Importance of Silence

True silence is the silence between thoughts and represents the true self, consciousness, or the soul. It is a web of energized information ready to take all provided there is a right intent. Meditation is the process of achieving silence.

Observing silence is another way of deriving benefits of meditation. Many yogis in the past have recommended and observed silence now and then. Mahatma Gandhi used to spend one day of each week in silence. He believed that abstaining from speaking brought him inner peace and happiness. On all such days he communicated with others only by writing on paper.

Hindu principles also talk about a correlation between mauna (silence) and shanti (harmony). Mauna Ekadashi is a ritual followed traditionally in our country. On this day, the person is not supposed to speak at all and observes complete silence all through the day and night. It gives immense peace to the mind and strength to the body. In Jainism, this ritual has a lot of importance. Nimith was a great saint in Jainism who long ago asked all Jains to observe this vrata. Some people recommend that on every ekadashi, one should observe silence for few hours, if not the whole day.

In his book, The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success, Deepak Chopra talks in great detail about the importance of observing silence in day-to-day life. He recommends that everyone should observe silence for 20 minutes every day. Silence helps to redirect our imagination towards self. Even Swami Sivananda in his teachings recommends observation of mauna daily for 2 hours. For ekadashi, take milk and fruits, study one chapter of Bhagavad Gita, do regular charity and donate one-tenth of your income in the welfare of the society.

Ekadashi is the 11th day of Hindu lunar fortnight. It is the day of celebration, occurring twice a month, meant for meditation and increasing soul consciousness. Vinoba Bhave was a great sage of our country known for his Bhoodaan movement. He was a great advocator and practical preacher of mauna vrata.

Mauna means silence and vrata means vow; hence, mauna vrata means a vow of silence. Mauna was practiced by saints to end enmity and recoup their enmity. Prolonged silence as the form of silence is observed by the Rishi Munis involved for prolonged periods of silence. Silence is a source of all that exists. Silence is where consciousness dwells. There is no religious tradition which does not talk about silence. It breaks the outward communication and forces a dialogue towards inner communication. This is one reason why all prayers, meditation and worship or any other practice where we attune our mind to the spiritual consciousness within are done in silence. After the death of a person it is a practice to observe silence for 2 minutes. The immediate benefit is that it saves a tremendous amount of energy. Silence is cessation of both sensory and mental activity. It is like having a still mind and listening to the inner mind. Behind this screen of our internal dialogue is the silence of spirit. Meditation is the combination of observing silence and the art of observation.

■■■■