

In all actions, keep an unbroken current of God-remembrance. Then work becomes Yoga and worship.

Even after years and decades of Sadhana, we still continue to remain what we were because, together with our outer Sadhana, inner transformation has never been attempted, it has never been seriously pursued and effected.

Swami Chidananda
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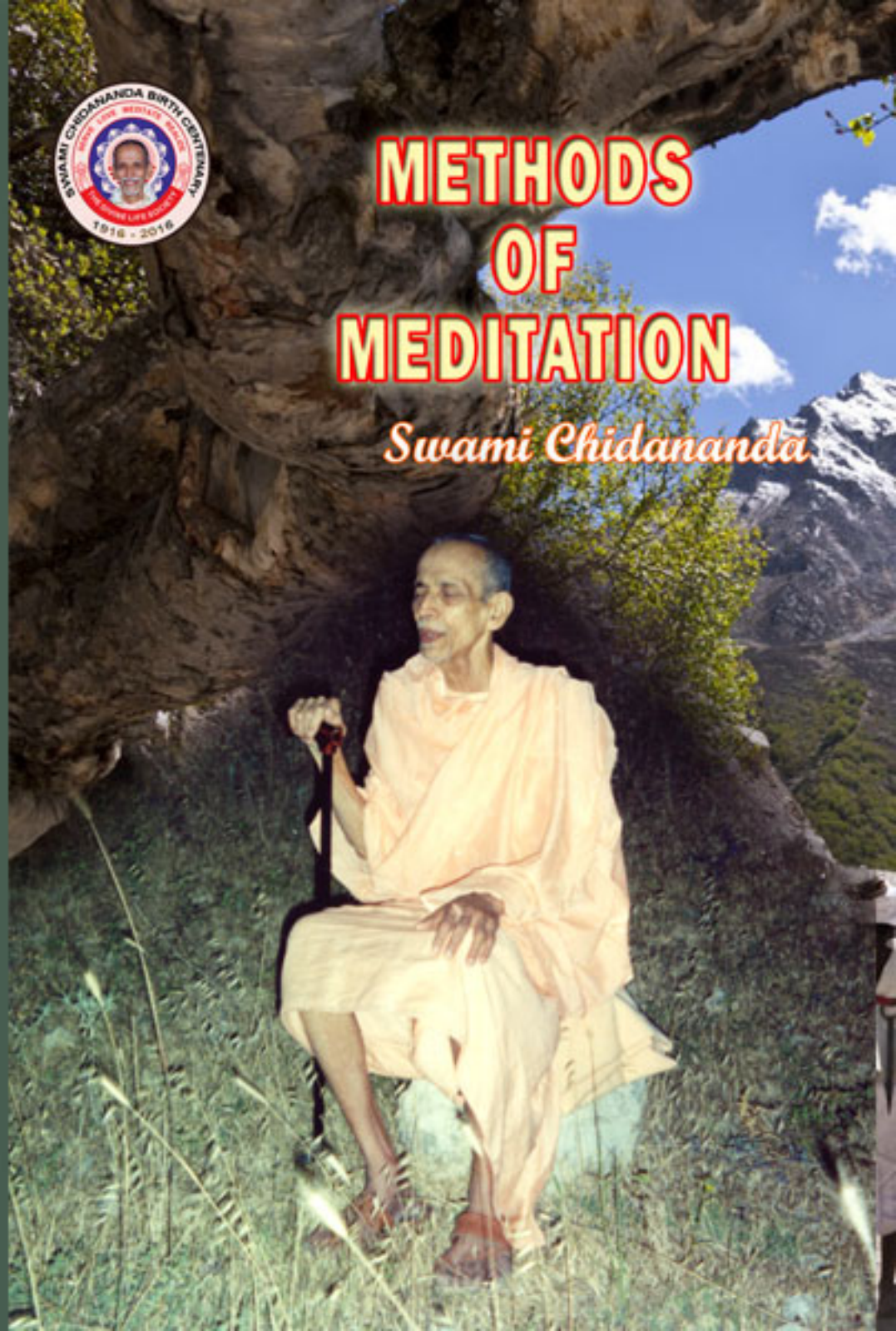


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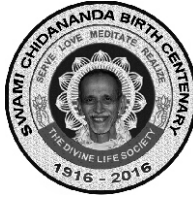
METHODS OF MEDITATION

Swami Chidananda



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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

24th September 2016 marks the auspicious occasion of Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out one hundred booklets comprising illuminating talks of Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

To propagate Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's gospel of Divine Life, Worshipful Sri Swamiji Maharaj travelled extensively in India and abroad and showed the path of divine life to countless seekers through his spontaneous and highly inspiring lectures. His lectures, in Sadgurudev's words, are the outpourings of his saintly heart, the revelations of intuitive wisdom.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of his hitherto unpublished lectures in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet **'Methods of Meditation'** is a Spiritual Talk given at the Yoga Sadhana Mandir, Keedysville, Maryland.

