a desired manner.

Concentration produces unique power which can be utilized in physical as well as in spiritual spheres. Concentration is nothing but the monitoring of thought waves produced in the mind, controlling their direction, focusing them to achieve a definite objective. The thought waves produced in the mind are in no way less than a very powerful power-house. Power-house has their limited installed capacity and are restricted by their design and installed resources, but there is no such limit to the human mind. If properly harnessed and channelised, human capability can be multiplied manifold and the resulting wisdom which was being used in the sphere of family, can benefit millions and millions of people throughout the world. It can play a decisive role in transforming the whole world and changing its prevailing environment. Meditation owing to its unique ability in both physical as well as the spiritual fields is directly related to the system of worship in every

community in the world. Its forms may change but the content remains the same.

In the field of worship, meditation is used while concentrating on God in the form of a human figure as well as on a point of light which has no definite form. Basically both have a form. Even the point of light is a definite point with a definite form. The only difference is that this is not a human form. For meditation there has to be a shape or a form of God-our ultimate goal. Meditation is not possible without a definite figure or form. It is the very nature of the mind that it proceeds with a definite figure even in the realm of formless consciousness. Thus, without bothering about the dispute over form or formless concepts of God, one should achieve one's purpose of self-realization with the help of meditation.

Any mind which has reached a higher level of development facilitates the meditation process. The mind sharpened by extensive study, deep thought and contemplation, absorbed in empathy and developed by serious reflection, is best suited for meditation. People of lesser intellect are able to react only after seeing or hearing about particular situations. They are incapable of subtle thoughts like poets, scientists or seers. Therefore, it is essential to resort to visual symbols in order to help them achieve closeness to God.

In every profession one has to use different symbols and props to reach higher levels of expertise. This is true in the field of worship also. Even the learned ones have to resort to symbolic worship during their initiation into the process of meditation. These symbols act as scaffolding and strengthen the worshipper to advance towards this ultimate goal.

In meditation, focus on form is not sufficient. It has to be accompanied

by total absorption. In the field of form worship one has to imagine closeness to a particular deity and establish a relation which may be identified with any worldly relationship. This helps in strengthening the bond and identifying the self with the Supreme Being. This identification is the sole aim of meditation.

In meditation the worshipper surrenders the gross, subtle and causal forms of his body with his deeds, feelings and devotion to God and consolidates his determination to involve himself for divine purposes only. Surrender means the end of worldly desires and the acceptance of divine will, together with the determination to act accordingly. This acceptance, adopted and internalized with total integrity, is known as self-surrender. Meditation heightens and perpetuates this integrity.

The complete surrender of the devotee or the worshipper, is rewarded with the blessings of the Almighty. In form worship, the worshipper is free to visualize the deity and all its related aspects in any form that he likes. He is also free to remain completely engrossed in his own vision. The concentration involved should be such that the dialogue between the worshipper and Almighty should continue without material considerations being allowed to creep in. The state of complete concentration known as Samadhi, or total absence of consciousness, is the highest state of meditation. Samadhi is that state of concentration of the mind at which absolutely no distraction has any effect on the mind. This concentration is impossible to achieve in the initial stages of meditation. The practical aspect of meditation should aim at achieving a dialogue between God and the Worshipper. In this situation the devotee surrenders all his belongings and worldly desires and in so doing identifies himself with **God**. This is the state of enlightenment, joy and divine blessedness. Communion with **God** does not mean that a devotee, either in a dream or in an

awakened state, glimpses the figure of a deity or sees some divine light or any other strange vision. If anybody does see such things it is nothing but the extension of his preconceived beliefs. What is important to internalize is that God enters into the life of man in the form of divine thoughts and beliefs. When the divine ideals acquire the status of a beloved and one acts in that light then the resulting bliss and ecstasy is a sure sign of closeness to God.

In the formless system of worship, generally, sunlight is taken as a medium. The rising sun is the symbol of the Sun God known as Savita. Its divine rays affect the body and the mind of the worshipper, causing him to do good deeds, think holy thoughts and experience a feeling of empathy.

Concentration is crucial to meditation but **one** must bear in mind that concentration is not meditation. The practice of concentration takes time and it does not help to be hasty or impatient. If one were to constantly keep the goal of life in mind, then this very process would itself serve as a definite direction pointing the way to real concentration.

