

Guruji speaks on Meditation and Japa

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Guruji speaks on the different methods of reaching the goal of the Ultimate Truth and also provides responses to some questions of a spiritual aspirant.

Introduction to Meditation and Japa

There are different methods of reaching the goal. The first method discussed here is meditation and the second is japa.

First Method: Meditation

The ultimate aim of meditation is to keep the entire world at bay and to see what remains hidden behind the drama of the world.

In the current days, the term meditation is being used in a limited and narrower sense.

Meditation means to one-pointedly think of the image of their favourite Lord or Guru continuously. But in the real and wider sense, meditation means to remove all thoughts from the mind and to remain in the state of “No Mind”.

The first method is a direct path, but how?

In a dream in our sleep at night in a room, we meet a number of people in the dream and at that time we absolutely forget that 'I am Deepti, Shantananda, Anisha, etc.'

The dream drama completely hides our relative reality by becoming somebody else in the dream.

In the dream, we identify ourselves with one person who may be a lawyer and we think that we are that lawyer. We have completely forgotten in the dream that 'I am Deepti, Shantananda, etc.'

In the same way, this world is a cosmic dream superimposed on our real nature and form.

We have forgotten that we are that Ultimate Reality – the only Truth.

Because of the superimposition of the world, we continue to think in the waking state, which is a cosmic dream, and identify ourselves as Deepti or Shantananda, etc.

And all thoughts are in respect of this world, which is actually a dream. The mind is a conglomeration of various thoughts and not a separate organ by itself.

Thus if we remove the dream of this world, we find that each one of us is an indivisible part of the whole entity, which is the Ultimate Reality. It may also be described as the real Supremo whose drama characters we all are.

So when we remove all thoughts in meditation, the world is gone. All thoughts are gone including the ego or the "I" thought [the "I" thought means considering the body as part of myself].

When the mind becomes a "no mind", the "I" thought is gone, the world is gone, the body is gone and what remains is that one and only Existence which is aware of itself.

Thus this is a direct path to find the Truth.

Unlike japa which we have to do for a number of years, in less than 3 years of practice, we can get rid of all thoughts for a couple of hours every day and remain one with the Supreme Bliss by meditation as confirmed by great philosophers like the late J Krishnamurti.

The only practice that you have to do is to sit daily for an hour or a couple of hours (if possible) and try to be still. Whenever an outside thought comes, let us gently drive it out by saying “out” mentally.

The thought will go but again the same thought or other thought will come. Every time a thought comes, drive it out in the same manner. Every week, the number of times the thought that comes will become less and less and within about 2.5 to 3 years, we will automatically get into a state of no thoughts or “no mind”.

The method of eliminating the thoughts in our scriptures is called “mano naasha” meaning annihilation of thoughts.

When thoughts go, only the Truth remains. The truth is the bare existence which is aware of its own existence.

What a direct path!

Second Method: Japa

The second method of doing Japa (repeating a mantra again and again) has been very commonly adopted and advocated by almost all the sages of yore (maharishis), by Adi Shankaracharya and his successors till now. The benefit in this method is the mantra being a sound effect, whether the mind is concentrated or not, dispersed or not, it automatically goes inside us as a sound (whether audible or not) and dispels the various obstacles and impediments which have not been allowing us to have even a glimpse of the Reality.

Secondly, the power of the tapasya (penance) of the Guru which has permeated the voice of my Guru comes inside me. As my Guru has similarly received initiation from his Guru, etc., the spiritual power of these people is behind us and helps us substantially. Thus Japa alone can take us to liberation. In the method of Japa (i.e. repetition of mantra numerous times) also a stage comes when the Japa disappears and I, the chanter of the mantra, disappears. Only the universal existence alone remains and the individual “I” is no longer there.

The continued Japa turns into meditation.

As per the Yogasutra (tadjapah tadartha bhavanam), a Japa should be done remembering its meanings simultaneously. There are so many portions in mantras like the word ‘vicche’, ‘swadha’, ‘swaha’, ‘kleem’, ‘hreem’, which you will not find in any dictionary. The purpose is to remember the Supreme Lord while doing the Japa and not word by word meanings. All mantras denote the ultimate supreme entity whom you may call as the Brahman or Atman.

