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PREKSHA DHYANA : CONTEMPLATION AND AUTO-SUGGESTION

ĀCHĀRYA MAHĀPRAJÑA

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PREKSHA DHYANA :

Contemplation and Auto-suggestion

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Introduction

The objective of meditation is not to acquire physical goodness alone. but to acquire total psychical goodness by eradicating all evil from one's thoughts, speech and action. It is a "process of remedying inner incompleteness and reducing inner discord" as aptly stated by William James.

To achieve this objective, the system of *Prekṣā Dhyāna* bifurcates into (a) Concentration of Perception and (b) Concentration of Thought i.e. *Prekṣā* and *anuprekṣā*. In the former technique of meditation, preception and awareness are primarily used for concentration; thinking is considered a distraction and is banished as far as possible. In the latter technique, the conscious mind is encouraged to engage itself in a 'thinking process' i.e. contemplation. Perception and contemplation both awaken and develop practitioner's conscious reasoning and thereby modify one's attitude and behaviour. Contemplation is, sometimes, defined as 'religious' meditation which is non-discursive (i.e. intuitive) and mostly mystical. But in *Prekṣā Dhyāna*, contemplation is both discursive as well as intuitive. It means, research and deliberate reflection for Truth and Reality. Just as impartial (without like or dislike), objective and concentrated perception is meditation, a totally impartial and objective contemplation bereft of subjective prejudices and emotions is also meditation. Contemplation, therefore, is search for truth by a single-point mental faculty engaged in reflecting upon the reality, eliminating all that is mere appearance or illusion. It consists in concentrating on the entire mental faculty in searching Truth and nothing else.

The process of contemplation banishes all memories, eliminates all ideas and conceptions except one. Full concentration

on a single mental conception becomes contemplative meditation and this is an efficient process of ascertaining the reality. It, therefore, becomes a powerful tool for realising the Truth. Whenever one concentrates on a theme or a object and takes a purely objective view, that banishes all subjective considerations, acuity of his cognition increases manifold. One, then, realises the true meaning of the theme or the true nature of the object. Ancient philosophers and seers used this tools extensively for realising the Truth. Modern science also uses this process to ascertain the ultimate structure of the material universe.

In practice of contemplation the exercise is two-fold: (a) exercise of concentration, contemplation and reflection on a single theme and (b) exercise using auto-suggestion to effect attitudinal change. Contemplation of eternal truth such as "*transitoriness*" comprise the first irrational fear by auto-suggestion is an example of the second type. Relaxation and the steadiness of body are essential pre-conditions in both types of exercise.

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1

Philosophical Version

Self-study (*Svādhyāya*) is an important tool for developing one's intelligence as well as character. It is five-fold, viz. (i) study (by reading), (ii) inquiry (by asking questions) (iii) revision (by regular recitation). (iv) contemplation and (v) dissertation. Recitation of a syllable as well as concentrated reflection are also branches of self-study.

In *Prekṣā* system of meditation, the technique which is more often used is concentration of perception and not that of thought. Concentration of thought, i.e. contemplation however, is not excluded as a technique of meditation from this system. It fact, it is considered as an important means of realising the Truth. Thoughts are not always looked upon as hindrance or interference. They are, no doubt, unproductive when the mind keeps on wandering and does not concentrate. Concentrated profound thinking can result in discovering and establishing important philosophical as well as scientific doctrines and principles. Process of canalised deep thinking has always been a powerful means of discovering various facets of Reality. In Jaina literature. it is called *Vichaya Dhyāna* i.e. thought-oriented or conceptual meditation. With a wandering mind, thoughts are scattered: when the mental faculty is concentrated and canalised in a single thought-process, it becomes meditation. Thus concentration of perception and concentration of thought-both qualify as valuable techniques of meditation. Whenever the former techniques of meditation, thought is, undoubtedly, considered a distraction and is banished. But when thoughts are canalised and concentrated on a single theme, they comprise an exercise in meditation.

In *Prekṣā* system, there is scope for both types of meditational practice. The word *Prekṣā* means profound perception (sans conception.) Here, the practitioner's full attention is engaged in perception of an object or phenomenon. For instance, perception of body[1] is an exercise of becoming mentally aware of the functioning of one's own body. In this exercise, the practitioner concentrates his full attention, inturn, on various parts and organs of the body, and becomes aware of their functioning. Starting from the outermost layers (of consciousness), he has to mentally penetrate inside. First, he perceives the superficial sensations of the skin such as contact with cloth, warmth, perspiration, itching etc. Then he becomes aware of the sensations produced by the muscular system. Next, he experiences the awareness of the functioning of inner organs- he 'hears' the heart-beats, perceives the contraction and expansion of the lungs, peristalsis of the gastro-intestinal tract, coursing of the blood in the blood vessels and exchange of nutrients and waste-products. With practice, as his mind becomes sharpened, he becomes aware of the subtle vibrations caused by the chemical reactance of the metabolic processes as well as the electro-magnetic impulses criss-crossing the nervous system. Finally, he is able to perceive the flow of vital energy which activates the entire organism. There is incessant motion producing agitation, sensation and vibrations everywhere and nothing is static. The practitioner just perceives them all without indulging in emotion and thought. Undoubtedly, he must develop his perceptual ability and intensify his concentration on the organ under observation. But the process is mostly without conceptual activity of the mind. Thus *Prekṣā* is concentration of perception.

The other branch of *prekṣā* system is *Amuprekṣā* i.e. Contemplation-objective reflection of what has been perceived during the exercise of *Prekṣā*. For instance,it has been revealed that there is incessant agitation within the body-food- materials are being broken-down into their simpler constituents and then resynthesized; waste products are constantly being excreted, millions

1. See, tract No. 5 in this series.

of molecules of oxygen enter the body and those of carbon dioxide are expelled. Having perceived these continuous processes of fissions and fusion,one contemplates and reflects that this organism is surely not eternal. He reasons with himself- " This body which I consider to be 'myself' is in fact the product of the processes of metabolism-catabolism and anabolism. It can never be permanent or eternal and therefore cannot be my true SELF." Thus one realises the truth that the body is perishable and ultimately experiences the separateness of his eternal conscious SELF and the perishable material shed that is body. In other words, the basic vulnerability of the material body is realised by exercise of contemplation which has followed that of perception. This is an instance of discursive meditation where the result of direct perception leads one to the actual experiencing of an eternal truth viz, the perishablel material body is separate from one's eternal conscious self. Hence, *prekṣā* and *Anuprekṣā*-perception and contemplation- are concomitant. One cannot continue perception alone for ever nor can one continue to contemplate for ever. Contemplation precedes as well as succeeds perception. Perceive first and then reflect on the findings of the perceptual exercise. The objective of *Prekṣā Dhyāna* is to realise the Truth by utilising both mental functions-perception and conception.