The practice of concentrating the mind upon one point is a very advanced concept of meditation. Initially one has to take the help of mental images. Those who practice formless system of worship also take the help of symbols, but even this system has its own distractions and diversion. Likewise, in the symbolic images of the deities, various related aspects of the figure distract one's attention, thereby making it difficult to concentrate. Those who practice the formless system of worship visualize the entry of sunrays in all parts of the body or during meditation, hear peculiar sounds. This also contains ample scope for the diversion of the worshipper's attention. If the mind has so much latitude for wandering it cannot concentrate.

Concentration means controlling the aimless wandering of the mind. It implies restriction of the mind in a well-defined sphere. This is a process which continues over a period of time. One must not be impatient for its culmination.

It should be borne in mind that complete concentration which is the culmination of a long process is needed neither at the initial stage nor throughout the process of meditation. One should neither be overly anxious to achieve this stage nor should one feel sad if it is not achieved. To have made the effort itself is enough. A study of the lives of the Bhakti Saints, Meera, Surdas, Chaitanya and Rama Krishna Paramhans reveal that what they achieved was not complete concentration but total absorption, total involvement. In the Bhakti cult union, separation, embrace and surrender dominate the efforts of the devotee and in such a mental state, concentration is not possible. Had concentration been the supreme goal, the ecstasy and resulting laughter, weeping, dancing and sorrow would have been great obstacles in the realization of such a goal. But this did not happen because concentration was not the ultimate goal.

The idea here is not to belittle the importance of concentration or to look upon it as an eminently dispensable commodity. The importance of concentration can not be overemphasized. But one must be clear in one's mind that rather than repressing the faculty of reasoning what is desired is the monitoring and control of one's mental disposition. More emphasis must be laid on proper direction rather than on concentration as the main goal. Only then would one find one-self in the proper setting and context for meditation.

It is difficult for the human intellect to comprehend the total divine power of the controller of the Universe, the Supreme Being. The universe is very vast and its expanse is beyond our imagination. Our planet earth differs from the

other planets in nature. There are vast differences in the size, shape, nature, thought processes and modes of living among the animate forms which inhabit the planet earth. In that case how can we visualize the nature of animate forms if any, of the other planets? Similarly it is neither necessary nor is it possible to comprehend the nature of the Controller of all the Universes, the Supreme Being. That part of universal consciousness associated with human consciousness is known as God. Closeness to God is, therefore, enough for worship. God is that focal point of worship. It is he who plays the major role in our happiness and our spiritual upliftment.

One may resort to worshipping a particular deity for achieving a definite subtle power but the worship of God, the Supreme Being, is the true, fulfilling and best worship of all. An ideal diet is that which has all the nutrients in it. Protein may be important but taking only protein in one's diet will serve no useful purpose. Worshipping any particular deity is like taking a diet of only protein or only calcium. Just as a particular nutrient may be recommended at a given time, so also depending upon one's need one may undertake to worship one particular deity at a given time. But for all-round happiness and upliftment one must worship the *Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient* God the Almighty. Offering prayers to various Gods and Goddesses and asking for blessings for fulfillment of various desires is not worship. Worship means concentration, devotion and the focusing upon God the *Almighty* the Supreme Being. In seeking to propitiate several Gods and Goddesses the worshipper loses focus and his attention is diverted.

The converging of meditation and faith is very important in worship. The worship of God the Almighty in the form of *Savita*, the Sun deity may be regarded as the best kind of worship. The worship of light is rewarding for those

who believe in the formless system of worship as well as for those who believe in form worship. Communities and religions everywhere have accepted the importance of light in one form or another. Every devotee recognizes light as the conscious and visible form of his deity. That is why light is called the universal symbol. *Savita* is the deity of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The gross, the subtle and the causal forms come together in the Sun, the pious symbol of knowledge. One may visualize in its rays, both the harmony of the *Gayatri* Mantras as well as the figure of the all-loving Mother Goddess. This system of meditation fulfils the need of all the three aspects of the human body, the gross, the subtle and the causal. The form and the formless systems of worship are co-ordinate in the symbol of the Sun. Thus this symbol of meditation is considered to be the most appropriate for the highest level of worship.

