

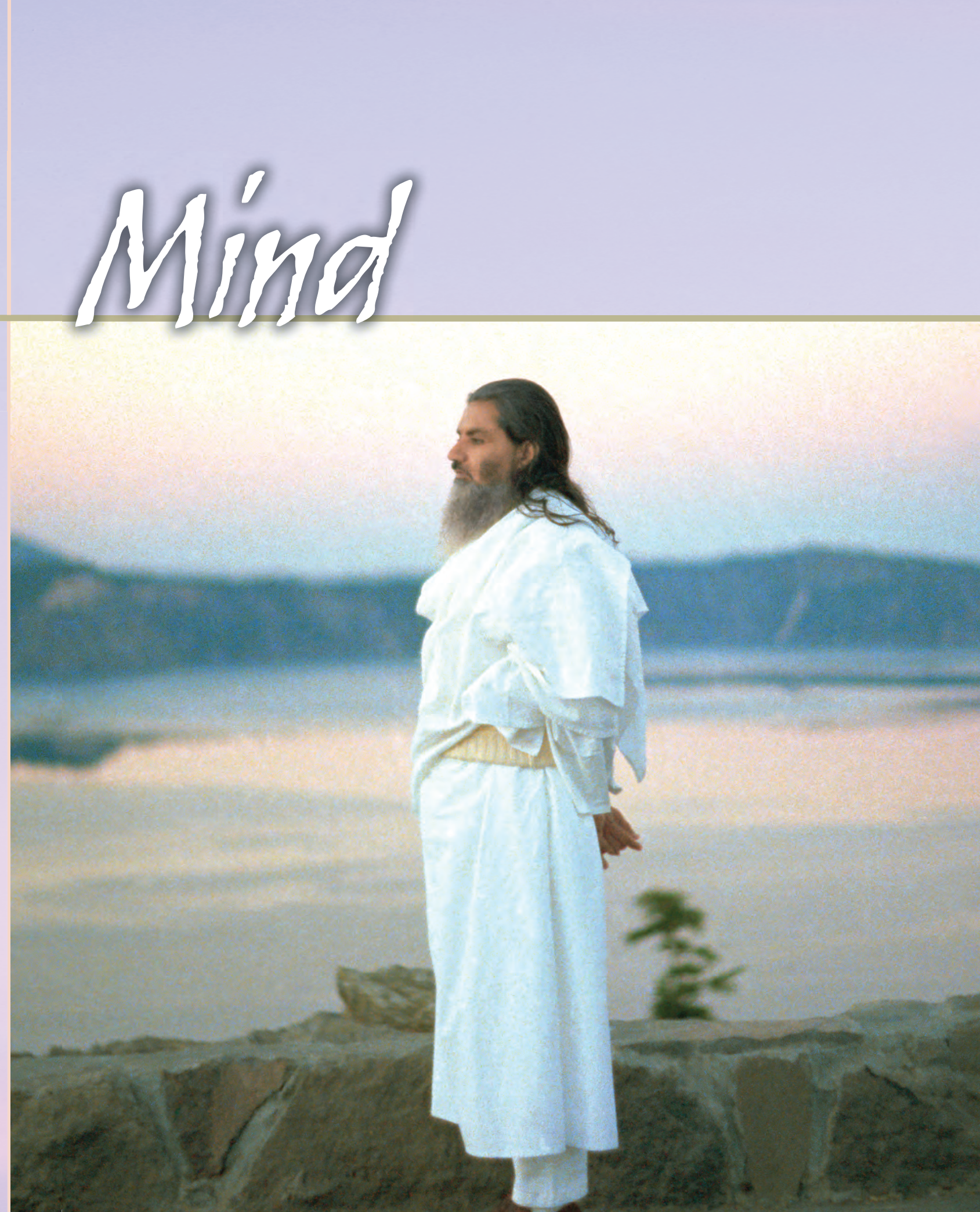
Satsang by Swami Amar Jyoti

# Quieting the Mind

## Relax into Stillness

The ultimate aim of all paths is to still the mind. Whichever tradition you follow, whether it is Vedanta, the path of devotion, Zen Buddhism, Vipassana, Christianity or Hinduism, at the end of every path you will see that the mind has to quiet down and come to stillness.

