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# 1. Looking for positive changes

Dear friends, as meditators we are looking for some positive changes. If we are totally happy about our present state, if we are totally happy about our current situation, then we are not here, then we would not become meditators and we wouldn't do anything. We do everything n our lives to make a change, to change something, we want to change others, we try to change others, we try to change the society, the system, the country, the world, and we want to change everything. We put a lot of effort; spend so much of time, energy, money, power to change the world, to change others.

But we didn't come here for that, at least directly not for that, maybe indirectly we like/want to change ourselves. we like/want to change our lives or to change our mind. That is why we are here. When I ask from the people, who come here to learn meditation, "Why are you interested in meditation?" they use to say that they want to change somebody else, it is not a very rare answer. Some people come for meditation to change others, they think that once they meditate they can get some energy; some power, some psychic power, skills to change others, to change their partner, to change their children. Of course we can change others by changing ourselves. There is no way to change others without changing yourself. There are many ways of course; rituals, pray, punishments, political power and some other religious and spirituals chanting. We use

all of these things to change others, to change the external conditions. Sometimes it may work; sometimes chanting works, sometimes political power, punishment, war, etc. works. They can change things in the world but they cannot change the person, the inside of us. Wars cannot do it punishments, chanting, rituals, pray, none of those car change a person. To whom we are going to chant or pray?

# 2. The highest miracle

That is why meditation is so important. That is why we try to meditate to change ourselves. If we do not want to change ourselves then what is the point of meditating. If you want to exist the way that you are existing at the moment, then no need to do anything. We are here to change ourselves, as we think that meditation can help us to change. Once we meditate then that meditation makes a different person. We like to think in this way, we think that meditation is miraculous. We like miracles. Of course changing the inner self is the biggest miracle, there are no other miracles that you can compare it with. According to the Lord Buddha the highest miracle, is to change a person but not creating things. You can let a miracle happen to create things but when we compare it with the change that can take place inside, the inner person, all the other kinds of miracles are lower than that.

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### 3. The sleep cannot change us

So dear friends, we like to change our mind, we like to change our thinking, that is why we sit here for hours and hours, that is why we wake up so early. We know the sleep cannot change us. If sleep can change us then we can sleep for hours and hours, for days and days. But even after eight hours or after twelve hours, even after a day, when we wake up we are the same; we are the same person, no difference, there are no differences between our state yesterday and today. That is why we wake up early morning, come to this room and try to meditate.

### 4. Concentration meditation

When we think about meditation, there are many meanings, many interpretations for that. One of the most popular English word for meditation is concentration. That a very attractive word, very attractive concept: S concentration, one-pointed. Ninety nine percent of the meditators like the idea of "concentration". They meditate for that, to concentrate, to stop the thinking mind. We do not like the thinking mind, we use the thinking mind for everything else, but whenever we come for meditation, we do not like it. Then we start thinking how to stop the thinking mind. So then, we search; for techniques, for the most suitable technique, for a suitable place, for a suitable teacher and for a qualified teacher to stop the thinking mind. That is why I like to speak about concentration meditation briefly.

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You may be aware that it is not so easy to concentrate on one object despite your commitment. It becomes one of the most difficult things in the world. You meditation object might be the in and out-breathing, a sound, your posture, walking, a single word, a single thought, a single image or a mantra. You can use one of these objects to concentrate, to develop concentration and stability. You can look at a candle, a flower or whatever available. Focus your full attention to that object, focus your full attention to that sound or focus your full attention to that mental image. But you know it is not easy, you can do it for a second and from the next second onwards the mind will start to think so many other things, so many other things except your meditation object. Then you have to bring your mind back to the object and again your mind goes away, and again you have to bring it back. So this is the way you have to develop the concentration practice. You may hear a sound, a sound of a vehicle and your mind wants to think about it. As a concentration meditation practitioner, you have to say "no" to that thought. You have to say that as you are not allowed to think about that sound. You must come back to that object, and after some time again the mind would want to think about these memories, but you have to say "no, no". See how many times you have to say 'no", whenever you do concentration practices, thousands of times you have to say "no" and a very few times you can say "yes, yes" for the meditation object and "no" for all the other kinds of experiences, other objects. When you

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practice meditation in this way, finally you become a big NO, very big NO and a very small YES.

