

Chapter 1

Meditation: A Sea of Peace

Why do we meditate? • What can meditation give us? • How do I start?



Meditation helps us to live from moment to moment. Again, in moment to moment the Eternal Now exists. The Eternal cannot be separated from each moment. This is a moment and here Eternity is all around. Eternity comprises the present, the past and the future.

Inside Eternity is the moment; again, inside the moment is Eternity. It is like the ocean. Inside the ocean are countless tiny drops. Again, each tiny drop holds the essence of the vast ocean. We take a drop and immediately we have the consciousness of the vast ocean, because the drop embodies the vast ocean. And so each moment cannot be separated from Eternity and Infinity. Meditation is the only way to feel the oneness of the finite with the Infinite. ¹

There are several questions a seeker should ask himself when he is learning to meditate:

How should I meditate?

Why do I want to meditate?

What kind of meditation do I want?

What do I expect to do when I meditate?

How sincerely have I accepted the spiritual life?

How much time am I prepared to spend?

When we have the highest form of meditation, however, we do not have to ask any questions. The best form of meditation is to transcend the mind. Right now from the mind we are getting good and bad thoughts, but a day will come when we have to enter into the highest Truth. At that time we shall not allow any thought or question to enter into us.

If you feel that you are a beginner, you should control your mind. You should try to be alert, with your eyes open, and focus all your attention on the heart. If your aim is just to have a little peace of mind or a little harmony in your family, the conscious will of your heart is all that is needed for the time being. ²

Why do I meditate?

I meditate precisely because

My meditation proudly carries me

To the shore I seek. ³

Question: When a person meditates, what effect does it have on his mind?

Sri Chinmoy: When someone meditates properly, divinely and unconditionally, he is bound to feel peace of mind and he is bound to feel that he has a very large heart, where he can house the entire world. When someone meditates properly, he feels spontaneous joy. Sometimes he may not know where this joy is coming from, but it actually comes from his own meditation. When a person meditates whole-heartedly, from the depths of

his heart, he feels that every moment is an opportunity to do something great, to feel something divine, to grow into something supreme, something transcendental. ⁴

* * *

Question: How should I do meditation if I have never done it before?

Sri Chinmoy: First try to be calm and quiet at least three times during the day: in the morning, at noon and in the evening. You don't have to actually do any kind of meditation. Just feel that these five minutes belong to you and nobody else. Act like a miser. Feel that you are not going to give these five minutes to anybody, not to your relatives, your friends, your enemies — nobody. These five minutes are absolutely yours. When you are with yourself, this is not self-centred ego. Here "you" means you in your highest form. Your highest form is God, and you are growing into this highest form.

If you have friends who know how to meditate and you meditate with them, even unconsciously, your inner being may receive inspiration from them. If you are a very sincere seeker, then you will get help consciously in the form of inspiration from your friends who are sitting beside you. You will learn things from your spiritual friends. Automatically the power of meditation in you will increase.

You have to know that in your case the power of meditation is not strong enough right now for you to continue meditating for a considerable time, fifteen minutes or a half an hour. But the main thing is not to become discouraged. When you begin taking exercise, you cannot do it for more than five minutes. But if you practise daily, then after a few months you can take exercise for an hour or two. What we need is regular practice at a regular time. If you can meditate early in the morning at a particular hour, then try to continue meditating every day at that hour. At that hour God will knock at your heart's door. Open it and He will offer you His Peace, Light, Bliss and Power.

Regularity is necessary. Although we are regular, we may not give first importance to our meditation. But if we give importance to our meditation and are sincere, whole-hearted and dedicated in our spiritual life, automatically our power of meditation will increase. ⁵

Question: What is the best way to meditate?

Sri Chinmoy: The best way to meditate is to feel that you have come from the Source. This Source is Delight. When you meditate, feel that you have come from that Source and you go back there triumphant and victorious. Here on earth you play your role and then you go back to the Source. The Indian scriptures say:

Anandadd hy eva khalv imani bhutani jayante

Anandena jatani jivanti

Anandam prayantya bhisam visanti

"From Delight we came into existence.

In Delight we grow.

At the end of our journey's close,

Into Delight we shall retire."

This is the ultimate way of meditation. ⁶

¹ Sri Chinmoy, *The mind and the heart in meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

² Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God speaks and I listen*, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

³ poem

⁴ Sri Chinmoy, *The silent mind*, Agni Press, 1977

⁵ Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God speaks and I listen*, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

⁶ Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God speaks and I listen*, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

Chapter 2

Mastering the Essentials

Setting up your meditation practise • Proper posture

Question: I don't seem to feel comfortable and relaxed while meditating in a sitting position.

Sri Chinmoy: Everybody has a room where he can meditate. He may not own a house or apartment but he certainly has a room. In one corner of that room he can have a shrine where he can sit and meditate.

When the body feels uncomfortable it will change its position and it is up to you to keep it comfortable. If there is restlessness though, immediately relaxation goes away. If you constantly move from this side to that side, how can you have relaxation? In order to maintain relaxation one has to keep calmness in the body and avoid restlessness at all costs. ⁷

* * *

Question: Why do you use flowers and burn candles and incense when you meditate?

There are some people who say that it is not necessary to have flowers around us when we meditate. They say, "The flower is inside, the thousand-petalled lotus is inside." But this physical flower reminds us of purity, of divinity. When we look at the flower, we get a little inspiration. If we do not have any inspiration, we will not get up to pray and meditate. We will simply make friends with sleep. But the colour of a flower, its fragrance, its pure consciousness immediately give us a little inspiration. From inspiration we get aspiration, and from aspiration we get realisation.

It is the same with the flame from a candle. This will not in itself give us aspiration; it is the inner flame that will give us aspiration, But when we see the outer flame, then immediately we feel that the flame in our inner being is being kindled and is climbing high, higher, highest. And when we smell the scent of incense, we get perhaps only a little inspiration, a little purification, but this inspiration and purification can be added to our inner treasure. ⁸

Flowers, incense and washing before meditation also help us to have purity. The purity of the body is of paramount importance in the spiritual life. It is in purity that God's breath abides. If physical purity is lacking, then it is simply impossible for the Divine to breathe in you. Purity demands cleanliness in the body. What we call cleanliness in the outer world we call purity in the inner world. So before you start meditation, no matter when you meditate, take a shower or wash your eyes, ears and nose and feet with cold water, and if possible use flowers and incense to create an atmosphere of purity. ⁹

* * *

Question: Can we meditate while lying down? Is this not the best way to relax?