**T**HE EARLY TRANSLATORS of Eastern philosophies used terms in English that often lost their original depth and substance. I feel that either we should choose the right translations or use the original terms. For example, we do not say, "Let us do *union* postures." We say "yoga postures." The word "surrender" has been used as the translation of the Sanskrit term, *sharanagati*. In Western culture and history, surrender generally refers to warfare: one leader or army surrendering to another. So when Eastern holy men came in the sixties and seventies and spoke of "surrender to God," many in the West were resentful. By surrender to God or Guru, we mean *sharanagati*, which has a totally different meaning. *Sharanagati* is a sacred, consecrated word that means, "taking refuge in the Supreme." *Sharana* means refuge or stopping, silencing, relaxing or establishing; *gati* means motion, something that revolves or moves. *Sharanagati* is when all the motions of your mind relax, all your karmas, *samskars*<sup>1</sup> and emotions are stilled and quieted.





Many terms in Sanskrit, such as *Brahman*, require several sentences to translate into English. And when we say, “Everything is within your Self,” the normal understanding is that there is a cosmic entity that is the Self. That is not the real meaning. Ordinarily, self is used for ego, the sense of I-ness, an individual. *Atma*, which has been translated as the Self, is synonymous with Consciousness; it is not an individual. So when we say, “Everything is within your Self,” that Self is unlimited, all-pervading. It is no longer you and me.

Before coming to this indescribable Reality, let us start with the mind. The mind basically has three stages. One we call the subconscious; one is the surface or conscious mind. The third is called superconsciousness, which is the higher mind, supermind or overmind. All three are within the domain of the mind. The superconsciousness transcends our subconscious and surface, day-to-day sensual mind. Still it is not the *summum bonum*, the ultimate Reality.

The subconscious and surface mind are like a river: there is the surface water flowing faster and a current beneath flowing slower. These currents may seem like two but it is one river. In the same way, the subconscious and surface mind are one mind. The surface or conscious mind is how we perceive and deal with ordinary reality. The subconscious mind includes whatever thoughts, samskars and karmas we have suppressed or are lying dormant. They are not known to us, as if hidden in a box. When we describe these aspects of the mind they become two, but actually they are one. As in the river water, what differs is the speed. The under-current is slower; the upper-current is rapid. The rate of vibration is slower in the subconscious, which is why we are not conscious of it. Sometimes things emerge from our subconscious in certain conditions, situations or with certain persons, that we are bewildered could come from us. It is as though the water in the river is being stirred and things come to the surface. They were there (in the subconscious) but the current was so slow that we were hardly aware of it.

Restlessness of mind creates motion, which creates ignorance and unconsciousness. When you relax and still your mind—all thoughts, emotions and excitements—you slow the speed or vibration. Then you come to the basis of those motions. And when you come to complete stillness of mind, we call it superconsciousness. It is the same mind but it is quieted. The rushing water gradually slows down, and

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when it stops it is placid, like a mirror. It is the same water but it is quieted down, and in that stillness the light of wisdom and intuition shines.

As you begin to still your mind, your subconscious will open and many things will come out: negative, positive, good and bad. You will be wonderstruck that these existed in you. When you succeed in stilling the totality of your mind, then your true Self is revealed. You are fully conscious. This stillness is not outside your mind. You do not transcend the mind and come to superconsciousness. It is the *same substance*; it has simply quieted.

Let’s put it in a devotional way: when you have meditated and quieted the mind, in one sublimely fortunate moment you will see God. It sounds as if God was waiting outside to enter when you are quiet. Not so. He was always there. Your restlessness, your thoughts and desires kept occupying you so much that you did not see God within you. And when you *truly* see, it is not that God is there irrespective of you, or in spite of you, or separate from you. You will see that it *is* you. God is not separate from you. You and God are one. It is as if all the time the sun is shining but you cannot see it because of ripples and waves in the water. As soon as the water becomes still you see that it was there all the time. This is unity of thought: when the whole mind, including the subconscious, quiets down, when all movements stop and relax. That is sharanagati. It is a merging, being one.

The sacred Gayatri mantra proclaims that the same Sun or divine Radiance—*Om Bhur Bhuva Svah*—shines

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in the terrestrial, netherworld and celestial realms. That shining Being, *Savitur Varenyam*, illuminates all the realms, *Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi*. There is nothing else we could meditate upon—*Dhiyo Yo Naha Prachodayat*. When you still all the regions of your mind, all of a sudden you will see everything: past, present, future; this world, the galaxy, the universe; rich, poor, good, evil, animals, plants, people. You instantly see that everything is you. This is the Universal Form, *Viratsvarupa*, which Sri Krishna showed to Arjuna at the battle of Kurukshetra.