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You have to fight against everything; fight against the sound, the world, pain, thoughts, memories. expectations and everything. Without fighting against everything you cannot practice concentration meditation because you want to change the mind; you want to stop the mind, you want to transform your thinking mind into a nonthinking mind and concentrate the mind. So at the beginning, very beginning, very little conflicts were there between you and your mind, but after some time, after practicing concentration meditation, the conflict becomes bigger and bigger, stronger and stronger. The mind becomes a trouble. Before it was not like that but now every single thought can be a problem, a disturbance, a

distraction for a concentration meditator. And if you go back to your normal life with this training, it is very difficult to maintain it, very difficult to practice concentration meditation in your daily life; especially as a lay person, as a family member, as a partner. Very difficult. I know, I have many experiences with different types of meditators.

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When they are here they are very calm, very quiet and after that, they go back to their normal life with lots of confidence, thinking that they can continue their practice. Before they leave, they are very happy, as they think they can continue their practice they want to come back next year. But they may come back within two weeks. I used ask them, "Why did you come back in two weeks? You said you will come back in one year." They use to say that it is not easy; it is difficult to meditate in the family atmosphere, the working atmosphere and in the society. That is not the truth, but it can be true if you start saying "no" to your family life, "no" to your job, "no" to everything as you practice to say "no" to the thoughts that disturbe your concentration meditation.

It is easier to fight but difficult to win. Especially if you fight against your own mind, it will be a never ending "ight. As you know there are countless thoughts passing through your mind, so you have to fight against every single thought, but still the mind can produce thoughts again and again, there is no full stop, even on weekends, on holidays mind is thinking, mind produces thoughts, nc vacation for the mind, no holidays even during the sleep. So, "how do you fight against something like the mind? Unfortunately most of the meditators, consciously of unconsciously, become fighters and they think that is the way to meditate, that is the way to practice meditation by fighting against them. They are very innocent, most of the meditators are very innocent, they do not kill a single mosquito, they do not kill a single leech, they are very nnocent for others but for themselves very hard, very cough. Poor mind, poor body!

Before the Lord Buddha, there were many meditation practices, but all of them were mainly concentration practices. Yogi means fighters, they have tc iight against their emotions, thoughts and thinking mind. Fighting, fighting, fighting...

#### 5. A beautiful story

There is a beautiful story. Once a man came to mee a Meditation Master and he asked: "Dear Sir. dear Master please teach me how not to think, how to stop my thinking mind." The Master said: "I am sorry there is no way to dc it". And the man replied: "Do not say like that, you are a great Master, everybody comes to see you and get you advices, you advice everybody but not me, you show no kindness to me. I am suffering because of my thinking mind, I want to forget certain things, I do not want to think of certain things, I want to eat, no way, so please help me. Finally the Master said: "Well, then I'll teach you a technique." So when that man got this positive answer he was so happy.

- Oh, please tell me what the technique is, I can sit and practice right now.
- No, no, you have to go back home, practice the whole day today and come back tomorrow, and tell me the result.
- What is the technique?
- The technique is: "Please do not think about monkeys."
- Ahhhh, I do not think about monkeys in my entire life.
- There is no hurry to answer this question, please go back home and practice this technique, and come back tomorrow.

So he went back home. On the way back he hought, "Oh! I should not think about monkeys," so he

starts thinking about some other things but thoughts about monkeys came to his mind and suddenly he realized it, and he stopped thinking about monkeys and started thinking about elephants. But his mind didn't want to think about elephants, his mind wanted to think about monkeys.

You can do this technique, you can do it as ar experiment. Just try not to think about monkeys for five minutes, not for the entire day, try it and see the result.

