

## MEDITATION IN JAIN SCRIPTURES (1)

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Meditation (dhyān) is the process of concentrating mind on a single topic; preventing it from wandering. Virtuous meditation can be practiced by a person with a physical constitution who can keep his thought-activity from drifting and concentrate solely on the nature of self. When the soul gets rid of all auspicious and inauspicious intentions and dilemmas, and attains a state of unbiased absorption in all bonds of karma break down. In fact, meditation entails forgetting all worries, intentions and dilemmas, and stabilizing the mind. It involves contemplating about the nature of soul, thinking of the difference between soul and matter, and concentrating on the true self.

Meditation purifies the mind, speech and body. However, it is of no avail to inflict pain on the body without purifying the thoughts. One who stabilizes the mind and concentrates on the self definitely achieves salvation. Meditation is the only means to stabilize the mind.

Meditation is of four kinds:

- Sorrowful (aarta) meditation
- Inclement (raudra) meditation
- Righteous (dharma) meditation
- Spiritual (shukla) meditation

Of these the first two are inauspicious because they cause the influx of undesirable karma. The last two are auspicious because they help destroy karma.

### SORROWFUL MEDITATION

The Sanskrit word aarta means sorrow. The thought-activity caused by an outburst and intensity of sorrow is sorrowful meditation. It is of four types:

Distaste Related (anishtasamyog janya) sorrowful meditation is persistent thoughts and worry about the removal of disagreeable objects, situations or events.

Attachment related (ishtaviyoga janya) sorrowful meditation is the constant feelings of anguish on the loss of some agreeable object or person, such as wealth, spouse or child, and the preoccupation to recover the lost objects.

Suffering related (vedana janya) sorrowful meditation is the feeling of impatience, grief and agony in the face of disease, sickness, etc., and the worry about its going away.

Desires related (nidaanaj) sorrowful meditation is having persistent desires for future sensual pleasures and comforts.

## INCLEMENT MEDITATION

The sanskrit word rudra means inclement (harsh, lacking mercy). The meditation involving inclement thoughts is called inclement meditation. Based on the cause, inclement meditation has been divided into four types:

Violence enchantment (himsa anand) inclement meditation involves thoughts of enchantment (delight) generated by teasing, hurting and/or killing animals. Cruel, angry, immoral, nonreligious and passionate people indulge in such meditation.

Violence-enchantment meditation also includes contemplation about revenge, planning to beat or kill someone and enjoying visions of deadly war scenes.

Untruth enchantment (mrisha anand) inclement meditation is thought involving false imagination stained with sinful intentions. A person with this type of meditation takes delight in a variety of intentions and alternatives based on untruth.

Stealing enchantment (chaurya anand) inclement meditation involves thoughts of ways to steal and misappropriate other's wealth or beautiful things.

Pleasure preservation (vishaya samrakshan) inclement meditation is contemplation about schemes of enjoyment of sensual pleasures and of accumulation of material wealth and the means of material comforts.

Sorrowful and inclement meditations hinder spiritual uplift, They obscure the attributes of soul. They cause the natural disposition of self to disappear and initiate corrupt dispositions. Both these meditations are inauspicious and lead to undesirable destinations. They are not related to spiritual advancement in any manner.

## RIGHTEOUS MEDITATION

Contemplation about devotion beneficial to self and others, and proper conduct is righteous meditation. It is one of the causes of the purification of the soul. By practicing this meditation in all of its aspects the true spirit of the three levels (proper perception, proper knowledge and proper conduct) is attained, and shedding of karma occurs. Righteous meditation is of four types.

Doctrine oriented (aajnavichay) righteous meditation is contemplation about reality as described in the scriptures.

Self dependence oriented (apayavichaya) righteous meditation involves thinking about helping the self and others get rid of vices such as attachment, aversion and delusion.

Karmic fruition oriented (vipakavichaya) righteous meditation involves concentrating on the nature and fruition of different kinds of karma by observing the worldly pleasure and pain.

Universe oriented (sansthanvichaya) righteous meditation is contemplation about the nature and structure of the universe.