If you are fighting with your mind, trying to resist your mind, rejecting or angry with your mind, you are trying to reject yourself and thereby you are trying to establish two realities. Try to see this point: when you are trying to get away from your mind, to transcend or reject or suppress or escape it, you are trying to get away from the Reality. The problem is, the very mind you are trying to avoid, if you just quiet it down, the Reality will shine right there.

The ultimate aim of all paths is to still the mind. Whichever tradition you follow, whether it is Vedanta, the path of devotion, Zen Buddhism, Vipassana, Christianity or Hinduism, at the end of every path you will see that the mind has to quiet down and come to stillness. When you attain stillness, whatever the outer differences of doctrines, paths and religions, you will find Oneness. When you drop into that quietude, the light shines where you thought it was darkness. Not that you fight with the darkness, resist it or discard it; within that very darkness there is light. If you had unity of thought more than fifty percent of the time, your problems would be over. We will not have to fight with anyone or anything. We are trying to detach ourselves, but from what? If you are trying to detach from something that you feel is unreal, wrong, negative, bad or ignorant, and thereby getting to the right side of the coin, do not forget that both sides are one coin.

Apply this to practices: let’s say meditation. With what are you meditating? Are you leaving your mind





for the time being locked up somewhere in a cupboard and meditating in another compartment of your consciousness? No, it is the same mind with which you are meditating. Trying to meditate by leaving the rest of the mind elsewhere, or suppressing or ignoring it may be one way to slowly dissolve it. But the fact is that you can relax and still the very same mind with which you concentrate upon *whatever* you do. When that happens, your meditation is successful. In that perfect fullness and stillness, your true Self, the Reality, shines right there. All of a sudden you will see that everything is one, the whole cosmos, known and unknown, the manifest and unmanifest. That Being—*Asti* in Sanskrit—is not you or me anymore. If you get to that stage, you are God, Brahman, Thou Art That.

This stage is called *sthita prajna*—*sthita* meaning stable, established, realized; *prajna* meaning pure intelligence, limitless consciousness. There is no separation of Thou and That. The stilled mind is the superb core of your Being. Within the unconsciousness, when quieted and relaxed completely, is Pure Consciousness. You have seen how when you are really fatigued, your eyes do not see clearly; and when you

are relaxed and well rested, your eyesight brightens up. In the same way, when your unconsciousness relaxes a little bit, your agitations and restlessness quiet down. This fundamental unity is called *Rta² Dharma*. Break that unity and no matter how many practices you do, they will leave you fragmented and struggling. If you love your God well, where is the struggle? A struggle comes when you are not loving God, or you love God for your own material pursuits.

Then you ask, “Why is God troubling me or not doing things the way I want?” Why should God do what you want? On the contrary, you should do what God wants. This fallacy continues because we do not have insight, so we divide. And when we divide in our thoughts, our practices are divided. That very mind, that negative, resistant mind is the place where you find your consciousness and wisdom—by somehow putting a lollypop in the mouth of your ego and quieting it down. Otherwise this struggle continues, even on the spiritual path.

Seeking should be joyful, longing and loving. It should be a non-resistant pursuit, like a moth diving into a flame. The moth does not think or analyze or

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debate; it just plunges. This is sharanagati: *be still and know*, when your mind relaxes completely into your object of concentration, whether it is Krishna, Jesus, Buddha, Brahman, Silence, Consciousness or Light. When you merge into That, there is no thought or reservation or resistance. And in that very darkness the light shines.

Quieting the mind is the most heroic act. This is the purpose of all practices. When you quiet the mind you come to absolute silence where time and space do not exist. You are instantly anywhere and everywhere. Everything is within your Being, unlimited Brahman. To reach that pure silence you have to go through your mind, and that is where all the horrors come up! We do not want to face our minds, at least not willingly. Therefore the most difficult exercise for anyone is to face one’s own mind. That is where your whole wealth is. If God were outside your mind, you would not need to go through it. But everything is within your mind. Where there is no mind there is no concept of God. If you cannot face your mind you are avoiding truth and you will not get anywhere. That is where you find your Truth and Reality.

Can you just shut off your mind and get into the Light? If you could you would, but so far no one has done it. If you have spoken untruth and someone tells you, “You are a liar,” accept it humbly. I do not mean to deny the goodness that is there, but it is better to be humble so the ego does not get puffed up. Unless you face your mind you are not going to still it. As long as you are avoiding or suppressing or rejecting it, your mind remains as an entity to disturb you. Guidance, either from within you or from your Master, emerges only when you have become quiet to a proportionate degree. Ultimately when you reach that limitless Being, you will see everything. Then you are established in

Cosmic Consciousness. And even if you try to search where your mind has gone, you will not find it. It is like when you bring light into darkness; darkness vanishes.

