

Meditation for Health and Peace

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Abstract—Health is a state of physical and mental well-being. A healthy body houses a healthy mind. In the recent past there has been a surge in psychosomatic diseases. In spite of better health care facilities, preventive health care, and better quality of life, conflicts of the mind are increasing, leading to stress in daily life. The world is becoming more competitive and focus is on academic excellence and higher positions in demanding jobs. Although we are aware of the role of exercise and sports in staying physically fit, we tend to ignore mental health. This paper emphasizes the impact of meditation in promoting mental health, which in turn promotes physical health and well-being. Meditation helps us in realizing the self. Equipped with this knowledge, we have a better understanding of life. Dilemmas and conflicts of the mind disappear through meditation and we become aware of unity of life in its diverse forms. It transforms us from a limited to a limitless state, from an isolated to a united state, and from an ignorant to a fully awakened state. By the constant practice of meditation, the layers of ignorance and impurities gradually wash away. We start experiencing a sparkling, glistening, self that is devoid of any defects like fear, anger, jealousy, hatred etc. Meditation is a peaceful and blissful joyride. As meditation deepens we also realize that we are all one and same. We are just different manifestations of the same universal consciousness. This realization changes the personality, mind set and conduct of a person. Life becomes a joyful ride, full of energy, enthusiasm, peace and bliss. It resolves conflicts of the mind and helps us in realizing our goals in life.

Keywords: Health, Meditation, Peace, Stress

This is an era of science and technology and man has made great strides in the recent past. As a result of this progress, there has been a surge in networking, telecommunications, health care facilities, preventive health care, leading to a better quality of life. Advancements in science and technology have not only brought down the mortality rate but also improved the quality of life.

Though we say mankind has progressed so much, yet insecurities of the mind are increasing. This has given rise to stress in everyday life. Today everyone is aware of stress; whether it is a child, an adolescent, a youngster or an old person. All of us have experienced anger, jealousy, hatred, stubbornness, ego clashes, violence and fear at some time or the other. All these emotions develop due to the conflict in our mind and lead to a very negative impact on our psyche. These emotions are believed to lead to a number of diseases, be it blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety, ulceration etc.

It is now very well established that the practice of meditation is helpful in getting rid of inner conflicts [1, 5, 6]. In addition to worldly knowledge and achievements, we need the wisdom to discriminate right from wrong. It is easier to achieve the first two goals. However, the power of discrimination is enhanced through spiritual growth.

Spiritual growth is the ultimate purpose of life. Most people in the world today are very conscious of their bodies. They think that they are the body. However, study of our ancient scriptures like Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Vedas, and Upanishads, clearly establish that we are not only the body. We are actually a combination of body, soul, mind and intellect. The soul resides in the body. It is that pure consciousness which is non-physical, bright energy, in the form of light, and is imperishable (Srimad Bhagavad Gita 8.10, Shri Sai Satcharita). This soul is also termed the spirit or atman or self.

Since the body is temporary and the soul is permanent, we have to gradually shift from body consciousness to soul consciousness [8, 3, 7]. According to great spiritual gurus like Patanjali, Osho, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, it is clear that to acquire the knowledge of self, meditation is necessary. Buddhism, Jainism and Sufism also emphasize the role of meditation in self realisation. In the yoga of wisdom and knowledge in Srimad Bhagavad Gita (7.10), Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that He is the eternal seed of all the beings. This seed is the self or atman that is to be realized through meditation. This seed or spark of life is the same in all beings.

The Buddha said that all of us suffer from sickness. The cause of this sickness is desire. Desires are the result of our senses that are like wild horses. They constantly want and drive the mind. Our body is a vehicle which is driven by the desires of the mind and the intellect. Endless desires make us restless and rob us of our peace of mind. All our desires are transient. If we desire a house and acquire it, then the satisfaction of living in that house is temporary. Soon our mind starts playing tricks on us and we start desiring a bigger and better house. So everything in this ever changing world is temporary. However, through meditation we connect to the permanent reality of life. Through it we learn to discipline our mind as well as body. We take an inward journey and explore and experience a world within [2]. During meditation we experience divinity within us.