Righteous meditation is possible for rational beings in one of the following stages of spiritual development: (2) Vowless, with partial vows, self-control without conscientiousness, and self-control with conscientiousness. Another classification of righteous meditation is: embodiment-based (pindashtha), mantra

based (padaastha), image based (roopastha) and intangible (roopaateet).

Embodiment based righteous meditation is contemplation about soul residing in the body. From the aspect of reality, soul is conscious, and has absolute perception and knowledge. However, it has attachment and aversion on account of the cause and effect relationship (between karma and soul). This cause and effect relationship is without beginning and embodiment (wordly existence) of the soul is the result of this relationship. Although the soul is distinct from the material body, and is formless (intangible) and conscious, it is said to have a form due to its association with matter. Such thoughts constitute embodiment-based meditation. The five visualizations (dhaaranas) which can be employed for accomplishing such meditation are: earth (paarthivi) visualization, fire (aagneyi) visualization, air (vaayu) visualization, water (jala) visualization, and reality (tattvaroopvati) visualization.

**Earth Visualization:** This consists of an ocean of pure water in the middle of the universe; an enormous golden lotus of one thousand petals representing the earth; a tall mountain in the center of the lotus; a forest and a huge rock at the peak of the mountain; and a throne of white crystal on the rock. The aspirant imagines himself seated in the lotus position on the crystal throne and meditates on the means of destroying karma.

**Fire Visualization:** Sitting on the crystal throne, described above, the aspirant imagines a white lotus of sixteen petals rising from his navel. The sixteen golden vowels of the Devanagari script are inscribed on the petals and the Sanskrit word "Hram" is inscribed in the center. (3) The aspirant further imagines another lotus of eight petals near his heart, considering that the eight petals represent the eight kinds of karma.

Next, the aspirant visualizes smoke rising from the top of the word "Hram" and flames burning the heart-lotus which symbolizes karma. He further imagines that the flames are reaching his forehead. They divide into two halves reaching the top of the head from two sides. The triangular fire engulfs the body. The fire consists of flames in the shape of the Devanagari letter "ra". Inscribed on the outside of the triangle at the three vertices are the symbols of life (saanthias), and the Sanskrit phrase "Om Hram" is inscribed on the inside. The meditator thinks that the inner flame is destroying karma while the outer flame is consuming the body. He imagines that all karma and his body have finally been reduced to ashes. The flames have subsided. This exercise is called fire visualization.

**Air Visualization:** Continuing the above visualization, the aspirant imagines a powerful whirlwind. The cyclone surrounding him has the Sanskrit word "Swayn" written at eight places. The word is blowing away the ashes of karma and of the body. The soul is being purified. This is the air visualization phase of the embodiment based righteous meditation.

**Water Visualization:** In the next phase, the aspirant imagines that dark clouds have filled the sky. There is a rainstorm accompanied by lightning and thunder. A half moon of water has been formed around the meditator. The Devanagari letter "Pa" is written on it at many places. Streams of water are flowing. The karmic ashes are being washed away and the soul is being cleansed. This is water visualization.

**Reality Visualization:** In the final phase, the aspirant thinks that he is perfect, omniscient, pure and conscious soul, free from all karmic and other material associations. He is like a pristine human statue of consciousness, shining like a full moon. This is reality visualization.

The above five exercises, in the order described above, constitute the embodiment-based righteous meditation. Such meditation eliminates all karma and gradually unveils the attributes (knowledge, perception, bliss and power) of soul.

Mantra-based righteous meditation is contemplation about the five supreme benevolent personalities (arahanta, siddha, acharya, upadhyaya, and sadhu), and about the nature of soul with the help of mantras. (4)

The meditator visualizes a mantra written at a predetermined spot such as the front of the nose or in between the eyebrows and concentrates on it. In this meditation, the contemplation about the pure souls is done with an aspiration to purify one's soul by eliminating karma. One easy and practical way to conduct this meditation is to visualize a lotus having eight petals near the heart. Written on five of the petals are the five lines of Namokar Mantra which mean the following:

- We revere the supreme human beings (arahantas).
- We revere the perfect souls (siddhas).
- We revere the master teachers (acharyas).
- We revere the scholarly sages (upadhyayas).
- We revere all the ascetics (sadhus).