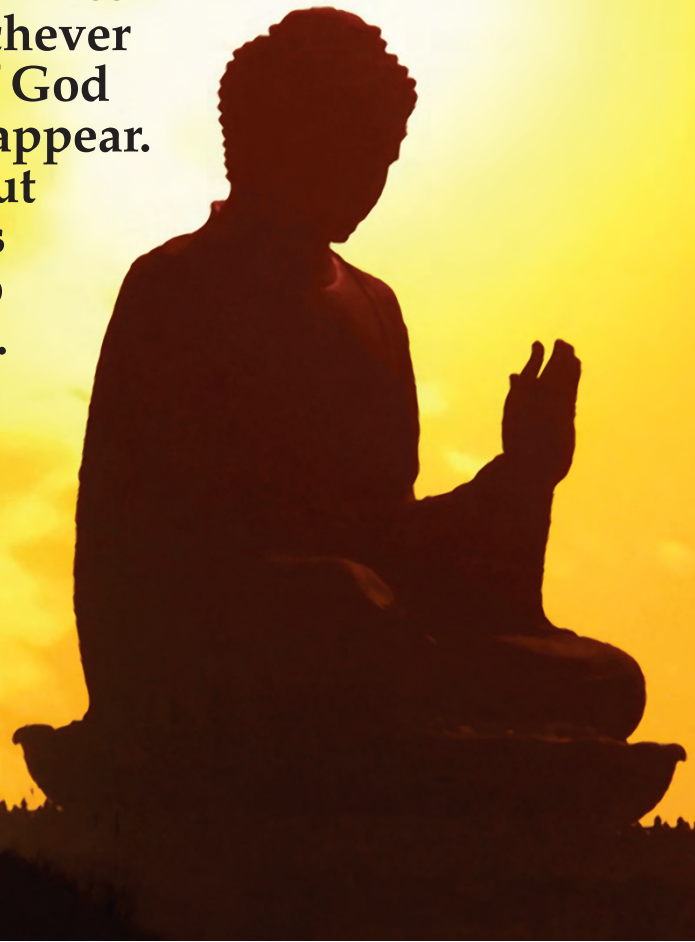
There is nothing to reject in God’s kingdom, but you can only see that by attaining stillness. If your mind refuses to be still, choose an object for meditation. The way to God should be very loving and sweet. There is nothing higher or

greater than that. The bliss, joy, peace and satisfaction of seeking God, nothing else can give you. Once you attain this quietude, nothing can disturb you. It gives you your own impetus, your inner strength. It is because we hide, defend and are untruthful that we do not want to face our minds. The social norm is courtesy on the surface, looking good. Nobody wants to talk about it. That is the phenomenon we are trapped in, avoiding the Reality underneath. But the real Gurus, the Satgurus, do not allow you to avoid your mind. Their job is to bring your mind out, to open it up and purify it. Some seekers say, “Accept me as I am.” Well, do you have problems? “Yes.” Then you are not okay. If you live just a happy-go-lucky surface life, you will never be satisfied. So let me repeat one thing: if you want to realize your True Being, your Brahman, your Light, your Consciousness, your God within, you have to go through your mind. You may wish that someone would just go on pampering you and making you feel good and that would be the way to Reality. It is not.

Reaching Enlightenment has been likened to “walking barefoot on the razor’s edge,” but it does not have to be difficult. If you have courage and one-pointed loving devotion to the goal, you will reach. Those who see their mind, face it, deal with it and make it pure and simple, reach the earliest. It is a very straightforward way. Different names for God, different doctrines and different paths are allowed. But the way is always through your own mind. When Krishna gave Arjuna the blessing of *Divya-chakshu*, divine vision, awakening his third eye, Arjuna was able to see His universal form. Arjuna was awestruck and spontaneously asked Krishna, “What is all this?” He thought Krishna was his uncle, yet in that divine vision he saw Krishna’s Universal Form, beyond all his thoughts and conceptions. When Krishna resumed



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the form of a human being, Arjuna got sober and took refuge in that Infinite Being.

