

Introduction to Mental Culture

Since earliest times men have recognized the vast benefits that can be gained through mind control. While meditation was practised in Europe over the last two thousand years, it was in India and later in China that the techniques of mind control were fully recognized and developed. Over a period of more than four thousand years, religious and spiritual disciplines were centred around meditational practices, but it was the Buddha who gave meditation a central place for gaining Enlightenment, and final salvation. All other religious systems use meditation to direct the mind towards external powers, but the Buddha taught us to use meditation to look within ourselves, to gain INSIGHT and thus develop ourselves without depending on external powers.

The primary purpose of meditation is to help the individual to control the mind and train it to bring inner peace to the individual who practises it. In this way a great deal of mental energy can be concentrated and thus make the mind capable of harnessing great power. Examples of the kind of power that mind control can give are the 'miracles' performed by saints and religious leaders, e.g. walking on water, being in two places at the same time, going through solid walls, light emanating from the body etc. However, the Buddha taught that such mental power was not the final goal of his teaching. Mind control through meditation brings calmness but the Buddha has taught that such control is merely superficial. The suppression of the mental defilements is temporary. They can come to the surface of the mind at any time and hinder the spiritual development. These defilements like anger, hatred, greed, pride, illusion, wrong views must be completely rooted out from the mind through the development of Metta (goodwill), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (sympathetic joy), Uppekkha (equanimity) before one begins to tread the path towards emancipation.

This programme aims at explaining why meditation is absolutely essential to give modern man the peace and solace he so desperately needs. It details the long term and short term benefits that can be gained, how to prepare for it, the method to be used and how to evaluate success.

It is presented in simple language for the benefit of those who are interested in beginning this important practice, to remove their doubts and fears regarding its spiritual and therapeutic values. All human beings can find the ultimate happiness they seek if they begin by training and purifying the mind. Hopefully, 'Meditation Mental Culture' will contribute towards bringing greater peace and serenity to the minds of those who follow this programme.

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Introduction

We are living in a world community where people think they can find happiness, inner peace and harmony through wealth, power and social status. They also seek happiness through family relationships, jobs, partners, friends and sensual pleasure. They try to change the external conditions of their physical, social and political environment in various ways, because they believe that when these conditions are developed, they can become happy and peaceful. But they forget that at no time will conditions stop changing. Even before the fulfilment of their dreams, things will change and the promise of happiness fades away like the morning mist at daybreak. The harder they try to reach out for happiness, the more elusive it becomes, like catching a fluttering butterfly which is so enticingly near.

People waste a lot of their mental energy when they do not know how to harness it. Energy is like a waterfall. Almost everyday, water pours from the waterfall. An innovative engineer, after studying this phenomenon, builds a dam to harness this power. The water so accumulated, is converted into hydro-electric power which lights up streets and houses and keeps the factories running. In the same way, we can accumulate our mental energy, harness it, and use it well to serve others, besides enabling ourselves to experience peace and happiness. The Buddha developed his mental energy to a supreme level, which, as a result, enabled him to finally gain enlightenment.

According to Albert Einstein, even atomic energy which has shaken the whole world cannot train a man's mind. Such is the nature of the mind. Without religious guidance, it is difficult to train the mind.

Man had turned the whole world into a time bomb because of his ego, hatred, selfishness and cunningness. The life of every living being is in danger, by the various inventions clever people have made but which are misused by those in power. Atomic energy, for example, has been discovered by a human mind, and can be utilised for constructive or destructive purposes. But today politicians seem to be using this energy as a threat to their neighbours and the whole world. Unless they control their mental energy and channel it for productive ends, great destruction can result.

Insecurity of Mankind

Today no one can live peacefully without being filled with fear, suspicion and tension. Every being that exists creates some problem for others. They suffer as a result of actions performed out of ignorance. Why do some people create such problems which violate the peace and happiness of others? It is due to selfishness rooted in an untrained mind. Whatever method we adopt to increase our knowledge in the scientific, technological, or academic fields is by itself inadequate. No proper development of the mind can occur nor can there be real understanding in a mind enslaved by materialistic desires. Due to increasing materialism, man becomes more and more violent, jealous, and engrossed with hatred.

