

The page features a soft, warm-toned background with pink lotus flowers in the corners. The word "Automatism" is written in a large, elegant, orange-brown cursive font in the center.

Automatism

Dear friends,

Babuji Maharaj inspires us, through his messages, to establish *automatism* in our practice. In the most basic sense, he is inviting us to regularize our sadhana by practising daily at the same time. Regularizing schedules is also beneficial for health, including the times we eat food and sleep. By performing any activity at a fixed time every day, it becomes natural and automatic to perform the activity at that time, thus establishing a *biological clock* in our system. This is a simple fact of nature.

The First Step

When you perform an activity with regularity, your system becomes primed for it. Your mind is prepared for it. When you meditate with regularity, you will not struggle so much. By cultivating the habit of meditation every morning at the same time, you will slip into meditation automatically; you will not have to apply much effort. And if you complete your meditation before dawn, according to Babuji's Maxim One, you will find the process even more natural.

In fact, this procedural matter of regularizing timings is just the first step; it does not even scratch the surface of what Babuji Maharaj really means by

automatism. Yet, for many of us, even to accept this first step requires some explanation, as the word 'automatism' is often misunderstood. Automatic action does not mean being an automaton, nor does it mean robotic, mechanical or lifeless action. Rather than curbing freedom, it actually prepares us for greater and greater freedom. As an example, if you observe the workings of nature, you will soon learn that nature's movements are automatic. A cloud does not choose to release its rain or withhold it. In nature there is no choice. Everything proceeds on its own in the most natural way.

The same is also true for our activities. An extreme example is an astronaut, who requires intense automatism in their habits to enjoy the freedom of journeying into outer space. Many more of us can relate to the need for automatism while driving a car. Without practice we would find it very difficult to multitask – steering, using the accelerator and brake pedals, working the clutch while changing gears, looking in front, in the side mirrors and the rear-view mirror, using the indicator, navigating and often holding a conversation or listening to music or a podcast simultaneously. To be free to drive wherever we wish, we are dependent on automatism.

To Attain Effortlessness, Great Effort Is Required

We can also take this 'no-mind' state to a much higher level of perfection, which is so beautifully and simply offered by Patanjali as the definition of Yoga at the beginning of his Yoga Sutras:

1.2 योग: चित्त-वृत्ति निरोधः

Yogaścittavrttinirodha

Yoga is that state of being in which the ideational choice-making movement of the mind slows down and comes to a stop.

That ideal state of perfection requires no conscious corrective input. The more mental input is required, the less perfect the work. A great flautist will play masterfully even when roused from sleep. The flautist may only be half awake, their mind may not be fully working, but if you place a flute in their hands

their breath will flow and their fingers move. They may not be able to identify which piece they are playing, but to hear it is to be in the presence of art. Their musicianship has become automatic; it no longer requires active mental choice-making.

While in a certain state, when there is no place for thinking, the thinker disappears. Psychology describes this as the 'flow state' or 'being in the zone', a condition in which an expert becomes so deeply absorbed in their expertise that their very sense of self dissolves. Where have they gone? They are merged in their work.

A basketball player often has no time to calculate, "Should I take this shot or take that shot?" By the time they have chosen, the opportunity has passed. Their actions need to be reflexive and automatic. So how do they arrive at this state of automatism? We must acknowledge the efforts they invest in preparation in order to arrive at this state. To attain effortlessness, great effort is required. A flautist spends long years in practice, struggling at times to master every facet of their art. The basketball player practises shots thousands of times, from every angle, so that the action becomes automatic at the time of need.

Mastering Consciousness

In spirituality, our concern is the mastery of consciousness itself. Consider the spectrum of consciousness as a rainbow, where each distinct colour represents an individual frequency of consciousness. Integrating spiritual practices in our material life is designed to help us arrive at a stage where we can access any

Automatic action does not mean being an automaton, nor does it mean robotic, mechanical or lifeless action. Rather than curbing freedom, it actually prepares us for greater and greater freedom. As an example, if you observe the workings of nature, you will soon learn that nature's movements are automatic. A cloud does not choose to release its rain or withhold it. In nature there is no choice. Everything proceeds on its own in the most natural way.

frequency of consciousness, automatically, as per the need of the moment. Babuji exemplified this. At one moment he would be lost in oblivion, identified with the Centre. A short while later he would be seen entertaining *abhyasis* in a most vivacious manner. The frequency of his consciousness was constantly adjusting to the requirements of his work. We can only imagine how he must have interacted with his juniors and seniors in the office. This all happened automatically. Such was his naturalness.

To be able to move automatically to a certain frequency of consciousness, we must have already mastered it. Unless and until we have reached a particular frequency of consciousness and transcended it, we cannot revisit it on command. Like a basketball player who must practise every shot in order to call upon the right shot at the right time, we must master every level of consciousness if we are to attune ourselves to the needed frequency.

Jumping to a particular frequency will not happen just by wishing or praying for it. Again and again we come back to the all-important aspect of practice. Without practice we cannot create reflexive action. Like cycling, or playing football or a musical instrument, practice is key. What is practice? It is to apply efforts for the sake of effortlessness.