Sri Chinmoy: For meditation you do have to relax. And for a spiritual person who has meditated for many years and knows how to meditate at his command, lying down and meditating for hours is no problem. But for the beginner, or for the person who is not advanced in meditation, lying down will present a problem. This type of meditation is not dynamic or active. His blood circulation will not function properly and a very subtle kind of drowsiness will attack him. But when he is in a sitting position, drowsiness cannot assail him. The very act of lying down takes us into the world of coma. Then what happens is that we feel we are meditating most sincerely and dynamically but we are wrong. I had a cousin who is now twenty-five or twenty-six years old. She used to tell us that every night she would meditate at least ten hours while lying down. My sisters used to enter into her room and find her snoring. They would then pull her hair, nose and so many things. But she would not wake up. The following morning she would say that she meditated the whole night. She did not have conscious meditation. It was an unconscious way of feeling that she was meditating. Meditation is very good; but this kind of meditation while lying down tends to lead towards self-deception about one's own spirituality. It is better to meditate while sitting or even standing. While walking up and down, to and fro, you can also meditate. I used to meditate in a very relaxed way two or three hours or more while walking very fast, like the marching of a soldier. ¹⁰

Question: Are fifteen or twenty minutes enough for meditation, or should I spend an hour?

Sri Chinmoy: It depends on you. If you are able to meditate for more than fifteen minutes, then please do so. But it has to be absolutely sincere and soulful. To sit for an hour just to show that you can meditate for an hour will be a mistake. The soul will not be there. You may meditate for five hours, but the meditation will not give you any joy. It will not be fruitful at all. If a person can meditate for fifteen minutes most soulfully, and after that, if he feels that he has the capacity to continue, then he can continue. But if he doesn't have the capacity and just wants to make himself feel that he can meditate for an hour, it will be a waste of time. ¹¹

To meditate soulfully
For a few minutes
Is infinitely more valuable
Than to sit for hours and hours
With a restless mind. ¹²

Start your meditation with joy

The soul is a divine portion of God and is all joy and cheerfulness. Now, if you start your meditation through discipline and keep your body very tight and straight, as if a monkey who is full of evil thoughts is trying to bite or pinch you, it is wrong. By doing this you become afraid and you only keep yourself tense. What you should do when you meditate is to allow yourself to be relaxed, keeping the spinal cord erect. The best way is to meditate in the lotus position, but if you cannot do this, then just sit on a chair.

God is all Love and Joy. The most effective way to please God and to become one with God is to approach Him through Love. And where there is Love, there is Joy. To go to my Father I do not have to cut off my hands or arms to show how self-disciplined I am. That is no discipline at all. Discipline comes through spontaneous love. When we allow our divine qualities to come to the fore, automatically the soul takes care of our outer life. We

just have to go deep within and from there we shall have to bring out the soul's poise. When the soul's poise come to the fore, automatically the restless outer being becomes calm and quiet. So please try to meditate always with inner joy.¹³

⁷ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

⁸ Sri Chinmoy, A Sri Chinmoy primer, Vishma Press, 1973

⁹ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

¹⁰ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

¹¹ Sri Chinmoy, Earth's cry meets Heaven's smile, part 2, Agni Press, 1974

¹² Sri Chinmoy, Ten Thousand Flower-Flames, part 88, Agni Press, 1983

¹³ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

Chapter 3

The Silent Mind

Quieting, purifying and going beyond the mind

In our inner life and in our meditation, the silent mind is of the greatest necessity. Without this silent mind, progress is difficult. If we bring to the fore the qualities of the heart: love, devotion and surrender, then the doubting mind, the restless mind and the separating mind cannot cause problems. If we bring these qualities to the fore, then naturally there will come a time when we will say, "It is beneath my dignity to draw attention to the mind." But right now the best we can do is to make the mind feel that the only thing that it wants and needs is the heart. In this way we can silence the mind. ¹⁴

When my mind falls silent,
Everything becomes perfect
In my life. ¹⁵

Question: How can I make my mind quiet? It is such an unending source of confusion that it distracts me from my aspiration.

Sri Chinmoy: It is very easy. From now on think that you do not have a mind; it belongs to somebody else. You know that when a little child has money he wants to use it. He does not know whether he is using it for a good purpose or for a bad purpose. If he knows that he has no money, then he keeps quiet; he has nothing to use. Similarly, please feel

that you do not have the mind. Make yourself feel that you have only the heart. As soon as some idea enters into your mind, then feel that your mind has nothing to do with it. When the mind bothers you constantly with fear, doubt and worries, simply say that you don't have the mind. But when you feel a little joy, peace or light inside your heart, immediately feel that you have everything to do with it. By convincing yourself that you don't have a particular thing, automatically you will get rid of it.

You may ask how you can live without the mind. But you can live without the mind. You can live with the heart and the heart will do everything for you. In the spiritual life the most important thing is to unlearn whatever the mind has taught you. The things that are important, the things that are illumining, will always remain inside your heart, although the mind may try to grasp them. If you feel that you don't have a mind, then how are you going to be affected by it? But if you feel that you have a mind and it is torturing you all the time, then it will always torture you.

When you are afraid of something, then that very thing will torture you. If you have something good, identify with it and say that you have it. But if you have something bad, please say that you don't have it. Just by saying this, the life of those undivine forces will automatically go away. This kind of self-assertion is extremely good. To get rid of the mind, simply say that you don't have it. If you don't have it, how are you going to use it? Then the heart will take care of you. ¹⁶

* * *

The thing is not to pay any attention to the mind. Just feel that there are two boys in front of you. One is a mischievous boy. The other is kind, polite and nice in every sense of the term. The bad one will try to disturb you, but don't pay any attention to him. You pay attention to the nice one.

