

YOGIC MEDITATION

The mind is a very complex composition of various psychic, physiological and nervous pattern. It is compassed of thoughts, emotions, memory, love, hate, jealousy, passion and detachment. These are all patterns of the mind; but not the mind itself.

The main purpose of meditation is to free the mind of these patterns. The essential nature of the mind is spiritual, it is not evil. The ultimate nature or the fundamental basis of the mind is transcendental.

When the mind is associated with matter, it is bound. When it is freed from matter, it is liberated. The main aim of meditation is to liberate the mind from the bonds of matter, '*Prakriti*'. When the mind is freed from patterns, formations and impressions, it becomes infinite in nature.

In Patanjali's '*Yoga Shastra*', meditation is described as "When the mind has been able to transcend the knowledge of smell, sound, touch, form and taste, and, at the same time, when the consciousness is functioning 'around one point.'"

"Becoming like a crystal, on the modifications disappearing, the mind acquires the power of thought-transformation (Samapatti) the power of appearing in the shape of whatever object is presented to it, be it the knower, the knowable or the act of knowing."

-Yoga Bhashya

These are three distinct stages involved in meditation; The first leads to withdrawal of the senses (Pratyahara)

The second leads to concentration (Dharna)

The third and last leads to meditation (Dhyana).

Pratyahara (abstraction of senses) is that of which the senses do not come into contact with their objects and follow as it were the nature of the mind.

The process of Pratyahara is intended to detach one's awareness from the sense organs, thereby promoting internalization of consciousness. It depends upon the regularity and intensity of practice and aid the state of the mind. When the mind is clear, Pratyahara can be easily induced. Without mastery, it is not possible to induce Dharna.

Dharna (concentration) is the stead fullness of the mind.

Concentration means the mind becoming fix in such places as the sphere of the navel, the lotus of the heart, the light in the brain, the forepart of the nose, the forepart of the tongue, and such like parts of the body, or by means of the modifications only in any other external object only."

Dhyana-can only be experienced.

The continuation of the mental effort is meditation or Dhyana.

When the object of contemplation takes entire possession of the mind, contemplation shows forth only the light of the form of the contemplated object, and is 'Dhyana' as it were, of its nature of self-recognition, then it is called trans or contemplation or Samadhi.

Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi together for 'Samyam' (inner discipline).

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