Modern man seems to apply his selfishness and greed to anything he handles. One man cannot trust another although they live together. Even in a densely populated world, men somehow are plagued by insecurity and loneliness because of their lack of confidence and trust in their fellow human beings.

It is very difficult to judge what is in a person's mind. He pretends to be cultured, civilised, educated or religious. Nobody knows him as the crook which he really is. He swindles, cheats, or misleads others for his own benefit. When you reflect on man's crookedness, you can see that animals, in many ways are even better than human beings. Animals are not that cunning and never mislead others. The two legged animals who live in concrete jungles are unreliable and selfish, and often endanger society by introducing all sorts of immoral practices.

Considering the sophisticated technology at man's disposal, we know that if there is any being who can destroy the world, it will be man himself. In the past, people had some mythological belief that one day a god or a devil would destroy this world. Now we can see for ourselves who is going to destroy this world. Too much political power is given to a few decision makers (and manipulators). As a result the fate of millions of human beings is literally in their hands. If one of those men presses a button, the whole world could be reduced to rubble and ashes in minutes. And if he is mentally deranged (like Hitler), the chance of global destruction is even higher. Over the centuries, certain methods have been discovered by wise people which enable human beings to lead a respectable life. The culture of any community is based on these basic moral principles set out by the wise men. But, unfortunately, all these noble methods in culture and religion are misused.

Look Within Yourself

Most people adopt the wrong methods to find peace and happiness. They seek them from outside of themselves, instead of looking within themselves. People foolishly try to overcome their miseries by seeking to please their senses : they drink, gamble and dance under the illusion that they are enjoying happiness. Sense stimulation does not really bring peace and relaxation. The more we try to please the senses through sensual pleasures, the more will we become slaves to the senses. There will be no end to our craving for satisfaction in this way.

We need to develop 'Insight' - into the real nature of things. Without insight, we will be like a person who enjoys the taste of honey oblivious to the dangers from the bees. Many people, however, are beginning to realise the real source of their happiness and the cause of their troubles. We cannot change the chaotic situation in this world unless we create a peaceful and harmonious environment for others to live peacefully. To do that, we have first to tame the mind which is clouded with evil. It should be filled with purity or wisdom which is gained through the cultivation of religious and spiritual principles.

Writing on Insight, Bhikshu Sangharakshita says:

By Insight we mean the clear vision, the clear perception, of the true nature of things -- of what in traditional Buddhist terminology is called things 'as they really are'. In other words, to use more abstract, more philosophical phraseology, it is a direct perception of Reality itself. This is what meditation at its height is -- this is what insight or sight, really is. Such perception is twofold. It is insight into the conditioned, which is to say, the 'world', or whatever is mundane, transitory and so on; and it is insight into the Unconditioned, that which transcends the world; the Absolute, the Ultimate.

Man Can Be Free

The purpose of religion is to train the mind, not to blindfold mankind with dogma. By controlling the mind we calm our senses and gain deep relaxation. When we talk of controlling the mind, we do not mean brainwashing. A person must control his own mind willingly and through personal effort. No one should attempt to control the thinking of another. If we are able to control the mind, then we will be able to control everything that affects us. The mind which is fully controlled and purified will be free from mental disturbances and can see many things not perceivable by others with their naked eyes.

This is the only method to achieve mental purity and emancipation. The Buddha gained his enlightenment through this method and by virtue of his own personal experiences. Only then did he introduce the way for others to follow.

Although people and animals can be trained in a physical sense, the training of the mind is more difficult to accomplish. Meditation, which is a system of mind training is, therefore, not an easy task and requires earnestness and effort. Because of its intricacies, many people have misused it and misled others for their personal material gain.

