

ORDER AND MEDITATION

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ORDER

Order is everything in its place in the present. This includes all things—ourselves, our relationships with each other, and with all things and conditions we find ourselves in from moment to moment. It is not an 'external rearrangement', as such, though it may result in some moving around. It is standing with everything without division through the process of change.

'In its place' implies *its own* place and not the place *we* give to things. Just like each piece of a jigsaw puzzle has its own place, everyone and everything too has its own place—not permanent, so to say, but from moment to moment.

We ourselves are part of a vast arrangement, and being so, it is ridiculous to have a separate order for everything that we call our life. There is no 'our life' at all—we ourselves are part of something very grand and each situation presents an opportunity for some external adjustment to follow the waves of change to the unchangeable that underlies and animates all change.

EXTERNAL ORDER

If you consider yourself one with the neighborhood you reside in, you will naturally pick up a glass bottle or fruit peel on the path, because it does not belong there and, it may hurt someone. If, on the other hand, you do not feel one with any environment—someone else (whose job it is more than likely) will or should do the needful—that is what they are getting paid for, after all. This utterly selfish attitude comes about when we do not stand *with* things—with our environment—not just where we reside, but wherever we find ourselves from moment to moment.

When we do not stand with all things, all things do not stand with us and we suffer a self-imposed exile from our own larger self. Our prejudices and desires separate us from everything, and though one may have justification for this—it is unspiritual. Spirit animates, sustains and envelopes all—no one and nothing stands apart from this vast panorama of existence—in *its* design, not ours.

When you stop by a rest stop or another public place, you are at home just as you are in your own home—nothing is unsacred. Order is not the intellectual recognition of this, but a deep

feeling of the harmony of all existence which has soaked down to the very cells of one's being so that this inner recognition acts directly—doing what needs to be done without the interference of thought. The 'someone else will surely do it' never arises in the mind that stands with all things—the spiritual mind. As long as this 'someone else' arises, you stand apart from things and this will be the source of problems.

Order or standing with things does not mean that you become everything to everyone either, as standing together is not merely a physical condition but an inner state without any feeling of otherness, or a state undivided. The same wisdom that feels oneness with all also understands suitability and does not try to become something unnatural in order to fit in, try to make others something they are not, or develop attitudes as conditions change.

Different creatures inhabit the forest and some live closer, others keep their distance, but they are able to do this without hatred or animosity. All foods do not agree with people equally and some foods are best not had in some seasons or under certain conditions. Wisdom is in knowing what is right for the moment. This same wisdom also recognizes that because I feel not to eat something, I do not have to become anti-that or averse to those who do feel to eat it.

When you see yourself as no different from others, regardless of status and conditions—you have taken a bold step in abolishing this 'otherness' which is the source of many problems. All are entitled to their views, beliefs and ways of life and none have authority or sway over any other in this regard. Any view is as valid as my view. Your point of view may not be natural to me, but it is the same as mine in that it is a point of view only and not the absolute truth. No idea, expression or belief can be absolute or the truth.

To see everything as it is, without the coloring of my beliefs, requires ongoing vigilance. I must be both awake and remain alert so that thought does not interfere with perception or action. There is direct perception or seeing things as they are, not as we would like them to be, and this clarity in seeing—acts directly. This necessitates inner order or standing together internally as well.

INTERNAL ORDER

Internal order is alignment in the thoughts, feelings and the body. When there is no fragmentation, all energy flows in the direction of different activities but is guided by a single principle. Every thought, feeling, word and deed is onboard and activities are opportunities for discovery and transformation—one single principle.

Struggle in any effort is based on internal disorder. There is a vast difference between hard effort and struggle. Effort is energy expended in a certain direction. Struggle is energy expended in multiple directions. What we call obstacles and distractions are nothing but our own conscious decisions to exert in competing directions—sometimes at the same time.