Written on the remaining three petals are the lines:

- We revere proper perception.
- We revere proper knowledge.
- We revere proper conduct.

The aspirant concentrates on the mantra on each petal for as long as possible.

Image-based righteous meditation is visualizing the supreme benevolent personality arahanta (the supreme human being) seated in the meditating posture in the religious assembly (samavasharan) having twelve sections. The aspirant thinks that arahanta possesses the infinite foursome (anant chatushtaya) i.e., infinite perception, bliss, and power, and is beyond all attachment. Alternatively, he concentrates on the statue of Jina (the spiritual conqueror) in meditating posture.

Intangible righteous meditation is concentrating on the abstract attributes of the perfect souls (siddhas). The aspirant recalls that the siddhas are formless, accomplished, serene, embodiments of consciousness, free from karma, and beyond all attachment. They possess the eight attributes: absolute rationalism, absolute perception, absolute knowledge, equality of status, eternity, subtlety, infinite bliss, and non-interference. Then the meditator thinks that the self is potentially a perfect soul, a supreme soul (paramaatma), an omniscient being who is free from karmic bondage.

## **SPIRITUAL MEDITATION**

The concentration achieved by an immaculate mind is spiritual meditation. It consists of four states: Multi aspect (prathakatva savitarka savichar), single aspect (ekatva savitarka avichar), subtle activity (sookshma kriya apratipaati) and absorption in self (vyuparat kriya nivarti).

Multi aspect spiritual meditation is performed by an aspirant who has scriptural knowledge and who is attempting to attain the spiritual stages of subsidence or destruction of the conduct deluding karma. The aspirant concentrates upon the various aspects of reality. This type of meditation involves shifting of attention between the meaning, word and activity of the aspects of reality. Hence, it is called multi aspect meditation with shifting. This meditation suppresses or eliminates conduct deluding karma.

Single aspect spiritual meditation is contemplation on a single aspect of reality on the basis of scriptural knowledge by an aspirant who is in the delusion free (kshina moha) spiritual stage. The aspirant concentrates on one particular form or word or activity of the aspect of reality without shifting. Such meditation is the single aspect stage of spiritual meditation. This meditation eliminates the four destructive (ghatiya) karmas, namely, perception obscuring karma, knowledge obscuring karma, deluding karma and obstructing karma. Thus, it leads to omniscience.

Subtle activity spiritual meditation is performed by an omniscient who eliminates the gross activities of body, speech and mind, and posses only subtle activities. In such as case the association of soul with body causes only subtle movements of the space-points of the soul. Hence it is called the subtle activity stage of spiritual meditation.

Absorption in self spiritual meditation is performed by an omniscient who eliminates even the slight activity of the soul in spite of its association with body. All activities (of the space-points of the soul) cease in this meditation. Thus the influx of even the pleasant feeling producing (sata vedaniya) karma is stopped. Finally all karmas are shed and the soul attains salvation.

This is meditation according to Jain scriptures.

It is interesting to note that, although Jains have developed such meditative exercises as samayika and the aforementioned types of dharmadhyana, they have traditionally paid scant attention to the more magical paths of awakening so heavily favored by other Indian schools. Thus we find in their ancient texts no mention of yogic control over respiration (pranayama), or of the mystical centers of psychic energy (the kundalini or the chakras, for example), Jaina teachers seem to have felt a pronounced repugnance for occult powers and the practices which aimed specifically to generate them; such techniques are considered suitable mainly for destructive purposes, hence, to be avoided.

- P. S. Jaini in The Jaina Path of Purification, p. 253

1. English adaptation of the section on meditation (dhyān) in Dr. Nemichandra Jyotishacharya's Tirthankar Mahavir Aur Unki Acharya Parampara, vol 1, pp. 533-543, Jain Vidwat Parishad, Sagar, M. P., India, 1974.
2. There are fourteen stages of spiritual development. Those mentioned here are the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh stages.
3. The vowels and "Hram" represent the syllables from Namokar Mantra and certain spiritual teachings.
4. Comprehensible combinations of letters words or phrases.