



INNER PEACE THROUGH MEDITATION

by Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj



People throughout the world express their desire for peace in many ways. We often hear phrases such as: "Peace be with you." At Christmas people send greeting cards or sing songs about "peace on earth." People hold up two fingers in the form of a "V" which symbolizes peace. When someone dies, we pray that he or she "rests in peace."

Nations meet continually to search for ways to make peace with each other. Organizations dedicated to peace have sprung up in many countries. There is even a Nobel Peace Prize for individual contributions to this noble cause.

The quest for peace is universal. In every age and in every country, people have been trying to find peace within their environment, within their families, within their places of work, within their communities, and within the world.

It is strange that although countless people have been searching for peace throughout the ages, its attainment remains elusive. Few of us have found peace for ourselves. We see how the difficulties of life conspire to deny us true and lasting peace. Is it really possible for us to achieve this end?

First, we should analyze what peace is. A dictionary defines it as freedom from strife, and a state of serenity, calmness, and stillness. Inherent in this definition is the answer to why peace is so difficult to achieve. Life and strife seem to go hand in hand. We have all experienced this. Any happiness we receive is often short-lived. We may suddenly find ourselves in states of sorrow. There are disturbances at each and every stage of our life. Existence in this world is turbulent.

If peace means "freedom from strife," then it is not easily attainable. Whether one is rich or poor, a king or a peasant, one's life is beset with one problem or another.

There is an instructive story from the life of Lord Buddha which aptly illustrates this truth. A woman whose young son had died was inconsolable. She visited all the doctors in her area to find out how the child's life could be restored. Someone finally told her that there was an enlightened being, Lord Buddha, who might be able to help her. She approached Buddha and asked him to help bring her son back to life and ease the terrible pain in her heart. Buddha, in his wisdom, told her that he would help revive her son if she could first bring back a mustard seed from a household in which no one had ever died.

The woman was filled with joy and set out to follow his instructions. She visited one house after another. Yet at each door she received the same reply. One or more members of the family had passed away. Each household thought she must be a fool for thinking that any family can pass through life escaping the loss of one of its members.

In this way Lord Buddha taught her that death is the one inevitable reality of life. We as mortal human beings are all going to die one day. Sickness and disease are other facts of life. We need only examine our own existence to see how difficult it is to go through life without any illness, mishap, or accident. Medical books are filled with many diseases that can afflict human beings. There is no dearth of accidents that could befall us as we move through life's journey. We live in an environment over which we do not have total control. With death, misfortune, or illness hanging over our heads, how can we live in perpetual, uninterrupted peace?

Even if our physical body is fairly healthy, few can lead their lives without strife. There are many occurrences that produce stress. If we have a family, we know that the illness, unhappiness or misfortune of any member causes the others to be distressed. Whenever any two people live or work together, there are bound to be tensions due to differences of opinions or viewpoints. When we are not at peace with those with whom we come in contact, we experience stress and apprehension in our day-to-day activities. And this tension prevents us from leading a life of happiness, joy, and bliss.

There are a host of other problems that afflict our lives. If we search for peace in our outer life, at best we can find transitory moments of tranquility. We certainly do have times in which we enjoy the warmth of being with our loved ones, or we have moments of happiness from some gain or achievement. But these moments are fleeting. Inevitably, life again presents us with another set of problems.

The great mystic-poet and saint, Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj, expressed this beautifully in one of his verses:

*Whenever I experience any moments of bliss,
Life comes and offers another cup of sorrow.*

It seems as if lasting peace in this life is virtually impossible. Life should be more than a pendulum in which we swing back and forth between moments of joy and moments of sorrow.

Despite the obstacles, we can attain true peace in this lifetime. But to do so, we need to undergo a shift in our way of thinking. Our angle of vision needs to change. We tend to look for peace in the outer world. We hope to find it in our possessions, positions, and relationships. But the loss of any of these

causes us to become agitated and distraught. Our peace of mind is disturbed. Everything in this world is subject to change and eventual decay. So long as we look to the transitory world for happiness, we will be disappointed. We need to change the way we look at this problem. An anecdote from the life of the Moghul Emperor Akbar can help us in this regard. Akbar is considered to be one of the most enlightened emperors of India. He had a number of advisors to help run his ministries. Among these great minds was Birbal, the wisest of them all. He was quite clever and could figure out solutions to difficult problems by looking at them from a totally different perspective.

