

Art of Meditation

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In many talks I have given and in articles on meditation that I have written, quite a few times the readers have asked about how to do meditation. Meditation has been practiced since antiquity and tomes have been written on it, the classical being Patanjali Yoga Darshan. So there is nothing new that one can say about it, except that what I present is based upon my limited experience.

Meditation is basically a focus on single thought for a long time. This is what Patanjali talks about in his Yoga Darshan. It could be a thought on any subject or object. Patanjali describes deep meditation as *Sanyam* where contemplation, reflection and Samadhi are brought to bear on single object or subject.

Shri. Ramakrishna, the Indian saint used to tell an interesting story on this. A young boy went to a Guru and asked him how he can see God. The Guru immediately saw that the boy was an enlightened soul but too young to be educated in the abstract knowledge of Vedas and Upanishads. He asked the boy whom he loved most. The boy replied “My calf. I play with him all the time. He is my true companion”. The guru asked the boy to think and meditate on the calf. After some months the Guru went to see what his young disciple had achieved and found him crying. “I am losing my mind”, said the disciple. “The calf has become so small that it sits on my palm”. The guru advised the disciple to continue meditating on the calf. After some time when the Guru visited the disciple again he was crying and said that now the calf has grown so big that it reaches the sky. The guru knew that the young disciple was on the correct path. He told him to continue further

on the same path. Many years passed by before the Guru went to see his disciple. From the disciple's face the guru knew that he had obtained happiness and had reached his destination. After great difficulty he was able to shake the disciple out of his Samadhi. On being asked how he feels the disciple replied, "Sir you, I, calf, sky and God are the same!"

Hence any idea or subject if thought about for a long time can result in reaching God Head!

Also we should try to focus on positive things. Brain is a transmitter and receiver of thoughts and hence focus on negative thoughts or about harming somebody can [bring negativity to one's mind](#) and interferes in the process of meditation. One can meditate at any place or in any position. [Walking while thinking deeply about a certain subject is also meditation.](#)

However, a good way to meditate is to sit in an upright position, close the eyes and think about the subject. Closing of eyes reduces a major external stimulus and helps in focusing the mind.

The mind initially will not remain focused for more than a few minutes. It starts wandering and gets influenced by noise and other external inputs. Hence the need for closing eyes and thinking.

When the mind starts wandering one needs to gently bring it back to the object of meditation. Never do it violently because the mind has the tendency to rebel against force! If one achieves this then it is a step in the right direction because bringing the mind back to focus itself means increased awareness. Initially a person will be able to focus for a few minutes, but when practiced daily the duration will start increasing and eventually one can easily meditate for a couple of hours at stretch.

In the initial stages if you meditate deeply for 10-15 minutes there is a tendency to go to sleep. This is because meditation is very relaxing and

therefore sleep results. Hence it is necessary to meditate while sitting so that when you doze off the sleep reflex wakes you up. For older people who have difficulty in sleeping, meditation is a good way to induce sleep.

Thus there is no holy, spiritual or correct idea or subject to meditate on. Anything can be meditated upon except the negative things. It is the process of thinking deeply that matters.

As the meditation progresses the first thing a person will notice is that his/her concentrating power has increased. Secondly, overall mental health and general well being results. There are a large number of scientific studies done all over the world telling about the benefits of meditation.

Meditation also has the benefit of removing memories. This is what Patanjali speaks of when he says that a Yogi can remove his/her *Sanskars* by Yoga. Focus on a single thought for a long time requires energy and forces more and more neural pathways to be used for the single thought. This releases the already stored memories in these pathways and allows the brain to increase its processing memory. This helps the mind to become like a crystal because most of the psychological knots are dissolved. However this state of mind is achieved after meditating for a long time and comes after years of practice.

Meditation also helps against boredom. Boredom is a state of mind which is incapable of accepting new ideas and is not interested in accepting external inputs. With psychological knots being dissolved through meditation which results in increased neural pathways, the mind is hungry for more inputs and hence becomes curious and removes boredom.

Another interesting outcome of meditation is that one starts to remember dreams. All of us dream but when the brain is very active and has less psychological knots it remembers the dreams. Remembering of dreams in

the morning and contemplating on them is very relaxing and helps in further reducing the psychological knots.

So my dear readers there is nothing sacred about meditation. Anybody can do it. And as Patanjali has said a person goes into Samadhi as a fool and comes out as a genius!

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