In *Prekṣā* system, contemplative meditation is practiced to eliminate false traditions, myths, legends and superstitions. With the prefix *'Anu'*, *Prekṣā* means - perceive only what is really true. That means-perceive without the prejudice of preconceived opinion, false tradition or mythical and fictitious ideas: perceive the reality as it is. A practitioner of Anu prekā transcends the dogma of supersitious traditions and acquires eternal wisdom.

Some examples of contemplation:

1. Transitoriness;—One's deep attachment to one's body is a delusion. It is an eternal truth that man is mortal. One has to die and leave the dead body behind. The nature of the body is, therefore, perishable,impermanent and transient. Even during one's life-span, the body is vulnerable to the degenerative processes and passes through various stages. The transitory nature of

the body, irrefutable, proves that it can never be one's true SELF (which is eternal). Although apparently possessed by 'ME', it is only a material shell and not the self.

Similarly, the transitory nature of other material possessions can be contemplated and one's delusive attachment to them is terminated or at least reduced.

2. Helplessness:—The eternal truth is that when one dies he leaves behind not only one's body but also one's family, estate and all other material possessions. Noting can save one from the jaws of death, be one a sovereign, a minister or a rich tycoon. One has to seek refuge in divine help.

3. Mundaneness:—The eternal truth is that one's mundane existence is utterly miserable. One is born,dies and is reborn: sometimes as a human being but more often as a sub-human organism. The worldly existence is, thus, a vicious circle of birth, death and rebirth. During one's life-time there is more misery and suffering than pleasure or peace. One has only to contemplate calmly on this eternal wisdom to realise the miserable nature of one's mundane existence.

4. Sultriness:—The truth is that one's existence is utterly solitary. One enters the world alone and leaves it alone. It is one's delusive attachment that makes one feel otherwise. One is really solitary in health and solitary in sickness. By contemplation of this reality, one realises that one is alone, single and separate from all others, one's instincts and impulses, emotions and passions are essentially subjective.

5. Separateness:—In reality, one is separate from everything and everybody. One's own material body is but a transitory association and not one's real self. Hence anything material is also transitorily associated. Pleasure and pain, health and sickness, emotions and passions are separate from one's self. Carnal desires and sensual pleasures are also separate in reality.

6. Uncleanliness:—(of one's body). In reality, one's body is a dirty, filthy and unclean organism. It needs continuous cleaning

as it constantly excretes filthy waste products of metabolism. Perspiration, urine and excreta all give out obnoxious smell and one has to use nicely-scented consmetics to hide the adore. The best dinner instantly becomes foulsmelling if vomit is thrown up even within few minutes after its indigestion. Such contemplation makes one to realise the eternal truth and frees one from the delusive attachment.

Auto-Suggestion (*Bhāvanā*)

One uses a ferry-boat to cross the river and reach the other side. Similarly, one can ride the ferry-boat of auto-suggestion (Bhāvanā) to cross the river of mundane existence and reach the opposite bank, however distant it may appear to be.

Ehāvanā means frequent and prolonged repetition of an idea. Just as the efficacy of a herbal medicine can be raised manifold by applying repeated thin layers[1] of a precious mineral, repetition of an idea can bring about a radical attitudinal reform and bring one nearer to his goal.

Maharshi Patanjali, in his Aṣṭaṅga (eightfold) yoga, has prescribed three stages of meditational practice viz. *Dhāranā single-point thinking), Dhyāna* (meditation) and Samādhi (euphoric meditation). *Prekṣā* system of meditation also prescribes three phases viz. *Bhāvanā, Dhyāna* and *Samādhi.* There is no basic difference between, *dhyāna* and *bhavand. Dhāranā* means a fully controlled mental lexercise concentration one single object or idea. When such an exercise is prolonged and profound, it becomes meditation and when it takes the form of a euphoric trance, it is called *Samādhi.* Thus the same process is prescribed as a threetiered exercise, *Bhāvanā* means conceptual concentration i.e. when one a single object or idea, it becomes *bhāvanā.* Thus *bhāvanā* may be defined as intense concentration of mind on a single object or idea.

The mental faculty or function which is directed to conscious and intentional action is called will. If one applies one's will- power with a resolute determination that some thing shall

be done or shall happen, it will happen. Full concentration of mental faculty coupled with intense willing results in the fulfillment of the desired objective. In other words, repeated willing by auto suggestion by a practitioner of *anuprekṣhā* enables him to achieve a desired objective. If his objective is to effect an attitudinal change (e.g. from negative to positive), he does bring about the change. Whether one's goal is spiritual or hot, the exercise of autosuggestion positively accomplished the desired transformation.

Suggestion can also be transmitted to others i.e. another person could be profoundly influenced by a practitioner's suggestion. By using the technique of hypnogenesis one can alleviate (other's) suffering, cure diseases, bring about a mental or an emotional change. Thus *bhāvanā* is a multiform therapy-it can take the form of auto suggestion of self hypnosis and effect one's own transformation or it can be projected and bring about a desired change in a person or in the environment. It can take various other forms.

Practice of *bhāvanā* has significant application in the ethical field. As stated earlier, one can achive permanent attitudinal change by this practice. Negative attitudes such as jealousy or pessimism can be replaced by positive ones: hastily instincts such as cruelty, retaliation, deceit,fear, lust etc. can be eradicated and human virtues such as compassion,forbearance, honesty, freedom from irrational fear, comtinence etc. can be developed.

Two conditions are essential for the success of the exercise. viz(i) totally relaxed and motionless body-posture with canalised mental concentration and (ii) intense willing in the form of steady repetition of the desired aim. Repeated auto-suggestion reinforces the will-power and brings about desired result.

