

THE OBSTACLES TO UNION

Thoughts to Ponder Prior to Meditation:

1-30. The OBSTACLES to soul cognition are

BODILY DISABILITY: an unhealthy or weak body.

MENTAL INERTIA: an undeveloped mind, the inability to think clearly. Remedy - develop the mind, train it to analyse and think clearly

WRONG QUESTIONING/ DOUBT: being too attached to the beliefs and opinions of the lower mind and those of authorities or theologies. Remedy - get rid of any limiting or separative opinions and beliefs.

MENTAL CARELESSNESS: an unstable mind which flits, is too restless, busy. Remedy -train your mind to be quiet, steady.

LAZINESS/ SLOTH: the mind is developed, the man knows what he has to do to progress in his spiritual life, but he is too lazy to put this into action. Remedy - draw up an ordered program of spiritual development, and stick to it.

LACK OF DISPASSION (ASTRAL): this is the major problem in the astral nature, and is probably the hardest of all the obstacles to overcome. Addicted to 'things', desire for material and sensuous things. This brings us back time and again into incarnation. Remedy - practise dispassion, non-attachment.

The last 3 obstacles are the natural result of the previous six.

ERRONEOUS PERCEPTION: this is because the ego is the perceiver and not the soul. Remedy - continue spiritual disciplines.

INABILITY TO ACHIEVE CONCENTRATION: therefore unable to meditate correctly and contact "the Plan". Remedy - practise concentration.

FAILURE TO HOLD THE MEDITATIVE ATTITUDE WHEN ACHIEVED. Remedy - persevere with the esoteric meditation technique which involves concentration, meditation, illumination.

1-31. Pain, despair, misplaced bodily activity and wrong direction (or control) of the life currents are the results of the obstacles in the lower psychic nature.

Removing the Obstacles

Patanjali gives seven occult methods to remove the obstacles, and the student should note that the instruction advises the use of one method only.

1-32 To overcome the obstacles and achieve peace of chitta, the practise of one subject should be made.

1-33. ... the practise of sympathy, tenderness, steadiness of purpose, and dispassion in regard to pleasure or pain or towards all forms of good or evil.

[Method for Body Disability.] It emphasises the right use of physical energy, which will then affect brain vibrations, and this will remove physical body limitations to the spiritual life.

1-34 ... the regulation of the prana or life breath (pranayama).

Harmonising the in-breath, out-breath rhythm quietens the prana which affects chitta.

1-35 ... through (right detachment) from the senses.

As this method is practised, the perceiving consciousness will gradually assume more and more the position of onlooker, and shift slowly out of the realm of the sense vehicles into that of the "dweller in the body." From this elevated position one sees life more clearly.

1-36 ... meditation upon Light and Radiance, so that knowledge of Spirit can be reached.

At the centre of the "heart chakra" dwells Brahma. Meditating upon the "point of light within [the heart centre]" will eventually reveal a road which must be travelled if the student is to arrive at his goal.

1-37 ... purification of the lower nature and so that it is no longer indulged.

This is the major correction given for those in whom the passions dominate the life. The sacral centre is highlighted in this sutra, and it is particularly related to sexual desire. As desire thoughts arise, negate them. Think an opposite thought.

1-38 ... using "dreaming" (creative visualisation) to make the necessary changes.

Using the creative faculty to imagine how we could be, should be, if living a soul aligned life, is what the sutra is referring to. We need to think and act "as if", in the higher sense.

1-39 ... Meditate on anything that is good, which is dearest to the heart.

The student is instructed to study and ascertain whether that which is dearest to his heart is temporal and ephemeral, or whether it will lead to service and spiritual growth. If not, then the practise of right detachment needs to be applied to the objects of desire. Meditate upon goodness and love, and how these qualities can be used to help others.

MEDITATION

1. Basic Meditation Alignment

1. Sit comfortably with spine erect.
2. Breathe easily and relax your physical.. emotional.. and mental fields.. OM
3. Focus high within your head.
4. Visualize the light, love and power of the soul pouring into your three personality vehicles. OM
5. Pause for assimilation.
6. Imagine yourself as the thinker focused within the soul-illuminated mind. OM
7. Say the Gayatri.

**"Oh Thou, Who givest sustenance to the universe.
From Whom all things proceed, to Whom all things return,
Unveil to me the face of the true spiritual Sun, hidden by a disk of golden light.
That I may know the truth and do my whole duty, as I journey to Thy sacred feet." OM.**

2. Visualisation Exercise (this should only take a minute or so)

1. Choose one obstacle which you believe you have and wish to work with.
2. Very briefly realise how the obstacle prevents you from moving forward spiritually.
3. Determine that you will eliminate the obstacle.
4. Using your will and your powers of concentration, for a few seconds visualise yourself demonstrating the opposite, positive quality.

3. Meditation:

Follow the Raja Yoga Meditation Method.

1. *Meditation*: analyse the seed thought, using "Sequential Thinking", until you gain a synthetic understanding.
 2. *Contemplation*: hold your consciousness high, above mind, and open it to Divine inspiration. Expect a soul inspired thought or symbol to drop into your consciousness.
 3. *Illumination*: recall any insights and summarise and ground them in your memory.
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Ponder the following “seed-thoughts”, endeavouring to find one or two that seem more relevant for you. Then meditate upon those thoughts for the rest of the month.

Quietness of mind will come through the practise of sympathy, tenderness, steadiness of purpose, and dispassion in regard to pleasure or pain. I imagine myself expressing these qualities.

Quietness of mind will come through the regulation of the prana or life breath (pranayama). I imagine myself in perfect balance with the breath of life.

Quietness of mind will come through the practise of (right detachment) from the senses. For a quiet moment, I remain alert and aware as I observe any rising thoughts and emotions.

Quietness of mind will come through meditation upon Light and Radiance, so that knowledge of Spirit can be reached. What is the nature of Light and Radiance? Where do I experience these energies most in my nature?

Quietness of mind will come through purification of the lower nature and so that it is no longer indulged. What is it that I most need to purify? To what extent do I indulge my lower desires?

Quietness of mind will come through the use of creative visualisation to make the necessary changes. What do I need to change? What will my life be like if I make these changes?

Quietness of mind will come through meditating on anything that is good, and dearest to the heart. What are the qualities and actions that I think are most beautiful and good? What would my life be like if I radiated those qualities? What would the world be like if humanity radiated those qualities?

3. Lower Interlude:

With deliberation bring the meditation to a close, and imaginatively reaffirm your focus in your mind, and then your brain. Quietly review and interpret any insights you received during meditation, summarising with clarity, what these insights were, and what they mean to you. This work is very important. It will ground your consciousness back into your brain - helping to overcome the problem of “spacing out”, and will also train your mind to do the necessary working of interpreting intuitive insights. It also completes the underlying exercise of building the antahkarana.

4. Distribution:

Sound the Great Invocation followed by the Sacred Word OM, three times, visualizing as you do so, the redemption or upliftment of humanity and the Earth.

THE GREAT INVOCATION

**From the point of Light within the Mind of God,
Let light stream forth into the minds of men.
Let Light descend on Earth.**

**From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men.
May Christ return to Earth.**

**From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men—
The purpose which the Masters know and serve.**

**From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out.
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.**

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan on Earth

OM, OM, OM