

Some Methods of Mind-Control—II.

(Continued from the previous number)

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(7) PRACTICE OF CONCENTRATION ON ONE OBJECT

Maharṣi Patanjali writes in his *Yoga-*
darśana:

‘तत्प्रतिषेधार्थमेकतत्त्वाभ्यासः’ ।

(*Samadhi-Pada. 32*)

With a view to remove wandering of the mind, concentration on one among the five elements should be practised. The word *Tattva* in the aphorism may be taken in the sense of an object. Thus, the eyes may be fixed on any object or an image and the gaze should be continued till tears come to the eyes or the eye-lids are forced to close. The object on which the gaze is fixed should be gradually made to appear smaller and smaller. In

the end, there should be no perception of any object before the eyes. ‘दृष्टिः स्थिरा यत्र विनावलोकनम्—’ ‘Keep the gaze fixed without seeing’. When this state is reached, there will be no mind-wandering. If this practice is cultivated for even half-an-hour every day, success in mind-control may be easily achieved. Again, the gaze is fixed on the point between the two eye-brows, and the practice is continued till the eyes begin to give out tears. Through this practice also the mind is made steady. It is known as the practice of *Trātaka*. It should be needless to point out that the more time one is able to devote regularly to practices of this type, the quicker and greater will be his success.

(8) FIXING OF SIGHT ON THE NAVEL
OR ON THE TIP OF THE NOSE

Sit erect in *Padmāsana* or *Sukhāsana* and fixing the eyes on the navel continue to gaze attentively till the eyelids move. This should be practised regularly every day. Through this practice the mind is very quickly brought under control. Similarly, the mind is steadied by the habit of fixing the sight on the tip of the nose. Through this last practice, one may gain the sight of supernatural light.

(9) HEARING OF INTERNAL SOUND

The practice of hearing sound is carried on by stopping the ear-holes with the tips of fingers. When the ear-holes are stopped, one will at first hear a sound like the humming of bees or like the twitter of birds in the early morning; then gradually sounds similar to those of small bells worn in ankles, conch, large bell, cymbals, the flute, the trumpet, the tabour, kettle-drum and the roar of a lion will be heard. When the practice of hearing these ten sounds are formed, the practicant will last of all hear the Divine sound of *Praṇava*—OM—and fall into *Samādhi* (complete absorption) with it. This is also a good practice for controlling the mind.

(10) MEDITATION, OR MENTAL
WORSHIP

Take any Name of God, and imagining the same to be written in space try to fix your mind again and again on its meditation. Or, take a Form of God, and imagining the same to be present before you in space offer your mental

worship to Him. First, meditate separately on each limb of the Lord and then take up the whole Form and concentrate your mind on the same. Try to fix the mind thoroughly and well in this meditation. The absorption in meditation should be so great that the consciousness of the world itself may be lost. Then, offer mental worship to the Lord with offerings, which are also mental or imaginary. Worship of the Lord performed regularly with Love will serve as a great aid in controlling the mind.

(11) PRACTISING FRIENDLINESS,
COMPASSION, JOY AND INDIFFERENCE

This is also a method of mind-control mentioned by Mahārṣi Patañjali in his *Yoga-darśana*. The aphorism runs as follows:—

‘मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्’ ।

(*Samādhi-Pada*. 33)

“The mind gets bright and complacent through cultivation of friendliness towards the happy, of compassion towards the distressed, of joy towards the virtuous, of indifference towards the sinner.”

(A) Through cultivation of the spirit of friendliness towards all happy men of the world, the impurity of the mind in the form of envy is removed, the fire of malice is extinguished. Ordinarily, men feel delighted when they find themselves or their relatives happy because these are dear to them as life itself. If this sense of love is extended to all happy men of the world, how great should be their joy? The very propensity which creates the sense of

burning at the sight of another's happiness will be destroyed.

(B) Through cultivation of the spirit of compassion towards the distressed, the impurity in the form of the spirit of doing injury to another is destroyed. Man does not wait for another's advice in the matter of removing his own suffering, and sets about devising means to avoid a possible cause of sorrow which may loom before him in the future. If the very same spirit is extended to all distressed men of the world, the suffering of many people may be removed. The mind may always remain bright and delighted through the preponderance of the feeling of sacrificing one's all for removing the suffering of the distressed.