Now in this world there is something called prestige. You may think that only good people have a sense of prestige. If that bad boy bothers you for a long time, and you are not paying any attention to him, then he will say that it is beneath his dignity to bother you. I tell you, it is absolutely true. You are ignoring him, and you should ignore him because he is a very bad boy. He is pinching you all the time like a monkey, but you don't pay any attention. You just let him go on, go on, go on. He will see that all the time you are paying attention to this other boy, the heart, who is very kind, affectionate and loving. If you go on showing all your affection and love to the nice boy, then the other one will stop bothering you.

Afterwards you will see that while you are showing affection, love and concern to the heart and becoming one with the heart, there will always be competition. The mind will say, "By disturbing and bothering this person, I have gained nothing. On the contrary, he is ignoring me like anything." So the mind will immediately try to imitate the heart. First it will say, "I can also become a nice boy. I want to become nicer than he is so that I can get more attention, more affection from this person." In the beginning it will try to imitate. So here imitation is very good. I always say that in order to try something, we have to start by imitating.

After a few months or a few years, the mind will say, "I am imitating the heart, but why have I to imitate it? What is it doing? Let me try to become good in my own way. Let me try to please this person in my own way." But when the mind tries to please you in its own way, it finds this very, very difficult. Then it says, "How is it possible for the heart to please this man? How is it that I can't please him? All right, let me go deep within." When it goes deep within it sees that inside the heart is the soul. The soul is constantly offering light to the heart. That is why the heart is able to please the human being. So the mind will try to enter into the soul.

The mind finds it very difficult to enter into the soul because the soul is like the vast ocean. The mind thinks that if it enters into the ocean, it will be totally lost, like a tiny drop. It will see how much light the heart has, and when it makes a comparison between the heart's light and the soul's light, it sees that the soul has much more light than the heart. At the same time, it will see that the light that the heart has is more than enough to satisfy the person. Now the mind will feel that the light of the heart is within its reach. Just five minutes ago the mind and the heart quarrelled and fought. Even if the heart can get the soul's light, still the mind is ready to fight with the heart; but the mind is not ready to fight with the soul. The mind does not dare to fight with the soul, because it knows how powerful the light of the soul is. So the mind tries to compete with the heart's light, and while competing, it comes very close to the heart in a positive way. At that time the soul, out of its infinite compassion, offers light to the mind through the heart. The soul knows that the mind is only able to grasp or to know the capacity, quality or quantity of the heart's light and not that of the soul's light. The soul is so kind that it tries to offer a little light to the mind through the heart, according to the mind's capacity.

So from the very beginning, always try to think of the mind as a naughty boy who is creating problems all the time, and just ignore it. Think that the mind does not exist. In Indian villages, there are thousands and millions of people who don't use the mind. Does

this mean that they do not exist? No, they do exist. They have the heart. Let us ignore the mind for one year or two years or ten years. We will not ignore it forever, because we know that if any part of our being remains imperfect, then we are not totally perfect or complete. But for the time being we have to be wise. It is not that we shall neglect and ignore the mind forever, far from it. But we will let the mind know that it is not sufficient, it is not complete, it is not perfect. The mind wants to convince us all the time, but let us convince the mind that it is not perfect. It is imperfect, it is weak, it is helpless. Let us go our own way to convince the mind that what it wants to be is not enough. We do not need it. We need something higher, something deeper, something infinitely more meaningful and fruitful. Previously we surrendered to the mind, but when we convince the mind, then the mind will surrender to us. ¹⁷

* * *

Don't try to convince the mind that spirituality is the only thing worth having. Only try to pay all attention to the heart. The mind will become jealous and it will run after you. Now you are running after the mind as if it were a mischievous child. You are telling it you don't want it. But, like a mother, you should ignore the mischievous child and go to some other child. Then the mischievous child will come running. If you go to the right person, the heart, which is simple, humble, sweet and polite, immediately the mind will come racing after you because the mind also wants attention. Then when the mind comes to you, you will illumine the mind with your soul's light. No matter how many times you tell a naughty boy not to do something, he won't listen. But when he sees that somebody else is getting attention by doing something else, then he will start listening. ¹⁸

* * *

Question: How can I purify my mind so that I can have a good meditation?

Sri Chinmoy: In your case, the best thing to do is to feel every day for a few minutes that you have no mind. Say, "I have no mind, I have no mind. What I have is the heart." Then after some time, say, "No I don't have the heart. What I have is the soul."

You have to know that the mind is almost always impure, bringing in dark and bad thoughts; even when it is not doing this, it is still a victim to doubt, jealousy, hypocrisy, fear and all that. All negative things first attack the mind. You may reject them for a minute, but again they knock at your door. This is the mind. But the heart is much, much purer. Even if you have fear or jealousy in the heart, the good qualities of the heart come

forward. Affection, love, devotion, surrender and other divine qualities are already there in the heart. That is why the heart is much purer than the mind. But again, the heart is not totally pure because the vital being is around the heart. The lower vital, situated near the navel, tends to come up and touch the heart centre. It makes the heart impure by its influence and proximity. But at least the heart is not like the mind, which is always opening its door to impure ideas. The heart is far better than the mind. But the best is the soul. In it there is no impurity. It is all purity, light, bliss and divinity. You must say, "I have the soul."

