CHAPTER 2
JK’S CONCEPT OF MEDITATION

“Where there is ‘me’ there must be disorder. And if I look at the world through the ‘me’, the world outside or the world inside, there is not only division, but that brings about conflict, that division creates chaos and disorder in the world. Now to observe all that totally, in which there is no division, such observation is meditation. For that you don’t have to practice, all that you have to do is to be aware of what exactly is going on inside and outside, just to be aware.”

The object of all the philosophical/metaphysical inquiry is to end human suffering or to attain Moksha/ultimate freedom. Various ways have been prescribed by various thinkers all over the world. Meditation is the prominent one among them. Meditation is a topic discussed all over the world and there are people who regularly practice meditation. Especially in the present age where human life is full of various tensions arising out of the very struggle for existence, the ancient science of Yoga/Patanjali Yoga is invoked in order to find a remedy for the psychosomatic disorders caused by these tensions and stresses. The Yoga system prescribes various bodily postures and control over one’s breathing to keep the body fit. Only with a fit body one can go beyond and attain Moksha—that is the general view. Is meditation a kind of rigorous physical and psychological exercise? What is the true meaning of meditation? What is the importance of mediation? Such questions arise and JK’s teaching on mediation throws light on them.

In the previous chapter we have gone through JK’s concept of freedom. As mentioned earlier, freedom and meditation are closely connected, they coexist according to JK. In this chapter a study of JK’s understanding of meditation will be presented. As the chapter progresses, the interconnection will become clear.

**Commonsense understanding of ‘meditation’**- Sitting still, adoption of particular bodily postures, concentration, rigorous physical discipline, strict dietary rules, chanting of mantras, prayers, following a particular system of meditation, discipleship of a guru and lots of ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ are considered to be the integral parts of meditation. Some particular time is set aside for meditation; a particular place is also arranged for daily meditation. The objective of
the exercise is freedom from the worldly sufferings, having a peaceful, steady mind, attainment of bliss, achieving Moksha etc. JK talks about meditation at length in his dialogues; of course his understanding of meditation is quite different from the usual understanding of the word. But he has placed a lot of importance on meditation; it is seen clearly when he says, “If you have this extraordinary thing (meditation) going in your life, then it is everything; then you become the teacher, the disciple, the neighbour, the beauty of the cloud- you are all that, and that is love.”

Meditation according to JK

JK says that we must understand right at the beginning, before we meditate, the meaning of meditation. Is it that my guru or tradition says ‘meditate’ and so I sit and meditate? Surely we have to understand the meaning of meditation before we begin meditating. JK does not talk about ‘how’ to meditate or meditation according to a particular system at all. He says that rather than finding a system or method or a prescribed format and following it, we must understand what meditation is; not a system ‘for’ meditation but meditation itself is important. He has also said, “If one can find out, very deeply, the significance, the necessity and the importance of meditation for oneself, then one puts aside all the systems, methods, gurus, together with all the peculiar things that are involved in the Eastern type of meditation.”

In the commonsense understanding of the term several things like chanting, prayer, concentration, the search for truth, or what we call understanding, the desire to seek consolation, the need for a guru etc. are involved. Let us now see what JK has to say about these one by one. JK’s review of the commonsense understanding will show the limits of these and why these fail to lead to real meditation.

Chanting of mantras

Very commonly, chanting/ repeating of a mantra or mantras is considered to be a part of meditation. JK gives us two etymological meanings of the word and shows how far removed we are from the real meaning of ‘mantra’. One meaning of the word is ‘to ponder over not-becoming’, another is ‘to absolve, put aside all self-centered activity.’
According to JK we are always busy with ‘becoming’ something. In the process we neglect the fact, the present which is life. Rather than ‘becoming’ something one should pay attention to what *is*. Thus pondering over ‘not becoming’ will be existing in the present and that is meditation. This observation of the present will bring about real self knowledge i.e. knowledge of the non-existence of the self. With this realization all self-centered activity will come to an end and that is meditation.

He says that we forget these meanings and go on repeating a mantra and this activity is carried out with self-interest, with our egoistic ways. All the time we are trying to become something which turns out to be futile. The self is very much there and this is a conscious activity, can this be real meditation? Here one is meditating consciously in order to achieve mental stillness or peace of mind. Using stern words, JK says that there is no difference between this meditator and a man who says, ‘I want money, so I will work for it’. One is called as spiritual achievement and the other is a mundane achievement but still both are in the line of achievement. Meditation does not have any goal as per JK. “Any conscious, deliberate, active desire with its will is not meditation.”