(C) Cultivation of the spirit of joy at the sight of virtuous men removes the mental impurity of malice and awakens the spiritual faculties of the heart—faculties which are already awakened in virtuous men. Through the destruction of malice, the mind becomes calm and tranquil.

(D) Through indifference towards the sinner, the mental impurity of anger is destroyed. No thought being given to sin, there is no impression of sin on the heart. No one is an object of hatred. This keeps the mind peaceful and tranquil.

Through repeated practice of the above four sentiments the two lower qualities of the mind, viz., *Rajas* and *Tamas*, get pacified, and the Sattvic quality becomes predominant. This gives delight to the mind and brings it quickly under control.

(12) STUDY OF SPIRITUAL LITERATURE

The mind is steadied also through the study and teaching of scriptures dealing with supreme divine secrets. When books like the Upaniṣads, the *Gītā*, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, the *Rāmāyaṇa*, etc., are studied in seclusion with reference to the meaning and implication of their teachings, the mind gets in tune with them. This results in making the mind steady.

(13) PRACTICE OF *Prāṇāyāma*

The mind gets fixed through *Samādhi*. There are various types of *Samādhi*. The practice of *Prāṇāyāma* (breath-control) is one of the principal requisites for attainment of *Samādhi*. The *Yoga-darśana* says:—

‘प्रच्छेदैनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणस्य’ ।

(*Samādhi-Pada* 34)

Exhalation of internal air through the nostrils is called *Prachchhardana*, and suspension of the breath is called *Vidhāraṇa*. The mind may be steadied through the practice of these two methods. The Lord says in the *Gītā*:—

अपाने जुहति प्राणं प्राणोऽपानं तथापरे ।

प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥

(IV. 29)

“Some offer the *Prāṇa*-breath (outward breath) into the *Apāna* (the inward breath); others the *Apāna* into the *Prāṇa*. There are others, who restrain the course of both the *Prāṇa* and *Apāna*, and practise *Prāṇāyāma*.”

Apart from books on *Yoga*, the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* has been described in detail in the *Mahābhārata*, in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* and even in the Upaniṣads. In short, suspension of the flow of breath is called *Prāṇāyāma*. Manu, the Law-giver, says:—

दहन्ते ध्मायमानानां धातूनां हि यथा मलः ।
तथेन्द्रियाणां दहन्ते दोषाः प्राणस्य निग्रहात् ॥

“Just as the impurities of a metal burn up when it is heated on fire, even so through control of the breath all impurities of the senses are burnt away.”

When the movement of the *Prāṇas* (internal air) is suspended, the movement of the mind also gets suspended. These two movements are inter-connected. If the mind is the rider, the *Prāṇa* (internal air) constitutes the horse. Therefore, when the movement of the latter stops, the other also stops. The scriptures on *Yoga* contain many instructions about *Prāṇāyāma*, but they are extremely difficult to put into practice. Many rules and restrictions have to be observed for the practice of *Yoga*. It requires practice of self-restraint of the most difficult type. For various reasons it should be regarded as almost impossible to practise *Yoga* in the present age. With reference to *Prāṇāyāma* we shall make the only observation that deep inhalation through the left nostril is called *Pūraka* and exhalation through the right nostril is called *Rechaka* and the pause which stops external air from entering

the body and internal air from going out is called *Kumbhaka*. In a nut-shell, this is what is called *Prāṇāyāma*.

The ordinary rule is to repeat the *Japa-mantra* four times during *Pūraka* (inhalation), sixteen times during *Kumbhaka* (pause) and eight times during *Rechaka* (exhalation); but no such practice should be attempted without instruction from a well-qualified *Sadguru*. The practice of *Yoga* in imitation and without careful instruction from a *Guru* may lead to quite the contrary result. There is a common saying:—“When *Yoga* is practised in imitation, it leads to emaciation of the body and aggravation of disease.”* Nevertheless, it should be remembered that the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* is one of the best methods of controlling the mind.

