

## MEDITATION for Western Temperments

John Pater

A question was asked of the mahatmas as to why HPB's behaviour was at certain times considered to be obnoxious. To this question it was replied that it was not her fault but result of her occult training in Tibet. She was the best person at that time suited to the task disseminating Occult knowledge to the West of which we know the results of her fruitful work in the establishment of the Theosophical Society.

In the Mahatma letters ( Adam Warcup's lectures ) we are told of only one individual to have successfully completed the probationary period for Chelaship and chosen to continue his training in Tibet - no further information as to what happened further is available.

HPB reduced her esoteric school to 12 individuals in the hope that it would be successful. She apparently was not satisfied.

IT would appear that in the late nineteenth century there were difficulties in establishing appropriate pathways of self development for western individuals.

A Theosophist, 1902 to 1913, by the name of Rudolf Steiner claimed, from his own spiritual perception, that Kali Yuga ended in 1899 and that before this time it was extremely for any individual to live in full individual consciousness in the spiritual world.

So have things changed today where there is a safe pathway of spiritual development available without the need to isolate oneself in an ashram or monastery and still fully function within western society?- MAYBE.

However, one thought that sums up a pathway of self-development and meditation is that that **there are no shortcuts** for a safe passage and a lot of self initiated effort is required.

### WHY MEDITATE?

Maybe a better way to ask this question is - why undertake a pathway of self-development, which includes meditation as a necessary part of the process. Meditation by itself can actually be harmful if some of its effects are not balanced out by other harmonising exercises.

Some of the various reasons that have been given for undertaking meditation are as follows: -

It's the done thing in certain spiritual circles as given instructions.

- To know oneself
- To **know** of a spiritual world
- To confirm what spiritual seers have said
- To develop so as to see objectively into the spiritual world
- To bring down knowledge from the spiritual world which can be used on the physical plane.
- To assist in progressing man's evolution and one's own evolution

To achieve liberation from the dreariness of physical earth life.

So as not to reincarnate after this life.

- To develop one's charkras.

To unite oneself and to dissolve into GOD.

To achieve calmness and stress control (may be not the use of true 'Meditation' but the preliminaries to meditation).

- To raise oneself to a higher stage of human capacity for knowledge.
- To unite oneself with the higher self

To Levitate

- To become a better person

To heal oneself

- To achieve enlightenment

To achieve peace in the world

- To master the burdens of life
- As a necessity for this stage of evolution for our survival
- So as to develop a strong self, which can exist within the spiritual world in full consciousness
- A combination of the above.

Those marked with a dot would probably sum up what the main purpose of self development and meditation would be for an individual following Rudolf Steiner's approach and this is to be achieved in **full freedom** by the individual. It seems that world evolution requires that a number individuals, in freedom, take up self-development and meditation if world evolution is to proceed in a healthy manner or if at all.

Hence, as a summary, my reason for meditating would be to develop, in freedom, a strong and balanced individuality, which can bring down spiritual knowledge and actions so as to contribute to humanity's progress.

If the reason for why one meditates doesn't have its basis beyond oneself then it will be difficult to maintain a regular practice of it over a long period of time which is necessary if it is to have a fruitful effect.

### WHAT IS MEDITATION?

The word Meditation has been associated with numerous activities involving an individual in certain practices, which can bring that individual into another state of awareness. Included in meditative practices have been concentration, contemplation and even prayer.

Some views on what meditation is as follows: -

- Repeating and focusing on a mantra, which has been given by a GURU/teacher, that has no/has meaning to the individual.
- Focusing one's attention on the breath or another area of the body eg pineal gland.

Immersing oneself in

- Symbol
- Religious/spiritual verse
- Colour
- Picture
- Aspects of nature
- Higher feeling eg love
- Mystical saying
- One's thinking on higher principals
- On an illness ( for healing purposes )  
(The above may be accompanied by intense feelings about the subject at hand)
- Chanting Hare Krishna or other given sayings etc.