Sometimes, chanting is a part of some ritual. JK has talked about performance of rituals, idol/image worship. According to him, performance of a ritual without thinking, without understanding the meaning is being insane; chanting some words without a referent, without meaning is a state of unbalance because you are doing something without knowing it. Whereas in meditation, “you have something extraordinary going in your life, it is like you become the teacher, the disciple, the beauty of nature- everything.” there is no place for insanity or imbalance. He also says that when this happens, love also exists there.

**Prayer**- JK simply says that “prayer is a form of supplication.” When someone is in some difficulty, he or she looks for some help, somebody to help out. Thousands of people pray and they believe that their prayers are answered. They would not pray if they did not receive an answer to their prayers. Out of praying they receive a certain consolation. The question that arises here is- does the answer come from God, a superior entity, or does the answer come from somewhere else? Also we have to look into what is actually involved in prayer. First you repeat...
certain words or mantra over and over again. This repetition induces quietness in the mind because when such repetition takes place the mind is made dull and quiet; and when the conscious mind is quiet, then it receives an answer. Does this answer come from God or from somewhere else i.e. your mind itself?

According to JK, this is what actually happens in praying- the superficial mind becomes quiet, it is in an inactive state and then the unconscious projects itself and you have an answer. Or you sleep over a problem and have an answer in the morning. Here, the conscious mind goes over the problem, struggles to find an answer and then puts it aside. Then the unconscious is able to project itself into the conscious and you get an answer. JK says that this can be called as the small voice in you or the voice of God or whatever. It is obvious that the unconscious that gives the intimation gives an answer to the problem. And, “prayer is merely a trick to make the conscious mind quiet so that it can receive the answer.” The important point to be noted here is that the conscious mind receives an answer according to its conscious desire. As long as the mind is conditioned, its answer will inevitably be conditioned.

**Concentration** - It is also said that concentration is extremely important in meditation. But it is noticed that concentration is not easy, it is a problem. So, what is meant by concentration? JK says that concentration is mostly taken to mean exclusion. While concentrating one tries to focus totally on some idea, object, image; it means that you resist all the thoughts that are coming to you. Then you are engaged in a kind of battle in forcing your mind to dwell upon only one idea/object etc and to resist the flow of other ideas. In this process you concentrate on one idea/object etc and exclude all others. So this concentration is nothing but exclusion. Not just exclusion, it becomes a constant conflict of resistance because you resist all but one thought in order to concentrate. Such concentration creates more disturbances in the mind and the resistance, conflict consumes one’s energy. Thus concentration is not meditation according to JK.

Also, in choosing one thought over the others, you are giving more importance to that particular thought; the others automatically become 'lesser' ones. Again there is a battle between the important and the less important thought. JK says that instead of going through this, if
you follow and understand each thought as it arises- no thought is of ‘lesser’ importance- then there is no need for focusing on one thought. This concentration is more comprehensive, creative and strengthening.

Regarding this point, JK has made an interesting observation. He has said, “The man who makes an effort for concentration has no interest in what he is doing. If he is interested, concentration is no effort at all.” It means that meditation is not something that is externally imposed upon you. If you force yourself to meditate then it is an effort; you thoughts are moving around and you are forcing yourself to meditate. In such a situation the mind is divided, is struggling to concentrate on a particular thing but actually there is no division or struggle in meditation.

Meditation, Understanding and Self-knowledge- At one place JK says that understanding is the very basis, the fundamental process of meditation. Mere concentration or prayer cannot bring about this understanding because in prayer there is supplication and petition; you are asking for something and you expect your demand to be fulfilled. The understanding that he is talking about here is that which will liberate you from what you understand. Therein lies peace and freedom and these are important in meditation.

He has further explained what he means by ‘understanding’. According to him ‘understanding’ means giving right significance, right valuation to everything. Ignorance is to give wrong values. The question here is how to establish right value – of property, relationship, ideas. If right values are to come about, the nature of the thinker has to be understood; without the understanding of the thinker or the self, one’s actions, choice, thought etc. have no foundation at all. “Therefore self-knowledge is the beginning of meditation.” If I don’t know myself i.e. my motives, desires, demands, my pursuit of patterns of action, there is no foundation for my thinking. And then the thinker who merely asks, prays or excludes, without understanding himself, is bound to end in confusion, in illusion. Thus understanding is self-knowledge.

