

## **What Do We All Want?**

I recently travelled from India to North America and Europe, sharing what is revealed through the practice of meditation. The mind has certain expectations about meditation coming from the premise that I am incomplete and therefore I will do something to become complete.

Meditation evolves the acceptance that the mind is not 'doing' meditation. Even though the body can be made to sit still for some time, the mind is less willing to relinquish its doership. The purpose of meditation is not to shut down the mind's natural thinking ability, but rather to understand it. Etched on my mind are the words from Krishnamurti, "With understanding, there is no need for control."

### **How to Understand the Mind?**

To understand the mind is not through psychology, a belief or a philosophy. The practice of meditation is not to add more concepts, but rather to see clearly WHAT IS – without needing to explain, rationalise, justify, control or even spiritually elevate what is observed. The purpose is not to put more restrictions on the mind by giving it a fixed answer, but rather to stimulate an enquiry directly relevant to the situations you are faced with every moment.

Just look at the nature of thinking – not the content of the thoughts, not the narration of your personal story – but just watch, what are thoughts? It does not require a thesis; it will be apparent that the nature of thinking is motion. In a wave-like manner, thoughts arise and subside.

Thoughts are not something to be understood as criminal or as a dominating force. The wavering nature of the mind is not insignificant; it is the manifest force of the whole cosmos, which when channelled through a small body, is quite remarkable! It is no wonder most people are driven to distract themselves from sitting with their minds. We are timid to realise how vast and powerful our Self really is.

### **The Precious Gift of Enquiry – "Who am I?"**

To live a distracted existence is to ignore the most precious gift given to humanity, the ability to ask, "Who am I?" "What is the Self –personal and collective?" "What is that which is the same in us all?" Just as fire cannot burn itself, and your teeth cannot bite themselves, you are not an object to be known, which means that mind cannot know You. According to the Upanishads, when you know that the mind cannot grasp who you truly are, that is Vedant (the beginning of Self-knowledge).

Again and again, my teacher would open the satsang with the question, "What do you want?" Each time he asked, I realised the immense value of this enquiry. Inspired by my Guru, for the Wisdom of Meditation tour, I posed this seemingly simple question, "What do you want?" All the participants want freedom, love, peace and to feel connected.

After some time in reflection upon the first question, I posed another question, "What appears to be hindering you from fulfilling your wish?" In order to understand more deeply our true want, we need to consider, "Where do I perceive that I am bound, not loved, not connected, not at peace?" The important word in the second question is 'appears' – "What appears to be binding you?" The great dilemma for a human being is that he thinks that his life is confined by his own body and mind. In order to cope with this feeling, he adopts all kinds of social, religious, and cultural systems in accordance with his training. And thus he lives, apologising for the way he is.

### **The Essential Point**

A relative mind is an excellent tool for knowing things, but it will not bring clarity in the work of Self awareness, which needs a subtler tool. An axe may be efficient for chopping wood, but a needle is needed to stitch cloth. The one-pointed attention of mind is not that one may control thinking, but rather, like the needle, bring Self enquiry to its very essential point: "What do you want?"

As the desires lead one through many experiences, at some juncture doubt again arises, "Why am I not fulfilled with the things and experiences I have accumulated?" Accompanying this doubt, every ambition, every acquisition, every relationship, and even the fundamental beliefs are brought under scrutiny and one can feel paralysed as to know what is true anymore.

When you are confronted with the inadequacy of things to quench your desires, you are invited to enquire deeper. Feeling the emptiness of superficial satisfaction, you admit that you don't really know what you want.

With the answer, "I don't know what I want" begins *Advait Vedant*, the revelation of the non-dual (non-personal) Self. The Self is not yours, it is You! That You is the same You as all You's. The want for freedom, love, peace and the feeling of connectedness, is not your personal want, but an understanding of the true nature of the Self.

## **An Unimaginable Blessing!**

When you cease to struggle to control your thoughts, you allow access to a unique power that reveals what you want – to be in unity with your ever-present Self. What an unimaginable blessing, to be able to sit at ease with yourself – not driven from yourself due to the intolerable unease of hankering; not provoked to prove or defend your mind's beliefs; not running in fear from an imagined void, or nervously filling silence with noise.

Trying to control, is trying to force things against their will. It is wasting your energy. Infinite energy is available to you, but when you don't tap into it, you find yourself endlessly seeking and defending. It can feel frightening to relax control, but this body and ego (our sense of control) is ever in a process of constant change, so if not now, we do eventually accept.

The meditative perspective views everything in manifestation as a perfect cycle of change. This is not something to be concerned about, but rather it assists the resolution to your enquiry, "What do I truly want?" To realise the spaciousness, gracefulness, wholeness and ever-presence of your true Self, the ego's exhausting and futile efforts to overcome the forces of nature surrenders.

When you identify with your ever-present Self, you will find you have all that you want. You can only be deeply fulfilled when you realise your true power. It is not the kind of power that can be held in your grip, rather the opposite, it is through the acceptance that there is one, all-permeating Self who knows that which we all truly want – is what we already are.