We express our heartfelt gratitude towards Moo Briddell, Mary Dean, and the inmates of the Headquarters Ashram for their loving service in making this printing possible.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—*The Divine Life Society*

METHODS OF MEDITATION

Blessed and beloved seekers upon the path to God Realization, seekers on the path of Yoga, devotees of the Lord and Yogis upon the upward ascending path of Yoga Sadhana. Welcome to our sharing in the name of beloved and worshipful Holy Master, Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, the prophet of Divine Life and messenger of practical spiritual living in this 20th century. This is dedicated to him and to you all under the auspices of the Yoga Sadhana Mandir.

Today's theme, Methods of Meditation, is intended more for the purpose of bringing about clearness in your ideas regarding the subject of meditation and its methods and less to provide you with any new information and instruction. It is intended more to clear up misconceptions and set right your thinking upon this subject and less to provide special or additional information upon the subject. Certainly, it is also to bring certain new insights precisely with the intention of removing misconceptions and clarifying views.

I say this because today, the subject most written about, talked about and taught more than

any other in all countries of the world is that of meditation. Maybe it is second only to diet—eating: what to eat, how much to eat, what not to eat, eating fads. Meditation has got a close challenger in the subject of diet!

Go to any part of the world, in all countries you will find people talking meditation. It is hip everywhere. It is a mod subject. People want to talk about meditation, to hear about meditation, to discuss meditation and to do meditation. It is a very good sign. It shows that one of the most important things, in fact, the most important thing for which man has taken human birth, is now pervasively present in the mind of man in human society everywhere.

Old people meditate, as they ought to, as they are at the end point of their lives and nearing the exit. Young people meditate, children meditate (I have seen two books by the same author where meditation is specifically taught to children.) University students meditate, business executives meditate, men and women both meditate. In America, Canada, England, Germany and other European countries, Australia—everywhere there are meditation centers. Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Zen, New Age, Yoga, Tantra, Kundalini—all have Meditation Centers.

How much more today than ten years ago, I don't know, but I travelled throughout Europe to Spain, Belgium, Germany, Austria, France,

Switzerland, then to Lebanon and the Arab countries. Prior to that I went to Canada and North America, to Venezuela, Trinidad, Uruguay, Chili, British Bahamas, to the Fiji Islands, New Zealand, Australia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Ceylon, Everywhere people are meditating and doing Yoga.

In Sidney, Australia there is a ten or fifteen minute Yoga class on TV every day given by a well known senior Yoga teacher who came to India and took Sannyas who is called Roma Blair (Swami Nirmalananda). So 365 days a year, there is ten or fifteen minutes of Yoga on Sidney TV.

Bookshelves in bookstores are filled with books on meditation; every type of book in various languages of the world. This being the case, there seems to be little that people do not know about meditation and that is precisely why I believe that this talk is necessary. If you get to know thoroughly one type of meditation then you are in a fairly good position. You know what you have studied. You know what you have to do and you start doing it. But when there are hundreds of books about all types of meditation and you start getting into the study of all of them, you don't do any of them. It is like the great teacher Ramakrishna said—You start digging for water ten or twelve feet in one place then you go to another place and start digging there, then you leave off that place and go to another. You will never get water. You have to keep at one place and

dig deep enough, then you are sure to hit water. What happens, there being too many ways of meditation publicized through bookstores and publications, the reader gets confusing and conflicting ideas about the subject. He becomes more puzzled rather than getting a clear cut idea of the process.

As I said, among the popular subjects on which thousands of books have come out in recent decades, meditation takes a prime place. In this profusion of books on meditation, there are some very good standard books which address themselves to and take up the task of expounding the time-honoured and well established classical methods of meditation, thus bringing more light by explaining them in a clear, detailed and practical way. This is certainly valuable additional knowledge upon texts that have existed for hundreds of years. Many other new types, that is, original brands of meditative techniques, copyright brands which are the sole monopoly of certain teachers, are also abundantly evident today. This sometimes causes a great deal of uncertainty and confusion.

