

Deeper States of Meditation

Hopefully we have all experienced the peace and bliss of 'Thoughtless Awareness' which one can achieve on a daily basis through Sahaja Yoga meditation. This state gives us great benefits in the quality of our everyday lives, improving our health, relationships, sleep, etc. This state is known in India - a place where Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years - as Nirvichāra Samādhi – '*meditation beyond thoughts*'.

However this is not the final purpose of Sahaja Yoga or of life itself. It is only the first step in the process known as Self-realisation. There are deeper, or higher, states of meditation which bring us closer to knowing the nature of our Self and the Ultimate Reality.

Thoughtless Awareness occurs when the Kuṇḍalinī passes through Āgñyā Chakra – the energy centre in the middle of the head - and enters Sahasrāra – the crown Chakra. If the Kuṇḍalinī then passes through the top of the head and pierces the Chakra above Sahasrāra, we start to feel the Divine Nature flowing over us as waves of cool vibrations sending ripples of bliss through our Subtle System. We become immersed in these waves of joy and so absorbed in the experience of our Subtle System that the external world is obliterated. This stage is called Nirvikalpa Samādhi – '*meditation beyond all concepts*' also known as 'Doubtless Awareness'. It is 'doubtless' because we are experiencing the Divine Nature directly and so know the existence of the Divine for sure.

If the Kundalini rises even higher we go beyond the joy and bliss and enter a state of Pure Consciousness where we no longer have any sense of having a body or a subtle system of Chakras. All illusions such as the past and future, our ego, name, emotions and thoughts fall away. We realise the truth which is that our nature, our 'Self', is pure consciousness, also known as the Spirit or Ātmā, which is unlimited and unfettered from our identification with the body, mind, emotions, etc. This is the real meaning of 'Self-realisation'.

Even further expansion is possible where we our consciousness becomes unlimited in time and space, in fact it is not 'our' consciousness at all as there is no sense of separate identity and we are not just a part of, but fully identified with the All-pervading Supreme Consciousness. It is as if we are filling the vastness of space and encompassing the whole of time. We realise our identity with the Divine which is Infinite and Eternal.

This is what is meant by 'the drop dissolving into the ocean' or the state of becoming 'one with everything'. Once we have experienced this oneness with the Divine we can no longer doubt the existence of the Supreme Spirit or forget that, in essence, we are a part of that. We may continue our ordinary lives but our whole viewpoint will be altered irrevocably.

This experience has been described in many cultures as well as India – by Christian and Islamic mystics, American Indians and Zen Buddhists to name but a few. The beauty of Sahaja Yoga is that these experiences are available to all who earnestly desire them while still living a normal life.

So the big question is 'How do we achieve these higher states of meditation?' The essential ingredient is our desire. Can we honestly say that the only thing that matters to us is to achieve enlightenment? If this is so and we are prepared to make any sacrifice to know the Ultimate Truth, then, paradoxically, we are not required to make any sacrifice except to let go of the illusions which are obscuring the Truth and are, after all, only causing us suffering.

However there is another condition and that is recognition. In all cultures that have talked of this experience it is held as fundamental that one must have a guide – someone who has reached those shores before and knows the Path to the Divine. It is necessary to recognise that this guide, this Guru, is the Divine incarnated and to have absolute trust in them. This is still true in Sahaja Yoga. This guide for us is Her Supreme Holiness Shri Mataji Nirmala Devi and such is Her Power that no other intermediary is necessary.

I would say from personal experience that one has to be prepared to give it enough time. Buddha attained enlightenment by sitting down under the Bodhi Tree determined that He was not going to rise from that spot until He had known the Truth. This took Him several days. We also need to find a place and some time where we can do the same. If we are determined that we will not give up until we have really experienced connection to the Divine, no matter if this is two hours or two days (*or two weeks!*) this seems to have a powerful effect. We have places in Sahaja Yoga where one can go and feel free to pursue such a path without disturbance or interruption.

The present time is a great opportunity to achieve this, the ultimate goal of existence, which we have been seeking for many lifetimes – what is a few days devoted to realising the Truth compared to hundreds of years of living lives sunk in worldly illusions that we may have gone through in the past?

So I wish you all the best of luck with this, the greatest adventure that a Human Being can undertake. You will find that practitioners of Sahaja Yoga are more than willing to give their time, help and advice to assist you on this path without requiring any payment – in fact they would be shocked if you offered!

Jay Shri Mataji!

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