

MEDITATION

THE AIM

The aim of meditation is to bring about a state of rest, peace, tranquillity, and connectedness in the mind of the meditator.

Meditation can counteract the effects of stress, indecision, agitation, restlessness, confusion, anxiety, and many other negative and unproductive states.

When the meditator has achieved some degree of control over the ever-wandering mind and has been able to focus for some time on a single object or thought, then the higher intellect (some people call it intuition) is freed to operate and the meditator experiences a kind of insight into so many things not possible to be known by the activity of the mind alone.

THE METHOD

There are many methods of meditation. The fundamental similarity is that the mind is brought into stillness. That is to say it is given one and only one specific task to do, and in so doing, it cannot keep on wandering into so many irrelevant and unrelated things that create dis-stress and confusion.

Some meditation techniques emphasise focusing on the breath – the meditator simply focuses the attention on the inspiration and the expiration of each breath without trying to change it – just observing it.

Other techniques involve keeping one and only one trend of thought in mind – for example one might contemplate on one's activities that have been performed that day as a kind of "playback" at a fast speed.

Other methods involve keeping an image of a loved one in mind, such as one's (spiritual) teacher, an image of a saintly person, an image of God Himself (if one can have an image of God, some cultures do).

A very common technique is known as mantra meditation in which the meditator mentally repeats a sound or word or phrase over and over. After a while it should seem like the mantra is repeating itself and the meditator is simply "listening" to it. This is also a way to keep the mind in one place, although most teachers will recommend that the "word" one uses should be a name of God.

THE PRACTICE

Meditation is not something you do once just out of curiosity, for some cultures it is a way of life. You do regularly and diligently, just like you have regular meals and regular sleep, why not nourish the spiritual body as well as the physical and mental bodies?

For the regular meditator everything in life becomes spiritual. One can no longer do any harm to any thing or any body. One is in touch with something divine, something higher than just mere physical existence.

A regular meditator less likely to feel sick, agitated, angry, violent, arrogant, etc. A certain kind of wisdom will develop which can help people in all kinds of situations even if one is not an actual expert in those things.

THE ORIGIN

I don't think anyone knows the origins of meditation. It is certainly very old at least in the East.

Some cultures say that only God would be wise enough to give meditation to man. Some others may say that meditation developed from an observation that nature puts us to rest by way of giving us sleep. So that coming to rest after a day of activity cannot be a bad thing.

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