

Satsang with Swami Vidadatmananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulum
More on Alertness

Question

How do we get in to thinking mechanically? How is it different from predisposition?

Answer

Whenever a given thought is repeated, it builds up and creates a channel in the mind in the same way by which, if you keep scratching on a surface, a channel is created. If we keep repeating a thought over and over again, the mind automatically begins to flow along that channel.

Predisposition itself is a channel. It is something that we have created. Certain channels and dispositions are inherent, like patterns of judging, decision-making, etc. We do these things habitually. I could meet someone after six months, but without a second thought judge him by what he was six months earlier. That is how I perceive that person, and that is how I treat the person. He may be a new person, yet, whatever impressions or conclusions I have, remain with me. Sometimes we are not that observant and neither are we that sensitive.

Question

Is it ok to multi-task?

Answer

If you are deliberate and alert during the process, it is ok. Otherwise, in doing two things, we are only cultivating the habit of being distracted. In multi-tasking you are,

however, performing only one task at a time. You compartmentalize, do something for a little while and then go on to another task for some time and so on. If a task does not require your total attention you can use that time and accomplish some other task in the meanwhile. If a task requires your total attention it is difficult to multi-task in that time, so tell yourself that this is what you are going to do. Let whatever your mind does, be with your permission, such as deciding that when you brush your teeth, you are going to recite some *sloka* in your mind. That would be a deliberate action and you would be consciously using your time to do it. That is ok. It is not as if the mind is mindlessly wandering into a channel of habit.

Question

Does being single-pointed of mind necessarily mean thinking one thought?

Answer

One can be single-pointed of mind in two ways. Either the mind is devoted entirely to one thought or it is devoted entirely to one task. There could be any number of thoughts related to that one task, yet, the mind is single-pointed and does not get distracted from the chosen point or goal. Thus, when a certain aim has been chosen, all thoughts pertain to that aim, and we call it single-pointedness of mind.

If you want your mind to think of Lord Krishna, you can think of his sport or his glories. Then it is not one thought, but a series of thoughts, all centered on Lord Krishna. If that is what you want to do, it is ok. Then there is a larger field of activity available to the mind. This is what obtains in *puja*. We perform different tasks in *puja*, but each task is centered upon the Lord. The mind is not strained even though it has a large field of activity, because it is still focused on Lord Krishna. When you recite some *stotra*, the field of activity of the mind is more restricted than in the instance of *puja*. If you were to recite the *Madhurāṣṭakam*, the mind thinks of Lord Krishna but it is in a more restricted way than during *puja* because it is only chanting. When you are meditating, it is further

restricted. The mind can be fixed on whatever we have chosen to be the object of meditation. That is called being single-pointed of mind. One can choose a wider scope for meditation knowing that it is difficult for the mind to remain focused on one thought.¹

¹ Transcribed and edited by Jayshree Ramakrishnan and KK Davey.