The main purpose of meditation is to help us understand phenomena properly so as to remove the fantasies of our imagination which give us a false view of reality. The mind influenced by greed is like a bowl of coloured water which does not accurately reflect the colour of light. The mind given to anger is like a bowl of boiling water which hinders clear penetration of light. The mind overcome by laziness is like stagnant water, all is covered with moss and weeds. The mind agitated by excitement and worry is like water disturbed by the wind. The mind that is habitually in doubt is like muddy water placed in darkness. Here we can understand the many difficulties we will have to face if the mind is polluted or deluded.

The Power Of Meditation

J. Krishnamurti, the enigmatic spiritual teacher, gives an elucidative definition of meditation. He says:

Meditation is not an escape from the world; it is not an isolating self-enclosing activity, but rather the comprehension of the world and its ways. What is important in meditation is the quality of the mind and the heart. It is not what you achieve, or what you say you attain, but rather the quality of a mind that is innocent and vulnerable. Through negation there is the positive state. Merely to gather, or to live in, experience, denies the purity of meditation. Meditation is not a means to an end. It is both the means and the end. The mind can never be made innocent through experience. It is the negation of experience that brings about that positive state of innocence which cannot be cultivated by thought . Thought, is never innocent, meditation is the ending of thought , not by the meditator for the meditator is the meditation. If there is no meditation, then you are like a blind man in a world of great beauty, light and colour.

Meditation is very useful in helping a person to live peacefully despite various disturbances that are so prevalent in this modern

world. Not everyone can retire to a forest or to live in ivory towers 'far from the madding crowd.' Through the practice of meditation we can confront and face the pressures of modern living. Meditation practised conscientiously will help a person to face, understand and overcome every problem pertaining to life.

For meditation to proceed and progress, the mind must be completely neutralised from desire and aversion. Of course, at the beginning, one will find this extremely difficult. We cannot control the mind in a single attempt, specially by force, but should apply right effort through practice and understanding.

The Value Of Meditation

Buddhists are never forced or compelled to meditate, but meditation can help anyone appreciate Buddhist teachings, which explain the nature of life in its proper perspective, the nature of the world and worldly conditions, the nature of suffering, and the fleeting nature of pleasures. By understanding the real nature of component things, we realize that all sensations are mind-created. We also realise that to gain happiness we must calm and control the mind. For meditation practice to produce good results we must properly attune the mind with confidence. We should recognise the value of meditation which contributes towards mental training and peace. Meditation strengthens the mind and helps it to understand things properly.

As body needs washing, feeding and medicating, we must understand that mind also needs the same things. Wash the mind through calm meditation. Feed the mind with Dhamma. Medicate the mind, rid the sickness of anger, greed and ignorance with the supreme medicine of the Dhamma. The body needs clothing to cover nakedness; in the same manner, mind also needs discipline to prevent mental nakedness.

Medical science and therapy are not so effective in helping a person to eradicate mental disturbances such as frustration and worries because they arise not as a result of organic disorders, but are mind created. The remedy for these problems is meditation.

The Most Dynamic Force

The most dynamic force in the world is the mind. A single thought appearing in this invisible mind can either save or destroy the world. This mind is a gold mine but people pollute it. Therefore, it is important that the mind must be properly guided by discipline and reason to avoid mental pollution. The Buddha has said, 'No enemy can harm one so much as one's thought of cravings, thoughts of hatred, thoughts of jealousy.' When we master our mind, we can overcome such negative thoughts, which can make life a nuisance to ourselves as well as to others.

These internal enemies harm us more than external enemies. We suffer more due to worries, enmity and irritability arising from our mind. Therefore, we have to strive to overcome them by harnessing the mental forces of concentration and understanding.

To practise meditation, one must have strong determination, effort and patience. Immediate results should not be expected. We must remember that it takes many years for a person to be qualified as a doctor, lawyer, mathematician, historian or a scientist. Similarly to be a good meditator, a person will take some time to control the elusive mind and calm the senses. Practising meditation is like swimming against the current in a river. One must not lose patience if one is not able to obtain rapid results during the initial stages.

If there is need to apply force and compulsion to meditate, then we are going against our true nature. Instead of relaxing and letting go, we hold on to our ego and develop more pride. In this way, meditation becomes a game of ambition for personal achievement and self aggrandizement. Meditation is like kindness: it is a spontaneous experience, not something that can be forced or acquired through strenuous effort.

