



## Meditation as dissolution of wandering thoughts: A comprehensive analysis to achieve morality

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**A**bstract: This paper explores how human thoughts shape individual realities across different contexts and concepts. Individuals develop unique thought patterns based on sensory perceptions, past experiences, and anticipated futures derived from collective lived experiences. The layering and accumulation of these diverse thought patterns presents a significant challenge for those seeking to achieve “a state of thoughtlessness”—a state that many spiritual traditions associate with divine connection. The research examines how thought patterns influence moral frameworks within society, demonstrating that negative thought cycles often produce corresponding negative outcomes in behavior and decision-making. Meditation emerges as a critical practice for analyzing and deconstructing these thought patterns, particularly negative ones that impede moral development. Through systematic meditation practices, individuals can progressively strip away layers of “wandering thought” to ultimately reach a thoughtless state where authentic moral decision-making becomes possible. Drawing from ancient philosophical traditions, this study investigates three specific methodologies—assimilation, reduction, and surrender—as pathways toward thoughtlessness and divine connection. Various meditation techniques will be examined, with particular emphasis on how these practices contribute to the cultivation of moral behavior, by working on the cognitive and affective processes of mind, and ultimately, the experience of transcendence. By examining the interconnectedness between thought dissolution, meditation practice, and moral development, this research offers insights into accessing higher states of consciousness and authentic living.

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## **I**ntradaction

Human creativity and self-awareness often remain hidden within layered thoughts (Krishnamurti, 1986). These thoughts result from self-perception and the perception of others. To access our innate potential, we must reduce the layers of thought and work toward a state of thoughtlessness. As described by J. Krishnamurti (1969), true meditation leads to "a state of thoughtlessness, which is not the opposite of thought... It is the emptying of the mind of the known" (p. 115). This state transcends ordinary mental activity, allowing for direct perception of reality. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo (1949) refers to this state as "the silent mind," writing that "in the silence of the mind, the spiritual consciousness can go deeper" (p. 856). To understand the deeper realities within, we must recognize that whenever we contemplate an idea, it does not emerge in isolation (Osho,

1990). Certain pre-existing thoughts always lead to the creation of new ideas; without these existing thoughts, novelty cannot be derived. The notion of gaining something new that lies beyond our reach is entirely a myth. Only those meditators who have touched the state of transcendence (highest state of meditation) can access newness without relying on old patterns. For example, according to Rahula (1974), Gautama Buddha, in the context of Buddhist traditions, discovered the knowledge of suffering by entering into this transcendent state—a level of meditation previously inaccessible to others that could be categorized as a state of "thoughtlessness". Ordinary people often become increasingly distracted by the external world, causing them to lose connection with their inner selves. They struggle to take off old ideas or thoughts to gain access to new ones. Therefore, it is essential to understand the correct practice of meditation so that individuals can shed old

thought patterns and renew their perspectives according to contemporary insights. This process will also enable them to be honest and holistic in their understanding of themselves. Nowadays, many challenges exist to reduce or control our thoughts that are beyond human control, largely because people are disconnected from their centered selves. To rebuild this connection, individuals must engage in active cognitive processes (thinking patterns that are aligned with clear purpose). This may sound difficult for those bound by their materialistic desires. The primary effort they should make is to detach themselves from materialism, allowing them to fully access the true nature of the self (Radhakrishnan, 1923/2008, p. 63). For example, people are easily affected by the external sufferings of life, such as failures, emotional breakdowns, and the loss of loved ones. This vulnerability stems from being trapped in repetitive thought patterns,

which prevents them from rising above these challenges. As a result, they become suffocated within a web of illusory sufferings and often feel lost, unsure of how to free themselves from such distress. Historical records reveal considerable injury to the human mind caused by the external wear and tear of society, relationships, faith, self-doubt, and restrictive internal dialogues. These injuries lead individuals to believe they are incomplete and incapable of escaping suffering, thereby obstructing their path to conquering fears. Thus, meditation is an important practice that brings individuals closer to the truth of their existence. While meditation may appear insignificant to many, the reality is that true understanding of meditation can

only be achieved through reasonable practice. Understanding is akin to connecting with unknown patterns and accepting the mysteries inherent in esoteric sciences. Here, we will explore a few meditation practices that are meaningful in arranging scattered thoughts, reducing them to nothingness, and going beyond them to realize the divine sources within, untouched by external distractions. These meditation practices have been found effective in providing meaning and building moral connections. Moreover, these meditation practices are often methodical, significantly reducing the presence of doubt.