However, there is no denying the fact that meditation is the most important of all inner processes. Meditation is the most important process in the attempt of man to transcend his present state of consciousness and to attain a higher state of spiritual consciousness. Meditation still remains the most important of all

practices, the key to blessedness, the portal to higher consciousness, the doorway to illumination. Its importance cannot be overemphasized, it cannot be exaggerated. From time immemorial all great scriptures have tried to tell us precisely the central place meditation occupies in the practical spiritual life of the seeking individual soul. It is the technique *par excellence* for transcending earth consciousness, body-bound consciousness and attaining the state of supramental spiritual consciousness.

It is a significant fact that the science of Yoga is also referred to as the Science of Meditation (Patanjali), because in the ultimate context all the varied Yoga processes are nothing but preparation to take the practitioner to the state of meditation; training him, making him fit to engage in meditation. All Yoga leads to meditation. All the disciplines of Yoga are so many preparations; guiding the practitioner to sit steadily, withdraw his mind, still the thoughts, concentrate the mind upon one focal point and merge it into intense, deep, one-pointed meditation. "That which is cognized by the Yogis in a state of meditation, He whom the Yogis perceive in a mind that has been lifted up to a state of meditation, that Being I adore."

Master has written an entire book called "Concentration and Meditation". Another knowledgeable book is simply called "Meditation by Monks of the Ramakrishna Order". All the

different monks are senior people well-established in spiritual life, well-grounded in knowledge of the scriptures and the practice of meditation. A more recent publication culled from various utterances and sayings of the great Swami Vivekananda of hallowed memory has been compiled into a book, "Meditation and Its Methods", by Swami Vivekananda. I have no doubt that all of you here could benefit immensely by making a study of these books. At least whatever information is given in them should be your background, your basis upon which you can add a little knowledge of recent trends. But these books will give a sound basis of what you should know about the subject.

Meditation in its simplest general form means an attempt of the mind to stop thinking of multifarious things; to stop its constant, restless movement of flitting from one thought to another, and trying to think about a single thing. It is an attempt to unify thought, so that the almost ceaseless restlessness of the mental waves is calmed and made to subside and there is in the mind a lake of certain stillness. In that state of stillness, mind attempts to hold onto a single idea. This is meditation.

As a pure exercise in mental discipline this one idea can be anything you find is easy to fix your mind on; it may be a beautiful flower; it may be your visualization of the full moon in a calm placid night sky; or it may be a star in the heavens; or a point of light—whatever is pleasing

to and attracts the mind and enables the mind easily and spontaneously, without effort, to focus itself. That is chosen as the focal point. This is an exercise, a discipline for the mind, gradually to give up its constant tossing about and to remain stationary.

It is natural for the mind to dwell on whatever it likes, whatever is appealing to it. Therefore the object is left entirely to the choice of the individual meditator who is trying to train the mind to become one-pointed. Classically, meditation always means trying to fix the mind on the Eternal, on the Great Reality; that which does not change, that which does not pass, that which is eternal and imperishable, that which is permanent and indestructible, the beginningless and the endless.

For you must recognize that meditation is the Science of Religion, the practical aspect of the inner content of religion, whose outer form may vary from religion to religion, but consists of certain ways of worship, ceremonials and rituals. Though the outer form may vary, the ultimate inner content by which man seeks to make his religion the means of attaining the goal of life is the same. It is that which makes his religion the means for accomplishing the mission for which he has come into this world, of realizing his true nature and attaining a state of liberated consciousness, transcending all sorrow, pain and suffering and becoming established in a state of

joy! joy! joy! The peace that passeth understanding. A state of fearlessness and freedom. A state of supreme divine exaltation. This is the mission of the individual soul, and meditation is employed as the highest method accomplishing that mission.

In this case, the focal point of meditation becomes the Great Reality—becomes God—the Universal Soul, the Cosmic Being. So, as a spiritual process, being the ultimate inner quintessence of the Science of Religion, meditation is always upon the Divine Reality which is your eternal source, origin and abode. It is where you belong. Meditation means fixing your mind and getting absorbed in That. But as a discipline and training technique, it is the focusing of the mind on anything upon which the mind can easily be focused. It may be upon a candle flame, upon a dot on the wall, the symbol OM or a crucifix. Or on a personal form of Deity—the child Jesus, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Mother Mary. Or it may be the merging of your mind in the sound OM. All these different objects of concentration train the mind towards the state of one-pointedness to the exclusion of any contrary ideas.