One day Akbar wanted to test his advisors, so he presented them with a puzzle. He took a stick and drew a line in the sand. He asked the advisors to try to shorten the line without erasing any part of it. Each counselor took a turn but all were stumped. They could not figure out how to make it shorter. Finally, Birbal came forward, took the stick, and carefully drew a line next to the one the emperor had drawn. But Birbal made his line longer. By drawing the second line longer, it made the original one look shorter.

The solution to finding peace requires us to look at the problem from a new perspective. We cannot change the nature of the world or its problems. But we can add a new dimension to life that will give us peace. Lasting peace can be found within us. Enlightened luminaries throughout history have had mystical experiences which earned for them the existence of an inner spiritual reality.

Buddha found enlightenment by inverting within himself. Christ has said, "The Kingdom of heaven is within you." The Muslim and the Judeo-Christian scriptures speak of prophets who communed with God. Mystics from every religious tradition have described their inner spiritual experiences. They have spoken of heavenly realms that co-exist with the physical world. These are realms of joy and love which are within us. They are regions of eternal peace and bliss beyond time and space. We cannot change the fundamental nature of the world, but we can become attuned to the worlds lying within us. In order to find peace in the world, we must first find it within ourselves. We can do this only by changing our perspective in life.

The way to reach the spiritual realms is to invert through a process known as meditation. Through meditation, we can separate our soul from the body to voyage into the regions within. We can learn how to meditate from spiritual teachers or mystics who have mastered this science. They first explain the theory so we can understand the process. Then they give us a practical demonstration of it at the time of initiation.

From these teachers we learn that in the beginning, the creative principle of the universe, which we call God, was all alone. It is said that He is an ocean of all consciousness, all bliss, all joy. When He decided to become many from one, His thought or creative vibration resulted in two primary manifestations, Light and Sound. This current of Light and Sound was the cause of all creation. As it traveled outward from God it brought forth various regions or planes into existence.

It created a plane of pure consciousness. This is a region of Light so bright that it equals trillions and trillions of outer suns. In our scientific age, it seems hard to believe that anything could be as bright as trillions of suns. But even in the physical universe scientists have discovered quasars or quasi-stellar material whose light is as bright as millions of galaxies. They are so bright that even though they are millions of light years away, scientists can still detect them with modern instruments.

As the divine Light and Sound continued moving out from its source, another plane of existence was created. It was called the supracausal plane. Next, the causal plane was created. It is the plane from where the universal mind was created. The next plane is the astral plane. Finally, the physical plane was created, in which we reside. The physical plane consists of our universe with all its stars and planets, our earth, humanity, and all other species of life.

Besides bringing the various planes of creation into existence, God also sent into these worlds conscious particles of Himself, drops of Himself, which we call souls. They inhabited the various planes of creation. Soul is of the same essence of God. It is pure spirit and is all-consciousness, all bliss, all joy. When it took up residence on each plane it had to assume a covering or body corresponding to the material of the region. Thus, the soul was cloaked in a causal, astral, and physical body. In the causal plane we use our causal body. When we function in the astral plane, we do so with our astral body. And we have a physical body in which to work in this physical plane. The soul was also given the mind through which it receives impressions and communicates when it inhabits the causal, astral, or physical planes.

In the physical universe the soul is covered with the maximum layers or coverings. The result is that the soul forgets itself and becomes identified with the bodies which it inhabits. It forgets its true nature and its residence in spiritual realms within. This forgetfulness is the cause of unhappiness and ignorance of the mysteries of life. All knowledge of the creation, of who we are and of God, is within our soul. The soul is perpetually conscious. But the soul's coverings are so thick that the divine Light cannot shine through any more. In order for the Light to again radiate, we have to remove the various

coverings of the soul, one by one. Meditation is a process by which we can remove each veil until we shine forth as pure soul.

The various planes of existence do not have a physical location in our universe. They do not exist above or below us, in the sense of space as we know it. They exist within us. The way to reach them is not by any mode of outer travel, not by any space ship, not even by traveling faster than the speed of light. The way to reach these realms is by entering within through inversion.

