

Spiritual Prescriptions – Controlling the Inner Noise

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Yoga Sutras of Patanjali define yoga as restraint of the mental states (Chapter 1.2). In the state of total restraint, the mind is devoid of any external object and is in its true self or the consciousness. To control the mind many Vedic scholars have given their own formulas.

Being in touch with one's own consciousness requires restraining of the mind, intellect and ego on one hand and the triad of rajas, tamas and satwa on the other hand. Every action leads to a memory, which in turn leads to a desire and with this a vicious cycle starts.

The mental turmoil of thoughts can be equated to the internal noise and the external desires and objects to an external noise.

The process of withdrawing from the external noise with an aim to start a journey inwards the silent field of awareness bypassing the internal noise is called pratihara by Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. It involves living in a satwik atmosphere based on the dos and don'ts learnt over a period of time or as told by the scriptures.

To control inner noise based thoughts we either need to neutralize negative thoughts by cultivating opposite thoughts or kill the origin of negative thoughts.

Not allowing thoughts to occur has been one of the strategies mentioned by the scholars. One of them has been neti-neti by Yagnayakya.

The other method is to pass through these inner thoughts and not get disturbed by it and that is

what the process of meditation is. This can be equated to a situation where two people are talking in an atmosphere of loud external noise. For proper communication one will have to concentrate on each other's voice for long till the external noise ceases to disturb. In meditation, one concentrates on the object of concentration to such an extent that the noisy thoughts cease to bother or exist.

One of the ways mentioned by Adi Shankaracharya in Bhaja Govindam and by Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (Chapter 2.35) is that whenever one is surrounded by evil or negative thoughts one should meditate open the contrary thoughts. For example, if one is feeling greedy, one can think of donating something to somebody. Deepak Chopra in his book Seven Laws of Spiritual Success talks in detail about the importance of giving and sharing. He says you should never visit friends or relations empty handed. You should always carry some gift of nature, which if nothing is available can be a simple smile, compliment or a flower. By repeatedly indulging into positive behavior and thoughts, you can reduce the internal noise, which helps in making the process of meditation or conscious living a simpler one.

Washing out negative thoughts is another way mentioned by many Vedic scholars. Three minutes writing is one such exercise which anybody can do. Just before sleep anybody can do 3 minutes writing where you can write down all your emotions and then discard the paper. Another exercise is to reward or punish oneself at bed time for the activities done during the day by either patting or slapping yourself.



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