Meditation requires a subtle mind. The vast majority of people have minds which are very gross, because they are constantly engaged in thinking only of gross things, material objects, physical experiences. Naturally mind assumes the

state of that level of thing upon which it is settled whereas, the Supreme Reality, the Cosmic Being, Universal Soul is a transcendental principle more subtle than the subtlest, beyond the perception of the five senses. We cannot see it, hear it, touch it, smell it or taste it. It is different from the mind and mental processes, because they are all confined to time and space. They are limited and finite, and they function upon a relative framework of cause and effect, whereas the Great Reality is an Absolute Principle, non-dual, not limited to anything, infinite, not confined in time or space. Thus meditation upon this transcendental, subtle, supramundane principle whom we call the Cosmic Being, the Eternal Reality, requires a subtle, purified, very, very refined mind, because it is abstract.

This is a well-known hurdle, a great difficulty that man is habitually thinking only of things created, upon objects in this physical world with name and form, shape and colour. It is very difficult for him to engage his mind in thinking of something with neither name, nor form, nor colour, nor any dimension. The great ancient masters explained to us another aspect of the Supreme Reality which is equally valid. It is the impersonal absolute, but is also the personal Divine Being, the Deity, God that is concerned in creation as its Creator, Sustainer, and its ultimate Dissolver, as that aspect of the Supreme Being pervading all creation. They explained to us that

there is this other aspect of the Supreme Being besides its transcendent, abstract, non-dual aspect. There is also the Deity as Cosmic personal being to whom you can pray and who lifts you up to a state of cognizance of the impersonal Reality. Therefore, let not this hurdle deter you or turn you away from an attempt to realize God. It is not necessary to straightaway jump into the heights of the absolute, nameless, formless, transcendental Being. You can approach It by that which is tangible to you in the form of a personal Deity.

Thus they have given us methods of relating ourselves to the personal God through faith and devotion of the heart. Commence your training for meditation by sitting steadily, withdrawing the mind and visualizing before you the radiant presence of the personal Deity in the form of your choice. That is the wonderful uniqueness of the Vedic religion called Hinduism, that in order to provide a suitable focal point for a wide ranging variety of human temperaments and capacities and tastes, the One Indivisible, non-dual Supreme Reality has been given in numerous idealistic divine forms. It is not only a single stereotyped concept of the personal God that we have as substitute, in case of inability to think about the formless. No, even in the substitute they have given a wide range of variety, so no matter where you are, whatever your particular taste and temperament, you find a certain suitable concept,

an aspect of the personal God for your own meditation, to which you can easily relate. Thus we have the concept of Vishnu, or Narayana, or Siva, or Blessed Mother, or Rama, or Krishna.

This is not superstition or polytheism or idolatry. The great masters of the ancient Vedic religion were practical people. They were not satisfied with a religion which implied only faith and belief, but they wanted a religion that could be lived and practiced; ultimately to attain the deepest personal spiritual experience. They wanted to give actual practical techniques, and in the context of the needs of various types of seeking, individual souls that come into this area of the scientific practice of religion, they expounded the presence of numerous aspects of the manifestation of the One, non-dual Divine Principle (God, Brahman). There are innumerable manifestations of that Divine essence, and they are all an answer to a felt need.

To enter into a great building, a vast complex of offices, you can have a hundred different doors, but all give access to the same interior. Each particular concept of a personal Deity constitutes a door by which to enter that Brahmic experience. It is due to this knowledge that the followers of the Vedic religion are not too perturbed by charges of idolatry levelled against them. They maintain their peace, they do not try to justify or defend themselves, because they know that what appears on the surface to the superficial observer to be

something barbarous or cruel is nothing but a commonsense situation to answer felt needs, to provide for the necessity of practitioners of the inner and not outer content of religion. Therefore, the method of meditation may take the form of a steady dwelling upon a certain aspect of personal Deity (Rama, Vishnu, Siva, Narayana). They went even further. They not only gave these different names, but even with a single name like Rama, said that you can meditate on different forms. If you wish, you can meditate on Rama as a youthful Prince, or as a monarch sitting upon a throne, or upon Rama clad in bark cloth, holding only a bow and arrow in a forest background, or upon Rama the child, the baby Prince in the palace courtyard. So a single aspect of Deity may be worshipped in different ways.