What is this self-knowledge? According to JK it means being aware of every movement of thought and feeling, knowing all the layers- the superficial and the deeper- of one’s
consciousness, the deeply concealed activities, the hidden motives, responses. This requires tranquility in the conscious mind; then only it can receive the projection of the unconscious. The conscious/superficial mind is always engaged with the daily activities—earning livelihood, tackling problems—or activities of our existence. That mind must understand the right significance of its activities so that tranquility is brought in. This tranquility or stillness cannot be brought about by compulsion, coercion or by drugs. Observation of these activities is the only way to bring tranquility so that the self is understood.

JK says that before we go into the really complex and intricate question of what is meditation; we have to be very clear about what we are looking for or seeking. Everybody is seeking something. As we start ‘seeking’ meditation, these are the questions that arise—the nature of meditation, why one should meditate at all, what is its use and where does it get you. According to him the word ‘seek’ implies that ‘we already know, more or less, what we are after’; be it God, truth or a perfect life. When we are seeking we have an idea or image in our mind about that which is sought. It is like you are looking for something familiar that is lost and you will be able to recognize it when you find it. It means that we already know it. JK clearly states that the first thing to realize about meditation is that it is no use to seek because what is sought is predetermined by what you wish. For example, if you are unhappy or lonely you will search for, seek hope or companionship etc. that will sustain you. You will find it eventually. But this kind of search will not help you in meditation. So seeking is of no use.

**Foundation of meditation**

He points out that one has to lay the foundation of meditation. This foundation is the foundation of order which is righteousness. It means that one must be extremely, extraordinarily moral. Here morality is not an effect or outcome but a constitutive element as the foundation. And what is morality? He says, “…morality is only the bringing of order both within oneself and also without oneself.” JK also tells us that the morality must be in action, morality is not mere ideation or conceptualization. It is moral behaviour.

This **bringing of order**—which is disciplining oneself—has to happen without any suppression,
control or escape. In his peculiar style, he points out that the root meaning of the word ‘discipline’ is ‘to learn’, not to conform or become a disciple of someone; no imitation or suppression is involved here. The act of learning demands discipline which is not an imposition like the harsh austerity of a monk. But without austerity our daily life leads only to disorder. JK says that the order that he is talking about is like ‘mathematical order, not relative, not comparative, not brought about by environmental influence.’ This order comes with the understanding of disorder. But if you try to bring in order with control, then “…there are all the implications of the duality and the contradiction which arises between the observer and the observed.”

Because when you try to control there is the division between the controller and the controlled.

JK has given an example to explain his meaning of order. He says that one is angry and is trying to get rid of the anger; when he actually sees that he is anger itself, order comes in. Without this understanding you cannot really know what meditation is. He has also pointed out that the mind has to be in order for meditation. And, he says that righteous behaviour is to be established so that the mind is in complete order. “A mind that is tortured, frustrated, shaped by environment, conforming to social morality, must in itself be confused; and a confused mind cannot discover what is true.”

In meditation, truth exists.

Love also forms a part of this foundation. By love JK does not mean pleasure or happiness, desire, etc. but love that does not divide. He says that there is order in love and order means harmony between the mind, brain and emotions. Otherwise meditation could be self-hypnosis. Enmity, hatred, jealousy, violence has no place in such a mind and that is love, and truth exists in love.

JK also warns that for meditation you have to observe the activities and functioning of your mind which is self-centered and this is quite arduous. This demands great discipline and you must also know about the tricks that the ‘mind plays upon itself, the illusions and delusions, the imagery and the imagining of all the romantic ideas that one has.’ According to him a mind capable of sentimentality is incapable of love, sentiment which is attachment breeds brutality.

*This concept will be discussed later in a separate chapter.
cruelty and violence, not love. Another requirement for meditation is that the mind should be able to stand completely alone. He means that a mind that is holding on to the crutches of rituals, methods etc. for meditation cannot meditate; it has to be on its own.

Only after laying this deep foundation can the mind proceed to find out what meditation is. If righteousness is absent from one’s action and life then meditation has very little meaning for him. JK tells us that this foundation has to be laid happily, not compulsively but with ease and felicity, without any hope of reaching anything.

**JK on various schools of meditation**

While talking about the various schools, systems and methods of meditation like the Zen and Yoga JK says that these schools suggest that through a method or a system or through conforming to a particular pattern or tradition, the mind can come upon that ultimate truth, Moksha, bliss etc. JK does not agree with this. According to him method implies conformity, repetition; method implies that someone who has reached a certain enlightenment and he gives you the do’s and don’ts. We are eager and we practice it mechanically, day after day, blindly, without being critical. This actually makes the mind duller by the day. Such a mind will be in a position to experience only that which is in the field of its own conditioning. This of course is not meditation. JK explores the state/conditions of mind or nature and mode of mental states of different schools of meditation.