- Immersing oneself in silence to the exclusion of the senses.
- Surrendering oneself to thoughts that have eternal worth.
- A combination of the above

There are many explanations and meditative practices and techniques-, all of which work in some fashion or other. A western approach uses thinking in the build up of the meditative subject. Today, each individual is now required to take full responsibility for his/her actions and hence it's imperative that the meditative techniques and their effects should be understood by the individual undertaking them. In one sense, each type of meditation can be said to have some validity if used in the appropriate manner. Every epoch must follow its own appropriate path of meditation, which is suited to the evolutionary state of individuals of that day. Taking self-responsibility is appropriate for a western individual (there is no ashram environment to which one can withdraw months at a time and there are countless individual life situations that need solutions resolved by the individual). In the past the mantras and sound were effective meditative techniques. Today words filled with meaning and content are more appropriate for western individuals (western in character, not birth).

Meditation is usually a part of a total self-developmental package in a religious/spiritual context. It can actually be harmful if meditation is undertaken without other supporting balance exercises.

One method of meditation is that it is concentrated, conscious attention and awareness, as an act of freedom, over a period of time on a theme, object, symbol, together with the associated feelings where the individual becomes one with the theme being meditated upon after the object has been thoroughly thought upon. All external sense impressions and internal non-self initiated thoughts are excluded (in as much as this is possible). - Not many achieve this state.

### **When?**

It is important to meditate daily, even if for five minutes, at the same time every day. The morning is always the best time as soon as one awakens. Get up, wash one's face, rinse one's mouth etc, stretch, and if possible go outside and observe and 'greet' the morning so as to settle one's thoughts and to absorb some of the healing effects of the dawn and quietly place oneself into a state of reverence for the divine and the world. If in the morning is not possible then in the evening. If a daily rhythm is not possible then whenever possible, although this does not take advantage of the beneficent effects of rhythm. For those who are more committed then twice a day - morning and evening with the morning session being the main one. Meditation should always go hand in hand with balancing and observation exercises

### **Where?**

Find the same quiet spot where there will be no or minimum interruptions. As a westerner sitting on a comfortable chair with a good back support is recommended. (Crossing one's legs usually proves difficult). Some place where there isn't passing people traffic where one won't be disturbed.

## **BALANCE OF LIFE**

As a necessity for the pathway of meditation

### **Main Problems Encountered**

By taking up a spiritual path an individual will inevitably increase his abilities to act in the world. If one does not pay special conscious heed, in deed and thought, to the moral aspects

of one's development then, and although one can perform much good, one invariably can also leave a trail of destruction and then can blame others for problems that occur. Unfortunately *many individuals within spiritual organisations do not follow a balanced pathway of spiritual development* and the destructiveness of this can be easily seen. Undertaking only the meditative side can be problematical. In our normal everyday life we are supported by countless spiritual beings of which we are not aware. Once we choose a pathway of self-development some of the support we had received from the spiritual world is now withdrawn so that we can develop in freedom. We are now required to take over these functions otherwise we can be exposed to negative influences which can manifest as moral defects, **over sensitivity, egotism, desire for power, intolerant righteous towards one's fellow human beings, increased sensuality** etc. **EGOTISM** seems to be the predominate trait that is first encountered and then it is easy to fall into self-denial about the other qualities that follow.

On the other hand, for especially sensitive and/or insufficiently prepared individuals **meditation may throw them into a realm where they are unable to cope**, hence it is important that right judgement about one self and one's experiences is able to be applied and appropriate actions are undertaken. Hence, meditative practise may be best avoided until one has built up sufficient strength through appropriate reading, subsidiary exercises, observation exercises and contemplation exercises. Test - If one can't read *Esoteric Science -An Outline* (-too hard, too intellectual, too boring, not enough time, too long etc) then one may be a candidate for these type of problems. The ability to read, with understanding such material is a good test of one's readiness in coping with the extra responsibilities that will be encountered on a pathway of meditation.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES**

**Right Thinking** - to take a simple object that is of no significance eg a spoon and for five minutes a day for one month, direct one's thinking around it to the exclusion of thoughts and external sense impressions. We can in a way measure of our freedom by testing our capacity for concentration.

**Right willing** – In the second month perform an action, daily, for which there is no external stimuli eg when getting out of bed stand on your right foot and then on your left foot etc. Try to keep the first exercise going as well.

**Equanimity** - In the third month, place a check on the heights of feeling, even for short periods of the day, so that equanimity prevails.

**Positivity** -In the fourth month try to look for the good, especially in a negative situation, in a negative situation and abstain from criticism. Included is this is the **Conscious cultivation of warmth, tolerance and good will** to one's fellow human beings especially those who do us injustice ("Father forgive them they know not what they do")

**Right Judgement** - In the fifth month try to look at situations without pre-formed judgements especially events that may seem incredulous.