He made an effort to stop thinking about monkeys and tried to direct his mind to somewhere else but agair thoughts about monkeys came back. He was so irritated, so agitated and he was so angry about monkeys. Therefore whenever a thought about monkeys came to his mind he got very angry, he was fighting against this thoughts and the fight became real. It was just like as if he was fighting against real monkeys, the monkeys appeared in his mind they came as images, as real images, and finally he saw real monkeys. When he saw monkeys he became more and more angry and then monkeys got angry too, they triec to jump onto him, they tried to bit him, so it became  $\varepsilon$ mess, he was so afraid, so afraid, and so agitated. He rar to the temple to see the Master immediately within a half ar hour. The Master said: "oh, you came now, I asked you to come tomorrow. Did you find the way not to think?" He said: "No, no, I do not want to know how not to think, I do not want it, please save me from these monkeys."

We can laugh at the story, but how many times has t happened to us? How many times? First time in his life hose monkeys become a problem. That is at the point when he tries not to think about them.

Whenever you try not to think about something, you waste your energy. Whenever you try to forget something you waste energy to remember it again and again. There is no way to forget things, no way.

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# 6. The ego becomes a great fighter

So we do not like the thinking mind therefore we try to stop it. We put so much of effort to stop it. The ego puts so much effort because "I" do not like the mind, "I" want the concentrated mind, "I" want the one-pointed mind. All these deas are coming from the "I". So who is meditating? "I", 'ego" is meditating, ego is fighting, ego becomes a great fighter.

### 7. The muddy water

As you know, when a pond is rippling, when there are waves, the water becomes muddy. Then how can we settle it down? Is there a technique to calm down the pond, to settle down the mud? How to make a pond still?

We think that we can do it. We can do it, so we put a hand into the pond to stop the waves. Whenever you touch the water, more and more waves are created and as a result water becomes more and more muddy. Then you think that one hand is not enough, I have to make more effort, and then you put both hands and try to stop the waves. What happen then, you will put your legs too.

We did not understand the relationship between our ego and the wandering mind. The muddy water, the waves between the waves and ego. We think our ego is not good enough, so we strengthen our ego with determination, energy to stop the waves. Finally we jump into the pond. By jumping into the muddy water we think, ohhhh! Now we can stop it.

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# 8. The wandering mind

Likewise, most of the concentration meditators are inside the wandering mind, they jump into the wandering mind, and then thoughts are scattered everywhere, everywhere. Then they complain: "before start meditation there were no thoughts, even I did not know I was thinking, even I did not know I had such a memory before. Now all kinds of old memories remember, they come to me during my practice. What has happened to me, I am going to be crazy now." Not only that, but also most of the meditators complain "before meditation I used to sleep very peacefully and now not, my sleep is full of dreams."

This is the natural result, during the day time you can fight against your thoughts, you can make some effort not to think and repress and suppress. But soon after you fall asleep, the controller is not there, you are not there anymore. No way to control, the controller is in a deep sleep. The meditator is in a deep sleep. The concentration practitioner is in a deep sleep. Then the mind can dc whatever the mind wants to do; now the mind has so much energy, so much energy. All the night you will dream many different kinds of dreams, no peace, no peace at all, but still you can fight, still the meditator can fight against his/hei own thoughts and mind.

#### 9. The tricky mind

Mind is very tricky, very very tricky. According to Buddhism the mind is a magician, it can do so much magic. And we believe it, every single magic is real for us, very real for us. We may argue with others but not with our mind, nobody argues with their own mind, we all believe our mind 100%, 200%. Whenever we dream do we argue? No, nobody can argue about it, everybody believes in dreams 100%. You know how crazy the dreams are, but we all believe our dreams. We become very foolish and stupid like small children. Whatever our mind says that is true for us, that is the reality for us. During the daytime we are scientists, philosophers, we are very bright, rational thinkers. But whenever we sleep, where is the scientist? Where is the philosopher? Where is the rational thinker? They all are in a deep sleep. Then, who is experiencing the dream? The small child who believes everything, the whole mess.