Difference between Concentration and Japa

The Westerners are fond of using the word concentration apart from meditation as one of the techniques in this path. Many consider both as identical. This is not true.

Concentration means keeping the mind one-pointedly fixed on some photo or some mantra, etc. while the real meditation aims at eliminating the entire world altogether so that one can move in the infinite. The former works within a limited circle with a centre fixed. Meditation aims at transcending the world altogether.

Concentration gives a person certain mystic powers. The hypnotism and mesmerism is a branch stemming out of this concentration. No doubt, in the beginning one may practice concentration on one object and finally get rid of that object as also the individual subject which is ego. When once a practitioner is caught in the siddhis or mystic powers of concentration, he may not like to go further and stop with it. Concentration has nothing to do with our final goal of reaching the supreme.

More comments on the practice of japa and meditation (and modified approach)

The first method of meditation can actually be more helpful for an advanced soul who has reached a stage of maturity. As we ourselves do not know how mature we are, there is no harm in pursuing both the methods of Japa and “no mind”. As these are different paths, we should not try to do it together at the same time in continuation of one another but at different times of the day.

Those people, who are unable to bring the mind to a no thought stage, can simply sit down, forget the body for a couple of hours and simply revel in being alive, i.e. in the state of being alone.

To make it clearer, let us think of a child just born a few hours back. When once the minimum requirements of the feelings of hunger, thirst, evacuation of urine, etc., is taken care of and the child is lying down, absolutely still, without any thoughts or feelings (thought being impossible due to lack of knowledge of vocabulary of any language and the latter having being fulfilled), at that stage, what will be the state of the mind of the child? It simply enjoys itself being alive. It remains in its bare existence which alone gives it happiness. This method and example has been given as an instant moksha capsule in Sloka 4 of Chapter 1 of *Ashtavakra Gita*.

This is also a method whereby we can reach a “no mind” stage by imitating the child.

Simply “be”. Have no thoughts, not even the thought: “I have no thoughts”.

Question from an aspirant on the need for meditation and Japa:

Aspirant: You have been proclaiming in many of the books essays and articles and also in this current discussion that ultimately the entire world is a thought of the cosmic supreme totality and all of us are characters in the dream drama. You continue to state that each one of us is a thought energy of the Supreme. Energy can be converted to matter and matter can be converted to energy, this same one energy has taken the form of Deepti, Shantananda, etc. This is just like in a dream where the thoughts take different forms and were nothing but mental imaginations.

So, if the above is true, in that case why should we do any sadhana for getting God when we are only the thought and entire drama is being written and scripted by the Supreme totality. The entire thing has to be a natural process. Then why should I do all these things like japa and meditation?

Response from Guruji: So long as we still believe that I am the body and the body is mine, this world is true I am going to office, I am having meals - the entire thing is because in practical aspects I think that there is a separate me and there is a separate Lord. And I think I have the power to use my own will power, even if God may interfere in promoting or impeding the situation. At this stage, this is merely an intellectual acceptance of the theory. There has not been a unanimous consent from entire body and soul and the acceptance has been merely at the intellectual level. At a practical level you are continuing to think that you are a separate person, you are believing in individuality and that there is a God who will help from time to time.

Till you experience and finally come to the stage and see that you are nothing and have no substance of your own, that everything is there and He alone is there - until that time you cannot adopt the theory.

By doing meditation and japa regularly, a day will come and that day you will not be able to do what we are doing now. From that day, all activities will stop and everything is done automatically. What one does in the initial days of spirituality, one need not continue it until the end.

What should be a schedule for the day for an aspirant?

According to the availability of time, when we are in the world, the aforementioned method of ‘No Mind’ can be done for a minimum of one hour per day extending upto even 2 hours a

day. This can be done at any time in the day or night and no formalities of sitting in a particular posture are specified.

At a different time in the day, preferably in the morning or evening, one can do japa for a minimum of one hour but not in continuation with the aforesaid method. In other words, meditation and japa should not be combined and should be done separately.

