

Part 14 (...Chapter V continues)

The last time...

1. Two seeds for the mind: prana or life force where the movement of energy enlivens latent impressions, and, vasana or mental conditioning which are the impressions that have gained strength by use and will weaken by disuse.
2. Unminding the mind: spiritual discipline, avoiding carelessness, samsara, and equanimity.

Today's focus...

Today, discuss three things: the state of quiescence, going beyond—the no-mind, and, reality—the seed for consciousness.

1. The state of quiescence

Earlier, we have discussed the joy and delight of a quiet mind. We are not talking about a mind that does not work but of one that works when needed, as needed and in the light of wisdom. The noisy mind works relentlessly, often in directions different from current activity and under the strong influence of conditioning.

The effort it takes to quieten the mind is not so much to bring about natural inner silence but to endure the strong pull and vehemence of inner turmoil. Restoring inner silence thus takes effort across all aspects of life, not just on the mat in the hours in meditation. The mind has to be watched relentlessly and the inner has to be brought into the same field of awareness along with the outer as we discussed last time. Habits like 'multiple tasking' must be abandoned as they accomplish nothing substantial while leading to severe degradation of the psyche and a substantial increase in restlessness.

You cannot do anything really well if you are not fully involved – heart, mind and body must all be doing what needs to be done for peak performance. In doing one thing at one time with all your heart, mind and body, will result in accomplishments in the outer as well as the inner.

There is a very insightful verse in scripture: "Verily, birds are able to fly with their two wings: even so, both work and knowledge together lead to the supreme goal of liberation." (I.1.7) The purpose of work is to support your spiritual ascent while at the same time, enabling you to succeed in your work and have experiences in a way that is positive and healthy. All action so to say, are called 'work' in the language of Vasistha. Work or action acts as a mirror as while doing, one sees

one's reactions. Work is a transformer as while being aware of existing reactions, one does what needs to be done, because it needs to be done and on its own merit. Thus, selfishness and the ego are not given room to thrive while still being fully aware of them and this exhausts their residual energy, weakening them to mere impressions.

If we do all that needs to be done, because it needs to be done and with all our being – we will accomplish much in the outer or realm of activity and the inner or the realm of spirit. In doing wholeheartedly with relentless vigilance, inner quiescence will come about as the mind's chatter will exhaust itself in disuse. Our duties will thus also result in spiritual growth.

If the inner is not cultivated with the outer, all efforts are not worth much as all we do and accomplish are in time process. When we cultivate the inner amidst the outer, action and time process become a gateway to the quiescence of eternity.

2. Going beyond, the no-mind

When we bring the inner and outer in the same field of view and sustain it – the feeling of spatial separation begins to melt and the psyche starts to heal into oneness. Gradually, all notions such as 'this is desirable' and 'this is undesirable' are given up, and the mind becomes quiet. In the resulting silence, the inner intelligence functions in an unconditioned manner—this is a state of supreme quiescence.

Vasana or conditioning alone is the form of the mind when it thinks of objects on account of its like and dislike for them. When such taste ceases to exist and the heart is clean and clear—there is no inner turmoil. Firstly, it takes sincere and wholehearted effort to heal the mind and as we have discussed earlier, not so much because some quantity of effort is 'required' so to say but because of the heavy force of existing conditioning that already exists – whether we realize it or not. Secondly, we have to find the way to quiescence while enduring the noisy mind with which we are very familiar and intertwined. This is why a wholehearted resolve is essential or inner quiescence will seem unattainable. Friends, inner silence is already there, we have to stop inner agitation to experience inner silence. This my friends, cannot be accomplished in a little time on the mat or prayer area – there must be total change of heart so the quest for quietude threads all aspects of our life and living.

Inner quiescence is also known as no-mind as in it, there are no notions and there is consciousness of pure consciousness alone. One perceives what-is, as what-is, not according to preexisting notions or mental conditioning, even if there are thoughts and ideas in such a mind.

Please bring back to mind what we had discussed the last time with the 'two seeds of the mind'. If either of the two seeds of the mind: *movement of the life-force* and *mental conditioning* are destroyed, both are destroyed because they are interdependent. Both arise from the objects of the world which are therefore the seed of both prana and vasana. When the notion of objects is abandoned, both the movement of prana and vasana are destroyed by their roots.

Consciousness alone is the seed for the objects of experience. Without consciousness, no objects of experience can ever arise. There is nothing either within or without which is distinct from consciousness, known as the object of consciousness. There is a notion or a movement in consciousness itself, which is known as the object of that very consciousness. As long as this is not clearly understood, objects seem real and this constitutes samsara—*the removal of this misunderstanding is liberation*.

Contact with and experience of ‘objects’ is sorrow: non-contact *while remaining fully aware and active* promotes happiness. That which remains when there is no contact with or experience of objects and when there is no inertia is your true nature or self.

When one has firm resolve and lives with relentless vigilance, one’s practice empowers living in such a way that exhausts habits and the accumulation of likes and dislikes. Without likes and dislikes, vasanas or subtle impressions may continue to be there but lack energy that makes them an urge. Then, spiritual practices add momentum and with God’s grace, one feels stability in the inner march. Unless one has firm resolve and perseverance, one does not come to this threshold and it always feels like an uphill climb or struggle.

3. Reality - the seed for consciousness

It is said that God helps those who help themselves. Self-effort is the path to grace. The entitlement mentality runs counter to self-effort. In the spiritual path, all are entitled but there are no free rides as you are not working for something, or from someone else. You have to undo the knots on the heart and mind that are self-caused and self-sustained. Till the window of the mind is cleaned, one sees oneself just as one is now as the conditioning has rendered the clear window opaque.

Reality is the seed for consciousness for consciousness arises in pure existence. This pure existence has two ‘forms’, as it were; diversity and unity. Consciousness has to be fully empowered and one has to live consciously in light of one’s aspiration. When the mirror of consciousness is cleaned of all impurities, diverse objects are seen as diverse appearances of one indivisible unity. When this diversity is abandoned by the consciousness, it rests in unity.

When one abandons all apparent divisions of pure existence, and is devoted to one pure existence—divisions that create confusion in one’s vision cease. When you leave divisions, division leaves you. Therefore, it is essential to always live with the thought and feeling of one pure existence. Gradually, the notion of this world-appearance will recede as the seeds for its appearance are destroyed and one’s entire being will be filled with bliss.

Let us close with another verse in the first chapter, “It is this mind alone which is the cause of all objects in the world; the three worlds exist because of the mind-stuff; when the mind vanishes the worlds vanish, too”. (I.16.25)

Summary

1. The state of quiescence: A mind that does not work but of one that works when needed and as needed and in the light of wisdom.

2. Going beyond - the no-mind: When we bring the inner and outer in the same field of view and sustain it – the feeling of spatial separation begins to melt and the psyche starts to heal into oneness.

3. Reality - The seed for consciousness: self-effort is the path to grace. The entitlement mentality runs counter to self-effort. In the spiritual path, all are entitled but there are no free rides as you are not working for something, or from someone else. You have to undue the knots on the heart and mind that are self-caused and self-sustained.



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