2

Scientific Basis of Contemplation

Science Christian Society is an institution in America having thousands of members. One of the rules, voluntarily observed by all members, prohibits them from taking medicinal cures. Whether one suffers from a minor cold or fever, from T.B. or heart- attack, from fracture of a bone or skin-disease whaterver the malady, the sick member neither consults a doctor nor resorts to traditional curative measures. Then, how do they cure themselves? Their answer to this question is "God is merciful; His infinite mercy is our remedy and cure. We have unshakable faith in His mercy and no other remedy is necessary." This is a classical instance of faith-healing. When one develops such unflinching faith, one does not need material remedies.

In the above, the word 'God' stands for "one's own spiritual power". It is the power of one's spiritual self which gives one a sense of wisdom and authority to control the operations of the physical self i.e. the body and the spititual self can exercise its power to cure the sickness. What is needed is to contact the spiritual self via the sub-conscious mind. One, who can do so, does not care for the external treatment for his malady.

In ancient times, both man and animal had the instinct to guide them to whatever they needed to keep them healthy. But man, with the progress of civilization, gradually lost the instinct Somebody, however, in the community did retain enough ability to consult his animal instincts and usually was accepted as the 'healer'. Apart from nature healing – diet. medicinal herbs, bone-setting, minor surgery stc., he also used faith-healing, in which,

he made the patient to relax and gave suggestions. In all cultures for centuries, faith-healing followed a pattern, but later on faith-healing tended to be left to sorcerers and quacks.

With further progress of civilization, belief in the effectiveness of faith-healing began to dwindle and vanish except among the very credulous and very poor.

Franz Mesmer provides the link between the ancient healing techniques with faith-healing in its various manifestations today.

The simplest from of faith healing, however, dispensed with techniques, apparatuses and even with healers, and let the healing force come through the individual's own internal powers.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of Psychoanalysis, and later still Jung found that a patient could fall straight into a hypnotic sleep without any action on his part. This implies the process of auto-suggestion which was made the basis of later clinics where cures depended entirely on suggestion administered by the patient himself.

Healing and Suggestion

Faith-healing, in fact, is nothing else but applied suggestion. In 1953, Professor H.J. Eysenck described a scientific experiment in which a group of children with warts—virus induced tumours—was treated by suggestion; while another, the controulled group, was given the then orthodox medicaltreatment which was shown to be far less effective. It must be remembered that the warts are organic.

That suggestion given to patients under deep relaxation can produce striking and significant alterations in their bodily behaviour is proved by ample evidence.[1]

In other words, it is possible to use suggestion to effect a wide range of orgainc changes for treatment of the sick.

1. Dr. Stephen Black, Mind and Body, Kimber, London, 1969.

Nor is it essential to employ hypnosis. What is important in promoting health, is not suggestion coming from other but auto- suggestion. In other words, the healing power lies wholly within the patient's own orgainsm. The healer or the hypnotist is merely an agent helping to stimulate it. This hypothesis has received ample confirmation from countless experiments. Auto-suggestion is a simple explanation of the centuries old faith-healing. The trouble is, that it is too simple. It does not exhibit any apparently miraculous element.

Anuprekṣā---Contemplation---is an important exercise in the system of *prekṣā*. In this, auto-suggestion plays a very significant role.

By use of auto-suggestion and intense willing, the practitioner can modify his psychological distortions, change his attitude and behavioural patterns and generally develop his personality.

Faith-healing is a System of Psycho-therapy

In the western countries, a system of therapy called autogenic therapy is recently developing. In this system, the patient himself reaches his subconscious mind and effects the cure by developing the inherent immunological forces. First he visualises the desired state of health, sustains the visualisation, repeatedly recites the desired change and finally experiences it.

3

Raison D'etre of Contemplation

Knowledge Replaces Ignorance

The essence of contemplative meditation is, first, to get rid of one's traditional beliefs and then perceive and experience the principles of eternal truth. The raison d'etre of contemplation (*anuprekṣā*) in the system of *Prekṣā Dhyāna* is to abolish the myths, legends and superstitious beliefs and to realise and accept what is really true. Thus the main objective of contemplative meditation is to replace ignorance and superstition by knowledge and wisdom. It is a process of realising the truth and adhering to it.

Without practising contemplation it would be very difficult to grasp the essence of meditation i.e. it would not be easy or effortless to practise meditation. Contemplation is a ladder which facilitates ascending to higher levels of consciousness. Without mounting this ladder, one is unlikely to ascend the heights of perceptual meditation. Thus both are concomitant. contemplation (*anuprekṣā*) both precedes and succeeds concentration of perception (*prekṣā*) *Prekṣā* and *anuprekṣā* are but two states of the same consciousness. When fluid water solidifies, it becomes ice; basically both are same as there is no substantial difference. Ice has its use and value but water has also its own importance by becoming fluid, it does not lose its importance. Similarly *anuprekṣā* is fulid state of the consciousness. It flows in a regulated canalisad way. When the fulid solidifies i.e. concentrates on a single point, it becomes *dhyāna*. Before it attains a solid state

and steadiness, and remains revolving around the central thems, it is contemplation (*anuprekṣā*).

It is essential to obtain right answers to many questions. To contemplate on a single query (at one time) is a process for finding a suitable and true answer and is called *Vichaya Dhyāna* (contemplative meditation). To dispel ignorance by acquiring knowledge, to know the unknown and to realise the truth, one must think and concentrate one's thoughtprocess on a single object or idea. when the flow of ocnsciousness is controlled and becomes unidirectional (just as flow of water is canalised), proper answers are discovered and ignorance is replaced by knowledge Until one becomes competent and adept for meditating, contemplation and reflection are the only tools to search the reality. Similarly a practitioner of meditation is often faced with many problems. If one is not able to resort to contemplation, he may become confused. Some prescribe that for a practitioner of meditation, reading, thinking, contemplating and reflecting become distractions and should, therefore, be abandoned. One cannot disagree with this formula but total freedom from thought is not an early achievement.

