

śraddhā-bhakti-dhyāna-yogād avaihi

Tenth part of the serial article continued from October 2019 issue. Dhyana topic continues..

DHYĀNA

In *dhyāna* you do the external *pūjā* mentally, without the materials. You visualise an altar and do all the various steps of *pūjā* like offering *snāna*, a bath; *vastra*, clothes; *candana*, sandal paste; *puṣpa*, flowers; *ābharāṇa*, ornaments; *arcana*, chants and so on. You need not complain that there are no flowers. Here you can visualise fresh and fragrant flowers. You can offer to your heart's content. You have to learn how to visualise. When you do mental *pūjā* and vividly visualise every object and every movement of the limbs, in the process, you gain a capacity to hold a topic, to have a say over the ways of the mind. The mind will move away from the altar. Whenever it moves away, thinking of something else, bring it back. Bringing the mind back is also part of the definition of *dhyāna*. Therefore, you cannot complain, "My mind moves away." If your mind moves away, it means you have a healthy mind. If the mind moves away, it is a very dynamic and active mind, but it requires to be disciplined. Therefore, you bring it back.

Generally, one is advised to do *japa-dhyāna*. You choose a chant connecting you to Īśvara. Just as *pūjā* can be done mentally, any *vācika-karma* also can be done mentally. You can mentally chant. But when you pick up one chant and repeat it, it becomes *dhyāna*. *Saguṇa-brahma* is involved because the chant connects you to Īśvara. You can choose any given chant like *om namaḥ śivāya*, *om namo nārāyaṇāya* or *gāyatrī-mantra*. That chant is repeated. Repetition is a very important thing in *japa-dhyāna*. Repetition is what makes it *japa*. There is *dr̥ṣṭa-phala* here and we are in fact doing it for *dr̥ṣṭa-phala*. Whatever *adr̥ṣṭa-phala* there is, that also gets accrued. But we do this *japa-dhyāna* to have a say over the ways of our thinking.

The whole day your mind is busy. Suppose you keep track of, if at all you can, the ways of the mind. You record everything that the mind thinks during the whole day; you then read that. You can see what all comes out. The mind always thinks in a particular way.

For instance, you see a bus—Ashok Leyland. Then you think of Emperor Ashoka. He was responsible for the Mogul invasion. He took to *ahimsā*, non-violence, and disbanded the army after the Kalinga War. His disbanding the army was a wrong action. It resulted in the formation of so many small kingdoms. Therefore, the Mogul army could easily come in and win over one small kingdom after another, and thus took control of a major part of our country.

The Hindu Nobles always considered the kings as worshipful and offered them wealth, without seeing who the king was. It started from Bhīṣma's time. Bhīṣma vowed to protect Hastinapura irrespective of who the king was. Blind Dhṛtarāṣṭra, who was blind to *dharma*, was the king of Hastinapura. That is why the *Mahābhārata* war took place. Thus, from Ashok Leyland the mind has gone to Bhīṣma in a series of connected thoughts. The whole day passes like this.

Someone said, "There is neither reason nor rhyme in thinking." There is a reason. Every rhyme becomes a reason. Look at this. This person saw a Honda car. Seeing Honda, he remembered bonda, a snack. Remembering bonda he recollected a story. A person from Kerala came to Chennai and was proceeding to Mysore by train to seek an alliance for his daughter. In the Bangalore train there is a separate compartment for people going to Mysore. He put his luggage in the train and was about to sit when he heard 'ponde, ponde'. A vendor was selling bonda. In Malayalam 'ponde' means 'do not go'. Being a person who looks for *śakuna*, good omen, for everything, he understood 'ponde ponde' as 'do not go, do not go'. It was an *apaśakuna*, bad omen, to hear that especially when he was going for the auspicious purpose of fixing a marriage alliance. So he brought out his luggage. Then he thought, "Hey, everybody else is going in the train. This word 'ponde' is common for everybody, not only for me. So I can go." He put his trunk back in the train again and was about to get in. The vendor who was selling Mysore bonda came back again and shouted, "ponde, Mysore ponde." The person was now certain that this call "do not go to Mysore" was only for him. From Honda to bonda story, his thoughts went because of rhyme. Do not say there is no reason or rhyme.

Here the reason is all rhyme only. Thus, when the whole day is spent thinking like this, the person comes back home tired. His wife thinks he has done so much work in the office. It is just amazing to keep track of the mind. You can go to any object from any other object through association. Everything is connected. The *jagat* is one whole. Hence, the mind moves freely from one object to another and not deliberately. This is an ill-kept mind. It is not looked into.

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