Misinterpretations Of Meditation

In his booklet 'What meditation Really Is' Bhikshu Sangharakshita says many people have misinterpreted the word meditation:

So many times I have heard people say 'Meditation means making the mind a blank - making the mind empty.' Others seem to think that meditation simply means sitting and doing nothing. Sitting and doing nothing may be a fine thing to do or not to do, but it is not meditation. Again, sometimes you hear people say, or you even read, that meditation means sitting and gazing at your navel, possibly squinting as you do so, or that it means 'going into some kind of trance'.... [Some others use] this word 'trance'

as a synonym for meditation. Other people think that meditation means just sitting quietly and thinking about things, 'turning things over in one's mind.' Others again think that meditation means getting yourself into a sort of self-induced hypnotic state. These are just a few of the more popular and more wide-spread misunderstandings about meditation.

Quite often meditation is identified with a particular kind of meditation, or with a particular concentration technique. It is not, perhaps, generally understood that there are many kinds of meditation, - many methods, - and many concentration techniques. Sometimes people who just know about one of these, or who practise just one, tend to identify the whole practice of meditation exclusively with that particular method, that particular technique. They may claim that their method is the best one, or even that it is the only one, and that you are not actually meditating at all unless you meditate in that particular way, using that particular technique. The other techniques, the other practices, the other traditions. are, they claim of no value. This is the sort of claim that is made.

Misuse of Meditation

When people develop a certain aspect of their minds through meditation but do not yet possess spiritual maturity they may experience various forms of excitement which can be extreme in some instances. These sensations can cause fear and may even result in mental imbalance. But a person who is spiritually advanced and has gained certain powers over the material world through meditation remains calm. Also, we must be completely altruistic in meditation. While great power can be harnessed we must always have a right view in doing meditation. And that right view is to gain freedom from unsatisfactoriness, not power over the material world.

There is an amusing story of a man who boasted to the Buddha that as a result of great effort over many years he had mastered the art of walking on water. The Buddha remarked that it was not necessary to waste all that time and effort if one's intention was merely to cross a river - for a boatman could easily have ferried him across for a small payment.

One must cultivate right view and aspiration to cross the sea of samsara (cycle of birth and death) to attain emancipation. The aim of Buddhist meditation is to calm and purify the mind so that one may gain release and freedom from Samsara.

Unscrupulous men may develop their mental powers through meditation and use these acquired powers for diabolical purposes . But in Buddhist meditation, one must develop vipassana - (Insight) to realise the real nature of existence and discard selfish or egoistic desires. Insight meditation is the only solution to purify man's mind, to rid him of his evil ways or selfish desires.

There are some people who practise meditation, not for spiritual progress, but for material gain. They want to get better jobs. They want to earn more money. They want their business to be more successful. Perhaps they fail to understand that the aim of Buddhist meditation is not to increase but to decrease desires. Materialistic motives are hardly suitable for one wishing to practise meditation, the goal of which lies beyond worldly affairs. One should meditate to experience some spiritual benefits that even money cannot buy or bring.

Before one begins to meditate, one must have confidence and strong determination. All over the world people talk about air pollution, water pollution and so on but they do not concern themselves enough about mental pollution. Man's mind pollutes the whole world and atmosphere with anger, jealousy, grudges, hatred and various other evil forces. These negative mental energies can influence the normal cosmic energies and disturb the universe. When our minds are disturbed by fear, anger and excitement, we not only poison ourselves psychologically but also experience many physical disorders.

Just as an engine which runs for a prolonged period requires cooling down to avoid overheating, even so the mind subjected to various types of mental pollutions needs to be 're- cooled' regularly through meditation.

Impediments To Progress

Some people face difficulties when they attempt to meditate for the first time. They may even experience some uneasiness when they meditate on certain objects. The reason may be that they have chosen the wrong object for their meditation. The wrong object may also create some physical or mental problems, although this in itself is not dangerous.