Contemplation is an Armour

Motionless state of the body and steadiness of mind are threats to karma sarira which is the real enemy. To perpetuate its existence, the karma śarīra assumes a very aggressive stance and tries to agitate the practitioner. He would need, at this time, the defending support of contemplation to reinforce his resources Whereas, the meditational practice increases the vital energy on one hand, it also intensifies the urges of anger etc. on the other. Enhanced vital energy tends to produce agitation and excitation if it is not properly controlled or sublimated. On the contrary, it it is regulated and controlled, it enhances the other benefits of meditation manifold. Otherwise the increased energy may take a dangerously explosive state.

The principle of contemplative meditation shows the way to the practitioner to sublimate the increased energy. There are

various facets of eternal truth to choose from. An experienced practitioner would know which facet he should contemplate upon. Thus the practitioner would be able to maintain his equanimity and balance even under the most aggressive state of the enemy by practising contemplation.

Dual Status of Relationships

The coctrine of *aṅuprekṣā* (contemplation of transceendental or eternal truths) is a powerful inspiration for making one's life happy and free from turmoil. There are twelve themes for contemplation (see Appendix). They constitute a potent armoury of weapons for demolishing stupor and delusion. One, who does not practise contemplative meditation cannot free himsel from the vicious effects of stupor and delusion. His ability for decision-making is faulty and he never realizes the realities of life. One of the twelve themes for contemplation is "Solitariness".

Man must live a social live. One cannot just abandon one's social status and declare "I am alone; I am solitary". One has one's parents, family, kith and kin, community, nationality, property etc.—a long chain of relationships. Everybody is enmeshed in an indestructible web of associations—bound up so tightly that it is not possible to experience solitariness even when one is physically alone. This, indeed, is an empirical reality and none can deny it. But this is not the ultimate truth, the transcendental reality. And it would be unwise to ignore this fact. Keeping the social status in the foreground, one must also imcorporate the transcendental reality in his way of life. One, who accepts only the apparent and ignores the ultimate reality, would be in trouble at one time or another. To avoid trouble one must accept the duality of his status.

Wisdom teaches us to accept a dual way of life. The social life is necessary because without it one cannot obtain the necessitites of living and would not survive. Without a family, when there is none to cook, wash, do the shopping,nurse in sickness or provide a myriad other comforts of life, it would not be worth living. The family and social life is thus essential to live comfor-

tably. At the same time if we totally ignore the other side of the coin – the transcendental reality – this very family and society may create a hundred aches and pains to make one's life miserable. While living comfortably with family and friends, one would be wise to keep the ultimate reality at the back of one's mind. Let the family be in the fore but allow the reality to make up the back-drop. When both are concomitant, passage of life would be happy and free from strife. It is, indeed, essential to be sorrounded by one's kith and kin, friends and society. But, if one accepts their association to be ultimate reality and further believes this to be the only security and guarantee, one is most likely to feel betrayed at some time or another. On the other hand, if one is constantly reminded of the fact that the family etc. are for convenience and expedience, while in reality he is 'alone', and occasionally contemplates on his "Solitariness", one will never feel betrayed. The faet is that one betrays himself and there is no other betrayer. This is because he betrays himself and there is no other betrayer. this is because one nourishes the falsehood while ignoring the truth – the truth being sacrificed in the interest of comfort. If one would have realised that grouping of persons in the form of family or society is merely a transient association and not an ultimate reality, if one would keep himself reminded of the truth the whole 'association' and 'relationship' are facts of life in a social background, dissociation and solitariness are also stark realities, the problems would not be confounded and the Raison D'etre of the practice of contemplation is to understand this complicated, diametrically opposite, dual realities of life. Through the exercise of contemplation of solitariness, one comes face to face with the real situation and really experiences—"I am solitary".

Doubts may be raised that if one is constantly reminded of his soliary status, would it not, one day, result in his withdrawal from the society? Would he not neglect duties and responsibilities as a husband, or a father or a patriot? Would he not tend to become unsocial? Such doubts are quite reasonable and are likely to disturb one's mind. This complex situation must be considered from all angles. From the social angle, it is quite necessary for

one to consider himself (or herself) as a husband (or a wife), father (or a mother) and a patriot citizen and to discharge one's duties faithfully and sincerely. He (or she) should feel bound by umpteen relations as a member of the society. Simultaneously he (orshe) should also feel his (or her) solitariness as an individual on transcendental plane. While one is bound to live a soical life, one should not delude onesel that this is the only real life. One must destroy the delusion before the bonds of relationship become indestructible shackles of steel; then it will be very difficult to realise the truth.

As regards the doubts expressed above, it can be emphatically declared that no practitioner of *prekṣā* meditation has ever shirked responsibilities of family or social life or ever broken the code of good conduct or disrupted or repudiated social obligations. Practice of contemplative meditation in general and that of 'Solitariness' in particular enables one to effect equilibrium between his mundane social status and transcendental solitary status.

Thus the doctrine of contemplative meditation is not a theoretical principle but has a practical application as well. Regular practice of contemplation enables the practitioner to reach his unconscious mind and establishes the truth and reality therein. that is the Raison D'etre of contemplation. The practitioner must have full faith in the exercise and practice. One who practises systematically is bound to have experience and whatever is realised through a real. experience is stable and perpetually useful. apparently impossible becomes possible as a result of constant practice.

4

Technique of Contemplation

Two Types of Exercises

Practice of contemplation is an important exercise in the system of *prekṣā dhyāna*. As stated earlier, the practice of contemplation falls into two categories:

1. To contemplate and reflect on what is eternal, true and real. As the thought-process concentrates on a single facet of Reality, contemplation becomes a real experience and the practitioner is face to face with Reality.

2. To effect attitudinal change by the process of autosuggestion and repeated recitation. This exercise is a practical application of Will-power which has been developed and reinforced by prior practice of perceptual meditation. In this exercise counter- vibrations capable of countermanding the effects of activators of negative attitude are generated.

in both categories of exercise, the practitioner eliminates muscular tension, maintains the motionless posture of the body, breathes slowly and rhythmically and inhibits all agitation and excitation.

As stated earlier, contemplation is concentration of thought-process. Perception and awarencess were primarily used for other meditational techniques such as 'Perception of Breathing'. Thinking was considered a distraction and was banished as far as possible. In this exercise the conscious mind is encouraged to engage itself in a thinking process When thoughts are canalised and unidirectional, the exercise becomes meditation.