### **L**iterature Review

We frequently feel lost due to

the effects of our wandering mind (or, in Sanskrit, *chitta vṛttis*); therefore, we must learn to control it and empty the mind of its contents. While meditation aims to gain control over our thoughts, it's important to realize that controlling thoughts can lead to suppression, making the return of those same thoughts likely. To ensure that old thoughts do not return, we must commit to new beginnings, which is achievable when we layer out our thoughts. The layering of thoughts begins with understanding and analyzing their actual meaning. Thoughts are impressions of the external world, and by extracting these stored impressions, we can identify the true starting point or intentions behind our thoughts. This process leads us toward the

core of our inbound realities. Meditation involves removing all impressions from our thoughts, allowing us to gain an accurate understanding of ourselves. Though this may seem daunting for beginners, those who practice meditation consistently find it easier to access their thoughts, analyze them, and channel them toward the highest path of awakening. In yoga philosophy, we learn to rid ourselves of distractions, focusing on *Chitta Vritti Nirodhah*—removing fluctuations of the mind. By eliminating mental distractions, we can access the essence of thought, which helps us understand the true nature of human existence. The second step is to clear the passage from thought to mind, which can be achieved by properly directing

our senses toward perceiving actual knowledge. If we connect continuously with misguided or negative perception, our thoughts will be adversely affected, and so our mind. Thus, training our senses to absorb beneficial information is essential for mental processing and mind-body interactions. The third step is to select the thoughts we want to retain in our memory. We should repeatedly practice for the usefulness of thoughts while promptly forgetting those that are no longer relevant. This practice can help maintain clarity in our thoughts and guide us toward a more effective meditation practice. Meditation practice fills us with a unique energy, expanding our perception of the world and connecting us to the universe.

Research by Davidson and Lutz (2008) demonstrates that meditation functions as a trainable skill that physically alters brain activity, suggesting that regular practice creates measurable neurological changes. To understand meditation, we must first understand ourselves. This understanding involves comprehending our thoughts and the workings of our mind. There are two aspects to understanding the mind: the cognitive mind, which helps us acquire knowledge about the external world, and the affective mind, which determines our feelings and emotional responses toward that knowledge. Effective practice of meditation creates visual imagery that enables experiences of different states

within the mind. Although challenging initially, consistent practice can lead to significant benefits. Meditation purifies the mind, bringing clarity to our thoughts and vision. This journey toward our true selves is not just a random mental transaction but a state of transcendence.

Morality and moral behavior arise when our sense perception makes contact with our mind. If our senses collect inappropriate or corrupt information, our behavior can transform into immoral one. Therefore, it is important that we focus on our self-perception more than sense perception. Sense perception is more about what world is presenting before you; whereas self presentation is about what we would like to collect. As described in Advaita Vedānta,

"The world presents itself through sensory channels, but consciousness actively participates in determining what aspects of this presentation become part of one's experiential reality" (Deutsch, 1969, p. 62).

To develop strong self-perception, it is important to enhance our awareness. Awareness is not only about where our mind is; it also encompasses our physical presence. Wherever our body is, awareness exists. This is why we say that maintaining physical awareness is vital. The awareness our body gathers should also be reflected in our mind. This connection of awareness and interaction provides total clarity. Sometimes, the actions we take may be right for us but wrong

for others. This discrepancy occurs because what we perceive may seem correct from our perspective but may not align with others' viewpoints, and it can appear unethical from their perspective. To understand this, we must be able to shift our awareness to others. This is only feasible when we comprehend the interplay between self-understanding and the understanding of others.

In moral philosophy, there are boundaries that we need to understand. These boundaries are essential for improving our responses. Boundaries signify the differentiation between what we want to achieve and what is happening around us. This means that our purpose may differ from our inclined activities. Often, our activities depend on external factors,

which can prevent us from meeting our true purpose. To fulfill our purpose, we need to be mindful of our cumulative thoughts. The act of “living off thoughts” plays an important role in maintaining clarity. Only by leaving our thoughts effectively can we reach our existential goals. Similarly, some individuals may understand their purpose but struggle to achieve it because their body is pulling them in another direction. This is why the interaction between mind and body is needed. The body must be reactive to the mind, and the mind must comprehend the body. If the mind cannot communicate effectively, the body may also resist understanding the mind's intentions. For better interaction between the mind-body, we

need to know the two types of thoughts: positive thoughts, which our body naturally wants to absorb, and negative thoughts, which our body tends to resist. However, both types of thoughts may not matter much to us because these thoughts can't truly identify with our body. But these thoughts are important in their own way. What our body wants to absorb depends on its nature. If our nature (or innate contents) is filled more with positive qualities, then our body will absorb good things, such as spirituality (or highest attributes). "As is the constitution of one's *prakriti* (nature), so will be the tendency to absorb corresponding influences from the environment. The aspirant with purified nature spontaneously

