

## 96. Abandon Memories and Expectations

**Questioner:** I am an American by birth and for the last one year I was staying in an Ashram in Madhya Pradesh, studying *Yoga* in its many aspects. We had a teacher, whose Guru, a disciple of the great Sivananda Saraswati, stays in Monghyr. I stayed at Ramanashram also. While in Bombay I went through an intensive course of Burmese meditation managed by one Goenka. Yet I have not found peace. There is an improvement in self-control and day-to-day discipline, but that is all. I cannot say exactly what caused what. I visited many holy places. How each acted on me, I cannot say.

**Maharaj:** Good results will come, sooner or later. At Sri Ramanashram did you get some instructions?

**Q:** Yes, some English people were teaching me and also an Indian follower of *jnana yoga*, residing there permanently, was giving me lessons.

**M:** What are your plans?

**Q:** I have to return to the States because of visa difficulties. I intend to complete my B.Sc., study Nature Cure and make it my profession.

**M:** A good profession, no doubt.

**Q:** Is there any danger in pursuing the path of *Yoga* at all cost?

**M:** Is a match-stick dangerous when the house is on fire? The search for reality is the most dangerous of all undertakings for it will destroy the world in which you live. But if your motive is love of truth and life, you need not be afraid.

**Q:** I am afraid of my own mind. It is so unsteady!

**M:** In the mirror of your mind images appear and disappear. The mirror remains. Learn to distinguish the immovable in the movable, the unchanging in the changing, till you realize that all differences are in appearance only and oneness is a fact. This basic identity -- you may call God, or *Brahman*, or the matrix (*Prakriti*), the words matters little -- is only the realization that all is one. Once you can say with confidence born from direct experience: 'I am the world, the world is myself', you are free from desire and fear on one hand and become totally responsible for the world on the other. The senseless sorrow of mankind becomes your sole concern.

**Q:** So even a *jnani* has his problems!

**M:** Yes, but they are no longer of his own creation. His suffering is not poisoned by a sense of guilt. There is nothing wrong with suffering for the sins of others. Your Christianity is based on this.

**Q:** Is not all suffering self-created?

**M:** Yes, as long as there is a separate self to create it. In the end you know that there is no sin, no guilt, no retribution, only life in its endless transformations. With the dissolution of the personal 'I' personal suffering disappears. What remains is the great sadness of compassion, the horror of the unnecessary pain.

**Q:** Is there anything unnecessary in the scheme of things?

**M:** Nothing is necessary, nothing is inevitable. Habit and passion blind and mislead. Compassionate awareness heals and redeems. There is nothing we can do, we can only let things happen according to their nature.

**Q:** Do you advocate complete passivity?

**M:** Clarity and charity is action. Love is not lazy and clarity directs. You need not worry about action, look after your mind and heart. Stupidity and selfishness are the only evil.

**Q:** What is better -- repetition of God's name, or meditation?

**M:** Repetition will stabilize your breath. With deep and quiet breathing vitality will improve, which will influence the brain and help the mind to grow pure and stable and fit for meditation. Without vitality little can be done, hence the importance of its protection and increase. Posture and breathing are a part of *Yoga*, for the body must be healthy and well under control, but too much concentration on the body defeats its own purpose, for it is the mind that is primary in the beginning. When the mind has been put to rest and disturbs no longer the inner space (*chidakash*), the body acquires a new meaning and its transformation becomes both necessary and possible.

**Q:** I have been wandering all over India, meeting many Gurus and learning in dribbles several *Yogas*. Is it all right to have a taste of everything?

**M:** No, this is but an introduction. You will meet a man who will help you find your own way.

**Q:** I feel that the Guru of my own choice can not be my real Guru. To be real he must come unexpected and be irresistible.

**M:** Not to anticipate is best. The way you respond is decisive.

**Q:** Am I the master of my responses?

**M:** Discrimination and dispassion practised now will yield their fruits at the proper time. If the roots are healthy and well-watered, the fruits are sure to be sweet. Be pure, be alert, keep ready.

**Q:** Are austerities and penances of any use?

**M:** To meet all the vicissitudes of life is penance enough! You need not invent trouble. To meet cheerfully whatever life brings is all the austerity you need.