Especially in the East, there exists a whole tradition of meditation. Volumes are written on meditation even today. But any form of tradition, according to JK, is a carryover from the past. This way the mind carries the burden of the past and is not free at all. In meditation the mind has to be completely free of every form of spiritual tradition and sanction. What happens due to meditation is completely different, new from any of these things that the brain or the mind carries. In order that the new sets in, the old has to go says JK.

So meditation is not tradition, conforming to a method, no one can teach you and there is no particular path to follow. Then what is meditation? JK says that “The whole meaning of
meditation is in the mind becoming completely quiet; not only at the conscious level but also at the deep, secret, hidden levels of consciousness; so completely and utterly quiet that thought is silent and does not wander all over the place.”  

**Meditation and Guru**- In the East tradition tells us that you require a guru for meditation. The West has its own form of tradition, prayer, contemplation and confession. But the basic principle is that you do not know and someone else knows; this implies authority. The guru tells you to follow and you follow his system. In the process you are actually engaged day after day in following, in conforming to his method. Here you are fighting with yourself in trying to follow and you are suppressing your own desires, appetites, envy, jealousies, ambitions etc. Thus there is conflict between what you are and what you should be as per the guru’s method. The mind is making effort and such a mind can never be quiet. Without a quiet mind, meditation is not possible. The guru may ask you to get rid or suppress desire and if you force yourself to be desire-less, there will be conflict because desires will arise and you will try to be rid of them or suppress them. Your mind will be a battle ground, there will be no quietness.

JK says, “It is extremely essential to uncover for oneself what one actually is, not according to the theories and the assertions and experiences of psychologists, philosophers and the gurus, but rather by investigating the whole nature and movement of oneself; by seeing what one actually is.” Thus he makes it clear that a guru cannot help when it comes to observation of the whole process of the ‘I’.

Here it can be said that because of his teachings JK also became a guru. But calling him a guru will not be correct because he never declared himself to be a guru and he never said that he knows the truth and therefore others should follow him, he never said that he is the messiah and lead others on a certain path. On the contrary he always insisted that everyone thinks on his/ her own, find out on his/ her own about living, freedom, meditation, love and truth. Therefore though he may appear as guru to some, he was not.

So far we have seen JK’s views on the foundation or preparatory conditions for meditation. Now let us see what he offers as far as the **nature** of meditation is concerned.
Nature of meditation according to JK

Meditation is the emptying of the content of consciousness- If you want to see what you actually are, freedom has to be there. This freedom is not a freedom from particular ideology etc. According to JK, it is freedom from the whole content of one’s consciousness. This content is nothing else but all the things put together by thought. “Freedom from the content of one’s consciousness, from one’s angers and brutalities, from one’s vanities and arrogance, from all the things that one is caught up in, is meditation.”

This very seeing of what one actually is, is also the beginning of transformation. He further says that meditation implies the ending of all strife, of all conflict, inwardly and therefore outwardly.

What he means here is one lives with all the conditioning that one gathers right from childhood. There are opinions, prejudices, likes- dislikes, judgments, assertions, denials etc. This is the content of one’s consciousness. The society in which one is brought up, in which one lives influences and shape thoughts. Usually we think according to some ideology, book, guru etc. and take the gathered material as our own thoughts, opinions etc. During this process the true nature of the self is lost. Divisions arise and conflict comes from the divisions. For example if I am selfish/ greedy and a book/ guru tells me not to be selfish so I decide to become unselfish. A division is created between what I actually am and what I want to become. These divisions give rise to conflict, struggle follows, and all my efforts then are concentrated on trying to become unselfish. Neither the real nature of the ‘I’ nor the nature of selfishness is understood. The result of this kind of struggle is confusion and loss of energy. In meditation there is no confusion or struggle. When you observe, uncover for yourself the true nature of ‘I’- not according to some guru etc. - that is emptying the content of consciousness and that is meditation. Hence the importance of emptying the content of consciousness.

Meditation and ‘I don’t know’- JK has pointed out that the usual approach to meditation is ‘how to meditate’. He says that the question should be ‘what is meditation’. When you ask for ‘how’ you are looking for a pre-set method or system but that is not of help because then you will be engaged in following the method; that is not meditation. And one has to approach it with an open mind. If you want to understand what meditation is, you have to come to it with a fresh
mind. Unless you know what meditation is how can you meditate? And, that point is- I don’t know. So you begin with ‘I don’t know’ what meditation is; this way your mind is not occupied with how to meditate. We hope and desire that Yoga practices, breathing techniques, bodily postures etc will lead us to something, a certain state. But that state can be illusory, a projection of your mind, a reaction from the daily existence of misery. In very clear words JK say, “The issue of how to meditate is completely false. Rather, can I find out what meditation is, that is the real question.”