attracts higher spiritual vibrations" (Aurobindo, 1949, p. 173). Conversely, if our mind is filled with negative thoughts, our body will absorb similar negative qualities. For example, if we have a lot of tamasic qualities (state of darkness, inertia, inactivity), we may feel lazy, and in turn, our thoughts will also reflect that lethargy. When we are more active, our thoughts tend to be more dynamic and filled with energy, which enhances our overall activity. The ability to control our thoughts is often very limited. This is the reason it is said that one needs to follow the yogic cycle, which is the citta-vṛtti-nirodha (the practice of controlling one's thoughts) for the comprehensive development of the mind, body, and soul. Swami Vivekananda

(1896) emphasized that "Through the practice of citta-vṛtti-nirodha, the individual gradually accomplishes comprehensive transformation, where body becomes an instrument of perfection, mind achieves clarity and concentration, and soul realizes its universal nature" (p. 124).

Like these layers of our body, we have layers of our thoughts or minds (Manomaya Kosha):

### **The Five Sheaths or layers (Panchkosha)**

1. Annamaya Kosha: This is the first layer, which is formed by the food we consume. When we eat together, our bodies become attuned to that energy. If we do not eat nourishing food, our

bodies will also reflect that lack of nourishment.

2. **Pranamaya Kosha:** The second layer relates to our vital energy (prana). This layer involves breath and the life force within us. Our breath directly affects our energy levels and overall well-being.
3. **Manomaya Kosha:** The third layer is associated with our mind and thoughts. This layer governs our emotions, feelings, and thoughts leading to our overall mental state.
4. **Vijnanamaya Kosha:** The fourth layer involves our intellect and wisdom. It is the layer of knowledge and understanding, guiding

us in making informed decisions.

5. **Anandamaya Kosha:** The fifth and outermost layer represents bliss or spiritual happiness, reflecting the state of our ultimate realization and connection with the universe.

Like this layers of our body, we have layers of our thoughts or minds (Manomaya Kosha)-

1. Thoughts governed by external disturbances
2. Thoughts that are based on the cause-effect relationships.
3. Thoughts that are preinstalled as the result of karmic impressions
4. Thoughts that are guided by the influence of ego or identity.

5. Thoughts that are pure in nature and not affected by external realities.

When we overcome thoughts governed by external disturbances, we can often free ourselves from temporary causes that lead to non-permanent effects. For example, success is often measured by the accumulation of wealth. Once we begin to detach from these temporary thought patterns, we also become aware of deeper, more ingrained thoughts—often karmic in nature—that bring about effects based on past experiences. As Sivananda (1958, p.112) says that “the process of detachment (*vairāgya*) gradually reveals not only transient thoughts but also the deep-rooted karmic impressions (*saṃskāras*) that have crystallized in the causal

body". If we are able to reduce these karmic patterns as well, we stop inviting new effects based on old, repetitive behaviors. We begin to surrender our ego to a higher divine path, and when this occurs, we can access the pure nature of thought. These are the levels of meditation that become possible to explore through deep understanding.

To maintain good health and remain active, we engage with the *Manomaya Kosha*, which is our mental layer (including mind).

#### **Two areas of mind:**

1. **Affective Domain:** This domain relates to our emotions and feelings.
2. **Cognitive Domain:** This domain pertains to our knowledge and understanding.

Following this, we have the Vijnanamaya Kosha, which is related to our understanding and knowledge formation cycle. The last layer is the Anandamaya Kosha, which represents a state of bliss. It is often associated with states of trance or deep meditation. In this state, the mind is unaffected by surrounding thoughts; it exists in a completely expansive state, feeling no lack of anything. Everything available to the mind feels complete. This is why it is said that yoga leads to our realization, connecting us with divine particles. When we talk about the purpose of human life, it's often said to be *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, which means truth, consciousness, and happiness (Vivekananda (1896); Aurobindo (1949); Radhakrishnan (1953);

Chinmayananda (1976). But how do we truly understand or achieve this purpose? This understanding comes when we see ourselves as part of something bigger—the universal being, which the Upanishads call *Brahman*. When we realize this connection, we free ourselves from all the sufferings, evils, and worries of life, and we begin to truly experience truth, consciousness, and happiness. This happens when we engage well with the layerings of the body (the five sheaths) and disconnect ourselves from the layerings of superficial thoughts. To understand our thoughts, we must recognize their motives and their effects on our external and internal bodies.