The same with Vishnu. Some worship the child Krishna, some the youth Krishna, some the warrior Krishna, some the Jagatguru Krishna, World Teacher, who expounded the Gita wisdom to his disciple Arjuna. Some worship Krishna as a transcendental Being, apparently with form but nameless, formless, all pervading, indwelling all beings, as He who holds infinite universes within Him, Krishna, Satchidananda, Ocean of Bliss.

They are Incarnations, they came upon the earth and illumined the earth, and during their lifetime, they passed through various stages which any human being passes through: infancy, youth, prime of manhood, middle age. So as your

temperament pulls you, you can approach Him in any form. Even so the Divine Mother is given in many varying forms. Some seek to worship her as Lakshmi. Some as Durga or Kali. Some worship her as Saraswati, or as Parvati. But the essence of the meditative technique is the same, whether the method you employ is the method of the personal God or the abstract concept.

It is the stilling of the body movements, keeping the body in a state of poise, and withdrawing the mind from its outgoing tendencies distracted and wandering amongst many objects, and stilling the thoughts within, dwelling with the indrawn mind in one-pointed concentration upon God. It is the same with the worship of Krishna, Vishnu, Rama, Siva or Devi. It is the keeping out of contrary thought; unifying the mind upon one single flow, moving towards the concept behind this idea or thought, towards what it implies, what it connotes to you. This is the inner content of the form taken by meditation, no matter what kind it is.

In this process, you repeat over and over again the name that most happily and appropriately denotes the object on which you want to fix your mind. This repetition of a term which indicates that object is very helpful. It helps to keep up the continuity of thought, because without this external aid there come breaks in the thought flow because of the oscillating tendency of the mind. Mind swings away from the central

thought for a moment and goes to some other thing, then comes back again. But if it is hedged in, as it were, by the repetition of a certain name or term while simultaneously it is thinking about that which you are repeating, then the mind current, the stream of mental thought, being hedged in on both sides like a river flowing between two banks, cannot overflow and go off in diverse directions. Even so, the repetition of a name and listening to the sound becomes a channel for the thought stream to flow toward the object. This is a great help. Divine Name! Not any name, but Divine Name because it implies to you the meaning of the object upon which you are trying to focus your mind.

At the same time the subtle movement of is remotely associated with the breath that goes in your nostrils. By the regulation and control of your breath, the subtle movement of also becomes influenced, regulated and controlled. By this remote control of, the mind through activity and being interconnected, this regulation and control in inner becomes very helpful in keeping the thought flow unhampered and concentrated and flowing in the desired direction. Therefore, when you are sitting and trying to meditate, and the mind is trying to attain steadiness; at that point try to restrain the breath for a little while, without any feeling of pressure or discomfort. There should not be pressure, because then the very

object with which you move the will become thwarted, will become nullified.

The whole purpose and aim is that this temporary cessation should add to and supplement the stillness you are trying to bring into the mind by dwelling upon the object of your meditation. That stillness is aided by bringing about stillness in inner subtle, which is brought about by temporary cessation of the breath at the right moment. A little bit of breath control at the right moment aids in arresting the inner Pranic activity. And that aids the concentration of the mind. In this great method of meditation, physical stillness, the stoppage of the breath and resulting stillness in Pranic activity, temporarily all bring about a stillness of the mind. At the time of this state of stillness of the mind there should be keen, alert awareness of what you are meditating upon. You should not fall into a mood of forgetfulness. That would not be meditation, but a gentle unconscious drowsing.

With the body seated in a comfortable pose and in a state of quiescence try to still the thoughts. Temporarily there is stillness of thought and you experience a certain sense of absence of restlessness. In that quietude the tendency of the mind is to go into a gentle drowse, if there is a lack of sharp awareness of the thing upon which you are meditating. That acute awareness is the essence of meditation. All the other conditions are for making it possible. That acute awareness is a

condition of Sattwa, through the subduing of Rajas. And if that acute awareness is lost, Rajas is subdued but Sattwa also disappears. Then what will be the state? We call it Tamas. There is a gentle state of forgetfulness and drowsiness. Pleasant, but it will not pay you in the path of Yoga. By all means this should be avoided.