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So it is the nature of the mind, and it is the relationship we build between the mind and ourselves. We are not the Masters of the mind, not at all. The mind is the Master and we are followers or slaves. The mind does sc many magic and every single magic is very real for us. If the mind says this man is very good then this man is very good for us, and next day our mind says this man is not good then it becomes the reality for us. We did not ask, "Or mind, you said he is very good yesterday, you cannot change it in this way." No, never, we do not argue with our mind, we believe everything. So mind is changing its

attitude in every single second, and we follow, we are blinc followers of our own mind, followers of our own crazy mind. tricky mind. So if you fight against a mind of this type again and again, then finally the mind plays a very tricky magic. After long time of practice you will not be able to find the mind, it is like no mind, now no thoughts, no thinking. You think that it is the end of your practice and now "I won, I am the winner". It is a game! It is like a hibernated mind, it will come back and whenever it comes back we cannot face it. we cannot handle it. So for a short period, for a temporally period the mind disappears. Then we stop the fight, we think now there is no party, no mind, no thoughts. But it is  $\epsilon$ part of the game, part of the war, part of the fight.

# 10. "Neither mind nor mind"

At the beginning Lord Buddha did all kinds of these practices and finally He came up to this point: "neither mind nor mind", nobody can say that there is a mind or not. But the Buddha, He, Himself realized that it is not the freedom which He was looking for, He was still a slave of the mind. This is something mind made us to experience, all kinds of foi experiences are mind made. We are lookina experiences, if we are so attracted to these experiences and if you wish to have these experiences then in the practical life, it is not possible to experience it. If it is not possible for us to experience certain things in our practical ife, then we dream. Your mind gives you an experience through a dream.

#### 11. An experience

Once I was teaching meditation to some school students, the discussion was about dreams. I asked them to share their dreams, there were twenty students and most of them had the same dream. Even though they had the same dream, they did not know it. They were experiencing the same dream, so what can be the dream? They have hit one of the teachers in the dream and most of the students had the same dream. Then I asked: "why do you want to hit that teacher?" and they said that the teacher was very aggressive, not kind, and when he was teaching they were so afraid, as he often blames them and sometimes he hits them, so they wanted to hit him back but no way to do it during the day time, they all had this desire to hit him. Sc their minds made this experience a reality for them during the sleep, during the dream. So whatever we experience in our life, all of them are mind made, even no mind is a mind made experience. It's really good to realize it.

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#### 12. Awareness meditation

The Buddha realized it as an illusion, then He did not know what to do and nobody was there to teach him something else. Then suddenly He remembered that once when He was a child He did some kind of a meditation called awareness. Awareness means that you are not nside the mind, it is a very important difference. You are watching, observing, looking. So He started to practice this awareness meditation and He became an Enlightened One, He became the Lord Buddha by practising awareness.

When we do practice awareness we do not try tc control anything, this is one of the biggest differences between the awareness meditation and the concentration meditation. We are not saying "no, no, no..." Whatever we experience we try to be aware. No need to say "no", no need to reject, no need to refuse, no need to deny, no need to push it away. What is the point of repressing or suppressing? Because the practice is awareness. awareness means to know what is happening, to see what s happening. No fight, you are not becoming a fighter nstead of fighting you can experience lots of peace whatever happens you are at peace, it is very important. Not only with positive things, even with negative things you are peaceful because you do not have any wishes such as what should happen or what should not happen. These demanding and commanding words come from the ego. what should happen and what should not happen Whatever happens we try to see it, to look at it. So you are

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becoming an observer, not a controller, not a director, not a producer but you are becoming a spectator.

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This is the real transformation, this is the real change. You are not inside the mind, you are not inside the thoughts. If you want to see something, you have to maintain certain distance from that object, if the object is too close to your eyes you cannot see it, you cannot look at t. That is why we cannot see our own eyes because the eves and the object are too close. So you have to maintair a significant distance, you have to step back from the object, then you can see it. Whenever you are becoming an observer that distance will come naturally, it comes naturally. So you can maintain a significant distance from your mind, from your thoughts, from your emotions, from
your body too. Now, before the awareness we were inside the body, we were inside the mind, we were inside the neadache, thirst, tiredness and sleepiness, and the pain was around us. In this way; pain, tiredness, thirst, hunger was everywhere. We were inside, you can see, you can magine that picture. We are becoming smaller and smaller, f we are inside. The experience, the pain, it becomes bigger and bigger, so finally we are becoming micro beings. Then the experience becomes a problem.