Meditation, which is a holistic practice, cannot be fully understood solely from a mental perspective. Thus, we must also consider it through the lens of the body. Meditation is a form of awareness that arises through both mental faculties and physical sensations.

In today's progressive society, individuals are growing materially, yet many continue to feel empty and in need of support through meaningful interdependence. While constantly depending on others is not always feasible, it is essential to enhance one's own mental ability, strength, and stability to maintain a healthy balance in mental well-being. Mental health is an important component of overall well-being, alongside physical, social, emotional, and spiritual

health. Mental health is often disrupted by external challenges and an individual's internal capacity to cope (Ingram, R. E., & Luxton, D. D., 2005). When this coping ability is weakened, it can result in visible symptoms that impair overall performance. While these symptoms may be managed through small lifestyle adjustments, they often recur and can lead to more serious mental health issues. Mental health issues often become problems of immorality. Thus, numerous practices and interventions exist for treating and preventing mental health symptoms and disorders. However, here we must focus on meditation as a progressive state (Lykins, A. D., & Baer, R. A., 2009). Meditation is not just the transactional engagement of the mind but it is a state of

transcendence (Rao, K. R., 2017). The goal of meditation is to transform the potential within humans and bring a sense of freedom. As Osho (1974) emphasized, "The purpose of meditation is not to create a certain state of mind. The purpose is to create a state of no-mind, which is freedom—freedom from all states, freedom from all identities, freedom from all limits of any kind" (p. 36).

Since meditation practice is quite subjective and intentional, it is neither easy nor productive to achieve experiential results by testing the performance of other individuals involved in meditation. To gain accurate results from the performance of meditation techniques, one must be a meditation practitioner oneself and possess the ability

to understand others well (Rao, K. R., 2017). In classical times, the practice was more rigorous and required the achievement of all the necessary stages of meditation (Walsh, R., & Shapiro, S. L... 2006). There were proper preparatory methods for inducing individuals into meditation practice, and there was also a consistent supervisor to guide individuals and prevent breaks in their practice sessions. In contrast, modern meditation is often performed to gain benefits that can make life meaningful and balanced. It is more about the assimilation of all scattered thoughts into a harmonious whole (Osho, 1989), the reduction of thoughts that are no longer needed. What remains after reduction are the genuine insights that connect you to your

hidden reality (Osho, 1974), and finally surrendering (Osho, 1996) to the thoughts that are genuine and relate to our hidden realities. Today, meditation practice has become much lighter. Consequently, the time period, time frame, and involvement of trainers have also been affected. Thus, this paper plays an important role in exploring techniques for achieving the best meditation practices and achieving the thoughtless state. In ancient Indian philosophy (especially Hindu philosophy), the yogic and meditation traditions help to bring about the transcendence and transformation of one's cognitive ability. As described in the Upanishads, "Through meditation, the mind undergoes a metamorphosis from its scattered condition to ekagrata

(one-pointedness), enabling access to knowledge beyond sensory perception" (Aurobindo, 1971, p. 243). These scattered thoughts must be transformed to the pure ones by consistent engagement in meditation.

It also allows us to clear our senses of all the doubts, worries and uncertainties (Kabat-Zinn, 1990); this ultimately helps to process the external information well to enhance our abilities of cognition. Since meditation could bring the transcendence of cognition, it has a greater effect on human thoughts, feelings, and actions (Rao, K. R., 2017). It is also found that people who practice meditation have better mental health than people who don't practice meditation (Goyal et al., 2014).

Meditation helps in managing stress and builds empathy toward others experiencing difficult times. It also brings mental clarity, which is essential for building meaningful connections. In times of suffering, meditation is a path to healing (Rosenzweig et al., 2018). This same process of healing helps in the rejuvenation of the mind, body, and soul. To make our life meaningful, we must be growing by all means, and so meditation acts as a quite useful technique to help us grow and develop our personality. Research says that even brief meditation sessions could help to improve attention, stress regulation, and emotional control (Zeidan, F., Johnson et al., 2010). With so many distractions all around,

meditation helps us to focus on our purpose and brings clarity. According to Vivekananda (1896), "The control of citta vṛttis represents the essence of Raja Yoga, whereby the practitioner systematically empties the mind of its restless contents to experience unbounded consciousness" (p. 118). Most of the time, we are lost due to the effects of our wandering mind (or in sanskrit called, citta vṛttis), and so we must make sure to control it and empty the mind of its contents. As described by Krishnananda (1973), "The practice of emptying the mind is not the cultivation of blankness but rather the removal of colored perceptions that distort our experience of reality" (p. 87). According to one study, meditation should be taught