When you say, "I have no mind," this does not mean that you are becoming an animal again. Far from it. You are only saying, "I don't care for this mind which is bringing me so much impurity and torturing me so much." When you say, "I have the heart," you feel that the heart has purity, not abundantly, but it has purity. But when you say, "I have the soul," you are flooded with purity. Then after some time, you have to go deeper and farther by saying, not only, "I have the soul," but "I am the soul." The moment you say "I am the soul", and you meditate on this truth, your soul's infinite purity will come up and enter into the heart. Then from the heart, the infinite purity will enter into the mind. So when you say "I am the soul," you will purify your mind and your heart and you will have a wonderful meditation every day. ¹⁹

¹⁴ Sri Chinmoy, *The silent mind*, Agni Press, 1977

¹⁵ Sri Chinmoy, *Seventy-Seven Thousand Service-Trees*, part 20, Agni Press, 2001

¹⁶ Sri Chinmoy, *The silent mind*, Agni Press, 1977

¹⁷ Sri Chinmoy, *The silent mind*, Agni Press, 1977

¹⁸ Sri Chinmoy, *The silent mind*, Agni Press, 1977

¹⁹ Sri Chinmoy, *Earth's cry meets Heaven's smile*, part 2, Agni Press, 1974

Chapter 4

Concentration

The importance of concentration • How to begin

I always recommend that one should practise concentration; otherwise, meditation will never be fruitful. When we sit for meditation, millions of thoughts and ideas will enter into our mind and disturb us. We should practise concentration for a couple of minutes and then enter into meditation. For some seekers who have been practising concentration and meditation for a long time, concentration is no longer necessary; they can immediately enter into meditation. To have a calm and quiet mind is not easy. It is most difficult. It can be done only by the Grace of God and through the most sincere aspiration. If one has inner cry and if God's Grace descends, then only can proper meditation be practised and achieved. ²⁰

If you want spiritual discipline, then you have to know how to concentrate. Concentration is of paramount importance in disciplining us. Every day you eat. Every day you go to school and every day without fail you should practise concentration. What will you concentrate on? You will concentrate on the life that is fulfilling and not the life that is disturbing or destructive. What can build your life? Your cry for God. If you want to possess the world, then you will not be able to discipline yourself. If you want only to be possessed by the Inner Pilot, by the Supreme, then only you will be able to discipline yourself. ²¹

* * *

Question: Master, what is the difference between meditation and inner concentration?

Sri Chinmoy: Concentration is one-pointed; it is one-pointed awareness. It does not look forward or backward or sideways. Inner concentration tries to penetrate the veil of ignorance, so that ignorance is totally conquered.

In meditation, you have to feel that you are consciously trying to enter into the infinite expanse of consciousness. Everything here is finite. Everything there is Eternal, Immortal. When you are in a high meditation, you do not concentrate on anything. At that time, you only throw yourself into the Infinite vast of light, peace and bliss. You throw yourself into Infinity, Eternity and Immortality. ²²

* * *

Question: Will it be easier to meditate if one knows how to concentrate first?

Sri Chinmoy: If one wants to start with concentration, then usually it will be easier for him to meditate. There are three spiritual terms that go together: concentration, meditation and contemplation. Concentration paves the way for meditation. If one knows how to concentrate, then it will be easier for him to meditate. And if one knows how to meditate, then it will be possible for him to contemplate. Concentration is the practice of focusing our attention on a particular subject or object to the complete exclusion of anything else. Our entire mind will be concentrated only, on that particular subject. Nothing else in God's creation should be allowed to enter into our mind. We will focus all our attention on one particular object.

When our power of concentration becomes strong and vigilant, we can try to meditate. In order to meditate we make our mind calm, quiet and tranquil. We try not to have any thoughts at all. Then, when we are successful in our meditation, we can try to contemplate. Contemplation is the third stage and it is both the most important and the most difficult. The seeker becomes one with his Beloved Supreme on the strength of his proper contemplation. He feels that he and his Lord Supreme exist as one; there is nothing separating the two. They become one and inseparable.

To come back to your question, if one knows how to concentrate, then it will be easier for him to learn how to meditate, although one can learn meditation without practising concentration first. The best thing is to start with concentration. It is like walking up a ladder. The first rung is concentration, the second is meditation and the third and ultimate is contemplation. I would advise the beginner to start with concentration. But if a beginner finds it too difficult even to concentrate, then he should start with japa. Japa means repeating a syllable or a word or a few words over and over again. He can start with 'peace,' 'joy,' 'love,' 'God' or any divine word that gives him satisfaction. This will help him considerably if he cannot concentrate right at the very beginning. ²³

Question: How do you go about emptying your mind in order to be able to meditate?

Sri Chinmoy: First, you have to aspire. Then, you have to make your mind vacant. You should not allow any thought to enter into your mind and take shape. Suppose a name comes. As soon as the first letter of the name appears, you kill the name. You have to make your mind vacant, as empty as possible.

Question: How do you do it?

Sri Chinmoy: With your power of concentration. Suppose a thought, or a vibration, or something else is coming. Immediately, shoot an arrow and pierce it into pieces. An idea comes, somebody's name comes, or some thought comes. Immediately, just throw it out. It must not come and enter into your mind. Before it touches your mind you have to cut it into pieces.

But if you already have thoughts and ideas within you, within your body, within your mind, then you have to meditate like this: be as relaxed as possible. Feel as if you were inside the ocean. Then absorb those thoughts and ideas so they do not have a separate existence. They are lost in the sea. If they are already within you, throw them into the sea. If they are coming from outside, then do not allow them to enter into you. After doing this your meditation is bound to be successful.²⁴

* * *

Question: How can I improve my power of concentration?

Sri Chinmoy: You can improve your power of concentration by concentrating on the flame of a candle, on the petal of a flower, or on any small object. Always take a tiny object for concentration. When it is a matter of meditation, take something vast like the ocean or sky.²⁵

You can concentrate on anything, but if you are a spiritual seeker you will choose something that has some spiritual significance. Suppose you have a flower in front of you. A flower signifies purity. First you focus all your concentration on the flower, and then try to feel that you have become the flower itself, that is to say, purity. First you concentrate, and then you try to become part and parcel of the object you are concentrating on. The

flame of a candle signifies aspiration, so you can concentrate on the flame of a candle, also. If you wish, you can concentrate on a divine quality, such as love or peace. Each person can make his own choice. ²⁶

* * *

Question: What is the best point we can use to fix our gaze for concentration?

Sri Chinmoy: It depends on the individual. Some people find it easier to look at the flame of a candle and concentrate, while others find it easier to look at a beautiful flower. Still others prefer to look at the rising sun and concentrate. So if the individual gets a kind of inner joy when concentrating on a particular object, he should concentrate on that object in order to achieve his goal. ²⁷

* * *

Question: I'd like to develop better concentration so that I can keep my mind focused on one thought.