However, meditation can be a problem to emotionally unstable people who find it difficult to maintain a proper balance in their mind. Beginners may feel frustrated because of their desire to experience good results immediately. If you understand the nature of the mind, you will realise that it is not easy to gain immediate results. We have heard of over enthusiastic young men and

women literally going out of their minds because they are over ambitious, adopt the wrong attitude towards meditation and also because they are not properly guided.

Stubbornness, illusion, hallucination and delusion invariably pollute the mind. To remove such mental impurities and hindrances, one has to strive diligently and make use of one's confidence and determination. Good results will eventually follow. One must have lots of patience in order to progress in meditation.

In Buddhism, as in other eastern cultures, patience is an important virtue. The mind must be brought under control gradually. One should not aspire for the higher states without proper and systematic training. Meditation is a gentle way of weakening the defilements which pollute the mind. If people want 'success' or 'achievement' to boast to others that they have attained this or that level of meditation, they are abusing this method of mental culture.

One must be established in morality and clearly understand that to be fruitful in the discipline of meditation, worldly achievements must not be equated with spiritual development. Ideally, it is beneficial to learn under an experienced teacher or instructor to progress along the right path. But above all, one must never be in a hurry to achieve too much too quickly.

The Buddhist Way

The Buddhist way to meditation is through Sila, Samadhi and Panna. That means - morality, concentration and wisdom. First, we have to develop our moral background by voluntarily observing certain moral principles and virtues. That is the foundation for a good religious way of life. If we violate the universal law of cause and effect (karma), we will have to experience the bad effects sooner or later. That is why the Buddha introduced a moral code in the form of precepts so that we can live in harmony with existing living beings and maintain a healthy, peaceful atmosphere which will promote the well being of all.

If each and every person in this world were to radiate loving-kindness, compassion and understanding towards others, there would be less fear, tension or suspicion. Everybody can live peacefully.

After that, we have to concentrate more on mental development to achieve calmness and peace. That is samadhi, deep concentration. When the mind is calmed we gain panna, or realisation. Through meditation, we can gain calmness of the mind, understanding or wisdom. This is our main object. The confidence and understanding that we gain through meditation are very important as these achievements help us to avoid undue worries and frustration. We sometimes imagine that our problems are due to the influence of evil spirits, ghosts, charms or black magic or tend to suspect and blame others for these problems. We should try to understand the true nature of life. We meditate not only for our spiritual development but also to maintain our poise and equilibrium in our day-to-day life. If we can maintain patience and tolerance, we will not be easily provoked by others, for we can understand and see things in their correct perspective.

When we develop our mind to the fullest by cultivating virtues and positive qualities, maintaining our human dignity, and observing morality and discipline, we experience real freedom. This makes us appreciative of those who have achieved that end. We pay homage to them. Happy are those who have developed detachment, maintain peace and contentment in their lives.

The highest service man can perform to society is to abstain from evil. A developed and cultured mind can contribute to the weal and happiness of mankind. Meditation is simply not a waste of time. It expands the mind of a meditator in love and wisdom, and enables him to solve many human problems and enlighten others as well.

Through meditation, we will be able to make the right decision when we are in doubt as to which way to turn. These qualities cannot be bought anywhere. No amount of money or property can buy the qualities attained through meditation.

The Only Path

It is beneficial to recollect that the Buddha in the Satipatthana Sutta clearly points out that meditation is:

Ekayano Maggo - The one and only way,

Sattanam/visuddhiya - for the purification of beings,

Soka/ Pariddavanam/samatikkamaya - for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation,

dukkha/ domanassanam/atthagamaya - for destruction of suffering and grief,

nayassa/ adhigamaya - for entry into the Noble Path,

Nibbanassa sacchikiriya - for the realization of Nibbana.

The Buddha tells us in no uncertain terms that mindfulness has the effect of purifying beings, overcoming sorrow, causing entry into the Noble Eightfold path and ultimately of realizing Nibbana itself - magga and phala (the way and the fruit)

Bhikshu Sangharakshita gives a general perspective on what constitutes the spiritual path.