from a very young age (Lippelt, D. P., et al., 2017) as the mind is very flexible, and strengthening and training it early provides more clarity in dealing with unpredictable situations. Meditation training for children also takes care of the problem of morality. When we discuss the idea of why we need to practice meditation, we may identify multiple benefits. Meditation works directly on negative aspects and also reduces daily anxiety that arises from unfamiliar stimuli (Britton et al., 2014). Meditation enhances emotional regulation, attention, and self-awareness. For non-practitioners of meditation, incorporating guided meditation into daily routines can help them focus and pay attention to daily tasks (Zeidan et al., 2010). Daily practice of meditation can

help regulate the affective state of mind, which in turn supports the health and general well-being of an individual. Long-term meditation practices also result in improved emotional stability. While there is much research on the benefits of meditation, there is relatively less emphasis placed on the methods of practice. In meditation, there is a need to engage the mind intentionally toward a familiar stimulus—it could be the breath, a part of the body, or an external object. Intentionally engaging the mind includes both focused attention (FA) and open monitoring (OM) practices. Focused attention (FA) means solely guiding our attention to a specific task, while open monitoring (OM) includes the non-judgmental and non-

attaching observation of all things that come into our conscious awareness.

## **M**ethods

Meditation training is an important resource for the cultivation of well-being and emotional fulfillment in an individual's life. In recent studies, it is revealed that if there is a lack of inclination towards regular and long-term meditation practice, short-term integrated practice can also be helpful in bringing productive results (Yi-Yuan Tang et al., 2007). Moreover, different styles of meditation also result in varying effects (of mindfulness and concentration), and it depends on the meditation coach/ trainer/ expert to bring the best results in meditation by its training course. Some

practices for long term benefits in meditation, like mantra chanting (derived from Yoga-Sūtras) and mindfulness meditation (derived from Buddhist Theravāda tradition), directly impact the brain and its functioning, helping to improve attention, memory, and stress relief (Goyal et al., 2014).

In modern context, the integrated training for short duration seems to be quite effective for the results it delivers (Yi-Yuan Tang et al., 2007).

### **Integrated Meditation training**

The integrated meditation training relies on three methods: alerting, orienting, and finding conflict. First, preparedness is created by the coach, who helps the individual gain control of their breath through mental imagery and deep breathing

exercises. Second, after alerting, the trainer leads the individual through the training course, which may involve guided or non-guided meditation. Lastly, the trainer identifies where the trainee is going wrong and assesses areas for improvement in the meditation process. In this approach, the question that may arise is why integrated practices are more meaningful than other regular practices. This is because integrated practices combine mind and body practices, including body relaxation, breathing adjustments, which are effective in controlling thoughts, gaining attention, bringing emotional stability, and promoting morality. The second reason for its effectiveness is the quality maintained during the

integrated practice sessions, typically lasting five days, where a well-qualified coach is appointed to ensure the practice is beneficial. Third, proper screening and monitoring are conducted to assist individuals who face difficulties during meditation practice.

Aside from integrated practices, there are also mindfulness-based stress reduction programs (MBSR), which combine mindfulness practices with gentle yoga. These programs have been found to improve mood, affective processes (Nyklícek & Kuijpers, 2008), and are associated with better immune system functioning, as well as improved stress and emotional regulation. The added benefit of this program is that it is not relying on any one practice, but it is a culmination

of two or more than two practices. This is not directly aiming towards problem solving but it is also aiming for the reduction of any foreseen or unforeseen problems in the future.

In modern life, humans often feel stuck because they couldn't understand the blockages that disturbs the regular flow of energy. Meditation removes blockages that affect mental processing and brain function, particularly through Focused Attention (FA) and Open Monitoring (OM) practices, which can reduce stress as well as support structured mind training and clearing of thought channels. Overall, meditation contributes to a heightened sense of well-being, which is relevant for individuals to understand and affirm the

existential dimensions (knowing the self; and interrelations of self to others). As Vivekananda (1964) asserted, "The meditative state reveals that what we call 'self' extends beyond individual boundaries, establishing a direct experiential understanding of one's relationship to all existence" (p. 176). Meditation is not a singular activity but a process involving various conceptual and attention-regulation strategies designed for different ends (Antoine Lutz et al., 2008). FA training, for example, has been shown to significantly enhance goal-directed behavior by strengthening the ability to sustain attention and eliminate distractions. On the other hand, OM meditation involves cultivating a non-reactive

awareness of thoughts and feelings, leading to greater clarity and enrichment of everyday experiences.

### **Stages of Meditation training**

#### 1. FA Meditation Training

In the first case, there is an identification and categorization of stimuli as productive or non-productive, followed by a redirection of attention toward mindfulness.