Sri Chinmoy: Before you start your meditation I wish you to repeat the name of God, "Supreme", about twenty times as fast as possible. First purify your breath by repeating "Supreme." The breath has to be purified; unless and until the breath is purified, the mind will wander and cannot remain one-pointed. If the breath is purified, then the mind will not act like a restless monkey.

Then I wish you to concentrate on your inner divinity. Always try to feel that you are safe when you are with God, with divinity. Let God and the divine qualities within you act against your human, undivine qualities. When you use the word "God," please try to feel your real love for God. When you are concentrating, feel that you are really growing into God, into the very breath of God. Then your concentration is bound to do something for you. ²⁸

-
- ²⁰ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974
- ²¹ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974
- ²² Sri Chinmoy, Earth's cry meets Heaven's smile, part 2, Agni Press, 1974
- ²³ Sri Chinmoy, AUM — Vol.II-3, No. 2, February 27, 1976, Vishma Press, 1976
- ²⁴ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974
- ²⁵ Sri Chinmoy, AUM — Vol.II-3, No. 9, September 27, 1976, Vishma Press, 1976
- ²⁶ Sri Chinmoy, Fifty Freedom-Boats to one Golden Shore, part 4, Agni Press, 1974
- ²⁷ Sri Chinmoy, Earth's cry meets Heaven's smile, part 1, Agni Press, 1974
- ²⁸ Sri Chinmoy, Meditation: God speaks and I listen, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

Chapter 5

The Spiritual Heart

Meditating in the heart • The heart and the soul

Question: How do I go deep within?

Sri Chinmoy: You have to feel that there is something called the heart. You do not have to go to a spiritual Master in order to know that you have a heart of your own. Between the two lungs is the physical heart and the spiritual heart is also there. Then, you have to feel that inside the heart there is something called the soul. First go into the heart and feel that inside the heart you are trying to unlock another door. That is the door of the soul. ²⁹

* * *

Question: I am strongly tuned to the mental plane. What can I do to enter into my inner being and feel my inner self more in my daily meditations?

Sri Chinmoy: Try to think that you have three things in your possession: the soul, the heart and the mind. In your case one possession, the mind, the intellectual mind, is suffering because it has been given very good training at Yale and now you are neglecting it. Try to take the mind as a possession, but feel that it is a very heavy burden on your shoulders. Who wants to place a heavy burden on his shoulders? Feel that you can easily take off this load; you can get rid of the gross physical mind.

Your heart is another possession. When you think of or try to feel the heart, feel that there is something inside the heart and that is why it is beautiful and meaningful. Your last possession is your soul, which represents reality and divinity. The soul needs a heart. The heart needs a soul. The soul is a seed; the heart is a tree. The seed needs the tree; and if there is no seed there cannot be a plant. The heart-plant comes from the soul-seed; then

the plant grows into a tree and the tree becomes a banyan tree. But first there must be a seed.

If the mind is creating problems, feel that you don't need the earthbound mind. You have had enough use from it. Just take the heart as a plant and the soul as a seed. If you can grow into the consciousness of the seed, there will always be the possibility that the seed will germinate and you will grow into a plant and then into a tree.

Think of what will produce results. The conscious awareness of the soul will always create something ever new and vibrant. If something constantly grows inside you which is pure, divine and immortal, then automatically things that are not immortal and aspiring in the physical mind will be transformed because of the constant growth. They will be transformed and illumined if they have not already left. If the mind still remains a heavy load, it will be transformed. All you have to do is to give all importance to the seed, the soul. Then the physical mind will leave you or it will have to surrender to the flood of light inside the heart which is the soul. ³⁰

* * *

Question: When I am meditating, sometimes I have trouble distinguishing whether what I feel is my mind imagining my heart or whether it is really my heart.

Sri Chinmoy: If it is your real heart, then you will get a sense of satisfaction, pure satisfaction. If it is the mind you may also get satisfaction, but immediately you will also get something else and that something else is doubt. Your experience will be attacked by other thoughts: "How can I have this kind of satisfaction? I am so bad, I am so impure, I am so ignorant. This morning I told a lie and yesterday I did something very wrong, so I cannot have this kind of satisfaction." When that kind of idea comes, then you will know that your experience was from the mind. When you get an experience with the mind, you may temporarily feel very happy, delighted. But you won't be able to establish your identification with what the mind has seen or felt or realised.

But once you get an experience from the heart, immediately you feel your oneness with it. When you see something with the heart, you get joy and immediately you are one with it. When you see a flower with your mind, you appreciate and admire it. But when you see it with your heart, immediately you feel either that your heart is inside the flower or that the flower is inside your heart. So when you have an experience and feel a kind of satisfaction, if you feel that you are one with the experience itself, then you will know

that it is from the heart. But if you feel that the experience is something outside you that you are achieving, then it is from the mind. ³¹

* * *

Question: How can we meditate on the soul?

Sri Chinmoy: Please feel that you are not the body, you are not the vital, you are not the mind, you are not the heart, you are only the soul. Think of the most beautiful child on earth. Imagine the most beautiful child you have ever seen. Then feel that your soul is infinitely more beautiful than this child. Those of you who have children know that parents always think that their own children are the most beautiful. There is nothing wrong in it; they are absolutely right. But think that your soul is infinitely more beautiful than your children. To some of you I have told your soul's qualities. If you know, think of the qualities that your soul wants to manifest. Think of your soul in this way and then feel that you are the soul at this very moment. Feel that you are that — *Tat twam asi*. This is how to meditate on your soul. ³²

²⁹ Sri Chinmoy, *Flame-Waves*, part 11, Agni Press, 1978

³⁰ Sri Chinmoy, *The hour of meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

³¹ Sri Chinmoy, *The mind and the heart in meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

³² Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God's Blessing-Assurance*, Agni Press, 1974

Chapter 6

Daily meditation

Daily meditation • having a fixed time

Morning and evening meditation

Question: Why do we have to meditate every day?

