

Yoga for Exam Time

The Power of a Mantra

Here is a story about the power of a mantra. . .

During a discourse, a speaker told the assembled group that a person who chants a mantra regularly for many years develops a pure mind, which enables them to understand the meaning of existence.

At this, someone in the audience stood up and said, 'Excuse me, I can't believe in the efficacy of mantra. A mantra is just a word. How can it have the power to purify anyone's mind, let alone give him a vision of the meaning of life?'

'What! You don't believe in the power of the mantra!' exclaimed the speaker. 'You are the worst fool I've seen in the whole of my life!' Since the speaker had called him a fool in the presence of the entire audience the man felt extremely humiliated. His face reddened and he started shaking with suppressed anger.

Pointing out his reaction, the said, 'You don't believe in the power of words, but look at the power of the word 'fool' and the strong effect it has had on you. And yet, you deny the power of the mantra?'

People scoff at the mechanical repetition of a mantra, claiming it to be a futile exercise. However, if we were not reciting a mantra, what would we be thinking about? Take a look at your thought patterns and what do you see? We would probably find that there is very little consecutive thought. Most of the time, we are in a state of reverie – a mental fog of disconnected sense impressions, irrelevant memories, nonsensical scraps of sentences from books and newspapers, little darting fears and resentments, physical sensation of discomfort, excitement or ease.

As we do nothing to control this reverie, it is largely conditioned by external circumstances. If we introduce into this reverie the repetition of a mantra, we shall find that we can control our moods despite the interference of the outside world.