According to JK when you ask for a ‘how’ you are seeking a definite, fixed path or a method. Then you engage in following that particular method. In the process the content of meditation is neglected. Observation of everything within and without is the content of meditation; in a way that is the form of meditation and therefore there is actually no distinction between the form and the content or between the ‘how’ and the ‘what’ of meditation.

**Various Techniques of Meditation**

Various **traditions, methods** tell us how to meditate, give us techniques, skills. But for what are these given? Then meditation becomes a means. Mediation is not a means for some end, achievement or goal. JK denies this means-end concept with regard to meditation. Then, what is meditation? I don’t know what meditation is but I blindly follow a particular tradition or method that tells me ‘you do these things and you will get it’. Obviously that leads to nowhere. The question here is, can I eliminate this demand for a method and find out what meditation is? JK says that the very going into all this is meditation. I am meditating the moment I begin to inquire what meditation is. The moment I begin to find out for myself what meditation is, my mind must reject everything that it knows including the desire to meditate. According to him such desire is the root for the search for a method. What I already know, what I have already experienced are just a few moments of peace, quietness, a sense of ‘otherness’. I want to achieve that again and I want to make it a permanent state. In this case, I already know what I am going to achieve, what the state will be. JK says that if you know that already, then it is just a projection of your own desire; not the truth. When you are actually meditating, this desire to achieve is understood and so you become free from it. And thus you are in the state of ‘I don’t
know’. There is no concentration, no prayer, no chanting, and no accumulation. The mind is burden-less and therefore free. When this is done I have found out what meditation is. And then, “There is no struggle, no conflict; there is a sense of not accumulating- at all times, not at any particular time.”

Telling us about what meditation is he further says, “Meditation is the process of complete denudation of the mind, the purgation of all sense of accumulation and achievement- that sense which is the very nature of the self, the ‘me’.” Practicing a method only adds to the me, strengthens the me. So ‘meditation is also the uncovering of the ways of the self’. Such uncovering of the ways of the self will show the nature of ‘I’ and it will drop. That will be purgation or purification that is required for meditation.

**Mediation and Thought**

Is meditation something that is put together by thought? JK has clearly stated that meditation is not something put together by thought. If it is a deliberate action to achieve a result, you are caught in the cycle of cause and effect- the effect becoming the cause and this is the field of thought. So is it beyond thought? To understand this, he says that you have to understand the functioning of the brain. The brain is conditioned and limited; and it is trying to comprehend the limitless, the immeasurable, the timeless. The brain is conditioned in the sense that it is trained to think in a particular way, respond in a particular way. For example- to think in terms of cause and effect; this is its limitation. Meditation is actually crossing the boundaries of conditioning and going beyond the limits of thought. Therefore it can never be something put together by thought.

JK’s concept of meditation is quite significant in his teachings because according to him you come upon freedom in meditation. There is the total understanding of the ‘I’ and this brings about not just freedom but love as well. Because the ‘I’ is absent, the observer is nonexistent; there is no division between the ‘I’ and others and therefore there is no hatred, jealousy etc, there is only love. Meditation, according to him, seems to be the gateway to freedom, love and truth. This is the importance of meditation in his teachings.
So far we have seen what JK says about meditation. His concept of meditation is quite different from what it is generally taken to mean. Firstly, mediation is an all-time, continuous process, not reserved for a particular time of the day. Secondly, it does not require a particular setting or pre-preparation. And thirdly, JK does not talk about Samadhi or the ultimate transcendental state wherein one is supposed to enter via Yoga practices.

Now we will go into Yoga meditation and Buddhist meditation.

**Importance of Yoga and Buddhist meditation**

The origin of meditation is found in the Yoga Darshana. Therefore it is quite apt to know Yoga meditation in order to understand JK’s concept of meditation. That will also throw light on how JK’s concept of meditation differs from the traditional Yoga concept. Meditation is also found in Buddhism. Buddhist monks practiced Yoga; they were called as Yogachari. Along with the Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist meditation also reached various parts of the world like China and Japan. Therefore it is necessary to go into the Buddhist concept of meditation. This will be done later on in this chapter.

Let us first see what is meditation according to Yoga Darshana.