Sri Chinmoy: It is very simple. Every day you eat; that is why you live on earth. You cannot live on the food you ate yesterday. Similarly, the divine child in us also needs nourishment every day. Every day you have to feed the soul. Meditation means the conscious feeding of our soul. If we eat every day, we become very strong because of our regular nourishment. So also when we meditate every day the soul is being nourished. Then it gets the opportunity to manifest itself better, that is to say, to manifest the Divine on earth. This is why daily meditation is necessary. ³³

* * *

Question: What do you do when you are not one hundred percent alert during meditation?

Sri Chinmoy: First of all, before you start meditating, breathe in deeply a few times. Very deep breathing helps conscious awareness. If you still find yourself falling asleep and starting to enjoy the bliss of sleep, at that time you should say "No, let me enjoy the bliss

of meditation." Instead of entering into other worlds you should say, "No, let me remain in this world. I won't even knock at the door of the sleep worlds. I shall stay here outside.

In meditation, movement is going on but in a very subtle, peaceful way. In it is the life that lifts us up towards the goal. But when we enter into sleep there is no life at all.

During your meditation you yourself will realise when, instead of getting a very dynamic inner thrill, you are entering into a world where there is no life at all. You should feel, "No, I want to enter into a place where there will be fulfilling and dynamic life." ³⁴

* * *

Question: What should we imagine if we are very tired during our morning meditation?

Sri Chinmoy: Just imagine a blue-green forest or field. Feel that you are walking through a paddy field. Then, no matter how much you are suffering from lack of sleep, you will feel energised. ³⁵

* * *

Question: Should we try to get up spontaneously to meditate or should we set an alarm?

Sri Chinmoy: You should use an alarm. Otherwise, you have to become a Yogi to get the special Grace to wake you up. But please, when you meditate, do not keep a watch in front of you at every second. Some students may have this tendency, because they know they have to get ready to go to school. But if you really want to meditate soulfully, just dive deep within. True, you are not entering into Nirvana, but when you meditate, you are pleasing the Supreme. He will make you conscious of the fact that it is time to go to school. If you are really meditating, He will do this. But if you are in the fairyland, dreaming, wasting your precious time, it will not be His responsibility. ³⁶

Question: I was really inspired to meditate for five or six days, and then I woke up one morning and did not have the feeling that I wanted to practice my meditation. What can I do to spark myself without having to force things?

Sri Chinmoy: You said that for five or six days your aspiration lasts, then it disappears, and even if you try to meditate it does not come. But continue! Sometimes you don't feel like eating, but you know that the body needs food. So you still eat every day. It is a natural habit, the body's demand. So even if you cannot meditate properly or have your best meditation every day, you should not be worried.

In order to maintain the same level of meditation, you have to be very spiritually advanced. I am not throwing cold water on you; far from it. I wish to say that in the beginning you should be happy if just at times you get very good, very high, sublime meditation. When you don't have a good meditation, don't allow yourself to become a victim to frustration. If you get frustrated, you are losing your capacity to an even greater extent. Then on the following day, at that time also, it will be impossible for you to meditate deeply.

If you don't have a good meditation today, then try to forget about it. Tomorrow if you have a meditation that is a little better, try to remember it. The past is dust. The past has not given you realisation; that's why you are still praying and meditating. So why should you think of the past? You have to forget all that did not inspire you or encourage you to go farther. So if today's meditation does not inspire you or has not given you most satisfactory results, try to forget it altogether.

You have aspiration and then you lose it. Then you cry for it, but you may not get the same aspiration back again. But here you have to realise that you are not an expert in meditation. Now your meditation is at the mercy of your inspiration or aspiration. When you are inspired, you have aspiration and you are ready to meditate. But this aspiration, this inner urge, will last only for a day or a few weeks and then it disappears. But when you become an expert, meditation will be at your command.

How can we become expert in anything? If we want to be a singer or a poet or a dancer, we have to practise daily. It is the same with meditation. When we practise meditation daily, there comes a time when it becomes spontaneous. If we regularly meditate once or twice a day, then we develop a kind of inner habit. Eating every day is an outer habit. If we did not eat, we could not exist on earth. Similarly, if we do not feed the soul, our inner

being, every day, then the soul or the aspirant in us starves. And what happens then? We cannot reveal, we cannot manifest our own divinity.

If you meditate regularly for five months, six months, or a year or two, then automatically meditation will become spontaneous and natural. After a while, at such and such an hour, you will feel compelled to meditate. You will feel that meditation is your soul's necessity and the inner urge to meditate will never be able to leave you. It will always inspire you and energise you. Early every morning when it is time for your meditation, your inner being will come and knock at your heart's door. ³⁷

* * *

Question: Sometimes I don't have the inspiration to meditate. How can I create it again?

Sri Chinmoy: Think of the time when you had your highest meditation, three months ago, or yesterday, or this very morning. Just imagine it, and try to enter into it. After a while, imagination will grow into reality, and you will enter into deep meditation. ³⁸

* * *

Question: If during your meditation you feel comfortable and really inspired, can you increase your meditation time?

Sri Chinmoy: For the time being just remain in a meditative mood and read spiritual writings or sing devotional songs. If you have been meditating for one hour, then after two or three months you can increase the length of time, but do not increase it suddenly. Even if you are inspired, please increase your meditation time by degrees. Otherwise, if today you meditate well and you meditate for another hour, then in a subtle way pride enters. Pride is your worst enemy. You will be bloated with pride the whole day, and then the following day this pride will not allow you to meditate at all. You will think that you have got everything from your meditation, so for two weeks you won't get up. Meditation is just like eating. No matter how much you eat today, tomorrow again you have to eat to get energy. So do not overeat. Please go slowly. If you have to, increase your time only by two or three minutes. Then after a month or so you can increase it ten or fifteen minutes.

39

* * *

Question: When I meditate, there is something that holds me back so that I cannot meditate.