An aspirant should try and devote a minimum of two hours each day to the aforesaid practices. One should also get into the habit of reading spiritual books which are on the same lines as your Guru's instructions. Indiscriminate reading of all books at early stages will lead to confusion and doubts.

Some tips for japa and meditation

There are certain unwritten rules or regulations for doing the Japa or meditation. These are not only traditions but have a scientific significance to help us in reaching our goal.

1. One should never sit on the bare floor, but one should spread an asana of dharbha grass or a piece of red woollen carpet. This is essential as the earth is a good conductor of electricity. The energy cycle which is formed during the meditation will not stay in the body but will be conducted to the earth quickly if the body comes directly into contact with the earth. Hence, an insulator by way of an asana is necessary for conservation of the energy that is generated during meditation.
2. We all know that if the two terminals in a circuit are not closed the electricity will never be formed. Similarly, we have four terminals – the two hands and the two legs. When these are closed, the circuit will be closed and the energy will be able to form and circulate in the body. For this purpose, when you are sitting down, keep your palms or fingers crossed and keep your legs folded and crossed. The legs or the hands should not be allowed to dangle downwards but keep them all crossed so that the circuit will remain closed in order to enable to generate the subtle energy during meditation.
3. As we become old, as we are likely to be troubled by arthritis, sciatica or lumbago, etc. so that we will not be able to sit on the ground at all. In such a case, there is no harm in sitting on a chair but we may ensure that the legs and the hands are crossed either at the ankle side or the thigh side to ensure closing of the circuit.
4. To the extent possible, one should not sit for meditation facing the south. This is because the entire earth is a big magnet where the magnetic energy flows from the middle of the top downwards towards the south. If we sit in meditation facing towards the same south, our little energy will be swept away in the currents of the

- electromagnetic field of the entire earth. To avoid it, if we sit facing either west or east, we won't be coming in the way of the bigger current flowing from the earth.
5. The meditation or japa should be done while at home or in any temporary residence like the hotel, etc. on tour but not in a cab or a taxi. We never knew who the passengers were earlier to us sitting there. It could well have been a person with negative energy and his / her negative vibrations would get into us and prevent our meditation.
 6. Ladies should avoid Japa of Guru mantra during their menstrual cycle as these periods are not conducive for such kind of spiritual practices. However they may do Nama Japam (chanting of names of Ista Devata like Rama, Krishna, etc. without any Bijakshara (like Om, Kleem, Hreem, etc).
 7. The scriptures prohibit the ladies from sitting their hairs loose while doing Japa/ meditation. Nowadays many ladies keep their hair loose or shortened. In such cases they may cover the whole of the hairs by tying a scarf over the head.
 8. One should avoid sitting in another person's bed. Even one should avoid sitting on one's own bed and doing spiritual practices. This is because during sleep Tamo Guna is dominant and the same is not conducive for spiritual progress.
 9. All mantras should be 'mansika'. Mantras chanted mentally is superior to the chanting vocally and loudly. When you go on telling the mantra, a day comes when the mantra disappears and soon enough the person who chants disappears. Then what remains, that permanent existence. Individuality was superimposed on it.
 10. The most important thing is to meditate or take the name of the Lord or to think of him always (satata smaranam). All the rest of the rules and regulations are desirable but can be diluted or dispensed in times of need so that the emphasis will remain only be on meditation and japa.

Are there any other considerations to be kept in mind?

Always be moderate in your food, sleep, play (sports, etc. – both indoors and outdoors). Slowly stop reading fictions, daily newspaper, and allied magazines like *India Today* and stop seeing television (better not see even those films which only increase your worldly knowledge). Never do Japa when you are tired. If you are very tired, do yoga nidra for about ½ hour to 1 hour every day. You can even sleep during yoga nidra. A separate article on Yoga Nidra is available on the following link:

http://www.swamishantanandapurimaharaj.org/writings_swamiji/Yoga-Nidra.pdf

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Website: <http://www.swamishantanandapurimaharaj.org/>