

MEDITATION AND KUNDALINI

by

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

The Divine Life Society
Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, India

Website: swami-krishnananda.org

One must be sure as to why one meditates at all. Most of the difficulties in meditation arise due to aimless practice. There is practice, but it is aimless; it has no purpose. If you ask anyone why they do it, they give vague answers like peace of mind, and health, and all sorts of incorrect replies. In yoga, meditation is not done for peace of mind. I have been saying that people generally have peace of mind. Who does not have peace of mind? Everybody is well-off, so why you are saying, "I want peace of mind by yoga"? It is not peace of mind; it is a spiritual enhancement of personality that you are aiming at.

What is meant by a spiritual enhancement of personality? What is it? You may say it is the elevation of the soul; some such answer may come. But where is the soul? "The soul is inside me." This is a vague and crude way of defining the soul: *atma andar hai*, or the soul is inside me. This is not a correct answer. The soul is not so easily explainable as something inside somebody. Though it maybe inside, it is not really inside entirely. Why? Because the soul is made up of consciousness. What is the substance out of which soul is made? It is made of something; everything is made of something. What is the soul made of? It is consciousness.

What is consciousness? It is Pure Awareness of Being that is called consciousness. Can you say consciousness is only inside your body? It may be inside your body, because

without that you will not be even aware that you are existing. It pervades the entire body; therefore, you know that you are a total person. But it is not true that it is confined only to the limits of the body. It is all-pervading. Nobody can set a limit to consciousness. So—now I am taking your mind to a higher point—if the meditation is on the soul for its enhancement, exaltation, increase in dimension, then it is virtually a meditation on consciousness. It is not consciousness located in some place only, because consciousness cannot be located in one place. It is everywhere.

What is meditation? It is consciousness directed in concentration on consciousness. Who is meditating? You are meditating. John is meditating. Who is John? Somebody is sitting in front of me, this body. Is it John? No. Deep analysis has been made by ancient masters as to who this John is. When you are fast asleep, you are not aware of the body, but you are still existing. Therefore, John is existing even without the consciousness of the body. In what form were you existing in deep sleep? Not as Mr. So-and-so. You did not know whether you are a male or a female; you did not know that you are a human being. You were simply unconscious of all these externalities which you thought are connected with you. You were there as Pure Awareness only. "I slept well," you say afterwards. Who says, "I slept well"? The body cannot say that. The mind was also not operating. So who is saying, "I slept well"? That consciousness which was reposing in itself, not being aware of what is happening, is saying, "I slept well".

This is consciousness. You are meditating on consciousness. Now you have found out who you are. You are consciousness. Therefore, who is meditating on what? Consciousness is meditating on consciousness. Where is consciousness? I have told you that it is not only in one place, it is everywhere. So who is meditating on what? Universal consciousness is meditating on Universal consciousness. Why are you meditating? What is the purpose? The purpose is that you may become Universal existence. And what

happens? You will be deathless, immortal. This is the aim of life. So here is yoga for you, briefly.

Many seekers ask about how to rouse the kundalini. It is a very vast, very little understood subject. Everybody has some wrong notion about it, because they read some *hatha* yoga books which say that if you do some *asanas*—bending and breathing, and stretching the neck and locking the chin—something will come out of it. It will not come like that, it is only their imagination, because first of all, one must know what the problem is. Unless a doctor knows the patient's problem, the medicine cannot be prescribed. So, what is the problem of man? Has anybody understood it? And why should he rouse the kundalini? What is the purpose? Is it clear to his mind? He has a vague, unidentified notion of all things.

Energy is in the whole cosmos. The whole universe is energy only. So when one speaks of rousing the energy, what energy is one thinking of rousing? Now, when it is everywhere—if the universal energy is everywhere—where is the need for rousing it? It is everywhere. It means that though it is everywhere, in a human individual it is locked up in a physical location. It is not everywhere as far as the physical consciousness is concerned. It is everywhere theoretically, metaphysically, spiritually, absolutely. Yes, it is so; correct. But the mind of the human being cannot think like that. It cannot imagine that a thing is everywhere. Nobody thinks like that. They think it is only somewhere. If the energy of the human personality is identical with the Universal force, then it will virtually mean that a person is everywhere. This consequence follows. As energy is everywhere, it is also in one's own person; and as a person is made up of this energy, it will follow that every person is everywhere. Ultimately, it is the truth. Everybody is everywhere. That is the final truth; but the consciousness of the human individual is locked up in its intense attachment to this bodily limitation, and it can think only through this body. A human mind can think only through the body. It

cannot think through the Universal Being. It is not possible. I am slowly leading you to the point of kundalini.

As the whole energy is locked up in this bodily personality by a concentration of energy at a point of space and time, what has happened is, there is agony of consciousness. It is something like the fall of man from God, as is said in the language of the Bible. To fall from God is agony, great sorrow. So the consciousness, Universal that it is, has fallen headlong, upside down, as it were, into this earthly condition of physical personality. Consequently there is agony, sorrow; and one cannot exist in this condition for a long time. It is like living in hell. It is suffering. So, it tries to create a situation of removing this agony while still living in this finitude of the body. There is a line in Milton's *Paradise Lost* which says that Lucifer fell down into hell. Every human being is a Lucifer, because he has fallen from the Kingdom of Heaven. And Lucifer in hell says, "It is better to rule in hell than serve in heaven." It is the story of every man.