For example, during the process of bringing awareness to the breath, one may encounter external stimuli that either enhance or disrupt the meditation. If the stimulus is loud music, it may disrupt the meditation process and thus might not be helpful. However, if it is soft meditation music, it may deepen the meditation experience. Therefore, there is always a conscious choice in the

acceptance or rejection of stimuli. Silence also plays an important role in meditation; it is a therapeutic practice and a brief pause after the completion of guided meditation or deep inner visualization allows the individual to reflect on the training and fully absorb its benefits for greater meaning and connection (Fadel Zeidan, 2010).

#### 2. OM meditation Training

In the first case, there is an internal strength needed to focus on external stimuli, identify them, or even replace them. Whereas in the other case, the stimuli do not matter as much, since the focus is on simply monitoring the external presence without letting it disrupt the internal awareness. Open Monitoring (OM) meditation involves

maintaining a broad, receptive awareness of one's experiences—observing thoughts, sensations, and emotions as they arise, without reacting or clinging to them. Neuroscientific studies of such practices reveal the underlying mechanisms by which these methods can strengthen and reorganize the brain's complex regulatory functions, particularly in areas responsible for attention control, emotional regulation, and self-awareness. Further, any form of meditation training has shown longitudinal effects, including improved mental health, cognitive flexibility, and emotional stability. Therefore, it is essential to understand the nature of meditation and its various forms to effectively integrate them into daily

routines for sustainable well-being. Also, there is a growing need to design and deliver meditation practices that are developmentally and contextually appropriate—tailored to suit the needs of children, adults, the elderly, and gender-specific groups (Antoine Lutz et al., 2008).

### 3. Mindfulness meditation Training

There is another level of practice called MM or mindfulness meditation practice, which is based on maintaining a relaxed state of mind by firmly reducing wandering thoughts. It involves bringing attention back to the breath to enhance the practice of meditation. This training is debatable, as it is not certain whether 3 or 4 days of training are required to gain the benefits

of practicing this form of meditation (Fadel Zeidan et al., 2010). However, the results from a 4-day training program (Fadel Zeidan et al., 2010) were found to be quite beneficial in a research study, as it helped individuals perform several cognitive tasks that require sustained attention and executive processing efficiency. In contrast, other exercises like mood training through book listening showed that while the mind was occupied during the task, there was no significant improvement in mood (Fadel Zeidan et al., 2010). According to Krishnamurti (1975), "The challenge of meditation lies precisely in this paradox—that our consciousness is conditioned both by external impressions and by its own resistance to transcending

thought patterns that constitute its familiar identity" (p. 143).

We began by understanding the complexity of thought patterns and concluded that if these patterns are influenced by the duality of others' impressions and our own resistance to entering a thoughtless state, achieving meditation becomes difficult. Therefore, we must train both the cognitive and affective levels of the mind to reach a meditative state without being affected by external distractions.

### **A**nalysis and **D**iscussion

In the Pātañjali Yoga Sūtras, Rāja Yoga is given significant importance as the practice of the eightfold path (Aṣṭāṅga Yoga). This practice includes three essential stages of meditative states: Dhāraṇā (the practice of

achieving concentration on a single point), Dhyāna (practice of prolonged focus and attention), and Samādhi (a state of transcendence). "Trayamekatra saṃyamaḥ" (Yoga Sūtras 3.4) - "The three taken together [dhāraṇā, dhyāna, and samādhi] constitute saṃyama" (Pātañjali, trans. Bryant, 2009, p. 314). This reveals that the first importance is given to the practice and only then is the state of meditation achieved at the end. There are also the practices of Buddhist meditation that provide the arousal state or the state of wakefulness. This includes two practices- Upacāra, the concentration that is unsteady, while appanā is steady concentration leading to a state of absorption (Rao, K. R., 2017). This practice ultimately

leads to a Samādhi state or nirvāṇa (nibbana in Pāli) or a state of transcendence. In this, the goal of "awakening" is met, where an individual realizes the impermanence of the physical state of existence and its ultimate ends. Buddhist meditation practices focus on two states of reaching the level of meditational effects—one is the state of awareness and the other is the state of relaxation. As explained by the 14th Dalai Lama (1991), "The path of meditation involves developing śamatha, the state of peaceful abiding or relaxation, as the necessary foundation for vipaśyanā, the state of penetrating awareness that leads to wisdom" (p. 112). Awareness is a part of FA meditations, where a heightened state of attentive control is gained, and

relaxation is a part of OM meditations, where the monitoring of the body is involved that ignores the dominance of external experiences and maintains a balance between the external and internal experiences.