## **Balance of the above**

**REVIEW OF THE DAY** - at the end of the day review the day's events as though one were observing another person, especially the painful moments, but in a backward manner - initially for 5 minutes a day.

**RIGHT READING** - this is important, as each individual is required to take full responsibility for his actions. There is sufficient information available for one to become conversant in all aspects of the meditative pathway that he/she undertakes. It is suggested that twenty minutes a day be set aside for this. The content of the above-recommended books can be used as meditative subjects. Previously there was a necessity of finding a spiritual teacher or guru to guide one along the pathway of self-development. Today this is no longer seems possible, however as humankind has evolved, appropriate written works, together with human discernment can substitute for a teacher/guru.

The gaining of true spiritual concepts about ourselves, the world, spiritual experiences etc will provide great assistance in gaining the strength in being able to rightly bear our new experiences.

### **PREPARATORY EXERCISES**

- Observations of blossoming and flowering in contrast to decaying and fading.
- Conscious discrimination between sounds produced by lifeless objects and living creatures.
- Listening, in silence without criticism or opinion especially to opposite and incorrect views.
- Observation of stone, plant and animal realms.
- Conscious enlargement of sympathy for the animal and human realms and the sense for the beauty of nature.

### **DIET**

- Alcohol will eliminate all genuine spiritual experiences and, hence if it is not given up then **there will be little or no results**.
- Vegetarian diet is preferred but not essential although there are good moral arguments in favour of vegetarianism. The desire to go vegetarian will come as one progresses.

### **WHAT CAN BE EXPERIENCED**

An enlivening of the subject matter being meditated upon and time becomes irrelevant.

Have experiences where the content is made alive and one is strengthened by it in everyday activities.

Have meaningful experiences, which elucidate life's riddles and are able to be cross-referenced with others who have had experiences.

Receive inspiration to life riddles outside the meditation period but knowing that the meditation allowed it to happen.

Receive suggested directions for one's life.

Become inspired with creativity in music, poetry etc.

Good feeling of peacefulness and relaxation

Some fleeting spiritual experiences occur

Nothing - boredom - not unusual for westerners with busy schedules - could be caused by not sufficient effort of focus with feelings and thought. Can easily lead for one to give up

Have fantastic and meaningful thoughts that revolve around one's life - solving problems, creating fantasy situations, future possibilities - but not directed by the self. (spiritual knowledge is all around us. It has been deliberately withheld until the self is strong enough to confront it)

During or outside the meditation period one can become overwhelmed by uncontrolled feelings and emotions and consumed by raging forces flowing in one's being.

Become blissed out

Become too sensitive to things that didn't bother one before in daily life

Experience of wordless living thinking

A combination of the above

#### Everyday problems during attempts at meditation

Tiredness	it is necessary to regulate one's life to obtain sufficient sleep
Pain	All efforts should be made to get the body healthy
Lack of concentration upon the subject matter and Life's experiences flood in and take over.	Maybe not sufficiently focused – needs lots of effort to not revel in the thoughts.
Not enough time set aside due to ----- -	Need to consciously set real priorities. Don't give up but keep on trying.
Boredom	Maybe not sufficiently focused – need lots of effort to enliven the subject material.
Lack of enthusiasm	Attend lectures, talk to others on the path, read spiritual material.
Too many experiences where one become swamped	There is a need to get back to the basic exercises to heal oneself.
The mind can drift to all sorts of good and interesting thoughts and inspirations that one would not normally encounter during the day.	One here enters the etheric realm but without a strong captain driving the mind, even though one feels good one is not in control. When this happens and this is observed one can with, quite determination, resolve to refocus on the chosen meditation and re-enliven it. The drifting thought inspirational process is not bad in itself provided one has consciously <u>chosen to be in that state</u> . Perhaps one can, after the meditation resolve to enter that state for a period of time. Meditation is a good method for reaching this state but a conscious resolve is essential otherwise one can get caught - blissful but caught nevertheless.

Experience gained in one realm ie spiritual or physical should not be interchanged. It should be kept apart - Normal life vs spiritual

Ability to self monitor and control

Physical realities should not be carried into spiritual realities and vice versa

Descriptions of spiritual experiences have correspondences to the physical realm eg writing to the object described. - Blue to???, light to????