Those who try to meditate upon the Impersonal Absolute, the formless Brahman, beyond name, form, time and space, the unmanifest, employ methods that are exactly opposite. With the Personal dualistic meditation the mind is made to dwell upon a certain concrete form according to the Deity visualized, a very definite scientific form and appearance, but all of them are full of grace, of divinity, of luminosity because they are not material, gross forms, but spiritual forms. They are non-material, made up of pure Satchidananda. These forms are characterized by a luminosity and brightness, beauty and divinity. Though they differ, these are their common characteristics, no matter what the form is.

In the Impersonal Absolute those who do Advaitic Vedantic meditation, for them there is no form, only the visualization of Parabrahman as a state of light, of existence in infinity, of eternal being, of luminous consciousness, boundless, an ocean of consciousness, a state of impersonal pure bliss. This is the method of meditating upon the absolute Brahman, where once and for all you

drop all thoughts of name and form of this external universe, this relative world, where you go beyond name and form and dwell upon the nameless, formless Reality: the unmanifest Supreme Reality. This is Vedantic meditation upon the Impersonal Absolute.

But some Vedantins employ a different method of meditation. They do not so much dwell upon the external reality, but rather they prefer to meditate upon their own innermost Self as the Eternal Reality. "I am myself that Eternal Reality. I am not this body, not this mind, not these senses, not this intellect. I have no name and form. I am not an individual being. I have no bounds. I am eternal. Infinity. Unborn. Deathless. I am the supreme all-pervading Reality."

They mediate not upon Parabrahman as described in the Upanishads, they mediate upon their own innermost Self as non-different from the Eternal Reality. They are pure Vedantins. They deny even their separate personal being. They reject the human personality as being a myth. They equate it with the person whom you dream about when you see yourself in a dream going to various places, doing various things, as you see yourself in a dream at night. That you in the dream, when you wake up you know it did appear to exist but it did not have a factual existence that it was only for a short time a projection in the dream. When you wake up it disappears; it is no more. Even so they declare that this present state

of consciousness is only a temporary projection and you will wake up into a reality consciousness, eternity consciousness, infinity consciousness, then you suddenly realize that it never was, it does not exist. This 'I' personality does not exist. And meditating upon themselves as infinite eternal being, they seek to enter into a consciousness of non-dual, pure identity with the Supreme Being. "I and my Father are One." "Aham Brahma Asmi", "Soham, Sivoham".

This is not the meditation of devotees, those who prefer to keep a dualist consciousness of worshipper and the worshipped, of lover and beloved, adorer and adored object. This is not the method for such people, but rather for the pure Vedantin, who wants to become established in a non-dual state of consciousness where there are no two, no meditator and meditated object, only One beyond all distinctions. Followers of Shankara's Absolute Monism meditate upon the affirmation, "Aham Brahma Asmi, I am the Supreme Reality. I am neither body, mind, senses, intellect, none of these changing finite factors. I shine as the eternal reality. I myself am without name, form, without body." That is a different type of meditation altogether. It is called the pure Advaitic meditation, and it goes a step beyond the nameless and formless Being, a ray meditating upon the sun. But here there is no ray, no drop, no individual being.

Follow Sattwic diet and the careful avoidance of distracting activity that is avoidable and unnecessary to you, and keep a serene interior, unagitated by negative feelings, allowing things to be without being upset by the state of things outside yourself. Do not allow yourself to be too much agitated by the world's condition, but take a philosophical attitude. The world does not owe you a certain standard of behavior. Take the attitude that I am not a school teacher and the world my classroom, it was there before I came. I may owe a certain type of behavior to the world, but the world owes me nothing. It will continue on after I go, so let me take it as it comes and let me live it without grasping.

This does not mean becoming heartless and callous towards things which are brought to your notice, such as suffering in the world. It does not mean that you should not bother about it. It means not bothering yourself about things which you cannot change, about things with which you have no concern, but being positively concerned about things which come within the area of your own immediate obligations and duties; by doing the right thing by it and then forgetting it; by not being overly involved. You must know how to do the right thing in a situation, yet be detached. Stand back and know "I have not done it. Ego has not done it. God has done it. He knows more and

better how to deal with it than I. Who am I? A grain in the seashore of life.”