In the first category of exercises, the practitioner contemplates on an eternal or transcendental truth. For instance, in the exercise of "Contemplation of Transitoriness", he contemplates, "Everything is associated with everything else by a transient relationship and hence the association must come to an end". On the basis of this basic principle, the practitioner starts the exercise by contemplating and reflecting on the obvious seprateness of two associated gross objects e.g. seperateness of clothes and body. As the exercise proceeds, he contemplates on the sperateness of subtle and still more subtle objects, (which is not quite obvious) e.g. seperateness of urges and emotions from the conscious substance, and further reflects on their dissociation. As the contemplation concentrates, the practitioner will realise the truth on the level of real experience.

In the second category of exercises, the practitioner resorts to the technique of auto-suggestion to cure physical sickness, mental unbalance and phychological distortions. He, not only attains physical health and mental equilibrium but also develops a strong reasoning mind and rationlizes his judgements by conscious reasoning. In other words, he acquires not only physical goodness but also psychical goodness by eradicating all evils from his thought, speech and action. He acquires the capability to transmute habitual negative attitude and psychological distortions and develops positive attitudes and internal harmony. For instance, by contemplation of fearlessness, the practitioner eradicates irrational fear. In this category of exercises, concentration of mental equipment is coupled with auto-suggestion.

The practitioner must first select and determine his objective that is he must identify and pin-point the specific evil distortion to be eradicated to acquire the corresponding virtue. His aim is attained by becoming what he wills to become and his tool is the technique of auto-suggestion. It must be remembered that until the selected objective does not reach the internal sub-conscious level, his willing will not be successful. One must learn to subdue one's conscious mind and activate the sub- conscious one. The desired image is to be projected upon the subconscious from the conscious level.

Next, the objective is to be repeated in the form of a short sentence or syllable. Repeated recitation, first with a loud volice and then mentally, is to be continued for 5 to 10 minutes daily in very exercise. The continuity should not be broken. Response is likely to vary from person to person; some may achieve full success in a short time while others may take a longer time to do so; but success is always there. Thus, the process of auto-suggestion is very important in the development of physical, mental and spiritual goodness.

TECHNIQUE OF CONTEMPLATIVE MEDITATION

Preparation for Meditation

1. Posture:

For a successful practice of meditation, steadiness of the body is essential. Posture, therefore, is an important feature of the exercise. The practitioner must remain motionless, quiet, and alert for the full duration of the exercise. Obviously, therefore, a posture which produces any kind of distracting discomfort is ruled out. Strain or discomfort must be avoided during the session.

An advance practitioner may adopt a standing posture. In exceptional condition a recumbent posture may also be used. But a sitting posture is most convenient for learners and novices, and is most commonly adopted. Any of the following postures may be chosen –

Full lotus posture (*Padmāsana*)

Half lotus posture (*Ardha-padmāsana*)

Simple posture (*Sukhāsana*)

Diamond posture (*Vajrāsana*)

Although the full lotus posture is the best, *sadhaka* may adopt any one of these which can be comfortably maintained for the duration of the session. Some discomfort is inevitable, in the beginning, in any cross-legged posture, but a little practice would eliminate it to the extent that it ceases to be a distraction.

However, if at any time during the practice, there is a feeling of distracting discomfort, the position of the legs may be quietly changed without opeing the eyes. In all postures, the trunk and nead are erect with the spine and neck in a straight line. There should, however, be no stiffness. Eyes remain softly clsed.

2. Mudra:

The position of practitioner's hands is called mudra. One of the following two mudras may be assumed:

(a) The back of the right hand rest on the right knee and the left hand on the left knee, both palms turned up. The index fingers touch the roots of thumbs, with a slight pressure in the contact. The other fingers are kept straight.

(b) Both arms are bent at the elbows. The back of the left hand rests on the central part of the lap and the back of the right hand on the top of the upturned palm of the left hand.

In a standing posture, stand erect with the spine and neck in a straight line but without stiffness.

Feet are parallel to each other with a distance of about 10 cms. between them.

The arms hang down loosely from the shoulder joints close to the body, with the palms open, facing inwards and fingers straight and pointing down. all skeletal muscles are relaxed.

If a practitioner is unable to adopt either standing or a 'sitting-on-the-floor' posture, he may sit in a chair. An armless chair is to be used. Keep your back and neck in a straight line without the back rest. There should be no stiffness. Feet are kept parallel as in the standing posture. One of the two mudras given above, is to be assumed.

If a recumbent posture becomes absolutely necessary, one may lie down on his back, keeping a distance of about a 25 cms. between two feet, hands about 12 cms away from the trunk, palms turned upwards and eyes softly closed.

PREMEDITATION EXERCISE

Recitation of *Arhaṁ*

Arhaṁ is a Sanskrit syllable (*mantra*). It has unique sound and its loud repetition has many beneficial effects, not only on the physical level but also on psychological and spiritual levels.

Instructions:

Remaining in the posture as described before and with eyes softly closed, exhale fully. Then inhale deeply and quietly for about 4 to 5 seconds. Begin the intonation in a firm and controlled manner:—

Concentrating your attention on the navel, exhale slowly producing the sound 'a' for about 2 seconds. Next produce the sound 'rha' while concentrating on *Ananda Kendra* (near the herart) for about 4 seconds. And lastly taking your mind upwards through the throat to the cranium, press your lips together and produce without interruption, the sound m,m,m,..... resontating it like the buzzing of a bee. This should last for about 6 seconds. You shall experience the vibrations produced by the entire intonation first in the abdomen, them in the chest and finally in the cranium. At the end of the recitation the lungs are fully emptied.

Inhale deeplly again and repeat the performance nine times.

Throughout the performance, visualise that the sound waves weave together to form an impregnable web of armour all around you. This armour will repel the evil effects of malevolent vibrations from outside during the entire meditational session.

Alternate Exercise: Recitation of *Mahāprāṇa Dhvani*

Inhale deeply and silently for about four to five seconds, concentration you attention on the cranium, and pressing your lips together, exhale slowly and without interruption, produce the sound m,m,m,.... resonating it like the buzzing of a bee., This may last for about 8 to 10 seconds. Inhale deeply again and repeat the perfomance nine times.