God represents Truth, Goodness and Beauty (*Sat - Chit - Anand*). The concepts of truth and goodness are based respectively upon the realization of light and that of God being our well-wisher. Instead of adopting light as a symbol, to experience deep feelings of bliss one may involve the more suitable symbol of God as representing blessedness and noble feeling, in our meditation. Our life is dreary and unhappy because we ignore this blissful aspect of God. The Scriptures say 'RASOVAI SARA" (God is supreme divine bliss).

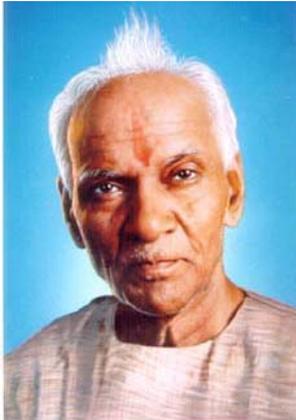
The Khechri form of worship is an additional form of worship, besides meditation and recitation. Therein God is visualized as a stream of joy by joining the tongue with the palate. Our mind represents the abodes of Lord *Shiva*, Lord *Vishnu* and Lord *Brahma*, - the Gods of transformation, preservation and creation. This centre is instrumental in making our contact with the universal consciousness and is, therefore, useful in the realization of divine consciousness in the form of absolute bliss. The meditation on light, a source affecting all parts of the body, may be done separately as well as in conjunction with recitation. But in the

Khechari form of worship, the tongue being in a specific position, recitation cannot be practiced and has to be done separately.

If we are able to understand the real nature of meditation and use it properly all the hurdles in our worldly advancement and spiritual upliftment may be overcome. Adopting a regular and balanced practice of meditation proves most beneficial in our lives.

About the Author:

Shriram Sharma Acharya: A seer-sage and a visionary of the New Golden Era.



His personality was a harmonious blend of a saint, spiritual scientist, yogi, philosopher, psychologist, writer, reformer, freedom fighter, researcher, eminent scholar and visionary. He pioneered the revival of spirituality and creative integration of the modern and ancient sciences and religion relevant in the challenging circumstances of the present times. In 1979, he founded the Brahmavarchas Research Institute, the research center in Haridwar (India) dedicated to the integration of the modern and ancient sciences in a practical way motivated by the noble goal of health and happiness for all. This center houses well equipped laboratories of Haemetology, Biochemistry, Neurophysiology, Cardiology, Phytochemistry, Psychometry, Yagyopathy etc.

At the age of 15, (Jan 18th, 1926) a great Himalayan yogi, Swami Sarveshvaranandji appeared before him in astral body from the flame of the Dipaka (lamp) and guided him throughout his entire life. The next 24 years of his life were devoted to 24 Mahapurashcharanas –each consisting of the rhythmic recitation (japa) of 2.4 million Gayatri Mantra with strictest of disciplines. In 1943, he married Bhagwati Devi, and ever since, the saintly couple dedicatedly pursued the noble mission of spiritual upliftment of humankind.

Realizing the potential of inspiring literature and its relevance in the present era of intellectual evolution, he had chosen writing as the principal mode towards uprooting the evil tendencies and blind faith from people's minds and arousing the indwelling wisdom, strength and spiritual bliss. He wrote about 3000 enlightening books in Hindi on almost all topics concerning human life. He translated the entire Vedic Vangmaya (4 Vedas, 108 Upanishads, 18 Puranas etc.) in Hindi elucidating the tradition, style, universality and history of Vedic Literature. He also practiced higher-level Sadhana on the arduous heights of the Himalayas and established enliven contact with the Rishis of the Himalayas. During 1984-1986, he carried out the unique spiritual experiment of Sukshmikarana, meaning sublimation of vital force and physical, mental and spiritual energies. He authored a special set of 20 books highlighting the future of the world and conveying the message of the dawn of the New Era of Truth

during the 21st Century. On 2nd June 1990, he voluntarily shed his physical sheath.

For more information:

To find out more about Shriram Sharma Acharya and his spiritual establishment visit www.awgp.org

Dev Sanskriti Viswa Vidyalaya is a university envisioned by Shriram Sharma Acharya to meet the pressing need to impart global education on scientific spirituality and life style with new thought of ethical, moral and spiritual transformation. Visit www.dsvv.org for more information.

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