Sri Chinmoy: The thing that holds you back is fear and this fear has no meaning at all. If you want the wealth which the ocean holds deep inside itself, you have to dive within. Fear and wealth don't go together. Only if you have inner courage, can you receive the inner wealth. It is fear of the unknown and the unknowable that prevents you from diving deep within. But what is unknowable today becomes merely unknown tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, it becomes known. The vastness of truth can never destroy you. It can only embrace and fulfil you. ⁴⁰

³³ Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God speaks and I listen*, part 1, Agni Press, 1974

³⁴ Sri Chinmoy, *The hour of meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

³⁵ Sri Chinmoy, *The mind and the heart in meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

³⁶ Sri Chinmoy, *The hour of meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

³⁷ Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God's Blessing-Assurance*, Agni Press, 1974

³⁸ Sri Chinmoy, *Meditation: God's Blessing-Assurance*, Agni Press, 1974

³⁹ Sri Chinmoy, *The hour of meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

⁴⁰ Sri Chinmoy, *Earth's cry meets Heaven's smile*, part 2, Agni Press, 1974

Chapter 7

Growing into the infinite

God and the soul • Spirituality • The inner cry

Question: What is the human soul really like?

Sri Chinmoy: The human soul is a portion of divinity. You can say this soul represents God, the almighty Father within us. According to Indian philosophy, the soul is neither masculine nor feminine. Again, you can see the soul in a physical form, in the subtle physical. It is most beautiful, infinitely more beautiful than any human being. You can't define the soul; but if you practise Yoga, if you pray and meditate, then you can feel the presence of the soul and eventually see the soul even with your naked eyes. ⁴¹

* * *

Question: Can you define the soul?

Sri Chinmoy: The soul is subtler than the subtlest, finer than the finest and, at the same time, larger than the largest. This is the description of the soul that you get in the Gita and also in our sacred Upanishads. This truth can be seen, felt and realised when we meditate.

The soul is the representative of God here on earth, a spark of God. God the Omniscient, the Omnipotent, the Omnipresent is one; but here in this world of multiplicity each soul represents a different aspect of God's multiplicity. When the soul takes human shape, it tries first to create possibilities and then inevitabilities. Then the soul tries to manifest the truth that it has already achieved. It sees the world of ignorance and tries to transform this ignorance into knowledge and wisdom.

There is an unmanifested Self, which we call *purusha*, and again, there is a manifested Self. The Self that is going to manifest on earth through the soul is called *prakriti*. Purusha is not indifferent, but it will always remain on the highest transcendental level of Consciousness. And the other Self, *prakriti*, will take part in the Cosmic Game through the individual soul.

When we become one with our soul, we enter into infinite Peace and Bliss — the highest Consciousness, which we call *sat-chit-ananda*. This is the triple Consciousness, where Existence, Consciousness and Bliss come together. When we live in the soul, eventually we enter into this triple Consciousness.

* * *

Question: Why are people afraid of spirituality?

Sri Chinmoy: You are right: people are afraid of spirituality. Unfortunately, they do not know what spirituality is. If they knew the real significance of spirituality, then they would in no time embrace spirituality. Spirituality seeks to energise humanity. Without spirituality, humanity would remain always in the dark. But with spirituality, with the inner life, each human being on earth is bound to realise his highest, his deepest. I wish to tell you that spirituality is not something foreign: it is not something vague. Spirituality shows us our true life and our only goal, and that goal is the realisation of the Infinite within and without us. ⁴²

* * *

Question: I have read that man is greater than the cosmic gods because he can realise God. Is this true?

Sri Chinmoy: Liberation or self-realisation can be had only by a human being. When a soul enters into a human being, it starts making progress. In the process of evolution, the individual becomes fully liberated and fully realised. But the gods do not have that opportunity. They live in the vital world, the higher vital world, and from there they operate. So unless and until they enter into a human form and go through the process of evolution, they cannot have the self-realisation or liberation that we human beings have.

We have to know that there is nothing greater than self-realisation. This means that we have crossed the sea of ignorance and death. That is why we say that man is greater than the gods. Man gets self-realisation whereas the so-called gods who are in the vital plane do not care for it. ⁴³

* * *

Question: What is your process for enlightenment and what do you ask of your disciples?

Sri Chinmoy: There is only one thing that I ask of my disciples: to aspire. By aspiration we mean inner cry. We cry for name and fame in the outer world, but in the inner world we cry for peace, light and bliss in infinite measure. So I ask my disciples to cry inwardly to achieve peace, light and bliss and to grow into peace, light and bliss. ⁴⁴

⁴¹ Sri Chinmoy, *Selfless service-light*, Agni Press, 1977

⁴² Sri Chinmoy, *Flame-Waves*, part 11, Agni Press, 1978

⁴³ Sri Chinmoy, *Secrets of the inner world*, Agni Press, 1980

⁴⁴ Sri Chinmoy, *The hour of meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

Chapter 8

Keeping your joy

Guarding and assimilating your inner wealth

After you eat, you don't run; you lie down or remain quiet. Similarly, when you receive something spiritual — Peace, Light or Bliss — you have to remain calm and quiet for some time. Once you have assimilated it, it becomes solid; it becomes part and parcel of your existence. Once it is assimilated, it remains inside your consciousness, inside your system forever. ⁴⁵

* * *

Question: When we receive light and peace from our meditation, is it assimilated and stored for our gradual use, or do we constantly need it as we need food?

Sri Chinmoy: You have to assimilate what you receive from meditation. If you do not assimilate these qualities, then it is almost useless. Then the next day you have to go again and get the same amount of peace, light and bliss. Once something is assimilated, it becomes a solid realisation, an absolutely permanent experience. Then it is not only a conscious part of you, but also inseparably one with your existence. This is very important. There is a great difference between when we assimilate our meditation and when we do not.

If peace, light and bliss are not assimilated, then it is as if a friend came into your life for a few hours and then he just left you after a short time. He did not become your eternal friend or your lifelong friend.

If you don't establish an eternal friendship, you do not give your friend the opportunity to be with you, to inspire you, to guide you, to mould you and shape you, or to share any divine qualities or capacities with you. ⁴⁶

* * *

There are two or three ways to assimilate into your system the light, peace or bliss you have received from a good meditation. One way is to be absolutely relaxed. This relaxation is not watching television or reading the newspaper! You should read only spiritual books, or lie down and quietly sing or hum soulful songs. If you can hum soulful songs after your deep meditation, that is the easiest and the most effective way to assimilate.