### **Meditation Training and its role in well being**

Attention has many types—out of this, first is selective or focused attention that involves prioritising over multiple tasks and responses; the second is intrinsic awareness that involves the general level of arousal, which controls an individual from mind wandering, or the state of mental preparedness to detect unfamiliar stimuli, and third is relaxation into the level of transcendence. The Tibetan

Buddhist practitioners, the Vipassana meditators, as well as meditators in other traditions, have been able to achieve high alert and aware brain states that reflect the level of transcendence. As the Dalai Lama (1994) explains, "The goal of Buddhist meditation is not merely relaxation but a profound shift in the quality of consciousness itself, manifesting as both heightened alertness and profound inner peace" (p. 132).

This was possible because of necessary mental preparation and diversion of attention towards focused training. It is also noted that the early stages of meditational practices require more effort, and in the later stages of meditation practices, the effort gradually declines. In the early stage, more reliability

is shown towards FA (focused attention) where there is a multiple process of bringing attention to the process of meditation. It involves breath training, stimuli-response training (where unfavourable stimuli are recognised and eliminated), and also involves alerting the muscles to attend only to meditative objects. It is found that in proficient meditators, the disengagement from unfamiliar thoughts is faster and easier. Even fatigue is decreased in proficient practitioners because they no longer have to depend on external resources to train the brain muscles to focus on a meditation object. In this OM (open monitoring) meditation stage, one becomes more aware and can recognise internal and external stimuli more easily.

Because of this, it also helps in more efficient processing, unless the system runs so effortlessly that it requires fewer meditational operations.

There is a wide range of attention and concentration practices that tend to increase an individual's performance. These practices are derived from Buddhist and Vedantic traditions. Among the variety of meditations, there are sound, chanting, and mantra-based meditation (Swami

Muktananda, 1976), which redirect negative thoughts. The meditational chanting of mantras is the first step toward calming the mind so that awareness can be raised to a higher state of consciousness.

Paramahansa Yogananda (1972) observed that "sound vibrations in the form of

mantras have the unique capacity to realign subtle energies within the practitioner, facilitating the transcendence of lower thought patterns" (p. 213). Apart from the focused attention and open monitoring practices of meditation, there is also a state of Transcendental Meditation (Orme-Johnson & Farrow, 1977) that consists of the repetition of non-religious mantras (Yolanda Álvarez-Pérez et al., 2022). This practice produces small to moderate reductions in levels of anxiety, stress (including post-traumatic), and general psychopathology. It has an impact on stress levels and mental health quality. It is also found to improve sleep quality and reduce sleep duration. Overall, it works on attentional and emotional self-regulation

through cognitive training and other practices. It is also an easy-to-practice form of meditation that does not require extensive theoretical knowledge, and anyone can implement it in their daily routines. In addition to traditional forms of meditation, there are various other practices that offer similar benefits for mental and emotional well-being. These include self-hypnosis, body scan meditation, progressive muscle relaxation (Sivananda, 1955), guided imagery meditation (Chinmayananda, 1987), biofeedback, and breath awareness techniques (Iyengar, 1979, p. 143). According to Krishnamurti (1969), "Walking meditation represents a dynamic form of mindfulness where one cultivates awareness through

movement, demonstrating that meditation need not be confined to static postures" (p. 87). Across different cultures and spiritual traditions, meditation and mindfulness practices have evolved into diverse forms. Buddhist traditions include various techniques such as Zen meditation (which has its roots in Mahayana Buddhism), Vipassana (or clear seeing), mindfulness practices, and methods that emphasize the connection between the mind and body for healing. In Hindu philosophy, practices encompass mantra meditation, mindfulness meditation, transcendental meditation, yogic meditations (Aurobindo, 1972), Kundalini awakening (Vivekananda, 1963, p. 89), hypnotic techniques, and self-inquiry approaches known as

Atma Vichara (Radhakrishnan, 1959, p. 436). Chinese traditions present meditative practices like Taoist meditation, Tai Chi, and Qi Gong (Chi Kung) exercises, which focus on energy flow, breath control, and achieving harmony with nature. Christian contemplative methods feature silent prayer, contemplative reading, quiet meditation with God, dialogical prayer, and reflective confession, all aimed at achieving spiritual development. In Islamic traditions, practices such as dhikr (remembrance of God) are utilized as spiritual tools to center the mind and strengthen the connection with the divine. A few observations have also been made regarding the limited effects of meditation, as some argue that meditation is merely

relaxation (Holmes, 1990). When meditation is viewed as religiously symbolic, it brings more meaning to the practice. An individual can connect to both the deeper self and the higher self simultaneously. It not only relaxes an individual but also instills hope.