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The same thing happens to us if we are inside the mind. If you are inside the anger then everywhere is anger, whatever you hear anger is there, whatever you see anger is there, whatever you think, you think with anger, you eat with anger, you speak with anger, you walk with the anger, and you sleep with the anger. Whenever you sleep with the

anger then you have to wake up with the anger, because you are inside the anger. We can start looking at anger then the anger becomes the object, it becomes an object. Whenever you start to watch it, soon after, effortlessly the distance appears, then you are not the anger anymore. anger is there still but you are not the anger anymore, you are here and anger is there, fear is there. You are not nside the fear, the pain is there, the headache is there but you are not inside the headache, if you are inside the headache then no way to look at it, no way to observe it. ust you have to suffer, just you have to experience the bain, that is all.

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There is another meaningful story, I do not know whether this story is true or not. Once the Great Alexander

came to India and the entire India surrendered to him. he wanted to go back to Greece but his teacher asked him to bring a yogi from India to Greece. Because Greece was a beautiful country, a wonderful country, which has created many things: artists, scientists, greatest philosophers greatest scientists, soldiers, thinkers but not a single meditator. After that the Great Alexander, commanded the soldiers to find a yogi, a meditator and send him there. But it was very difficult to find a meditator because all the meditators have gone away due to the war. Thev fortunately found a meditator at the end and they invited him to come with them to see their empire.

- He said, "No, I do not want to see it."
- "Yes, you must come, if you come we can give you lots of gifts, money. You can stay in our Palace."

- *"I was in a Palace before and I got rid of everything and became a meditator, I do not want anything else, anything now."*
- "if you do not come, our king will put you in to the prison."
- "I was in a prison and now I am free, that prison was the biggest prison, it is called the mind, I am free from that prison now. So nobody can make a bigger prison than the mind for me."

So as there was no way to bring him to the Great Alexander, the soldiers told the Great Alexander about the situation and he commanded;

- "if you do not come I will kill you, I can see you death." "Yes you can see my death, I also can see my death because I am an outsider, I am an outsider to me, I am not living inside anymore. Whatever you see within me, I also see it."

So I do not know the rest of the story, anyway this is the real miracle.

If you do not like something within your life please observe it, instead of fighting, refusing, rejecting, resisting and disliking by being an outsider.

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## 13. The wandering mind as a meditation object

If you really want to change the life patterns, look at the life, look at the style, look at the rhythm. Learn to be an outsider, as an outsider look at it, feel it, experience it. If you want to change your wandering mind, use your wandering mind as your meditation object.

See the beautiful aspects of this awareness practice. No fight, no need to fight, no need to control, no need to stop, just look at the wandering mind. Use the wandering mind as a meditation object. Say "yes" to the wandering mind instead of saying "no", say "yes, yes," I am looking at you now. You can wander, you can think whatever you want to think I am not disturbing you, I am not controlling you, I am not going to try to stop you but I am continuously watching, I am continuously observing you. So whatever you think I know, wherever you go I can see you, whatever happens to you I know. You cannot do anything secretly. there is no secret because I am observing, always I am observing. So whenever you make some distance from the mind, then the mind cannot wander because mind needs some energy to wander, mind needs fuel, food for its ourney. So who is supplying food, who is giving fuel? We we feed the mind to wander; we provide fuel for all kinds of mental journeys, to go to the past, to the future, to here and here.

But whenever you withdraw your position then nc food for the mind, no food for the wandering mind, no food for the anger, no food for the fear, not fuel for the thoughts, then the mind stops by itself. This is a natural state of the mind, you are not under pressure, you are not repressing or suppressing anything.

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The concentrated or one-pointed mind, comes whenever we are ready, it happens whenever we are prepared; it happens naturally, it happens effortlessly, it happens beautifully, like a blooming flower. Therefore learn to observe, observe your emotions, observe your suffering and observe your sadness. Without thinking they are negative. Whenever we think they are negative, they are plack, this is not the way to look at them, we cannot see them with that attitude, with that judgement and feedback. A closed mind cannot see the real picture. Therefore we need be open minded, non-judgemental mind.

