



Conductor Zubin Mehta, right, leading the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in New York, on Feb. 22, 2011

Are You Directing Your Inner Orchestra Well?

Our inner orchestra is made up of different musical instruments. These instruments are our memories, desires, tendencies, mind, beliefs, emotions, feelings, fears, intuition, judgements, creativity, our imagination... Who is the director of this orchestra? You. Who are you? You – the consciousness, you - the soul, you – the being. When you direct your inner orchestra well, you can remain unaffected by external influences. If you, the director of the orchestra, close your eyes for a few moments and cover up your ears, what happens to the orchestra? The music is not very harmonious or sweet; it is noisy and you suffer. To make the orchestra play according to the inner voice of your being, according to your purest intentions and values, you simply have to be awake, alert and attentive, and listen with your heart, not with your physical heart but with the heart of your being.

Checking Myself On The Stage Of Action

Once we become aware of the possible types of thoughts that the mind creates at different times in the span of a particular day, then we are in a position to keep a check on our thoughts and understand where our energy is being wasted. Once we realize that there are patterns of waste and negative thinking at some times during the day, which are usually triggered by certain situations or people, we can apply a brake on the pattern of **habitual negative thinking**, thereby transforming this energy wastage into something more positive.

It does happen, that when we are informed about the benefits of meditation for the first time, perhaps in a course or a presentation either in the office, in a center of a spiritual organization or elsewhere; we realize the need for the same but we also feel that, in order to get the house of our minds in order, we need to leave our busy city lifestyles behind and head for the hills. There, we think, we will find the time and the physical and spiritual environment to practice meditation and get our mental state in order, but this is absolutely untrue. While going on an occasional spiritual retreat is certainly useful and recommended for the development of the spiritual self, the real workshop is life itself. **Even if I am able to maintain a positive and powerful state of mind in a retreat, it is in our daily actions and relationships with others where the challenge lies, it is on the stage of action or *karma kshetra* that we have to check whether we can remain soul-conscious** i.e. in the awareness of our spiritual identity. It is here where we have to see whether we can apply the brakes on patterns of negative thinking, establish and maintain patterns of positive thinking and test whether we have reached the stage where, no person or situation, however negative, can disturb our state of mind.

Soul Sustenance

Improving The Quality Of Different Areas Of My *Karmas* (Part 1)

Karma yoga (experiencing meditation in practical life situations) functions in two ways:

- **By filling the self with power, the transformation of action is possible.** This in turn brings about change in my *sanskars*.
- **By absorbing the qualities of the Supreme Being my *sanskars* change.**

It's necessary to experiment with this to discover its validity. On one level, whatever I have done, I have to receive the return for that but, on another level, just simply pure love for God is the factor that purifies, cleanses and forgives. Whatever my past *Karma* may have been, the fire of God's love, the fire of a powerful connection with Supreme is able to resolve it and remove its impact from within the soul itself, in terms of negative personality *sanskars* and also in terms of negative *karmic* effects in real life situations. Thus it can be seen why *yoga* or the union of love with God is so crucial.

If one looks at the whole pattern of human life, there are **four areas of *Karma*** which need to be improved:

- *Karma* that I perform for **myself**, for my own sustenance and upkeep.
- *Karma* that I perform with or for others in terms of **relationships**.
- *Karma* that I perform, not out of need or necessity, but for **leisure** or **entertainment**.
- *Karma* that I perform as **service** of others.

In the next three messages, we shall explain how we can improve these four areas of *Karma*.

Message for the day

To share virtues along with knowledge is to encourage transformation in others.

Expression: When we have to give a suggestion/advise to someone we tend to share a lot of points of knowledge in order to make them understand. We try to prove logically why they have to change. Although the reasoning is right most of the time, the others don't seem to change either because they don't understand or because they don't want to understand.

Experience: When we want to bring transformation in others we need to make sure to share our own virtues along with the points of knowledge. To share virtues means to give them an experience of our love, peace, good wishes etc. When they experience our virtues, they'll be willing to bring about change quickly.

Work with Self-respect

The one who works with self-respect is the one who wins the cooperation of others. When we do things while in our natural state of self-respect, it creates cooperation. On the other hand if we have ego because of which we expect others to recognize our work and appreciate it, it creates competition and jealousy. If someone is not cooperating with me, I need to check within myself why I am performing that task. If there is the slightest feeling of trying to prove myself, I need to remove it. In its place, there needs to be the thought in the mind that I want only success in the task and nothing else.