**Meditation in Yoga Darshana**

Yoga Darshana has an important place in the Indian philosophical thought in that, generally it is agreed that Yoga describes the actual path to the ultimate freedom or Moksha of man. Rather than a theoretical discussion a concrete, action oriented, step-by-step method for the attainment of the ultimate freedom is given here. In the end knowledge dawns and one attains Moksha. The objective is to put an end to human suffering.

The Darshanas that are in opposition on many points agree on the importance of Yoga. For example Advaita and Buddhism; Nyaya and Mimamsa. This ancient method of mediation is quite popular and is practiced all over the world in various forms. We have Yogachara Buddhism and Zen Buddhism that have developed meditation
techniques of their own and they are taught in monasteries. Then there are some modern meditation techniques like transcendental meditation which have huge following in the West as well. A regular practice of Yoga, especially of Pranayama is said to be quite effective for good health in the current life style full of various tensions. Thus the importance of Yoga is accepted in many parts of the world.

According to Yoga philosophy, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*- though completely different and separate from each other- are the root of creation. The universe is created out of *Prakriti* which is the material cause of the universe. The proximity of *Prakriti* with *Purush*, which is pure consciousness, disturbs the balance/ equilibrium of the three *gunas* of *prakriti*- *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. This is the beginning of the universe. This universe functions on the principle of ‘Parinama’ i.e. nothing is destroyed and nothing new is created; only the proportions of sattva, rajas and tamas in everything keep changing giving rise to different things. There are three types of Parinamas- 1. *DharanaParinama*- water is mixed with soil, then it is kneaded, shaped etc and a pot comes into existence. 2. *LakshanaParinama*- The pot was non-existent, unknown earlier, now it is manifest, later on it will be dissolved/ destroyed. 3. *AvasthaParinama*- This is change in the stage or condition of a thing. In the manifest form everything goes through three stages; it is new now, it gets old and then it is worn out. Our body also goes through three stages- childhood, youth and old age.

Yoga Darshana recognizes that a man is not just a body, he also has ‘chitta’ or mind. This chitta too goes through three *Parinamas*- *Nirodha,Samadhi* and *Ekagrataparinama*. In the flow of the Parinamas, some of the Dharma’s of the chitta are dropped and some others arise. All the experiences in these Parinamas are the root of *Dukkha* or suffering; they arise out of Avidya or ignorance which is the assumption that *Purusha*and *Prakriti* are one, united.

Unless this Avidya gets removed or destroyed, suffering persists. In order to end Avidya, the chitta has to be purified by washing away the defilements or *Kleshas*; then only the chitta will attain its original equilibrium of trigunas and there will be freedom from suffering.
The key thought in Yoga for ending suffering seems to be this- Chitta is the ground for the Samskaras of Karma carried forward through past births, for the desires that cause the samskaras, for the dispositions that arise out of those desires. Chitta is also the ground for the kleshas like Avidya. Chitta comes into contact with the external world/objects through the senses. The result of this contact is the various dispositions or chittavrittis. So long as there are the Kleshas in the chitta, action is motivated. Action gives rise to Samskaras that are accumulated in the chitta. Then, later on, depending on and differing from condition to condition new dispositions emerge. This is the continuous cycle of dispositions and samskaras – which is called as Samsara.

In order to break this cycle the emergence of chittavrittis needs to be controlled. Here comes the fundamental principle of Yoga, “Chittavrittinirodhasccha” which means control of the chittavrittis. Yoga prescribes two ways for this control-

1. Abhyasa- It means the efforts that go into bringing a halt to the flow of chittavrittis.
2. Vairagya- With Abhyasa, the inclination of the chitta towards external objects slows down and gradually comes to a halt.

After this, one has a stable, quiet chitta. According to Yoga this is the state in which one realizes that Purush is completely different from Prakriti which consists of trigunas and their various combinations. This is called ‘Kaivalya’ or being totally independent of and free from Prakriti eternally. This is the ideal of Yoga and this is Moksha or the ultimate freedom.

In order to attain this Kaivalya, Yoga has given the AshtangaMarga or the Eightfold path of Discipline. Our body as well as our mind/chitta are constantly distracted by the sensual attachments and passions. If we follow the Eightfold Path we can conquer over these distractions and achieve Kaivalya. The Eightfold Path is as follows-

1. Five yamas or vows/abstentions. They are Ahimsa i.e. non-violence of thought, word and deed, Satya or adherence to truth, Asteya or non-stealing, Aparigraha or abstention from avarice, and Brahmacarya or abstention from passion or lust.
2. Five Niyamas. They are Shaucha- internal and external purification, Santosh-contentment, Tapas- austerity, Swadhyaya- study and Ishvarapranidhana- devotion to god.
3. **Asana**- means bodily posture. Comfortable bodily posture should be adopted because it helps in meditation.