We can now begin to see in what the spiritual life, - in what the Higher Evolution - essentially consists. We may say that it consists in a continual progression from lower to higher, and ever higher, states of being and consciousness: from the world of sensuous experience to the world of mental and spiritual form, from the world of mental and spiritual form to the formless world, and from the formless world to Nirvana, or Enlightenment.

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Reap The Benefits

Today many people from all over the world, irrespective of their religions, have become aware of the benefits to be gained through meditation. The immediate purpose of meditation. is to train the mind and to use it effectively and efficiently in our daily life. The ultimate aim of meditation is to seek release from the wheel of samsara-the cycle of birth and death. Even though it is a most difficult task, positive benefits are obtainable here and now, if one is serious about meditation. It is appropriate to re-iterate what was mentioned earlier: One should not be enslaved by the prospects of these benefits and lose sight of the real aim of Buddhist meditation. The benefits of meditation can be summarised as follows:-

If you are busy person, meditation can help you to get rid of tension and to find relaxation.

If you are a worried person, meditation can calm you and help you find peace of mind.

If you are a person who has endless problems, meditation can help you to develop courage and strength to face and overcome them.

If you lack self-confidence, meditation can help you to gain the self-confidence which is the secret of success in life.

If you have fear in your heart, meditation can help you to understand the real nature of the problems that are making you afraid- then you can overcome the fear in your mind.

If you are always dissatisfied with everything and nothing in life seems to be satisfactory - meditation can give you the chance to develop and to maintain inner contentment.

If you are sceptical and uninterested in the religious way of life, meditation can help you to go beyond your own scepticism and to see some practical values in religious guidance.

If you are frustrated and heart-broken due to a lack of understanding of the uncertainty of life and the world, meditation can truly guide and help you to understand the fleeting nature of worldly conditions.

If you are a rich man, meditation can help you to realise the nature of your wealth and how to make use of it not only for your own happiness but also for others' happiness.

If you are a poor man, meditation can help you to develop contentment and not to harbour jealousy towards those who have more than you.

If you are a young man at the cross-roads of your life, and you do not know which way to turn, meditation can help you to the right path to reach your chosen goal.

If you are an elderly man who is fed-up with life, meditation can bring you to a deeper understanding of life; this understanding in turn will relieve your pains and increase the joy of living.

If you are hot-tempered, you can develop the strength to overcome the weakness of anger, hatred, and resentment to become a more calm and sober person.

If you are jealous, you can understand that negative mental attitudes never contribute anything for your benefit.

If you cannot reduce your craving for sense-desires, you can learn how to become the master of your sense-desires.

If you are addicted to drinking or to drugs, you can overcome the dangerous habit which has enslaved you.

If you are a narrow-minded person, you can develop understanding that will be beneficial both to you and your friends

and family to avoid misunderstanding.

If you are strongly influenced by emotions, your emotions will have no chance to mislead you.

If you suffer from certain disorders such as nervous breakdowns and mental disturbances, meditation can activate the positive forces in your mind and body to regain your health, especially if they are psychosomatic problems.

If you are a weak-minded person or one who maintains an inferiority complex, meditation can strengthen your mind to develop courage to overcome your weaknesses.

If you are a wise person, meditation will lead you to supreme wisdom. Then you will see things as they are, and not as they appear to be.

These are some of the practical benefits that come from practising meditation. These benefits are not for sale in any shop or departmental store. But you can develop them through your meditation. The mind is the key to happiness, and also the key to misery. To understand the mind and to use it well is a task that transcends a peaceful and contented life.

Be Diligent In Your Meditation

Some people say it is very difficult for them to practise meditation because there are a lot of disturbances. No one can stop disturbances. In fact there is no place in this world where there are no disturbances. But if we are wise and can understand things properly, we will know how to guard our minds against any form of disturbances.

The advice of the Buddha is: 'When you see any objects, do not be attached to the objects, but use your mind to develop penetrative insight into the true nature of component things.'