(14) PRACTICE OF *Japa* ALONG WITH THE BREATH

There is another method of controlling the mind and fixing it on God, which is very easy to practise and at the same time not attended with any risk of danger, which, in fact, may be adopted by all irrespective of any consideration. It is the practice of *Japa* of the Divine Name in rhythm with the movement of the breath. It may be carried on always and under all circumstances, even when the practisant is engaged in the performance of other ordinary activities of life. There is no need

* देखा देखी साथै जोग छीजै काया बाढ़ै रोग ।

to make any artificial exertion to take breath, and *Japa* should be performed in rhythm with the natural movement of the breath. When the attention is fixed on the breath, the mind will automatically stop and begin to perform the *Japa*. During the performance of this *Japa* there should be a feeling of extreme delight in the heart, so much as if the mind was dancing. Filled up with joy, the receptacle of the heart will begin to overflow. If this amount of joy is not actually felt by the practicant, let him imagine that he is doing so. Let him at the same time, knowing God to be nearest to him, meditate on the Form of God. This meditation should be living enough to make him feel the presence of God. Thus, forgetting all consciousness of the world, the mind should be attached to God.

(15) SURRENDER TO GOD

The mind may be controlled also by surrender to God. To take refuge in God with a whole heart is what is called surrender to God. The word *Īswara* in this connection may be understood to mean both God and His devotee. 'ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति', 'तस्मिंस्तज्जने भेदाभावात्', 'तस्मयाः'—these texts of the Śruti and Philosophy of Devotion prove the identity of God and the God-realized *Jñānī* and devotee. The very thought of the glory and character of God and His devotees fills the heart with intense joy, and the bondage of the world begins to loosen, as if automatically. Therefore the mind may be conquered through the cultivation of association with devotees, through regulation of life according to their directions

and through the knowledge that the primary requisite for God-realization is the grace of the devotee. Every attainment is possible through the grace of God and His true devotees.

(16) WATCHING THE MIND

A very fine method of controlling the mind is to separate the self from the mind and go on watching the activities of the latter. All the restlessness of the mind persists so long as the self is identified with it. The moment we become the observer of the mind all its restlessness will disappear. As a matter of fact, the self in us is wholly different from the mind. The self knows what thoughts arise in the mind at what moment. A man in Bombay may be thinking about an object of sight in Calcutta, he knows well about this fact. Now, it is beyond all doubt that the knower and observer is different from the object known and observed. 'The eye cannot see itself', according to this logic, that which knows and observes the activities of the mind must be something wholly different from the mind. Although that something is different from the mind, it identifies itself with the latter, and the restlessness of the mind grows from the strength derived from it. Keeping the self separate from the mind, if the practicant makes it a habit to observe its activities only as a spectator the mind may be very soon wholly freed from thoughts.

(17) PRACTICE OF *Kīrtana* OF THE DIVINE NAME

The mind may be fixed on God through the loud chanting of the

Names and glory of God and getting oneself absorbed in it. Lord Śrī Chaitanya has prescribed this as the best and supreme method of controlling the mind and directing it towards God. When during chanting of the Divine Name with a choked voice, with tears in his eyes, and with the hairs of the body standing erect through intensity of emotion, the devotee wholly forgets himself and gets absorbed in the Form of his Beloved Lord, in what sense should he lack in mind-control? Therefore, to chant the Name of God with depth and intensity of Love is one of the best means of conquering the mind.

Thus, there are various methods of controlling the mind and turning its energies towards God. Attempt should be made to withdraw it from the pursuit of worldly objects and attach it to God, either with the help of one of these or any other method that may appeal itself to the reader. There is no escape without control of the mind. Just as a reflection gets distorted in tremulous water, even so the *Ātmā* is not properly reflected in a tremulous mind. But

we get a proper reflection of any object in water which is calm and still, even so the true form of the *Ātmā* can be directly perceived by a mind which is still. Let us try our best with all the strength and energy at our command to attain this stillness of mind. He who has attained stillness of mind has made his human life blessed through a sight of that blue Gem of Beauty, His ever-delightful, full-blown lotus-like face, bearing the blue hue of a new-formed cloud. Blessed is he, who has even once got the privilege and opportunity of a sight of that incomparable Gem of Beauty; in comparison with that joy all other joys have become tasteless to him; all other gains have become lower in value.

‘यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।’

“Which, having gained he thinks, there is no gain greater than this.”

The supreme fruit of the practice of *Yoga* lies in this, or, in other words, this is the supreme, the highest *Yoga*.

(*Concluded*)

