

## Some Teachings of Ramana Maharishi

*(What follows below are answers given by Ramana at various times to devotee's questions, strung together and brought into flowing English for ease of comprehension.)*

There is no greater mystery than this, that being the reality yourself, you seek to gain reality. You think there is something binding your reality and that something must be destroyed before the reality is freed. This is ridiculous. A day will dawn when you will laugh at all your efforts. What is there to realize? The real is always as it is. You have realized the unreal, in other words, you regard the unreal as that which is real. Give up this attitude and you will attain wisdom. There is nothing new nor anything you do not already have which needs to be gained. The feeling that you have not yet realized is the sole obstruction to realization. In fact, you are already free. If it were not so, the realization would be new. If it has not existed so far, it must take place hereafter. What comes will also go, what can be gained can also be lost. If realization is not eternal it is not worth having. Therefore what you seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal, but not now known due to obstruction. Remove the obstruction. That which is eternal is not known to be so because of ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get over the ignorance and all will be well. The ignorance is identical with the 'I-thought'. Find its source and it will vanish. Then the Self alone will shine as it always has, in the stillness of being.

People often ask how the mind is controlled. I say to them, 'Show me the mind and then you will know what to do.' The fact is that the mind is only a bundle of thoughts. How can you extinguish it by the thought of doing so, or by a desire? Your thoughts and desires are part and parcel of the mind. The mind is simply fattened by new thoughts rising up. Therefore it is foolish to attempt to kill the mind by means of the mind. The only way of doing it is to find its source and hold on to it. The mind will then fade away of its own accord. In deep sleep you are entirely free from thoughts, because the 'I-thought' is absent. The moment the 'I-thought' rises on waking, all other thoughts rush forth spontaneously. The wisest thing for one to do is therefore to catch hold of this leading thought, the 'I-thought', and dissect it - who and what it is - giving thereby no chance to other thoughts to distract you. Therein lies the true value of self-inquiry and its efficacy in mind control. All that you need do is to find out the origin of the 'I-thought' and abide there. Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the beyond will take care of itself.

It is with the inward-going mind that you eliminate the outward-going mind. You do not set about saying there is a mind and I'm going to kill it, but you seek the source of the mind. Then you will find that the mind does not exist at all. The mind, turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self. To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see from where the mind rises and then it will cease to exist. Whenever you are disturbed by thoughts you need merely withdraw within to the Self. This is not concentration or destruction of the mind but withdrawal into the Self. The degree of the absence of thoughts is the measure of your progress towards Self-realization. But Self-realization itself does not admit of progress, it is ever the same. The Self remains always in realization. The obstacles are thoughts. Progress is measured by the degree of removal of the obstacles to understanding that the Self is always

realized. So thoughts must be checked by seeking to whom they arise. Go to their source and they will not arise.

The truth of yourself alone is worthy to be scrutinized and known. Taking it as the target of your attention, you should keenly seek to know it in your spiritual heart. This knowledge of yourself will be revealed only to the consciousness which is silent, clear and free from the activity of the agitated and suffering mind. Know that the consciousness which always shines in the heart as the formless Self, the true 'I', and which is known by your being still without thinking about anything as existent or non-existent, alone is the perfect reality. Your duty is to be, and not to be this or that. 'I am that I am' sums up the whole truth. The method is summed up in the words 'Be still'. What does stillness mean? It means destroy yourself. Because any form or shape is the cause of trouble. Give up the notion that 'I am so and so'. All that is required to realize the Self is to be still. What can be easier than that? Association with a realized master pushes the mind inward. He is also in the heart of the seeker and so he draws the latter's inward-bent mind into the heart. Satsang will make the mind sink into the heart. Satsang means association with truth. Truth is the Self. Since the Self is not now understood to be truth, the one reality, the company of the sage who has thus understood it is sought. That is satsang. Introversion results and truth is revealed. In all the three worlds there is no boat like satsang to carry one safely across the ocean of birth and death.

