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"the Mahatma Gandhi of our time"
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Mind and Meditation

Have you observed what is happening in your mind every moment? It vacillates between the past and the future. It is either in the past occupied with what has happened or in the future thinking about what you have to do.

Knowledge is being aware of this phenomenon of the mind—of what is happening right now in your mind as you are reading this article. Information can be acquired by reading books or browsing the Internet. You can open a book on any subject such as how to lose weight, how to prepare for an interview, success 101 and so on. There are innumerable volumes available on a countless number of topics, but the awareness of your own mind cannot be learnt from a book.

There is another tendency of the mind—it clings onto the negative. If 10 positive events are followed by one negative event, the mind will cling to the negative. It will simply forget the 10 positive events.

With meditation, however, you can become aware of these two tendencies of the mind and bring it to the present. Happiness, joy, enthusiasm, efficiency and effectiveness are all in the present.

The human mind is very complex. It has its delicate and tough aspects. If you have had a misunderstanding with a friend or colleague at work, you can become stiff inside and this can distort your emotions leading to negativity—and you carry this negativity wherever you go.

However, when you culture your mind with meditation, its tendency of holding on to negative emotions simply disappears. You gain the ability to start living in the present moment and are able to let go of the past.

Balancing the States of Mind

In your day-to-day life, you come across all kinds of situations that can be challenging and demanding a degree of alertness to be able to make good choices. These situations give rise to different states of mind and neither life nor the states of mind occur with our permission. In fact, they often occur in direct defiance to our wishes.

Meditation can bring about a balance between the different states of the mind. You can learn to switch from

the tough aspect to the delicate aspect within you. You can stand up when needed and let go when needed. This ability is present within everyone, and meditation enables you to switch between these states effortlessly. The whole exercise is to develop an ability—to switch back and forth between the tough and delicate aspects of the mind.

One of the biggest deterrents for people not being able to meditate is lack of time. Yet when they start to meditate, they find they have more time, because they are able to focus and get more done. Not only that, the regular practice of meditation also leads to greater intuitiveness. It sharpens the mind through focus and expands it through relaxation.

With the integration of meditation into one's daily life, a fifth state of consciousness, called cosmic consciousness, dawns. Cosmic consciousness means perceiving the whole cosmos as part of oneself. When we perceive the world as a part of us, love flows strongly between the world and us. This love empowers us to bear the opposing forces and the disturbances in our lives. Anger and disappointments become fleeting emotions that occur momentarily and then vanish.

Rest and activity are opposite values, but they complement each other. The deeper you are able to rest, the more dynamic you will be in activity. Planning can hold you back from diving deep into yourself. Meditation is accepting this moment and living every moment totally with depth.

Restlessness, agitation, desire and ambition stir up the mind and keep it engaged planning for the future or being regretful about the past. Real freedom is freedom from the past and future.

The confluence of knowledge, understanding and practice make life complete. When you grow into higher states of consciousness, you find that you are no longer thrown off balance by different situations and disturbances. A regular practice can transform the quality of your life by culturing the nervous system to maintain peace, energy and expanded awareness throughout the day. You become beautiful yet strong, capable of accommodating different challenges in life without any conditions.

SRI SRI, Recipient of countless honors and accolades, don't miss this rare opportunity to hold audience with this great peacemaker and international agent of change. See Event schedule on page 16 for more info. Recipient of the Centennial 2006 Medallion by the Legislative Assembly of Calgary. For more information on Sri Sri, visit <http://srisriravishankar.org/>