

Some Thoughts on

The Heartfulness Practices

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Heartfulness Meditation

I will describe the method of Heartfulness Meditation for those who are not aware of how to meditate, those who are attending a meditation session for the first time. It's very simple: **Gently keep your eyes closed with your attention toward your heart, thinking of the presence of the Divine in the form of Light. Think that it is attracting your attention inward, pulling your attention inward. That's all you have to do. If thoughts arise during meditation, it's okay. When you become aware that you have drifted from the meditation, gently remind yourself that, "I am meditating on the presence of divine Light in the heart."**

Meanwhile, while you're meditating, you will be able to receive Transmission – what we call *pranahuti* – which is a unique experience in itself. Heartfulness's specialty is only this Transmission, and because of the Transmission many things happen. The first is that we are able to dive deeper in meditation, and the second is that we are able to slowly get rid of many so-called cognitive biases, also known as *samskaras* or impressions, little by little, to

the extent that we can tolerate. So to begin meditation, gently focus on “The presence of the divine Light in the heart that is pulling your attention inward,” and be receptive toward the Transmission. That’s all there is to it.

Meditation is all about training your mind, regulating your mind. But despite your sincere efforts and keen interests, a time does arrive when you get bored with meditation: “Oh, just one more meditation!” It’s quite natural. But if you continue meditating, despite the boredom, you’ll be able to arrive at a more refined state. Then it is something of a victory – you were resisting, but now you are able to meditate. That itself is a personal victory over your mind. The mind plays a lot of tricks with us. Many people say, “The mind is your enemy.” No, the mind is not your enemy; the mind can be your biggest friend, provided you know how to take help from this mind. A well-trained mind will serve you like a good friend. So the key is to train your mind, slowly, and allow it to do what your heart’s intentions direct it to do.

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Lalaji Maharaj talks about it in his book, *Truth Eternal*. He says that it is not that we have to arrive at a zombie-like state or lose consciousness. No. Heartfulness is all about arriving at a more refined level of consciousness, where we remain absorbed on one particular idea or on a spiritual state. **We have the concept of A, E, I, O, U – the acronyms for acquiring, enlivening, integrating or intensifying it, making it one, creating oneness, and establishing union with the Maker.** What we do are the first three things – A, E and I. O and U are the consequences, the results of us practicing A, E and I.

In order to acquire (A) the condition, you have to meditate. Unless you meditate, you cannot acquire a new spiritual condition. Having acquired it, you need to enliven (E) it. Often people ask me, “What is this enlivening of the condition?” To me, enlivening it is to magnify the inner spiritual condition, which has been given to you in the form of a gist – something like a seed.

Now you have to water it and allow it to grow and become a huge tree – enliven it. If you have a bit of peace, a bit of calmness or stillness of mind after each meditation, identify it. Having acquired it, you can enliven it; put more life into it by creating more interest in holding on to that state for a longer and longer period. Mingle with it. Write something about it in your diary. Talk about it to your mother, your father, or your friends, and see how it is actually enlivened by simple exercises like this. Enlivening to me also means taking it to a next level of integrating (I) with our life, intensifying (I) it.

An analogy that comes to mind is a diamond. A raw diamond on its own will not have a shine; it will not look so beautiful. But if you cut it properly and polish it, it will have a beautiful glitter. And it will become even more beautiful the moment you set it in a piece of jewellery. It becomes a presentable wearable entity. Another example that comes to mind is a beautiful painting. If you hang the painting with scotch tape or duct tape on your wall, it will look terrible, whereas if you frame it, it will look very beautiful. The painting gains value also by having the right kind of frame – a proper match. So our inner spiritual condition also requires some sort of framing within.

How to do it? It's up to us. Each condition is beautiful, and each condition can be framed and embellished further by adjusting our lifestyle around it. We can't have a peaceful mind and at the same time start shouting and becoming irritable – though the most peaceful people are the ones who lose their minds so easily. They are easily disturbed because they are so quiet and calm. Initially it may happen, but over a period of time the superficial calmness that we have can become very deep. It is like comparing the water surface of a calm pond, where even a small leaf will create ripples, with the depth of an enormous pond. Even when you throw a boulder in, while it will create a ripple, immediately it will settle. So we need to create not only calmness and stillness in our minds but also depth.

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Heartfulness Prayer at Bedtime

To experience a state of absorbency, and take it even further to the level that Lalaji prefers us to have, is to have control over our unconscious mind, where *sushupti* takes over, where thoughtlessness because of sleep takes over. In sleep, we don't think anything. Many of us are familiar with the three different levels of consciousness: awakened consciousness, where we interact, listen and talk; then the dream-like state of the subconscious mind, which we experience when we are falling off to sleep in a drowsy state and during lighter sleep; and the deep sleep state, which we call *sushupti*.

Lalaji says that if we have control over our heart's feelings before going to sleep, then we sleep with that state, there is the possibility of understanding the dream state and the state of deep sleep with our heart. For that, our prayer becomes very handy. The role of the Heartfulness Prayer cannot be underestimated. It is all about our inner cry.

It is wonderful to notice the beginning of the prayer itself, when we say, "O Master!" Imagine when we say, "Oh my darling!" or "Oh, my dear wife!" or "Oh, my son!" or "Oh, my father!" When do we use this exclamation, "Oh"? It actually expresses our inner cry,

our pleading. This is the number one thing we have to remember. Do we have that level of intense inner cry? At the very beginning, with "O Master!" we are identifying the goal: "What is my goal?"

Then, **as we dive deeper with the words of the prayer, trying to understand their meaning, our consciousness and our feelings also travel into inner realms with these words.** When we say, "We are yet but slaves of wishes," there's some level of helplessness; we are still slaves of wishes that are blocking our progress towards that Ultimate Goal. Are we frustrated by having so many desires? There are only two blockages: the number one block is desire, and



the second is ego. And ego is sublimated somehow when we also recognize His greatness – the greatness of the Master. For the Master is God, and we are saying, “My Lord, without your help we can’t attain this final state.”

When we practice the prayer, we become very humble – we become insignificant when we address our feelings in this way. In one go, through just three lines of prayer, we are expressing our inner cry, we are recognizing what is blocking it, and we try to create that inner harmony by letting ourselves know, “Oh, we are so insignificant. He is the great One; He is the help. On our own, we cannot achieve anything.”

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So, we’re invoking Grace, and without Grace the journey will be dry. In fact, there cannot be any journey without Grace. Can you travel without any help? How far can you walk? The journey is infinite. So we need to make use of this night-time prayer in a masterful way. They are not just words. Even if you repeat the words and contemplate, it is only so that you create feelings, resonate with those feelings, and allow them to strike the heart of the Ultimate. We have heard Babuji saying that if you knock at the door God will open it. We have to knock at His door, and this can happen only when our inner cry reaches that abode.

Otherwise, any feeling-less sounds will not reach there. You might say it is falling on deaf ears, but it is because you are not able to convey the inner feelings, or because you don’t have the feelings. **So create that sincere authentic inner cry, recognize what is blocking you, and understand that without His help, without His Grace, it is impossible to travel and arrive at the final destination.**

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