

in all places. In order to create a divine atmosphere, it has been suggested that a clean place be set aside as the pūjā room. Going to the temple for congregational prayers and so on, are all to help the student.

Time (kāla) – The student is psychologically available for prayer only at certain times of the day, early in the morning or at dusk in the evening. The rest of the time he is generally extrovert. So these two relatively quiet periods during the day are considered conducive to meditation.

Posture (āsana) – Physical posture greatly helps to maintain a particular pattern of thought during the initial stages. With the hands raised in an ardent attitude of prayer, you cannot have sensuous thoughts. Hence the scriptures prescribed a posture for meditation – a sitting position with legs folded, with vertebral column erect and hands placed lightly in the lap with fingers interlocked.¹ Relaxed in this posture, you can maintain a chosen thought for a comparatively longer period of time.

Direction (dik) – In every religion there are instructions regarding the direction to be faced while praying. Various reasons are given for the particular direction. If facing east (in the morning), one is said to face the Lord Sun who will bestow his blessing upon the meditator. In the evening facing north is advisable, since the Himalayas, where the Mahātmās live, are to the north. In Islam, one is told to face the direction of Mecca. Association of ideas creates an atmosphere of prayer in the bosom. All these regulations are to be observed by the sādhaka in the nebulous stages of his sādhanā. Once Truth is realised, they are of no consequence.

The story goes like this. A great Mahātmā went to Mecca on pilgrimage. After reaching the shrine, he felt tired and fell asleep. After some time, he was woken up rudely by a priest who shouted at him.

¹ Refer Swamiji's *Meditation and Life*.

“Kāfira! Do you know that while sleeping you should not have your legs pointing towards the holy Kābā? Get up and turn around.”

The Mahātmā replied, “Brother! Why do you get angry for a simple thing like this? You may turn my legs wherever you think the Lord is not.”

The priest turned the Mahātmā’s legs in the opposite direction and was surprised to find that the Kābā too had turned with the feet of the Master. He tried another direction. The Kābā too, turned again.

Verily, the Lord is enshrined everywhere, in all directions. There is no place where Mecca is not. All these prescriptions are to be followed only in the infancy of the sādhanā.

Similarly, yama, niyama and so on, all have to be strictly followed to start with. They help you to achieve the goal. Having reached the goal, they are not necessary. What rules can there be for one who has realised the Self? Means are only to reach the goal. In the goal there are no means.

Wherever the Man of Perfection lives, that becomes a pilgrim centre for spiritual instruction and solace.



घटोऽयमिति विज्ञातुं नियमः कोऽन्वपेक्षते ।
विना प्रमाणसुष्टुत्वं यस्मिन्सति पदार्थघीः ॥ ५३१ ॥

*ghaṭo'�मिति विज्ञातुं niyamaḥ ko'nvapeksate,
vinā pramāṇasuṣṭhutvam yasminsati padārthaḍhīḥ.* (531)

531. ‘This is a jar’, to know this what condition is necessary save that the means of knowledge be without any defects, which alone ensures a cognition of the object?