Thus, being fully aware that in the ultimate context it is God that is controlling the world, don't allow yourself to become too upset and agitated by things. Carefully steer clear of negative attitudes about people and things, thus keeping the interior serenity as untouched as you possibly can. Keep out of your life avoidable distractions which are not necessary for you. Avoid the company of such people who make you restless, who make your mind agitated, who create disturbances in your mind. You should not keep such contact if you want to have serenity and peace, if you want to be able to meditate.

Thus, wisely use your commonsense which is given to you by God. As an intelligent human individual, wisely and cautiously keep out of such associations, such company, such situations and occupations which needlessly disturb and distract your mind. Try to bring into your life factors that will help to stabilize your mind: dispassion, detachment, discrimination, philosophical attitude, the refusal to react violently to outer stimuli, contentment and satisfaction, control of desire, surrender to the will of God. Always hold onto a certain background of thought in the midst of distracting things.

Employing all these methods will gradually build up an interior that is suitable and fit and capable of entering into a meditative state. It is only with a fit instrument that you can do a very specialized procedure. You cannot pare your nails with a blunt pair of scissors; you cannot shave yourself with a blade that has rusted. If that is so in an ordinary procedure, how can you hope to meditate with a mind that is always upset, full of distraction, and involved in things which cause restlessness. At every step one has to be cautious. At every step one has to use commonsense. At every step one has to draw from one's own previous experience. You have lived in the world long enough. You know what situations upset your mind, what brings in disturbances and confusion. You have learned enough and experienced enough, so you are expected to keep out of situations which are likely to lead you again into an undesirable state of mind.

That is why God gives you experiences. You are expected to remember them, make use of them, and become wise, and not once again get into the same net by which you have been caught hundreds of times. Then whatever method of meditation you employ will be effective and progressive. Apply the lessons you have learned from previous experiences because your mind is yours. You are the only person who can manage your mind. The physician cannot take the medicine to cure the patient; he can only

prescribe it for him. I am prescribing now, but the medicine will have to be taken by the meditator because the mind belongs to the meditator and the life of the meditator also belongs to the meditator.

The outer life and the mind of the meditator are closely connected because of the simple fact that your outer life is also lived with the same mind. You have to think and get involved in situations with the same mind. You have to relate to other people with the same mind. And with that same mind you are supposed to do Yoga and meditate and attain Samadhi. So you don't have two separate minds; one for functioning in this world to be put aside when you go into the meditation room.

Therefore: the need for being wise, for using commonsense, for always remembering past experiences and applying them to present situations so that the mind is not in any way disturbed and rendered unsuitable for prayer and meditation. If you are always cautious and live in the light of past experience and wisely avoid pitfalls and do not create situations likely to upset and disturb your mind, then your interior will keep its spiritual state to carry on undisturbed prayer, contemplation and meditation.

These then are the three different methods of approach to meditation:

1) The method of identity, where you reject your personality altogether. "I do not exist. There is only Existence. Whatever there is, that is what I am." It is a non-dual state of meditation, where your identity merges with the ultimate Reality.

2) This is a lesser type of meditation where you feel yourself as the individual soul, like a river moving towards the ocean. It has no form, no name, no shape, it is not a person. This is meditation upon the Impersonal Absolute, Satchidananda. Here you still retain your awareness as the meditator.

3) The third is the method of meditation upon a personal Deity, in which you relate to Him with devotion, divine love, spiritual emotion. You meditate on the form of the deity which is favorite to you, on that all-perfect, divine personality who can hear your prayers, who can bless you, grace you, respond to your prayers. Relate yourself in a specific way as to a divine father, divine mother, as your guide, protector, and friend.

These three methods more or less generally sum up the content of all meditations whether it be in the context of Christianity, or Islam, or the Hebrew, Judaic religion, or Zoroastrian religion. They are either the non-dual state of meditation, or the Impersonal Absolute state of meditation, or the pure personal state of meditation. These three classes cover in a broad way the entire range of

meditative methods within the context of the different living religions of the world.

Specific techniques may differ. Zen meditation is an attempt to approach the Impersonal Absolute but it employs a heroic method of trying to confront the relative mind with an almost insolvable paradox, so that it goes on struggling and attempting to solve an insolvable thing, and bashing its head against the wall as it were, until it falls back exhausted, almost broken, devastated, and in the state of near self-destruction. Suddenly the consciousness goes beyond the mind, to the state of No-Mind. But that is a very strenuous and violent technique. Very few are suited for it. It requires great powers of endurance. The weak-minded become crazy or have a nervous breakdown. In a classical Zen technique as practiced in Japan (I don't know about here in the United States), it is a very difficult discipline. Fifteen to eighteen hours in each 24 hour period, sitting continuously for twelve to fourteen hours, in the Zendo. As I told you, few people here are suited for it. It is not easy. It is almost traumatic, and it is meant to be. The mind is blasted as it were by the overwhelming obstacles against which it tries to pit itself. That is Zen meditation.