When all of us is not onboard and moving in one direction, there is fragmentation and this is experienced as stress and fatigue. Hard work never causes stress, as a warm meal and some rest will replenish the energy for the next day.

When we are fragmented inside, it is almost impossible to perceive what is actually happening in front of us from moment to moment, and responses to situations will reflect the inner war.

DIRECT PERCEPTION

Direct perception has to be empowered to act without the interference of thought, which includes selfish calculations and prejudice of any kind. The inner intelligence, which is not fragmented or conditioned, sees—and that clarity of sight itself acts.

There is no inner fragmentation of hurt feelings or bruised egos, as it is not something done grudgingly or with reserve. This is not an experiment in some different way of living for some end but a way of living where each action is a total action and an end to itself without the psychological continuation.

Direct perception and action, which are the two phases for one single movement, prevents getting hurt and subsequently, hurting others. When I am hurt, I try to take all the steps necessary to prevent getting hurt in the future and this involves all kinds of separation as self-protection, which increases the hurt felt by loneliness and isolation and further hurts others as well. When we clearly see that being hurt and hurting others comes about because of the interference of thought and conditioning—the inner intelligence is awakened.

This is not something that happens incrementally or selectively. Till it happens, thought is very much in the driver's seat and being hurt as well as hurting others is inevitable. We may cloak hurt and try to avoid it by all kinds of fantastic superficial gestures, but it does not work.

All conditioning is thought, and thought is not only the reason for our problems but the substance of problems and the experience of problems. We have to see this very, very clearly so the seeing is itself change at this very moment. When a chronic smoker sees himself coughing up blood and the physician confirms his condition as serious unless he quits smoking—he acts not so much because of what the physician has said, but because he has seen the danger for himself and acts. Health warnings on cigarette packets, the warnings of friends and family and the advice of doctors do not release the energy to quit on the spot as does direct perception of the danger.

SPIRITUAL ORDER

All these things must come together at the same time: standing as one with things where we discover what 'fitting-in' means; being together internally so that all, physically, mentally and our awareness, is facing each situation from moment to moment and there is direct

perception—where thought finds its place within consciousness as a function and there is spiritual order.

The inner intelligence sees directly what is actually in front of us from moment to moment, and guided by the single principle of discovery and transformation—*it* acts. Thought is used as a function by the inner intelligence (or the undivided mind or consciousness) and no longer uses other faculties.

For this natural order to get restored, one has to be awake—the danger of the interference of all conditioning or memory has to be clearly seen. Again, this is not something felt intellectually but in every cell of one's being. Then, one stays alert or sustains the waking condition and this is called vigilance.

Vigilance is total observation: where what is happening externally and internally, or the attempt of inner conditioning to act, is seen at the same time without the feeling of inner or outer. You can only stand as one with all things when there is total clarity in perception and response. You have to be able to see and act without the interference of thought in any way. For this, thought must find its rightful place as a function, no different from any limb or sense function. Here, thought becomes most useful as it contributes but does not take over.

Our problems are the result of thought interference in perception, or seeing what actually is as it is, and a response that contributes to the situation and not one that sustains the ego. We often say in remorse, "If I only knew..."—why didn't you know? Awareness was absent, it was somewhere else. We are physically present but mentally loiter on the pathways of thought—the past and future. Past is memory and the content of memory is thought; the future is hope and imagination and the content of this is thought too. This inner time is made completely of thought—unreal, as it has no corresponding reality physically.

Seeing and acting are not two different things. Spiritual order in life is living in accordance with the oneness in and of all things, we ourselves included, and this 'seeing' empowers the inner intelligence which sees and acts. The awakened intelligence sees and acts. This is not something vague or supernatural—we see this in our daily lives every day. Our attention drifts when we drive, and to avert some real danger, the inner awareness which never sleeps sees and does what is needed to avoid real danger. This inner intelligence does not respond to the unreal or to something that has not happened or to something that may happen, as these are unreal—the products of thought.