**Q:** What about sacrifice?

**M:** Share willingly and gladly all you have with whoever needs -- don't invent self-inflicted cruelties.

**Q:** What is self-surrender?

**M:** Accept what comes.

**Q:** I feel I am too weak to stand on my own legs. I need the holy company of a Guru and of good people. Equanimity is beyond me. To accept what comes as it comes, frightens me. I think of my returning to the States with horror.

**M:** Go back and make the best use of your opportunities. Get your B.Sc. degree first. You can always return to India for your Nature Cure studies.

**Q:** I am quite aware of the opportunities in the States. It is the loneliness that frightens me.

**M:** You have always the company of your own self -- you need not feel alone. Estranged from it even in India you will feel lonely. All happiness comes from pleasing the self. Please it, after return to the States, do nothing that may be unworthy of the glorious reality within your heart and you shall be happy and remain happy. But you must seek the self and, having found it, stay with it.

**Q:** Will compete solitude be of any benefit?

**M:** It depends on your temperament. You may work with others and for others, alert and friendly, and grow more fully than in solitude, which may make you dull or leave you at the mercy of your mind's endless chatter. Do not imagine that you can change through effort. Violence, even turned against yourself, as in austerities and penance, will remain fruitless.

**Q:** Is there no way of making out who is realized and who is not?

**M:** Your only proof is in yourself. If you find that you turn to gold, it will be a sign that you have touched the philosopher's stone. Stay with the person and watch what happens to you. Don't ask others. Their man may not be your Guru. A Guru may be universal in his essence, but not in his expressions. He may appear to be angry or greedy or over-anxious about his Ashram or his family, and you may be misled by appearances, while others are not.

**Q:** Have I not the right to expect all-round perfection, both inner and outer?

**M:** Inner --- yes. But outer perfection depends on circumstances, on the state of the body, personal and social, and other innumerable factors.

**Q:** I was told to find a *jnani* so that I may learn from him the art of achieving *jnana* and now I am told that the entire approach is false, that I cannot make out a *jnani*, nor can *jnana* be conquered by appropriate means. It is all so confusing!

**M:** It is all due to your complete misunderstanding of reality. Your mind is steeped in the habits of evaluation and acquisition and will not admit that the incomparable and unobtainable are waiting timelessly within your own heart for recognition. All you have to do is to abandon all memories and expectations. Just keep yourself ready in utter nakedness and nothingness.

**Q:** Who is to do the abandoning?

**M:** God will do it. Just see the need of being abandoned. Don't resist, don't hold on to the person you take yourself to be. Because you imagine yourself to be a person you take the *jnani* to be a person too, only somewhat different, better informed and more powerful. You may say that he is eternally conscious and happy, but it is far from expressing the whole truth. Don't trust definitions and descriptions -- they are grossly misleading.

**Q:** Unless I am told what to do and how to do it, I feel lost.

**M:** By all means do feel lost! As long as you feel competent and confident, reality is beyond your reach. Unless you accept inner adventure as a way of life, discovery will not come to you.

**Q:** Discovery of what?

**M:** Of the centre of your being, which is free of all directions, all means and ends.

**Q:** Be all, know all, have all?

**M:** Be nothing, know nothing, have nothing. This is the only life worth living, the only happiness worth having.

**Q:** I may admit that the goal is beyond my comprehension. Let me know the way at least.

**M:** You must find your own way. Unless you find it yourself it will not be your own way and will take you nowhere. Earnestly live your truth as you have found it -- act on

the little you have understood. It is earnestness that will take you through, not cleverness -- your own or another's.

**Q:** I am afraid of mistakes. So many things I tried -- nothing came out of them.

**M:** You gave too little of yourself, you were merely curious, not earnest.

**Q:** I don't know any better.

**M:** At least that much you know. Knowing them to be superficial, give no value to your experiences, forget them as soon as they are over. Live a clean, selfless life, that is all.

**Q:** Is morality so important?

**M:** Don't cheat, don't hurt -- is it not important? Above all you need inner peace -- which demands harmony between the inner and the outer. Do what you believe in and believe in what you do. All else is a waste of energy and time.