First Phase of Meditation

Relaxation (*Kyāotsarga*)

This is an essential precondition of meditational practice, resulting in steadiness of the body. The whole body is mentally divided into several convenient parts and full attention is concentrated on each part. By the process of autosuggestion, each part is relaxed and the relaxation experienced. The relaxed and motionless state of the body is maintained throughout the meditation session. Simultaneously, there should be a keen awareness of the spiritual self. This exercise will take 7 to 10 minutes.

Second Phase of Meditation : Internal Trip (*Antaryātrā*)

Full attention is to be concentrated on the bottom of the spine called *śakti kendra*. It is then directed to travel upwards along the spinal cord to the top of the head-*jñāna kendra*. When the top is reached, direct the attention to move downwards taking the same path until it reaches *sakit kendra* again. Repeat the exercise for about 5 to 7 minutes. All the time, the consciousness is confined to the path of the trip (i.e. the spinal cord), and the sentations therein, caused by the subtle vibrations of the flow of the vital energy, are carefully perceived.

Third Phase of Meditation : Contemplation. (*Anuprekṣā*).

Category (I)

Contemplation of Transitoriness

1. Contemplate the transient (soon-to-end) association of yourself with the premises (or room) in which you are now performing this exercise. Reflect on the basic principle that "what is transient is not permanent." First contemplate and then actually experience the ultimate separatness between yourself and the premises (1 to 2 minutes).

2. Contemplate on the transient association of yourself with the cushion (or chair) on which you are now sitting. Reflect on

the basic principle as before. Contemplate and experience the ultimate separateness between yourself and the cushion (or chair) (1 to 2 minutes).

3 to 9. Continue the above process of contemplation, step by step, substituting the following for 'cushion' in step No. 2 above:-

3. Clothes worn by you

4. Your body

5. Your somatic and psychosomatic diseases

6. Your mental problems

7. Your urges and impulses, emotions and passion.

8. Your negative attitudes and bad habits (addiction etc.)

9. Your sutblemost microbody (*karma śarīra*) which is the origin of all emotions etc.

Maintaining the above sequence, contemplate, reflect on and experience the ultimate separateness of your conscious (real) self and each of the above associates.(1 to 2 minutes for each step).

Step Nos, 10 to 18. Now reverse the above sequence and repeat each step (beginning from body up to the premises) 1 to 2 minutes for each step.

19. Nest recite the following slogans three times:

* Body is transitory

* Sickness is transitory (i.e. will be cured)

* Mental problems are transitory (will vanish)

* Emotions and passions are transitory (will be subdued)

Similarly other exercises such as contemplation of solitariness can be performed.

Category (II)

1. Contemplation of Fearlessness.[1]

1. Lie down flat on your back (or continue the sitting posture) and further relax your body. At the end, be aware of total relaxation of the body and alertness of the mind.

2. Regulate your breath and make it slow, deep and rhythmic. Continue for 3 minutes.

3. Concentrate your full attention on the chest region (from neck to heart).

4. Visualise that everything around you including the air, is coloured bright green. Inhale slowly and visualise that long streams of green air enter your lungs with each inhalation.

5. Recite the following sentence nine times:

" The virtue of fearlessness s becoming stronge;
I am Becoming free from fear."

6. Now recite the above mentally for 2 minutes.

7. Visualise that the above words are written on the chest region in bright green colour. Read each word slowly and silently. Repeat and contunue for 5 minutes.

8. Now concentrate your full attention on *anand kendra* (centre of bliss) near your heart and sustain the visualisation of green colour for 5 minutes.

9. Again spread your attention on the entire chest region. Visualise that the word **"ABHAYA" (FEARLESSNESS)** is written on this region in bright green letters. Read it slowly and mentally for 5 minutes.

1. Here the word ' fearlessness' indicates a positive virtue which enables one to face danger, difficulty or even death with equanimity. It implies mental firmness arising from mental convictions. It stressess resolute freedom from fear (irrational or otherwise) and an unshakable determination.

2. Contemplation of Forbearance[1]

Same as above except:

Substitute blue colour for green in steps nos. 1 to 4.

Recite the following sentence nine times in steps no, 5,6,7:" The virtue of forbearance is becoming stronger; I am becoming free from intolerance".

Concentrate attention on *Visudhi kendra* (centre of purity) and visualize blue colour in step no.8.

Recite the word **"ANANTA SHAKTI (INFINITE ENERGY)"** as in step no.9.

3. Contemplation of Modesty.[2]

The technique is the same as above except that the colour is green. Recite " The virtue of modesty is becoming stronger - I am becoming free from arrogance" as in 5,6,7.

Substitute "Darshana kendra (centre of intuition) between the two eyebrows and green colour." in 8.

Recite the word **"SHUDDHA ATMA (PURE CONSCILUSNESS)"** in 9.

1. Here the word forbearance refers to one's ability for a voluntary self control that helps one to endure physical pain, mental anguish or any other unpleasent vicissitudes of life with equanimity. It stresses self-controlled abstinence from impulsive action in face of grave provocation such as opposing or hostile action or views. This attitude may easily be interpreted as a negative one of docileness, but this is excluded here.

2. Here the word modesty is used as an antonym of arrogance of haughtiness. It does not imply meekness or shyness but is a positive virtue of being gentle, kind and non-violent (not tough) in one's behaviour.

5

Benefits

Freedom from Suffering

Our body passes through various vicissitudes of time and life. Everyone is sometimes happy and at other times miserable; at times healthy, and sometimes sick; sometimes young and sometimes old. Howerver, there are three chief misseries : sickness, old age and death.

Whenenver one is sick, one suffers the misery of sickness. Normally a state of disease is a painful one for everybody.

Some scientists are engaged in research to eliminate suffering during sickness. Pain-killer drugs are administerd to alleviate pain during sickness. Some derivatives of opium, like morphine, are commonly used as pain-killers and every year, sale- value of such pain-killers amounts to millions of rupees. People buy them for headache, stomach-ache, pain in joints and knees, and continue to consume such drugs hoping to allevitate their suffering.