Now we are thinking—this bodily personality, the consciousness locked up in the body—is saying, "I am in hell, but let me create a heaven." How does it create a heaven? It manifests sense organs. The five sense organs are there. Seeing and contacting something by sight, hearing and contacting by sound, smelling by odor, touching by skin, tasting by tongue—these are the sensations this consciousness manufactures by intense thinking of the necessity to remove this finitude consciousness, because if it is always conscious that it is finite, it is like hell. It is not possible.

Every human being knows that he is finite, but he creates circumstances in society to remove the consciousness of finitude by somehow or other creating an atmosphere of bigness, importance. "I am a socially recognised person; the whole world knows me." If this idea enters the head, you somehow feel that the finitude has expanded into the area of the world. It has not really expanded; it has only expanded conceptually. Therefore, a socially great man is not really a

great man. He is only a small man, though people say "Very good! Very good!" But one day they say "Down!", and put him down. You know the history of great people. They are great only in the imagination, but still the foolishness of the mind is such that it is working to obtain it. It does not want only social importance; it also wants inner satisfaction.

How will it get satisfaction? One way to get satisfaction is to spread the consciousness of social contact, as I mentioned. The other way is that the sense organs want to come in contact with something outside. What happens is, a peculiar psychological drama takes place inside. The mind is inside, within the personality. It is suffering due to the fact that it is only inside. It is like a prison. It wants to get out from this prison. Every human individual is not made in the same way, psychologically. The mental structure is different. What I want is different from what you want. They are all different things. So a particular want, or longing of the mind, arisen out of that particular type of finitude, wants its counterpart in the world outside. This counterpart is of a particular type only, so that only certain things will satisfy you, only certain things will satisfy me, and nobody can be satisfied by all things. A particular sense object is chosen by the mind. It wants a beautiful thing; and what is beautiful to me will not be beautiful to other people, because the finitude is structurally different in different individuals. Similarly, it wants to contact certain sounds, and by that also you feel satisfied. It may be music, it may be some good word, or whatever it is. Similarly, this also applies to taste.

Now, these methods of the mind, adopted by the mind to overcome its limitations and expand the energy that is locked up in the body, are futile in nature. Therefore, anybody who is sensual and is too interested in sense contacts cannot practice this yoga, because he is doing something opposite of what is required. An artificial heaven is no heaven; it must be a real heaven. Conceptually, you can imagine, "I am the emperor of the whole world; I have got everything in me; I am a very big man." What is the use of thinking like that?

Really, it is not so. The Universal consciousness has cut off this individual consciousness by a fall, as they call it.

Then, what is the method? The method is to prevent the senses from going outward, from not thinking something that is outside. We started by saying energy is everywhere. If it is everywhere, it is not outside. This is a very subtle point. You cannot say anything in the world is outside, because outsideness is different from being everywhere. Do you understand the point? Thus, the Ultimate Reality is that which is everywhere. Therefore, the consciousness of the fact of something being outside should be stopped, withdrawn. This is what is called sense control. It is called by various names, such as *asbrahmacharya*, ethical discipline, morality, goodness, and charitableness. Many names are given, which all finally mean the method of sense control. What is sense control? It is the withdrawal of the consciousness from contemplating anything outside.

Now I am touching the point of kundalini. This energy is located under certain pressure points in the body, and you feel different sensations in different parts of the body. If I touch your nose, you will feel something; if I touch your ears, you will feel another thing; if I tickle your arms, you feel a third thing; if I tickle the stomach, something else, and so on. The different parts of the body generate different sensations. In this gross human personality, energy has descended to the lowest physical level. The *hatha yogins* or the *kundalini yogins* say it is in the lowest level, the *muladhara*.

'*Muladhara*' is a Sanskrit word. It is like an unconscious level, and therefore we are often in a state of unconsciousness. We do not think at all. We sleep. We seem like stones, like inanimate beings. In fact, we have descended to that level also. It is said by philosophers of evolution that there is evolution from matter to life, life to animal, animal to human. We have come to the human level from the lower level—that is, from the rock itself. Therefore, that rockconsciousness is also present in us little bit. We can sleep like a rock; we can breathe like a plant; we can behave

like an animal. Every human being has the animal quality also, and he can manifest it if he wants; and he can feel hunger and thirst like the plant; and he has the human qualities, as I mentioned. The lowest level is the total unconscious level.

In the next higher level, the consciousness is involved in different layers of nerve centres. It has to be roused by concentration on different parts of the body, intensely concentrating. There are seven centres, from the lowest up to the crown of the head. It is not concentration merely on that which is inside the body; it also has a corresponding location outside in the universe. There are seven nerve plexuses here. Correspondingly, there are seven planes of existence. In the scriptures, they are all mentioned. The physical, the astral, the mental, the intellectual, and the spiritual—these are the levels of being. They are cosmically existing levels; and we are to set ourselves in a state of harmony at each level between ourselves and that.

Thus, in each type of meditation you must conceive, “Physically I am one with the physical cosmos, vitally I am one with the cosmic energy, mentally I am one with the cosmic mind, intellectually I am one with the cosmic intellect, and I am, as a positive principle, one with the creative energy of the cosmos. As a spiritual light inside me, I am one with the Absolute Spirit. This is how you have to meditate—gradually, through the levels. Then the rise of the kundalini will take place. Actually, the rise of the kundalini is the rise of the mind from the lower level to the higher level of dimension—expansion until it reaches the Absolute stage.

The experience will be exactly as I told you just now. You will gradually feel united with cosmical levels, stage by stage. In the beginning, it will be a little circle, then it will become a wider circle—they are like concentric circles—until you reach the final circle, in which all the lower circles are included, so that the circle here includes all the lower. This is briefly the soul of the subject.