When unity in the heart is replaced by a variety of perceived phenomena, it is called the outgoing mind. When you enter the inner stillness of being, the heart-going mind is called the resting mind. When one daily practices more and more abiding in the heart, the mind will become extremely pure due to the removal of its defects, and the practice will become so easy that the purified mind will plunge into the heart as soon as the inquiry is commenced. Be what you are. All that is necessary is to lose the ego. That which is, is always there. Even now you are that. You are not apart from it. The thought, 'I have not realized', the expectation to become realized, and the desire of getting anything, are all the workings of the ego. You have fallen into snares of the ego. Be yourself! See who you are, drop your mind into the cave of the heart and remain as the Self, free from birth and death, free from all comings and goings.

Man is always the Self and yet he does not know it. Instead he confounds it with the non-Self, the body, etc. Such confusion is due to ignorance. If ignorance is wiped out, the confusion will cease to exist and the true knowledge will be unfolded. By remaining in contact with realized sages the man gradually loses the ignorance until its removal is complete. The eternal Self is thus revealed. When the mind is weak, grace is necessary. Serving a realized being will bring forth the grace. There is however nothing new to get. Just as a weak man comes under the control of a stronger one, the weak mind of a man comes under control easily in the presence of a strong-minded wise person. Every plane of worldly existence has its own illusion, which can be destroyed only by another illusion on the same plane. For example, a man takes a full meal and goes to sleep. He dreams of being hungry in spite of the food he has in his stomach. To satisfy the dream hunger, he has to take dream food. A wound in dream requires dream treatment. A great king once dreamt that he was ill but was too poor to call a doctor. Although he had fabulous wealth in the waking state, it was of no use to him in the dream state. Similarly, the illusion of ignorance can be destroyed only by the illusion of the master's grace. Liberation is ever present and bondage ever absent. That which is, is only grace; there is

nothing else; but as long as the dream prevails, the master must be sought and served to evoke the grace.

Association with the wise, satsang, and service of them is required of the disciple. As very few can hold satsang with the unmanifested truth of being, the absolute existence, most have to begin with association with the manifested truth, that is, the embodied guru. Association with sages should be made because thoughts are so persistent. The sage has already overcome the mind and remains in peace. Being in his proximity helps to bring about this condition; otherwise there is no meaning in seeking his company. Serve the guru selflessly with a full heart. Service to the guru is primarily abidance in the Self, but it also includes making the guru's body comfortable, looking after his place of abode, and serving all mankind by seeing all as God. It is the spiritual contact which is important. If the disciple finds the guru internally, then the guru will always be with him no matter where he goes. In the proximity of a great master, the negative tendencies cease to be active, the mind becomes still and samadhi results. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in the presence of the master. To remain unshaken in this peaceful state, further efforts are necessary. Eventually the disciple will know it to be his real being and will thus be liberated even while alive.

God is said to reside in the heart in the same way as you are said to reside in your body. Yet heart is not a place. Some place must be named as the dwelling of God for those who mistake their bodies as themselves and who comprehend only relative knowledge. The fact is neither God nor you occupy any space. You are bodiless and spaceless in deep sleep, yet in the waking state and in dream you appear to be the opposite. Whatever the dream, the only thing that has value and is worth doing with regard to dream is to wake up. When you wake up, do you say that the experiences of the dream were real, although within the dream everyone there would have tried to convince you of it? No. Similarly, when you wake up to the Self these experiences of the world will be unreal, like in a dream, although others in that state will try to convince you that they are real. In truth, you are ever in the peace of deep sleep. Being aware of this peace while in the waking state is samadhi. The unwise cannot remain long in that state because his ego pushes him out of it. For the wise, although he has scotched it, the ego continues to rise again and again due to the karma with which his body has taken birth. So, for both the wise and the unwise, the ego springs up, but with this difference: Whereas the sage enjoys the transcendental experience, keeping his attention always fixed on his source, the unwise is completely ignorant of it. For the wise, the ego is not harmful, being a mere skeleton of its normal self, like a burnt up rope. By constantly fixing his attention on his source, the heart, the ego of the wise gets dissolved like a salt doll which has fallen into the ocean. To the wise it is immaterial whether the world appears or not. In either case, his attention is directed towards the Self. He sees nothing separate from the Self. He is the Self. He always remains as the Self. That is all.