### **Meditation practice and Moral behaviour**

Could mindfulness practice lead to meaningful social and moral behaviour? This question reflects a biased opinion because moral behaviour depends on multiple factors; it's not just about a person's intrinsic nature but also about the external outputs they provide. Survival skills also play a role in making morally sound behaviour. As Gandhi (1946) observed, "The skills

required for survival, when practiced with mindfulness, naturally lead to ahimsa (non-violence) and satya (truthfulness) in all spheres of action" (p. 87). In human affective relationships, there is a deeper feeling of trust in others and a desire to be trusted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Despite this, how can trust be cultivated to create better, more meaningful connections? As meditation is a set of skills, it includes the practice of generating love, kindness, and acceptance. Buddhist traditions have focused on cultivating trust through the practice of Loving-Kindness Meditation (LKM). This involves an imagery-based guided meditation in which participants are asked to express their feelings toward random images

projected to them after regular meditation sessions to note their developed compassion and emotions. This is a systematic mental training (Thupten Jinpa, 2015) for developing compassion. Loving-Kindness Meditation not just helps in building compassion, but it also helps in developing a loving and kind-hearted attitude (and a series of moral behaviour) toward self and others. The loving-kindness exercise involves imagining a loved one, feeling their love, and then directing their benevolent aspirations to a neutral stranger with whom one has had no previous connection. In a study, it is also revealed that meditation training induces natural cultivation of moral behavior (Davidson & Dahl, 2023, p. 97). This is because

Loving-Kindness Meditation increases the release of positive emotions, which in turn enhances our various abilities to deal with life challenges.

Meditation training not just helps in bringing positive connections but also induced morality, it also helps in reducing the negative effects that come as a result of various roles we play in our lives. According to Patanjali, "Regular meditation practice (dhyana) creates a mental clarity that naturally discerns between harmful and beneficial connections, leading to a spontaneous emergence of moral behavior" (as cited in Dasgupta, 1922, p. 167). Meditation helps in the meta-analysis of thoughts that brings meaningful interactions with our own mind, body, and soul.

According to classical Indian philosophy, the meditation techniques that are often found to be beneficial in meaningful existence and bringing moral behaviour include mindfulness meditation (immersing oneself in the present moment) and Loving-Kindness Meditation or Metta Bhavana (Buddhaghosa, translated by Nanamoli, 2021, p. 289). The intersection of mindfulness practices and ethical development was explicitly addressed in Buddhist and Yogic traditions, where present-moment awareness was considered inseparable from moral cultivation" (Vivekananda, 2017, p. 103). The timing chosen for meditation doesn't significantly affect the results, as proven in one experiment (B. L. Fredrickson et al., 1998, 2001).

However, the time spent on meditation (time span) does impact the positive responses generated by meditation. The cultivation of positive emotions through meditation also aims to reduce the impact of negative or depressive symptoms. Moral behaviour in its descriptive sense signifies "correctness" ('the way things are') and in the prescriptive sense ('the way things ought to be). This signifies the difference between pragmatic ethics and aspirational morality (Chatterjee, 2020, p. 213). This sense helps to realize and position things the way they are and the way they ought to be. This is very important in contemporary society in deciding what is right and wrong. If we understand our thoughts and practice

meditation, we can achieve an orderly and just world and society. Morality regulates man's entire activities as a member of the society and also as an individual, and is a means of the goal of human existence. Happiness is a serious contemporary problem too. We have a rising generation of unhappy people who have been able to live a life of happiness and fulfillment. Right meditation techniques provide a pathway to happiness despite the commotion and erring ideologies around the world.

## **C**onclusion

The journey of self-discovery through meditation represents an important path toward authentic existence. By cultivating a thoughtless state and training our mental

faculties—both cognitive and affective—we begin to differentiate between externally imposed narratives and our genuine inner voice. Meditation serves as an illuminating force, systematically peeling away layers of conditioned thinking to reveal our deeper reality. Through dedicated practice, individuals experience a reduction in non-essential thoughts and non-moral behaviors, leading to the flourishing of ethical conduct. This process of assimilation and understanding ultimately guides us toward surrendering to the supreme divine—a surrender that paradoxically leads to self-fulfillment rather than self-diminishment. The transformative power of meditation lies in its ability to clarify our perceptual

framework amidst life's confusions. As we develop this clarity, we move from incongruent self-identification toward respectful self-recognition, aligning our energy with our authentic nature. This alignment not only benefits the individual but radiates outward, positively affecting our interactions and contributions to the world around us. Meditation thus emerges not merely as a practice but as a state of being—one that transcends conventional description yet remains rich with meaning.

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