Effort, Effortlessness and Doer-ship

Our efforts towards mastering consciousness may lead to a feeling that, “I am the doer.” This sentiment, which is a by-product of effort, is also the exact description of ego. We can see this reflected in the etymology of *ahamkara*, the Sanskrit word meaning ‘ego’. *Aham* means ‘I’ and *kara* comes from the root *kr* meaning ‘to do’. In this sense, *ahamkara* literally means ‘I [am] the doer’. Meditating with effort, and the associated feeling of ‘doer-ship’, only strengthen the ego. This defeats the very purpose of meditation.

In practice, automatism really means transferring your doer-ship or ego. How is that possible? It will happen if, to the extent that you are aware of a particular action, you feel that it occurs through some agency *other than yourself*. (Please note that doer-ship is only a sentiment or attitude. To renounce it does not mean that you become inactive.)

Sages tend to praise *sakshi bhava*, the witnessing state, in which we do not find ourselves to be the author of our actions, but only their witness. Lord Krishna, Sage Ashtavakra, and the Upanishads all praised the witnessing state, which has been sufficiently explained in various places. But entering into the witnessing state is not easy for most people. A witness is detached and unmoved, remaining unidentified with their experiences and surroundings. Can you be detached and unidentified with your own family? Therefore, Babuji has simplified things for us by providing an easy method to transcend the drawbacks of doer-ship. In his method, we remain the doers but we dedicate our actions to Him. In so doing, Babuji introduces a selfless motivation into all our activities. With this new attitude, we can safely apply efforts in our spiritual life and worldly life without creating explosions of ego. This is the efficacy of the *bhakti* approach. We also know it as the practice of Constant Remembrance.

Working with Frequencies of Consciousness

When we are learning to master and integrate a particular frequency of consciousness, what efforts do we need to apply? Generally, we adopt the process described by the acronym AEIOU (Acquiring the condition, Enlivening the condition, Imbibing the condition, becoming One with it, and, finally, being United with the condition). AEIOU is a vital step in absorbing any new condition so that it is assimilated into the subconscious, allowing automatism to occur. Another important effort we do is our regular daily Cleaning, as without purity of consciousness all other efforts only make life more complex. We would not even be aware of the nuances of various frequencies operating without purity of consciousness.

Babuji has simplified things for us by providing an easy method to transcend the drawbacks of doer-ship. In his method, we remain the doers but we dedicate our actions to Him. In so doing, Babuji introduces a selfless motivation into all our activities. With this new attitude, we can safely apply efforts in our spiritual life and worldly life without creating explosions of ego. This is the efficacy of the bhakti approach. We also know it as the practice of Constant Remembrance.

The way we work with any new condition must be holistic. If we want it to be dynamic, it must have its expression at every level, including at the physical level. Adjusting our physiology to the inner condition may enhance the condition. For example, if you allow your breathing pattern to slow down and match your inner state, your inner state will intensify. Conversely, a tense breathing pattern can create an emotion of aggression, which then compromises your inner state.

Babuji was familiar with this principle of tuning the inner state by tuning the outer one. For example, it is the basis of his method for creating love and longing. Babuji recognized that we remember whomsoever we love; he suggested that we reverse this process to create love for someone by remembering the person we wish to love. In his message at Surat in 1982, he proposed that if real yearning is not present in an *abhyasi* they can create it by simply imitating that state of yearning. Though artificial, it will become real in due course.

This principle of tuning the outer to tune the inner can be applied to many aspects of life. Whether it is the way you communicate, your attitude and thoughts toward external things, your behaviour and actions, the way you take food, the way you sleep, the way you breathe, or the way you look, they all affect your inner state and can contribute to its enhancement.

As every new condition is integrated into your being, your efforts will become subtler. Over time, instead of holding on to the condition for dear life, you will find that you are supported and your action is directed. It appears that some higher agency is the doer, rather than yourself. When this happens naturally, you may adopt Babuji's method of identifying that higher agency as your Master, thinking, "He is the doer." With this attitude, you are transferring your doership, your ego, to your Master and becoming a mere witness to the higher work that unfolds. This is the witnessing state described by past Elders. The sense of "I am the doer" seems so far off now. Nevertheless, automatism is not yet complete.

If you allow your breathing pattern to slow down and match your inner state, your inner state will intensify. Conversely, a tense breathing pattern can create an emotion of aggression, which then compromises your inner state.

This principle of tuning the outer to tune the inner can be applied to many aspects of life. Whether it is the way you communicate, your attitude and thoughts toward external things, your behaviour and actions, the way you take food, the way you sleep, the way you breathe, or the way you look, they all affect your inner state and can contribute to its enhancement.

The Subtlest Manifestation of Automatism – *Turiyatit*

Eventually, the identity of the witness also departs, and there is no doer either – not even the Master. Though nothing remains, action yet proceeds automatically. This state is called *turiyatit*, a condition in which you remain drowned while the work flows on unhindered. It emerges again and again, at higher frequencies each time, as you move along your journey.

Some are drowned in the cup,
Some are drowned in the bucket,
Some are drowned in the bathtub,
Some are drowned in the pond,
Some are drowned in the river,
Some are drowned in the sea,
Some are drowned in the ocean.

With love and respect,

Kamlesh

On the occasion of the 122nd birth anniversary of

Pujya Shri Babuji Maharaj

30 APRIL 2021

heartfulness
purity weaves destiny