A varieties of therapies and remedies have been developed for curing the illness and/or getting rid of the suffering. Psychological research claims that in the next ten or twenty years we shall discover a mental exercise and give such training to the sick that it would be possible to live with the illness without suffering even without drugs. It has been well established recently that chemical substances having the same effect as poweful pain-killers, such as morphine, are secreted by certain parts of the brain. [1] One of them is called endorphine (meaning the internal

1. Two regions in the brain known to be involved in pain regulation are : the medial thalamus and the periaqueductal grey matter (PAG)

morphine). A technique of meditation in the System of *Prekṣā Dhyāna* is called "perception of psychic centres."[1] By practising this meditation one can develop the ability to produce such internal chemicals at will and block out the pain.

Another form of phychotherapy has also been established in the system of *Prekṣā Dhyanā* by which a practitioner can remain calm and composed even in the state of serious illness. Moreover, he can experience mental happiness without any drugs.

That one can remain happy even when one is in severe pain, may appear to be anomalous, but it is true.

By practice of *anuprekṣā* (contemplation) a patient can free himself from fear, anxiety and tension. By regular practice of "fearlessness", a practitioner can remain free from fear and anxiety, so that he suffers only a small fraction of the pain. In a state of irrational fear and anxiety, The pain is magnified while in the opposite state, the pain is almost "killed" and there is very little suffering. It is our emotional and mental state that increases or reduces our suffering. An important benefit of contemplation is development of the virtue of fearlessness and thereby free from anxiety and tension.

Attainment of Bliss (*Samādhi*)[2]

One of the most important benefits of the practice of contemplation is the attainment of the state of bliss and blessedness.

1. see "Perception of Psychic Centres" No. VII in this series.

2. The term SAMADHI is used to express (i) a state of intense ecstatic meditation and (ii) a state of intense and extreme happiness. Here the word is used to express the latter. In the English language the following words are used to express states of mental contentment and happiness : Bliss, Blesedness, Beatitude and Felicity. Bliss, in its commonst meaning, refers to continued complete happiness or inner contentment under all external circumstances. Blessedness and Beatitude usually refers to intense spiritual bliss. The former is commonly used while the latter is a more formal literary term. Felicity means sustained happiness, but the word is more formal and is less often used. The words pleasure, joy, delight, etc. also denote a feeling of satisfaction of happiness. But, in this case,the feeling is most likely to be sudden or transient and not sustained.

It is considered to be the greatest achivement of a purposeful life. All other achievements, seem insignificant when one attains this state. One, who is fortunate to obtain various other things (wealth, power etc.) is, sometimes, found to be helpless and miserable. But one who has attained bliss is never, never unhappy or miserable. One attains bliss (*samādhi*) when one is free from physical sickness (*vyādhi*), *mental agony* (*ādhi*) and emotional malaise (*upādhi*). Only when one has overcome the trinity of physical, mental and emotional disorders, one can hope to attain sustained happiness. When one suffers from physical illness (due to malfunction of a vital organ), one is unhappy with pain and misery. If one is afflicted with a mental disorder (such as tension), one becomes agonised and does not have peace for a single moment. Inspite of possessing all the comforts of life, one feels quite unhappy. An emotional malaise is even more terrible than a mental malady. Emotional malaise means psychological distortion.

Cruelty, fanaticism, militarism, retalitation are some of the psychological distortions. When one suffers from one or more of these, one becomes almost inhuman does such acts does not behave a human being. The obstacle of the above evil trinity must be removed before one can attain sustained happiness. Strange as it may appear one is able to choose one's way of life. "Which way shall I adopt? The way of the evil trinity or the way of bliss?" A question may be raised: Does anybody wish to choose the way of the evil trinity? The answer is: one suffers from the trinity of malaise only if one chooses to do so. An internal driving force produces a desire to become sick and ultimately manifests itself in sickness. The process is over-indulgence in food, drink and sex; anger, greed and lust-all these are the precursors of sickness. How can one distingguish between the desire for over-indulgence in sex, etc. and the desire for going on the path of sickness? In reality, both are identical. If one chooses the other way, one never falls sick.

Similarly, one who does not wish to be afflicted with a mental disorder will never suffer from it. This is so because a

mental disorder is effective only if an internal desire drives one to the affliction and not oterwise.The mental state of like and dislike-attachment to some and aversion for others–are driving forces in this case. It is difficult to maintain mental health with strong likes and dislikes. Here also, one cannot distinguish between the desire for mental disorder and the mental tension produced by like and dislike– attachment and aversion. The same logic applies to emotional malaise. The root of all evils is greed and discontentmentand this is the basis of one's desire to choose the evil trinity of one's way of life.

This means that, if one desires to choose the other way of life, he is to overwhelm and subjugate his carnal desires of lust and hate. When one has discarded the path of the evil trinity and adopted the way of bliss, his way of life changes radically. In fact ' bliss', is not a miracle nor is it something reserved for a few chosen people. It is a way of life for anyone and everyone who cares to choose it. One who realises this truth, this science of life, this art of living, can live a life of sustained happiness i.e.bliss.

The doctrine of contemplation is an important part of preksha meditation. Once the principle of contemplation and the technique for its practice is fully undrstood, a powerful tool for changing the way of life is in our hands. The aspirant of bliss, by the practice of contemplation, becomes aware of the obstacles in the process of attaining bliss. His desire for over-indulgence in luxuries, his negative attitude of like and dislike, his psychological distortion, etc. disappear with the subjugation of greed and discontentment. Thus in the absence of factors which were responsible for generating the evil trinity, the state of bliss is attained.

Spiritual Healing

Practice of auto-suggestion will bring about radical attitudinal and behavourial changes. For integrated development of personality, it is necessary to bring about changes in the chemistry of the body, that is the synthesization of various chemical factors

in the body, which have profound influence on the mental stages and behavioural patterns, must be transmuted. These chemical factors are mainly the hormones secreted and distributed by the endocrine system. Exercise of auto-suggestion influences the functioning of hypothalamus and pituitary which, in turn, produces a strong state of faith and belief: and a strong sense of faith can help a person cope with the various crises that in life countless number of people with sincere religious beliefs and faith become free from serous, incurable diseases by just touching the feet of saints and *mahātmās* (or putting the dust of their feet on the head). Does the miracles lie in the dust? No. It is the miracle of faith and religious belief. Thousands find inner calm and peace of mind through faith.