This form of meditation taught by teachers of Science of Spirituality is a simple method to rise above the physical body and traverse the inner planes. Meditation requires concentrating the attention at a special point in the body through which we can enter within. The outer expression of our soul is the attention. Generally, our attention is spread out in our body. Through the help of our five senses we are aware of our physical body and the world outside. These senses function through the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, and skin. We are aware of the world through the senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. The soul, unaware of its true nature, has identified itself with the body and mind. Instead of the soul controlling the mind and the mind controlling the senses, the situation has become reversed. The soul is dragged by the mind, and the mind is pulled by the senses into the outer world. Our attention is lost in outer enjoyments and tempted by the world's attractions. Most of us are attracted to sights that we consider pleasant and beautiful. To someone, scenery might be lovely. To another person, an architectural building might be appealing. To yet another, machinery might look beautiful. We enjoy listening to lovely sounds. Some of us like to hear classical music, whereas others may like to listen to rock'n'roll. We are attracted to those sounds that we find enjoyable. We are attracted to food which is delicious. And we are enticed by sweet-smelling fragrances and by the sense of touch. Because of these outer attractions, it is hard for us to withdraw our attention from the outer world. So long as our attention is identified with the world outside, we are faced with the problems and miseries that are inherent in physical existence. We spend our time seeking worldly enjoyments, but they last for only short periods of time. By inverting our attention and rising above the physical body through a process of meditation, we will find regions within which give us lasting peace.

We have within us an opening or door by which our attention can enter the higher regions. This entryway is located between and behind the two eyebrows. It is known as the seat of the soul in the body and has been referred to in many ways by various religions and philosophies. It has been called the single eye or third eye, the shiv netra, divya chakshu, daswan dwar, or tenth door. If we can withdraw our attention from the outer world and focus it at this point, we will see the Light of the higher regions reflected therein. As

our soul collects at this point, it rises into the beyond. This is the same point through which the soul passes at the time of death when it leaves the body. In the last thirty years, much research has been documented by medical doctors in the field of study which has come to be called near-death experiences. These are experiences reported by people who were declared clinically dead, but through the wonders of medicine were brought back to life.

It is interesting that the experience of most of the people who underwent near-death experiences were similar. They felt as if they were going through a tunnel and emerging into light. Most of them said that they found so much peace,

joy, and bliss in that region that they did not want to come back to this world. Near-death experiences have also been reported by children. Doctors discovered that the children had the same types of experiences as the adults.

We do not have to wait for physical death or an accident causing a near-death experience to travel into the realms within. Through a scientific method of meditation we can learn how to come and go at will through this inner door.

The current of Light and Sound which descended from the Creator also returns to its Source. This Light and Sound is constantly reverberating within us. We can pick up the current at the third or single eye. But to go within and concentrate at that point, we need the help of an experienced guide or spiritual teacher. At the time of initiation, he shows us how to collect our soul at the third eye. We get a firsthand experience of seeing the inner Light and hearing the Sound Current.

On our own, it is difficult to concentrate at the seat of the soul and contact the Light and Sound. The mind wants to remain absorbed in the outer world and this does not allow us to concentrate at the tenth door. We can perform a small experiment ourselves. If we close our eyes and try to sit still, concentrating our attention, we will find that our mind will start to bombard us with thoughts. Within seconds we will become fidgety and will want to move and open our eyes and find we can hardly sit still. Then, the mind will start thinking of one thing or another. So any distractions will keep us from concentrating. Although wonderful regions lie within us, we have not been able to enter them. We need to learn a technique by which we can still the body and mind, and find peace, love, and bliss within.

To help keep our attention focused, the teachers of Science of Spirituality give us, at the time of initiation, five Words or Names of God to repeat mentally. This mental repetition keeps the mind engaged so it does not wander about or become entangled in thoughts which might pull our attention down. Our mind is like mercury and cannot be still. It needs to do something. If we

examine our daily activities, we will find that when we are not concentrating on working with our physical body, or on writing, reading, or doing any other activity, then the mind begins to wander and generate thoughts. One moment it could be in Chicago and the next moment it could be on Mars, and then it could be anywhere else. The mind acts so quickly that it is difficult to keep it still. But through mental repetition, we give the mind something to do. And what better way to engage the mind than to repeat the Names of the Creator?