It can be said that meditation is the inner strengthening of soul life, not the be all and end all, and not the only thing necessary but nevertheless it is a necessary part of the processes for obtaining spiritual sight.

On crossing the threshold there is a point where one has to confront one's own perceived being as being in error - fear of annihilation of one's being are one of the possible feelings.

Many can't make the transition of crossing the threshold as they refuse to give up that part of their illusionary self as it is too precious to them or they can't recognise it as being illusionary. Either way they come to a blockage or a standstill. ie out of themselves they formulate subjective pictures and concepts of what the spiritual world should be and not what it is in reality. They don't want to see the reality. A recent example is where some senior Transcendental Meditation teachers sued the organisation because they felt that the organisation robbed them of a major part of their lives with promises of things that did not eventuate (spiritual gifts, levitation etc). Was it that these teachers came to the actual realities of what they were actually doing as opposed to what they thought they were doing? It took them 20 years.

Each Individual should take what he /she needs for his appropriate development. Ie an individual now must be the judge and make his own decisions, based on true self-observation and thinking, on the appropriate exercises for him/her self. Each individual should be able to change the exercises as progress is made and as the situation calls for it, bearing in mind the requirements for balance in life. - No one else can take responsibility --THE NEW WAY

Rudolf Steiner recommends something totally apart from our day to day familiar situations to be used as a subject for meditation. Eg meditation on mantras, verses and symbols from spiritual teachers or from religious and spiritual works.

In reviewing our moral qualities

Do we regularly get into conflict with others where we are contributing to the situation?

Are we regularly uptight with others?

Are we regularly impatient with imperfection with others?

Are we regularly angry?

Are we regularly judgemental of others?

Are we regularly Emotional, uncontrolled?

Are we regularly not able to work with others?

Are we regularly trying to control others?

- Egotism is one of the first problems - then it is easy to fall into a state of self-denial about other qualities.
- Cultivation of veneration is a necessary state of mind.
- Man in a sense consists of a duality of good and evil in a balance - with self development they separate and the negative qualities then appear
- Distinguishing between the perishable and the imperishable
- Acceptance of one's situation in life.
- Not only do lust and passion grow ---- but opportunities to express these increase

- A very determined shaping of character is an indispensable foundation.
- Essential to begin with an immense strengthening of character

Obvious           deception  
                       Stealing  
                       Consciously inflicting pain  
                       Rampant selfish sexuality

Each individual can decide for him/herself only - ONE CAN'T MORALISE ON ANOTHER'S BEHALF

If we possess some of the above characteristics then we probably need to work consciously on a few of our inner qualities. To become aware of these qualities is a great start. If we don't work on these qualities then these WILL become exaggerated and progress will be impeded. The forces of spiritual cognition are associated with moral forces just as a good diet is associated with healthy physical growth.

LOVE -the capacity for one to allow another being to express its essential nature within one self.

### **SOME MEDITATIVE EXERCISES**

Place a seed, of which one is aware of its plant stage, in a visible position (on a piece of white paper) and observe the seed fully in its outward appearances. Then contemplate the situation that if this seed which I have before me will one day, if planted and with the forces of the earth and sun, put forth the plant I have in my imagination. Next imagine an identical seed placed beside it except it is artificial. Now contemplate the following thought: - If placed in the ground no forces of the earth and sun can draw forth from this artificial seed a plant.

Therefore this seed, which I have before me, has within it something invisible in it that is invisible. This something, which announces itself to me now through my thinking, will in future appear before my senses. At this point fix one's attention onto this invisible quality. One must be able to intensely feel the thoughts which one creates. See **knowledge of Higher Worlds for a fuller explanation**

**Well you've probably figured out that you can use just about anything to meditate on 'successfully'. That is your spiritual organs will develop and you'll have experiences. So why bother with all the lead up work? In today's modern society, without involving a pathway of rigorous thinking leading up to one's meditative life one will enter the spiritual world and will not be able to bring back meaningful concepts and one can even become isolated from every day life.**

**Many avoid the hard work of developing up the thinking either by applying old methods through not knowing or just by avoiding the hard work with the result that there are not many individuals who are able to bring down spiritual knowledge from their experiences.**