Look at things with awareness in their proper perspective. If the object is tempting, it is better not to be absorbed in that object if you really want to calm the mind. Allow the mind to be free of grasping the sense object. When you hear some sounds, pleasant or unpleasant, just listen with awareness. You must have the mindfulness to stop the sound vibration from affecting your mind. Do not allow your mind to absorb it. You have to train your mind in this way to maintain peace. This is the teaching we can learn from Buddhism. There is no academic discipline which can guide us to train the mind.

When Pythagoras was asked to define who a philosopher was, he said something to this effect: 'When all are invited to the feast of life some go there to enjoy, some go there to win name and fame and there are yet others who go there just to look on. These are the philosophers.' What is meant thereby is that the philosopher does not identify himself with life. He looks at life standing as it were outside life as an objective observer.

The mind can be disturbed by external objects and stimuli. When these external objects and stimuli do not disturb the mind, then the mind creates its own mental objects or imagination. After that it tends to develop greed, jealousy, hatred, illusion or emotional excitement which pollute the mind, according to the object that it creates. Meditation is the only means by which we can guard our mind. Wise people concentrate on any object whether it is pleasant or unpleasant without creating temptation or aversion towards the object.

We spend a lot of time on our body: wash it, clothe it, feed it, beautify it and relax it, but how much time do we spend on our mind?

Many sicknesses and disorders can be avoided if people could devote some time in the course of a day to calm their senses through the practice of meditation. Many people do not believe this or are too lazy to practise meditation owing to a lack of understanding. Some people say that meditation is only a waste of time.

Meditation can help one to overcome ill-health and maintain good health through developing the mind. When we harbour evil thoughts in our mind, these pollutions can cause damage to our physical body and we experience the bad effects. Medical science agrees that the mind can be the source for all forms of sickness and the same mind can also be used to cure sickness. In his view, Krihnamurti says:

Meditation is the unfolding of the new. The new is beyond and above the repetitious past-and meditation is the ending of this repetition. The death that meditation brings about is the immortality of the new. The new is not within the area of thought, and meditation is the silence of thought.

The Path To Deliverance

Scientific education, if unaccompanied with proper mental training or religious discipline can create disaster. Actually, we see this is happening all over the world. Educated people who have no wisdom and compassion are known to have no wisdom and compassion are known to have abused their intelligence by adopting evil means to achieve their ambitions or desires. Because of the application of dry intellect and technology, we face greater problems and threat today than had been faced by our ancestors in the past. All over the world people are fighting each other. Buddhism teaches us that killing for any reason is unjustifiable. It is worse when people fight and kill in the name of religion.

Meditation can contribute a lot to tame the wicked mind. By knowing that good and evil are both in our mind. We should watch our every thought very carefully and act mindfully. We must try to find out the nature of the thoughts which appear in the mind. Examining the thoughts that appear is in itself an act of meditation.

When the conscious 'I' frets too much, worries too much, or grieves too long and too intensely, then troubles develop in the body. Gastric ulcers, skin diseases, coronary diseases and a host of functional disorders are the products of mental and emotional imbalance. In the case of children, the defective eyesight are frequently related to emotional disorders.

If you practise meditation, you can learn to behave like a gentleman even though you are disturbed by others. Through meditation you can learn how to relax the body and to calm the mind; you can learn to be tranquil and happy within.

Meditation strengthens the mind and enables it to control human emotion when disturbed by negative thoughts and feelings such as jealousy, anger, pride, and envy.

We must remember that every spiritual master in this world attained the highest point of his life through the practice of meditation. They are honoured today by millions because they have contributed tremendous services to mankind through their supreme knowledge, patience and understanding.

Buddhism deals with the workings of the mind and the intricacies of meditation in the most detailed manner. The path to deliverance is a path of mental development. Buddhist devotees are encouraged to practise meditation as far as their inclinations and facilities permit. To shape one's attitudes and behaviour which are conducive to spiritual progress one should meditate on four subjects: the Buddha; loving kindness; unwholesomeness of life; and death. Even if the time spent on these subjects is not much, these four objects of meditation offer protection, and promote the devotee's progress along the Path to Deliverance.