These 'may happen' and 'happened earlier' are functions of thought—they are thought functioning—presenting an illusion which is the field of all our problems and stress. There is no difficulty in dealing with something real—however catastrophic it may be because it is out there, it is something real, and seeing this, you know what has to be done.

MEDITATION

Meditation is the experience of reality. You behold or experience the content of your own consciousness in meditation—whatever it be. We will not attempt to go into meditation here, but it is important to see how meditation is not only transformative but transformation itself.

No matter what path your meditation takes, facing the rise and fall of thought of what we call distraction is inevitable. To be aware of the rise and fall of thought without being distracted becomes vital to the meditator.

LIVING MEDITATION

If you are serious about meditation, your entire life revolves around meditation, so to say. You are very careful about all actions, as action can and mostly does culminate in impressions in the mind—favorable or unfavorable—and these rise as distractions in meditation. This care extends to all areas of life, including your health, diet, cleanliness of surroundings and company, but it is not blind care or fanaticism. This care is wise and knows how to adapt externally without losing itself, and so there is no need for it to assert superficially.

Your whole life must become a living meditation for meditation on the mat to be of any real value. One has to be careful to see that actions do not rise from thought but from a response to something real—what is actually facing you—and that actions do not end with thought but with the action in itself. This is called total action.

Meditators are very careful about every single thought, feeling, word or deed, as if any of these rise from thought (from any form of conditioning), they reinforce the impression; and at the same time they see that when the action ends, thought or feeling concerning the action ends with the action, or else impressions are created in the mind again.

Actions stemming from impressions strengthen them and become predispositions for future actions. Actions resulting in thought reinforce older impressions or create new impressions which again add to the bed of conditioning already existing. These are of great concern to the meditator, as it is these that will rise sooner or later as distractions in meditation. It is like trying to gain health and living an unhealthy lifestyle at the same time—a self-inflicted suffering.

MEDITATION PRACTICE

The practice of meditation is only an extension of living meditation. If you have been living a life of meditation—that is, every thought, feeling, word and deed being a response to reality without the interference of thought—you would have significantly reduced the noise of the mind. Over 85% of all thought is useless chatter—thought that never results in anything—

starting as thought and remaining thought. All our worries, stresses and grief are the experience of the consequence of this noise.

In the practice of meditation, you confront the rise and fall of existing impressions and tendencies and discover how to be aware of these and not be distracted by them. This gives rise to increased awareness—like the ocean being aware of a wave rising and falling within it without observing it, so to say.

Thought, which is a modification of consciousness, discovers that the background of consciousness is the continuity and therefore there is a feeling of security in it instead of trying to stand outside it which is just not possible. This is an immense discovery for the conditioned mind as it struggles and races to try to replicate consciousness by working overtime to provide lasting security, satisfaction and joy. The conditioned mind has somehow assumed responsibility for life, though it is only a function of consciousness—a most serious error.

When the mind identifies with the body and assumes separateness from other bodies—it assumes full responsibility for providing security, satisfaction and joy in some lasting way. Unable to provide anything durable or lasting, this conditioned mind or conditioning itself creates an inner world of thought based on its likes and dislikes and hardens the inner arteries further. Just like with hardened physical arteries, the heart has to work harder, there is more pressure and less blood circulates—in the same way with the inner cholesterol of conditioning too. We struggle harder and place ourselves under constant stress—achieving very little if anything at all that is really what is sought or needed.

Meditation is not thinking, though thought tries to meditate when you start looking within. Meditation is a state of inner attention—all of you is facing everything, trying to understand the truth of things by this direct observation. The mind has no support in self-inquiry and thought rises and falls—burning in the fire of observation. The mind sees that it cannot observe everything continually, as it itself is an amalgam of fragments, part of what is being demanded to be observed. The mind attempts frantically to observe, to meditate, and this is the initial chaos of the meditator, but it must be gone beyond and none can help in this crossing.