4. **Pranayama**- means control of breath. This is conducive to both physical health and concentration of mind. Sound body and sound mind both are necessary for the attainment Kaivalya. At this stage expert advice i.e. guru’s guidance is required.

5. **Pratyahara**- it means control of senses and withdrawing them from their subjects. Senses naturally tend to reach for external objects and this tendency needs to be controlled.

6. **Dharana**- here the mind is fully focused and fixed on the object of meditation like the tip of your nose, the midpoint of the eyebrows, lotus of the heart or the image of a deity. This is practiced so that the mind becomes stable, steadfast like the un-flickering flame of a lamp.

7. **Dhyana**- means meditation and consists of an undisturbed flow of thought around the object of meditation; it is contemplation without any break. But here at this stage the duality of the act of meditation and the object of meditation is still there.

8. **Samadhi**- it is the final state or step. Etymologically ‘Samadhi’ means concentration. Here, the act of meditation and the object of meditation become one. All the mental modifications or chittavrittis come to a cessation; connection with the external world is broken. This also has two steps. One is **Sampradnyat** or conscious Samadhi and the other is the**Asampradnyat** or supra-conscious Samadhi. **Asampradnyat** Samadhi is the ultimate stage; here the meditator and the object of meditation become one or are fused together. No new mental modification arises here. This is the highest form of Yoga.

Thus we find that Yoga Darshana gives a step-by-step programme for the attainment of Kaivalya and Dhyan or meditation is the 7th step of this programme. Control of the senses and mind through *Pranayama* or breath control and breathing exercises is emphasized. Taking into account the body, mind, mental processes and mental modifications Yoga Darshana presents a way that is said to be leading beyond the body and mind.

Now let us turn to meditation in Buddhism
Importance of meditation in Buddhism

Ancient Buddhist texts contain meditation techniques. There are various schools and sub-schools in Buddhism that have incorporated meditation and meditational techniques as a way to attain Enlightenment or Nirvana. There are diverse, school-specific techniques and practices; Theravada has more than 50 methods of developing ‘mindfulness’ or awareness and about 40 for developing concentration. Yogachara Buddhism has adopted Yoga practices for the realization of Pure Knowledge or Bodhi. The Tibetan tradition has Vipassana or visualization meditation. There is Zen Buddhism that gives high importance to meditation. The very word Zen is derived from the Sanskrit Dhyan which means meditation. Tradition says that Bodhidharma (460-534 A.D) introduced meditation to China which later on spread to Japan. In China there is Ch’an – derived from Dhyan- Buddhism; Tien-t’ai and Hua-yen are the two prominent schools of Ch’an Buddhism. In Japan we have different schools like the Renzai and Soto. The differences between the schools are those of techniques of meditation and objects of meditation. Zen Buddhism emphasizes certain kind of spiritual discipline which helps in bringing about sudden illumination. Some Zen writings ascribe the origin of Zen to the Buddha himself. Zen Buddhism contains Buddhist doctrines like rebirth, Sangha or monastic order and the need for the attainment of release and the possibility of one’s attaining Bodhihood.

Meditation in Buddhism

In Yoga, individual efforts for the control over mind and body are emphasized; importance of detachment from one’s environment is emphasized. Zen Buddhism emphasizes the ‘spontaneity of illumination’ and the rapport between the individual and the nature. In Zen Buddhism meditation is used as a technique to defuse the source of all the trouble- the illusion of the self and the other. It is said that originally the mind is pure, there is no attachment; therefore there is clear understanding without attachment. Gradually attachments and anger, greed etc. enter into it and clear understanding is obstructed. Meditation is the only way to attain that originally pure state. It means attainment of a state of mind that does not think of right/wrong, good/ bad, self/ other. Such a non-dwelling mind is the mind of Buddha. There is no past or future here, only the present is grasped. This is the original nature of mind.
The role of Roshi, the spiritual instructor in the Japanese Zen schools, and Zen Master is important in Buddhist mediation. Respect for the master and total obedience to him is expected of the aspirant. In other words, Zen is not something to learn on a ‘do-it-yourself’ basis.

Now let us see how JK’s concept of meditation differs from these two.

-JK does not give any step-by-step programme for/ of meditation. He does not believe that meditation can be thus put into a framework of set rules and practices at all. According to JK meditation is not a goal to attain; it is not a destination that one can reach by following a given path.