If you are not inside the anger then it does not matter whether anger is good or bad, whether thoughts are positive or negative, it does not matter. It is not yours anymore. Do you want to be the owner of this anger? Do you want to be the owner of this wandering mind? Muddy mind? Do you want to make an ownership with the sadness with the fear, with all kind of suffering? We used to think ir this way, we are the owners, so please let this ownership go off, if you really want to let go the anger, then please let go the ownership. Not the anger, nothing to do with the anger, nothing to do with the mind, nothing to do with the houghts, nothing to do with any emotion. Just give up your ownership. Let go the ownership.

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Then you can look at it as an outsider, as an external person. Whenever you fight with your mind and your thoughts then always thoughts would crop up, but whenever you start to look at them, then you can

experience no thoughts, sometimes no fear, no sadness, no anxiety, no depression, you can find some moments, some gap, some freedom, some space.

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## 14. The gap between the in-breath and the out-breath

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We think we are breathing all the time, either nhaling or exhaling, but that is what the scientist told us. We are breathing all the time but whenever you start to observe the breath, observe the breathing, in the beginning yes, the body is breathing in and out, inhaling, exhaling, nhaling, exhaling...and at the beginning actually we dc both together, we start to inhale and before it is completed we started to exhale. While inhaling, we want to exhale, while exhaling we want to inhale. Just see what happens at the beginning of the practice, you can see the way we preathe, in our entire life, it is the way we breathe we want to control it, we want to manipulate it, we want to regulate t, we are not allowing the body to breathe in the way the body likes to breathe, we want to jump into the breath, we did it, therefore the body cannot breathe freely so the breath becomes unhealthy. We inhale. In the middle of the exhalation we start to inhale then we are not inhaling the iresh air. That is why we have lot of breathing problems, sc when the breath becomes problematic then the entire system becomes a problematic as well.

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At the beginning of the meditation when we say now t is an in-breath and then we breathe, but before we say if s an in-breath, the out-breath starts. We cannot finish the sentence, we inhale and before we say it is the inhalation we have to exhale, before we finish the sentence then we are exhaling, etc. It is like the mind. Wherever the mind is, if s a mess. So we are not doing anything, we just observe whatever happens, when the body is inhaling and exhaling cogether we notice it. Nobody is doing both together, we are not saying this is wrong, this is not the way it should happen, no, we just look at it. Whenever you come out from the breath you are becoming an observer, you transform from the controller to the observer.

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The ego is not important for the breathing, no, ego is not important, when the ego is not there then the breath becomes natural and you can see the real rhythm of the breath.

Inhaling...exhaling...inhaling...exhaling...But whenever you try to do it consciously, whenever you try to manipulate it then it does not happen. So let the breath be natural and watch it, continuously watch it, observe it. There is a gap after that, exhaling....after the exhalation

'gap", so you can experience this gap between in-breath and out-breath, between exhalation and inhalation. If you continue observing, then the gap becomes longer and onger, deeper and deeper. You do not need much breath now, the breath becomes shorter and the gap becomes onger. You did not do anything, you did not ask for the gap, we cannot create that gap, nobody can make that gap. no way to make that gap, artificially you can hold the inpreath for a while and say this is the gap, but not, this is not the gap, then you are suffering, your body is suffering. Your body is suffering because you are holding the in-breath or holding the out-breath. In that gap nobody is suffering, that s one of the ultimate rest that anybody can experience. Because in that gap your lungs are resting, every single organ is having a deep rest in that gap, every single cell of

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your body is having a deep rest. This is something the minc cannot produce, mind cannot make. But even in that experience you are an outsider. We can become the owner of that gap, but whenever you are becoming the owner of that gap then the gap is disappearing, no more gap.

The same thing happens with the mind. At the beginning it's full of thoughts, collection of thoughts, whenever you start to watch it, to observe it then you can ieel gaps, some spaces between thoughts, between emotions, more and more gaps, more and more distance.

And the other important thing is the outsider is not udging or not saying that the gap is better than the thoughts or the emotions, they are equal, same and there are no priorities. So if you are really looking for a change, inner change, deep change, deep transformation, then please be an outsider to yourself and start to observe it. Observe yourself instead of controlling, instead of repressing, suppressing or pushing away.

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