Any person can meditate, provided he has some resolution, endurance and dedication. As we acquire intellectual knowledge for sustenance and fulfilling our desires, we simultaneously need to grow spiritually. We need to check our desires. It neither means that we stop working and leave the world nor does it mean that we should have no desires. It means just the opposite. It means transformation of character, conduct and consciousness [2].

Meditation actually means training the senses. It means mastering our deepest cravings. The body becomes healthy and strong when the senses are trained. It quietens the mind and in deep meditation a state of thoughtlessness is achieved. This is a state of deep rest. Even sleep cannot induce this state. The subconscious mind keeps working during sleep to induce dreams. Therefore, the sleep-wake cycle cannot induce the state that the soul requires. Meditation connects us with the all-pervading, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient universal consciousness we term God. When we are connected with that consciousness, we can draw on a limitless source of energy that floods us. It is like charging the battery of a cell phone with an electrical point through a charger. Similarly, meditation is the electrical cord that charges the battery of our soul by connecting it to the over soul or universal consciousness [5, 6, 7]. In fact, it floods us with energy that helps us in realizing our goal.

In meditation we connect with our conscious or self. The self is such a pure entity that the moment we realize it, a state of bliss is achieved. We realize that we are a miniscule part of the universal consciousness. The soul has some inherent basic qualities. It is a joyful, powerful, pure and blissful entity. Soul is the only permanent entity of life and each one of us is the same soul [4].

Through meditation we realize that we are here to perform our role in the world. Meditation makes us realize what we actually are and what our goal is. In addition, it channelizes us in such a manner that all that is unnecessary in achieving that goal becomes evident and all that is not required is cleansed away from our life. This brings us to a state of one pointedness. Equipped with this focus, we perform better and without stress.

Meditation transforms us from a limited to a limitless state, from an isolated to a united states and from an ignorant to a fully awakened state. By the constant practice of meditation, the layers of ignorance and impurities gradually wash away. We start experiencing a sparkling, glistening self that is devoid of any defects like fear, anger, jealousy, hatred etc. Meditation is a peaceful, blissful joyride. Our physical and emotional problems find their solution through it. Our creative and artistic abilities develop and mature and we are able to contribute to the welfare of others including family, society, country and the world. It increases our understanding and tolerance and we eventually become happier. We experience a better state of health because of increased vitality, resilience

and resistance to stress and disease. It boosts our immune system [2].

By transforming ourselves we are able to transform those with whom we live. This is called joyful living [2]. It is not running away from problems. It gives us the power to face challenges with quiet confidence and insight that comes with the constant practice of meditation. True peace descends upon us when we experience the reality of our soul. It actually quietens the mind and ends its conflicts. We become firm, secure and free of stress.

The practice of meditation involves withdrawing our attention away from the body and the external world. During meditation we focus our attention on the third eye chakra (Ajna Chakra). This is a point between the two eyebrows. When the meditation deepens we can see a light and hear a sound within us. This lifts us to a state of higher consciousness. We are not aware of this reality because our attention is always directed to the inner conflicts that arise due to outward or worldly journey. Our attention remains scattered throughout the body and goes out to the world through the five senses. As we go within, we experience great peace, contentment and happiness. Our endless search in the material world cannot help in achieving this state.

Gradually, through meditation, the baggage of our desires starts reducing. We begin to live in a state of equanimity, and accept all that comes our way. We perform our duties with perfection in a dispassionate manner, being even minded in success and failure (Srimad Bhagavad Gita, 2.48)

Therefore, in order to bring peace in this angry world, we have to become peaceful ourselves. If each one of us becomes peaceful, we shall contribute towards world peace. To transform others, we have to transform ourselves. We will then see the beautiful effect of meditation all around us.

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