If we could only awaken ourselves by being still, we would *know*. We would leave behind all worries. Each mind is occupied with material things: money, job, health, enmity, legalities—a hundred different things. What if greater things are within us? Having lost that heritage, we hug this so-called independence and individuality, which is actually synonymous with ignorance and helplessness. If you could just quiet your mind, there would be no struggle of any kind, not even philosophical. It is utter simplicity. Those have been the greatest scientists who have given us simplified formulas. So it is with the sages: the nearer they get to Enlightenment, the more they have simplified their minds.

Therefore Jesus said: “The Kingdom of God is within you.” The Vedic sages said: *Tat Twam Asi*, “Thou art That.” Try to see the unity of thinking. Be here as thy Father in heaven is. Do not think: *I’m here; my Father in heaven is there*. When you divide that way, you are missing the Reality. It is through your mind that you reach, so do not avoid it. Face it, reflect upon it, see the good, the bad, your weaknesses and strengths, your desires and accomplishments. Ask yourself what further you desire. How much time you take is up to you. You could finish in one day; you could take fifty years. It depends upon how you loiter in your mind.

Some are mad after the goal. They quiet the mind at any cost. For others it is a gradual process, stage by stage. Your speed and time are your making. People used to ask me, “How many years does it take to be

Enlightened?” I would reply, “How many years are you are going to take to be Enlightened?” When it happens, it is instant. So in the meantime we say, “Deal with your mind. Do practices. See what is blocking you, what are your hang-ups, what is your negative and positive side, how truthful you are, how honest and sincere you are. Read the scriptures, hear the Masters.” But do not think you will do these things and finish in ten or fifteen years. It is up to you. You could take one thousand years. That is why we continue to take rebirth, because we keep doing the same things over and over. Partly it is habit, partly desire, partly ignorance, and partly ego trip—unless someone comes and reminds and awakens us. That is what Satgurus do.

Ignorance forms habits; habitual patterns keep repeating until we come out of that arena. Karmas also affect your practices. They can make you helpless, weak or vulnerable. The counter-effect is to create willpower and new actions that support your practices. In other words: change your lifestyle or your valuation. It is commonly known that one of the most important aspects to bringing your health back, to boosting your immune system, is to change your lifestyle. This is what I mean by changing your valuation: change your situation so that your practices are not hampered. Your surroundings, the company you keep, your job, your family and other relationships should all be reorganized to support your practices. This will bring health of mind.

Wrong living has created our ills today: pollution, immune system deficiencies, mental problems, diseases and crimes. These are increasing in every nation. It is all due to wrong education and a wrong understanding of life itself. If we think only of the necessities of daily life, we are misunderstanding totally. We could live more joyfully, lovingly, harmoniously, cooperatively and peacefully. If you have the courage to reorganize your life, to make practices an integral part of your daily life, this will solve many of your problems. The solution is very simple. You have the instrument with you, the laboratory of your mind. Very honestly see your mind, whatever it is. You will see why you are not able to reach Enlightenment, to have God’s vision. Daily when you sit in practices, morning and evening or any other time, try to relax your mind under all conditions. See any desires and thoughts that come up and allow them to subside.

A quiet mind gives us peace and wisdom. We do care for peace, but we try to attain it by acquiring or accomplishing things. The reality is quite to the

contrary. A relaxed mind while singing or playing an instrument will create celestial music. A quieted mind while cooking will bring out better dishes. A relaxed mind in a managerial job will do justice to all, and will not dominate or exploit others. A quieted and relaxed mind will behave sweetly and lovingly, not deceiving or betraying others. A peaceful, relaxed mind will be understanding and insightful. So this has a very concrete application in every aspect of life. If your mind is relaxed and peaceful and any problem should arise, you will see the solution right there, how should you act and what you should do.

When you meditate and achieve stillness of mind, the Light shines right there. Whichever aspect or form of God you choose will appear. Practices help, but beyond practices your mind has to come to stillness. In other words: you have to come to terms with yourself. Regardless of your present surroundings, do not wait for the future. Begin to relax right where you are. When you relax, your circumstances in life will change. If we are not living in a simple and peaceful way with our fellow beings, we are missing the point. We each have higher faculties for understanding and responding to wisdom; otherwise we are living for our survival only. Our consciousness should grow beyond that. Let us take care of our children and our families, but our mission in life is beyond that. You have to reach that inner chamber of your heart, to relax, be still, and find the Light and God. Spiritual seekers have that responsibility. Have courage to do it. 🌸

1 Samskars are patterns in the mind that carry on from birth to birth until, through meditation, austerities, spiritual practices and grace they are dissolved.

2 Rta, the Sanskrit spelling, is pronounced as Reeta.

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