

THE DEFINITION OF MEDITATION

HE WHO KNOWS DOES NOT SPEAK; HE WHO
SPEAKS DOES NOT KNOW. – LAO TZU

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Meditation is super-heightened awareness brought about instantly by the complete and sudden ending of the action of memory, and sustained by the continued and complete inaction of it. In this state attention is super-heightened, but all thought has completely ceased, thought itself being nothing more than memory in action, and having no existence when memory is at total rest. Meditation is thus awareness of all things without the superimposition of the contents of memory – language, knowledge, experience, remembrances, ideas, and imaginings – existing between the observer and the objects of his observation or perception.

When memory is active, bits of information, words, ideas, knowledge, remembrances, imaginings, and the like are continually arising in the mind, with greater or less rapidity, creating thought at various levels and making it ongoing. This activity of memory, the continual and perpetual presentation of its contents, is known as thought, that is, thinking, remembering, imagining; and this activity of memory – thought – continually fragments attention, dividing it into parts, and thereby reducing its intensity. Therefore fragmented attention is weak attention. Complete attention, however, is intense; it is super-heightened, and is so because it is not fragmented. Complete attention blooms only when thought completely ends; it occurs only when thought is at total rest – only when memory is completely inactive.

Awareness is independent of thought; thought does not produce awareness; but thought affects awareness; it changes the quality of awareness, and of vision, by layering perception with the contents of memory, which act as filters or lenses and alter perception. Thought reduces the intensity of awareness, as any one may see who becomes fully attentive through the complete cessation of thought. Meditation is the removal of these filters and lenses.

When thought ends, awareness becomes instantly intense and the act of seeing undergoes an immediate transformation. This happens because the contents of memory – words, ideas, imaginings, remembrances, and the like – all these filters and lenses – suddenly cease to be projected; their application ends; they vanish, like steam in the air, between the observer and the objects of his observation or perception. When they vanish the distortion (which one mistakes for clarity) they cause ends; and to the observer, with eyes wide open, is at once revealed the actual present, which is truly shocking to see because one can never become used to it. It is always new; and it always has been new: In the present there is nothing old. Thought cannot reveal, can never reveal, the actual present, or *what is*, as Krishnamurti often called it, because by its nature thought is a backward process, each thought always taking one back to the past, and every succession of thoughts keeping him tethered to it.

Thought – thinking, remembering, imagining – completely prevents awareness of the actual present. It prevents it because thought is nothing more than memory in action, and memory in action continually removes one from the actual present and keeps him in the past, psychologically, and actually and continually dims and alters his perception and vision.

Having known from infancy only the past, and having ever been aware of only the past, or *what was*, and from infancy perpetually projecting the contents of memory, one invariably mistakes awareness of the past for awareness of the actual present, or *what is*; the reason is that the past is all one has ever known and been aware of from infancy. It truly is like growing up and always living in a tinted bubble, and never seeing without the tinted bubble-wall in the way. Meditation ends the cycle, and reveals the actual present – the world and everything in it stripped of all words, ideas, and such, showing the observer for the first time that everything is *always new*, and always ‘was,’ and is, and ‘will ever be’ a mystery; that words are not, and have never been, and can never be the realities that they are intended to represent; that one is, in fact, everything that he or she observes. It is all one movement – a universe, all the parts of which make a whole and are ever changing in synchrony; only the ego is out of step and gets left behind. For the ego, one’s identity, is in fact a permanent resident of the past, a piece of fiction.

The next time you see a so-called ‘tree,’ or ‘cloud,’ or ‘human,’ or anything at all, just look at it with the understanding that that thing is not the name that your brain has for it—that ‘eyes’ are not ‘eyes,’ that ‘arms’ are not ‘arms,’ that ‘legs’ are not ‘legs,’ that ‘hands’ are not ‘hands,’ that ‘bodies’ are not ‘bodies,’ that ‘beings’ are not ‘beings.’ In other words, associate none of your knowledge of the thing with the thing. Just observe it. Look at it without identifying anything at all with it. Do not recognize it. How to begin to meditate? As Krishnamurti says, ‘You just look.’