At the same time there is another class of Zen meditation, where the people do not meditate at all. They say everything is meditation; we are always in a state of meditation. Be here now. Be in

it. Whatever you are doing, be fully in it. Lose yourself. So you have the Zen of drawing, the Zen of cleaning Motorbike, the Zen of entering into whatever you do, so totally and completely that you are no more there. The consciousness becomes uplifted out of its narrow confines of the self, and you are aware only of pure consciousness, aware only of awareness. That, they say should be a continuing thing. It should be the very flow of your life. The Zen of normal life. The Zen of being. Pure You, in the most natural pristine state, at all times, in all situations. That also requires a certain unification of attention though not as strenuous as classical Zen which is a science, a technique. Here it is an art. The natural flow of consciousness and total attention is an art mastered by continuous practice. It does not come in a day.

As I told you I am not going into the various specific techniques. There are a hundred techniques. TM had its day and then it was converted into the Science of Creative Intelligence. That will have its day because America always wants something new, something modern. It tires of the same thing which goes out of fashion, like changing cars every year. So, after some time, the Science of Creative Intelligence also will give place to a third thing. But I have given you the broad methods of meditation within the classical religious frame.

Within this frame of classical religion, meditation always means an attempt to meditate upon God, upon the ultimate Reality. But this technique can be used for various things. If you want to get rid of a very bad temper, you can meditate on peace, on Lord Jesus, on Buddha, on Mahatma Gandhi, all of whom were devoid of anger. You can meditate upon the disadvantages of anger, and meditate upon one of these glorious beings who were the very embodiment of angerlessness, passionlessness. Then meditate upon yourself as already in possession of this anger less state, fully and completely free of anger and full of joy. Meditate upon yourself as already in the state of perfection.

This is also a method of meditation that can be used in order to overcome a specific negative quality, and to grow into a spiritual quality. It can be used to overcome fear, as we are always full of fear. Meditate upon fearlessness, the advantages of being fearless, the disadvantages of being timid and full of fear. Then meditate upon some fearless being, like Joan of Arc, or any other fearless person. Meditate upon yourself as already possessed of absolute courage. In this way meditative techniques can be used at different levels. If you want to master a subject, you can meditate upon that subject.

What I have given you is the classical spiritual meditation, which is the inner content of practical religion of all the major religions of the

world. I have given you three broad methods: (1) personal dualistic meditation; (2) impersonal non-dualistic meditation; and (3) the absolute monistic meditation of identifying yourself with the Absolute. And I have told you the important factors that are directly connected to successful meditation. Upon the basis of these ideas, which you have received today, you must further build up very clear ideas about meditation.

There must be a hundred different types of meditation, but that does not mean anything to your toil. You must know what is the suitable thing for you, adopt it, and stick to it. There are various things which do not necessarily have relevance to you. There are many people, so different meditation techniques are necessary. Textbooks are necessary because there are Buddhists following Buddhism, Christians following Christian meditation. There are books describing the meditations of St. Ignatius of Loyola, meditations upon the passion of Christ, the stages of the Cross. This is necessary because there are devout Catholics who want to meditate.

TM also is necessary because there are people who do not want self-realization or God realization or spiritual illumination, but they do want to get rid of tension, they want to sleep well, to have a calm mind and to calm their emotions. They want inner poise and freedom from tension, so they need no tranquilizers or sleeping pills. Also they want to develop memory; more attention and

powers of concentration. If you are a lawyer, a student, or a businessman all these things are going to pay rich dividends. That is all right. They go to TM and they get what they want. Maybe they get a lot more inner relaxation and freedom from tension and pressure, so that also is necessary. They all have their place and answer certain specific needs.

But as a seeker, you must decide for yourself what you are seeking. What is the ultimate experience that you wish to attain? What type of meditation is meant for you? Then you must adopt that and go along with it. 'Concentration and Meditation' by the Master contains invaluable disciplined technique in order to help you bring about concentration of the mind and to banish distraction.

OM