Another way is to walk very, very slowly, and let Mother Nature help you to assimilate. Very soothingly and tenderly Mother Nature will help you to assimilate all the divine things that you have received during your meditation. But Mother Nature is a great help only early in the morning or in the evening. At other times it is very difficult to get help from Mother Nature because Mother Nature has surrendered to humanity, or she has been spoiled or polluted by the restlessness of humanity. If you have a good meditation during the day, then the best thing is to sing. ⁴⁷

* * *

Question: When we receive joy from the soul, how can we keep it to the fore?

Sri Chinmoy: Sometimes you get tremendous joy but then you cannot account for it. There is no outer reason for you to be feeling such joy. You are feeling spontaneous joy. You have not outwardly received any good news from your husband or your children or anybody, but you are getting tremendous joy. At that time, feel that your soul has come to the fore and that is why you feel such joy.

If you see that your joy is going away while talking to someone, then immediately try to shorten your conversation with that person. If you are doing something that is taking away your joy, then immediately stop doing it. When you get joy from within, when it is very fresh, do not do anything that takes it away. You have to strengthen and assimilate your joy. If for five or ten minutes you can stop doing whatever is taking away your joy, then that joy will be assimilated inside you.

Always be extremely, extremely careful when your soul comes to the fore and you are getting spontaneous joy. No matter how long it takes you to assimilate this joy — half an hour or an hour or even two hours — you do it. Then you are secure. If you feel that your

joy is decreasing, always try to assimilate it. Once it is assimilated, then it is safe. Before that it is not safe. Before you are secure in your joy, even one word from someone can totally take away your joy. So immediately you should go deep within. ⁴⁸

* * *

Question: After I have a good meditation I lose it. What can I do to maintain my meditation?

Sri Chinmoy: Consciously, you don't want to preserve the treasure. Either you mix with unaspiring people or you don't want to preserve your meditation. You are not valuing the treasure. You think: "Even if I lose it I will get it again tomorrow." No, you have to value it, preserve it in the heart-pocket. I always tell you to assimilate your meditation. Once you eat something you must assimilate it. ⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Sri Chinmoy, *Secrets of the inner world*, Agni Press, 1980

⁴⁶ Sri Chinmoy, *The hour of meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

⁴⁷ Sri Chinmoy, *Sri Chinmoy answers*, part 11, Agni Press, 1999

⁴⁸ Sri Chinmoy, *Flame-Waves*, part 11, Agni Press, 1978

⁴⁹ Sri Chinmoy, *The mind and the heart in meditation*, Agni Press, 1977

Chapter 9

The power of Mantra

Mantra and japa • Purification • The mantras Aum and Supreme

Mantra is an incantation process for going deep within or to accelerate one's spiritual progress. By repeating a mantra we can either invoke the presence of a particular god or we can bring to the fore our own inner divinity. But we cannot say that mantra is superior to prayer and meditation or that prayer or meditation is superior to mantra. No. We can call mantra one road that leads to realisation. ⁵⁰

Each mantra offers a particular result. While using a mantra, we invoke a certain aspect of God or a certain cosmic god to give us Peace, Light, Bliss or something else that we want or need. But if we can meditate well for ten or fifteen minutes, this serves the same purpose because we enter into the infinite expanse of Peace, Light and Bliss, where our soul can drink whatever it needs or wants.

When aspirants cannot enter into their deepest meditation because the mind is restless, this is their opportunity to utilise a mantra. 'Supreme', 'AUM' or 'God' can be repeated by anyone for a few minutes before he actually starts his meditation. The mantra should be repeated slowly and aloud.

If you want quick results in your inner spiritual life, you should repeat a mantra every day without fail, for a least half an hour: fifteen minutes in the morning and fifteen minutes in the evening. There can be no mantra more powerful than the mother of all mantras, AUM. ⁵¹

Question: Guru, can you tell us what happens when you chant Aum?

Sri Chinmoy: When we chant *Aum*, we enter into a higher realm of consciousness. *Aum* embodies God in His three aspects: God the Creator, God the Preserver and God the Transformer. There are many who feel that God is a destroyer, not a transformer. But our philosophy says that God cannot destroy. He can only transform the things that are undivine in us. God has some wisdom. He will not create something just for the sake of fun and then destroy it for the sake of fun. No! He does not destroy us; only He transforms what is undivine in us.

Aum is the mother of all mantras. 'Mantra' means incantation. You can realise God just by chanting *Aum* most soulfully. That is enough, because with this mantra, you are invoking God.

Question: How are we actually supposed to chant AUM?

Sri Chinmoy: There are various ways to chant AUM. When we chant AUM with tremendous soul's power, what we actually do is enter into the cosmic vibration where the creation is in perfect harmony and where the cosmic Dance is being danced by the Absolute. If we chant AUM soulfully, we become one with the cosmic Dance; we become one with God the Creator, God the Preserver and God the Transformer. All that God has within and without, AUM can offer to us, because AUM is at once the Life, the Body and the Breath of God. This is what an Indian seeker or an Indian spiritual Master feels when he chants AUM.

If you get an attack on the emotional vital plane and wrong thoughts, wrong ideas, wrong vibrations enter into you, repeat AUM or the name of the Supreme as fast as possible. Do not chant slowly. When you are trying to cleanse your mind of impurities you must chant as if you were running to catch a moving train. ⁵²

If you want a mantra,
Then “Supreme”
Is by far the best mantra.

If you want a special meditation,
Then to invoke the Presence
Of the Supreme
Is by far the best type of meditation. ⁵³

⁵⁰ Sri Chinmoy, Flame-Waves, part 8, Agni Press, 1976

⁵¹ Sri Chinmoy, Prayer-world, mantra-world and japa-world, Agni Press, 1974

⁵² Sri Chinmoy, Prayer-world, mantra-world and japa-world, Agni Press, 1974

⁵³ Sri Chinmoy, Seventy-Seven Thousand Service-Trees, part 14, Agni Press, 1999