-All the efforts, rigorous bodily and mental discipline, strict control of the mind-thought-senses by force is not acceptable to JK because this kind of external imposition only intensifies the internal conflict and struggle leading to more disturbances in the mind. He talks about the importance of effortlessness, an ease a kind of naturalness in meditation. Any imposition is a hindrance according to him because imposition means resistance to it, which is conflict.

-JK says that adopting certain Asanas or bodily postures is not a necessary condition for meditation. At best these Asanas will help one in keeping the body in good health/condition. They could be an aid as far as the body is concerned but other than that, even if you master the postures to perfection, you will not be in meditation.

-JK clearly says that meditation is a continuous process. It is not something that you practice for a specific period of time and be out of it, resume your routine life, resume your old ways thereafter. The observation that he talks about is an ongoing process- wherever you are whatever you are doing you are constantly watching all that is happening in your mind. This kind of observation and attention does not require any specific time. Time-bound meditation is no meditation according to him.

-Both Yoga and Zen give enormous importance to concentration. We have seen that JK does not agree with it for two reasons. First, he says that when you concentrate on one thought you
exclude the rest of the flow of thought. This creates division in the flow and, whenever there is division, there is conflict which consumes a lot of energy. The meditation that he talks about requires tremendous energy from the body and the brain. If it is wasted in conflicts meditation will not be possible. Therefore, according to him, forced concentration does not help. Such a concentration is no meditation at all.

Secondly, this kind of concentration on one thought or object may become an escape from one’s life. He points out that many times your daily, routine life stops being interesting to you and you try to escape into meditation - besides other ways like entertainment. You try to escape completely by concentrating totally on one particular thought or object. But, meditation is not an escape. And, rather than meditation, it becomes a constant battlefield of resistance to thoughts. You are forcing yourself into one thought by excluding the others. Also, it is giving one thought more importance than the rest. The total thought process is missed when you cling to one thought. This is giving fragmentary treatment to the process. In meditation you are looking at the process in its entirety.

He also maintains that if you need to be forced into meditation perhaps even that does not really interest you. You wouldn’t need to be forced into something that you really want to do. You would get completely and effortlessly absorbed into it had your interest been genuine like a child is absorbed in his toy. Coercion implies your unwillingness to go into meditation.

Thus JK seems to be in complete disagreement when it comes to forced concentration in mediation or a step by step programme for meditation..

-An important difference between Yoga meditation and JK’s meditation is this- in Yoga, meditation or Dhyan is not the final state or step that one is supposed to achieve; it is the 7th step in the Eightfold Path of Yoga. Samadhi is the 8th and the final destination. On the Dhyan step, the duality of the act of meditation and object of meditation is still there. It is only in the Samadhi state that this duality is completely absent, no chittavrittis or mental modifications arise here and connection with the external world is broken. In JK’s meditation there is no such hierarchy; meditation is the step, there is nothing beyond that. Like freedom there is either
meditation or there is no meditation, no state in-between the two. Absence of the duality of observer and the observed is there, so is complete tranquility of mind. JK says that there is total alertness as well. So no question of being cut off from the rest of the world.

-In Yoga meditation ‘Ishvarapranidhana’ or full faith in god is important (2\textsuperscript{nd} step). This is absent in JK’s concept of meditation. The reasons are quite obvious. JK says that God is a creation of thought; if you concentrate on that you are very much in the field of thought. The duality of the ‘I’ and others, the rest of the world persists. Meditation is emptying the contents of your thought; it will not be possible to do so if you cling to the thought of god. Also, the moment you start concentrating on God- or any other thought for that matter- you go away from meditation because all your efforts are directed at god, meditation takes a back seat!

-One more point of difference is that of guru. In the eastern tradition guru is essential in the process of meditation. According to JK when you accept the word of guru as authority, you are actually engaged in following his word and conforming to his words day after day. Your own thoughts, desires, appetites etc. are all suppressed. This creates a conflict between what you are and what you want to become as per the guru’s words. The mind is busy conforming to the guru’s method. Such a mind is not a quiet mind and without a quiet mind meditation is impossible. ‘Be a light unto yourself’ is his motto. But, it must be noted here that a guru as a sign-post, seems to be acceptable to JK. In very clear words he says that rather than asking someone ‘how to meditate’ one should ask oneself ‘what is meditation’ and find out for oneself. If the answer to ‘what is meditation?’ is ‘I don’t know’, that should be the real beginning of the search within, real meditation.

Thus we have seen how JK’s concept of meditation takes a departure from the traditional Yoga concept of meditation.

Now let us explore his teachings on love in the next chapter so that the interconnection between freedom, meditation and love becomes clear. Plato and Mahatma Gandhi’s views on love will also be considered in the next chapter.
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