Sage Yajnavalkya mentions in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad that the Supreme is to be known by the 'not-this, not-this' method or rejection of untruth—that which has no existence. Thought has assumed independent existence and in meditation, thought is recognized for what it is—movement of energy over impressions, rising as tendencies—nothing more. This is what it actually is and the fire of observation rejects all presentations of the mind or thought not by suppressing them but by continuing the observation, as thoughts gradually lose steam when all the energy is pulled into observation. Initially, there is some conscious redirection, like inner recycling, but that too is seen as inefficient, as it consumes energy.

It is here that Sage Vasistha's requirements for one qualified to pursue the truth are understood. One must really feel bound and want to be free. Not the feeling that we have with things and people we love now and then, but the only feeling that exists in one's being which feels bound—and it is this very same feeling that wants to be free. To the degree one feels bound, one will exert for release from this bondage. The feeling of being bound itself exerts, and so any deception here is utter foolishness.

In the fire of self-inquiry, the mind realizes that it is not the observer but the observed—not the subject but an object—and all its efforts to assert subjecthood fail. Self-inquiry or meditation is a crucible in which the mind or thought is purified—not by some external fire but by the flames of your own pure intentions. Meditation fails because the intention that tries is a failure or an attempt without heart. This is why meditation is a confrontation with truth, with reality, as you see how things really are—and this seeing sees through the tangled weeds of thought. As the seeing continues, the inner ground is tilled for a new harvest.

In the practice of meditation, the conditioned mind or the collection of impressions see that the continuity they struggle to provide is already there. These impressions remember, when life is lived as a living meditation, that direct perception does a far better job of providing a perfect response to every situation without the need for much of a mental start, if at all, or a mental end as impressions gathered after actions. The practice of meditation becomes an education of the conditioned mind which let's go of its steam. The dynamic energy of predispositions called rajas is gradually let go by this conditioned mind, which gives up its conditioning, layer by layer.

In the fire of direct observation, the mind recognizes that it is not the subject it had assumed itself to be but is an object of inner awareness, and it is only then that the ego surrenders itself to the largeness of its own existence—pure consciousness. The ego must surrender itself and it will not do so until it experiences first hand its non-existence as an entity. All the study and fervor of any activity will not help one till the ego itself understands its non-existence as a separate entity. This does not mean study and activity do not have their purpose; but to be clear: it is the ego that must surrender itself—and it will offer itself when the fire of observation enables the ego to ubiquitously understand that the inner intelligence is supreme. All practices help keep the rafters together, so to say, before and during this adventure of self-discovery and self-surrender.

Proportionate to the letting go of conditioning is recognition of the divine omnipresence. The conditioned mind that is weakening sees this operating in oneself, too, and that surrender to the divine omnipresence is the only response if one is at all sincere. Living meditation or a life of meditation itself teaches the ego how to surrender effectively—how to let go of its unnecessary burden and discover security, peace, satisfaction and joy that is lasting.

Surrender is not something I can do as it is the 'I' that must be surrendered. When the 'I' or ego sees its utter futility, it also discovers its non-existence, and something real and stable takes the helm. The conscious mind returns to its natural place as a function of consciousness. This is spiritual order or the natural state.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

A life of meditation is the education of the mind—the mind gets enlightened. Light falls upon the darkened areas of conditioning which have been the cause of all our sorrow and suffering, and where there is light—darkness is not and cannot be.

One leads an enlightened life, free from all confusion and sorrow, and lives a life that is truly productive. One cannot be very productive carrying a heavy load. The enlightened mind has no load at all and becomes very efficient and productive.

A life of meditation is not contrary to living a good normal life—it makes sure that it actually is good and that one stays normal or natural. When the mind finds its place in consciousness, the outrush of the mind in the form of desires ceases. This mind is now ready to glance at itself and inquire directly into its source to complete its education and evolution.

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