Prayer and worship produce profound joy and contentment. Nor is it essential to have a specific religious belief. One must merely develop faith in one's own consciousness and psychic self to help one to cope with a crisis, by developing underlying mental strength. Exercise of auto-suggestion (*bhāvanā*) is based on the practical application of faith and belief. The exercise brings about the necessary changes in the body- chemistry, thereby weakening the forces of disease and ultimately curing it. The process of producing or transmuting the internal chemicals is a form of faith-healing or spiritual healing.

Appendix

VALUE-ORIENTED EXERCISES

Acquisition of some virtues which have high moral and human values is very much desirable for personal as well as social health. Exercise of auto-suggestion is an effective means of transmuting undesirable, unsocial negative attitudes to positive ones. Twenty-two such exercises are given here with instructions for using the technique of auto-suggestion which enables one to acquire the virtues.

List of Desirable Virtues

(A)

1. Loyalty (to duty)
2. Self-reliance
3. Faith in Truth
4. Reconciliation
5. Freedom from Fanaticism
6. Human Equality
7. Co-existence
8. Discernment

(B)

9. Balance of Mind
10. Patience
11. Honesty
12. Compassion
13. Non-attachment
14. Forbearance
15. Gentleness
16. Forbearance
17. Self-discipline
18. Universal Amity
19. Straightforwardness
20. Freedom from Lust
21. Patriotism
22. Strength

Instructions for Exercises in Group A

1. Sit in a comfortable posture with spine and neck in a straight line, eyes softly closed.

2. Recite Mahaprana Dhvani for two minutes.

3. Regulate your breath making it slow, deep and rhythmic. Continue for 5 minutes.

4. Attain relaxation (kayotsarga) acquiring motionless state of the body.

5. Focus full-attention on a specified psychic centre (as per tabel) and recite specified sentences (as per table) first loudly for 4 munutes, then softly for 4 minutes and finally mentally for 4 minutes. Contemplate on the values of the virtue desired to be acquired.

Table for Exercises in Group A

	Name of Virtue to be acquired	*Psychic Centre*	*Sentence to be recited*
1.	Loyalty (to one's duty)	Centre of Peace (frontal lobe)	(a) I will be keenly aware of my duties. (b) I wil try my best to control factors like anger, greed and fear which may detract me from my duties.
2.	Self-reliance	--do--	(a) I will remain self-reliant. (b) I will rely upon my ability to fulfil my necessities.

3.	Faith in Truth	--do--	(a) I will keep full faith in Truth. (b) I Shall not tell lies and keep myself free from prejudices.
4.	Reconciliation	Centre of Intuition	(a) I will try to find reconciliation in apparently conflicting views or events (statements, quilities, actions). (b) I will develop broad-mindedness.
5.	Freedom from Fanaticism	Centre of Bliss	(a) I will remain free from sectarian fanaticism. (b) I will develop tolerance for divergent creeds & sects.
6.	Human Equality	Centre of Purity	(a) I will have full faith in l (basic) human equality. (b) I will not designate anybody as high or low on the basis of caste, colour or creed.
7.	Co-existence	Centre of Bliss	(a) I will try to maintain peaceful co-existence. (b) I will not support destructive or aggressive activities.
8.	Discernment	Centre of Bliss	My body and my soul are separate entities.

Instructions for Exercises in Group B

1. Same as in A-1.

2. Same as in A-2.

3. Same as in A-3.

4. Visualize that you are surrounded by a specified (as per table) bright colour and with each inhalation you are breathing in air of that colour.

5. Focus your attention on a specified (as per table) psychic centre and maintain sustained visualization of the specified colour.

6. Recite prescribed sentences first loudly, nine times and then mentally nine times

7. Contemplate the moral and human values of the virtue to be acquired by suitable phraseolog.

8. Terminate the exercise with recitation of Mahaprana Dhvani.

Table for Exercises in Group B

	Name of virtue to be acquired	*Psychic centre*	*Psychic colour (to be visualized)*	*Sentences to be recited.*
9.	Balance of Mind	Centre of Intuition	Bright Green as that of Emerald	(a) My urges and impulses have been brought under my conscious control. (b) My mental equilibrium is increasing

10.	Patience	Tip of nose Centre of Vital Energy	Bright Yellow as that of Gold	(a) I shall develop my capacity of endurance. (b) I shall never surrender to unfavourable circumstances.
11.	Honesty	Centre of Enlightenment	Bright White as that of Full Moon	(a) My Will poser is increasing (b) My honesty is being enhanced.
12.	Compassion	Centre of Bliss	Bright Pink as that of Fresh Rose	(a) My sense of compassion is increasing (b) My sense of cruelty is being reduced.
13.	Non-attachment	Centre of Peace	Bright Blue Colour as that of Peacock's Neck	(a) The virtue of non-attachment is being developed. (b) My attachment to material possessions is being reduced.
14.	Forbearance	Centre of Enlightenment	Blue Colour as above	(a) My forbearance is increasing. (b) My mental equilibrium is increasing.
15.	Gentleness	Centre of Peace	Bright Green	(a) My gentlenes is increasing. (b) My arrogance is diminishing.

16.	Fearlessness	Centre of Bliss	Pink	(a) My fearlessness is increasing. (b) My instinct of fear is reducing.
17.	Self discipline	Centre of Peace	Bright Yellow	(a) My ability for self control is increasing. (b) My mental agitation is reducing.
18.	Universal Amity	Forehead	White	(a) All are my frinds. (b) I will be friendly to all.
19.	Straightforwardness	Centre of intuition	Rising Sun Red	(a) My straight-forwardness is increasing. (b) My crookedness is decreasing.
20.	Freedom From Lust	Centre of Celibacy (Tip of tongue)	Bright Blue	(a) My desires are being brought under self-control. (b) Selfishness is reducing.
21.	Patriotism	Centre of Intuition		(a) I will remain aware of my duty to my Nation. (b) I will not do anything which may harm my Nation or lower its prestige.
22.	Strength	Chest region	Rising Sun Red	(a) My strength is increasing. (b) My weakness is reducing.

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