While we repeat these Names, we concentrate our attention at the third or single eye. We gaze into the area in front of us. As we concentrate on what lies in front of us, we begin to see Lights of various colors. These are reflections of the Lights of the higher regions. Concentrating further we begin to cross the inner sky, stars, moon, and sun. We then travel with our spiritual teacher through the astral plane. The physical body remains at rest in meditation, but our attention is fully engaged in the astral region. A silver cord connects our soul with the physical body so that when our meditation is over we return to the physical body filled with peace and happiness.

A spiritual teacher can guide us on the inner journey. We rise through the causal and supracausal planes. At each successively higher plane, the lower bodies are left behind until the soul reaches the purely spiritual realm where it shines in its pristine brilliance. Here we appear as pure spirit, pure Soul. At this stage our soul merges back in the ocean of all bliss, peace, and happiness. We become fully aware of our true selves and of God.

The benefits of learning meditation are many. The soul attains self-knowledge and returns to the source from where it came. We become all-conscious. We find solutions to the questions of the mystery of life and death. We realize that death is nothing more than passing through a door from one realm of existence to another. We are able to cross the threshold to higher realms and return in the twinkling of an eye. Death no longer holds any fear for us, for we know that we never die but only pass to another realm. And those regions are more beautiful, more peaceful, more blissful than any place on earth.

The more we come in contact with the Light and Sound, the more bliss we experience. This state of peace and joy remains with us when we return to the physical realm. It becomes a part of our daily lives.

By mastering meditation under the guidance of a spiritual teacher, we not only attain personal fulfillment, but we become an instrument for bringing peace and joy to those around us. When we merge in the Creator, we recognize that all living beings are children of the one Father. We realize that the Light of God which is within us is within everyone else. We realize that all are

brothers and sisters are in the Creator. It is at this stage that we develop true love for all, for our fellow beings, and for all creation. We become ambassadors of God's love. We radiate love to others. We begin to care for others. We transcend the labels that our societies have placed on people. We do not discriminate among people on the basis of wealth, skin color, religion, or nationality. We need to become integrated human beings. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj used to say that if we are Christian, let us become a true Christian. If we are Jewish, let us become a true Jew. If we are Hindu, let us become a true Hindu, If we are Sikh, let us become a true Sikh. If we are Muslims, let us become a true Muslim. And this means that we live our lives according to the essence of each religion. That essence is to know ourselves, know God. and develop love for all. All religions teach us that we are children of God and that we should have love in our hearts for each person we treat. If we realize the Light of God within us, if we experience it for ourselves, then we will see the same Light of God shining in others. When peace fills our heart, it radiates from us. If each person has this realization, there will be true peace on this planet.

By gaining inner peace, we can also achieve outer peace. Some people mistakenly think that the path of meditation is one of escapism. They feel that it requires one to sit in a cave or on a mountain top like a recluse. But meditation does not lead to escapism; rather, it makes us more alive. It is one of the most effective ways to actively work towards outer peace. The teachers of Science of Spirituality encourage us to maintain a balanced life in the world. While attending to our spiritual progress, we lead a productive life, fulfilling all our responsibilities.

We need to earn an honest living. We must care for our family. We should contribute to the needs of our neighbors, our community, our society, the nation, and the world. Whatever task we undertake, we perform it to the best of our capabilities, The spiritual path is twofold. We achieve inner enlightenment and peace for ourselves. Then, we use our talents and skills and the gift of our human life to make the world a better place, a more peaceful place. If we are a doctor, we should be the best possible doctor. If we are a carpenter, we should be the best carpenter. If we are a musician, we should be the best musician that we can be. In this way, we make improvements in our society and make life better far all around us. By developing our inner and outer life, we will become complete human beings. We will find fulfillment and peace for ourselves and help others achieve it as well.

We may not be able to eliminate all the problems of the world, but through meditation we can attain peace and happiness. We can make our family life more peaceful, loving, and caring, We can help change the society in which we live. We can be a source of peace to all those around us. By leading a life

in which we are caring and loving to others, we will develop into ideal human beings. Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj used to say that it is difficult to become a human being in the true sense of the word, but once we do so, it is not so difficult to find God. And that is the highest goal of human existence.

