

FAQ on the Two Articles

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I get several questions, in person and by email, regarding the two articles The Answer and My favorites from Gita. Usually I avoid answering these questions because I don't think I have anything more to add to the contents of the two articles. However, there could be a rare person who might benefit from rephrasing of the same points in a different, concise, form and this write-up is created with this possibility in mind.

Q: You have repeatedly said that there are no techniques, no methods etc. At the same time, you do discuss a little bit about the Upanishadic "method" of neti, neti as well as something that could be loosely called meditation or mindfulness. (I understand that these words mean different things to different people and I am just using these phrases to describe what you have said.) Can you put the whole thing in a nut-shell even though I appreciate your disclaimer that there are no methods/techniques? As a concession, can you tell me what I should do?

A: If you are like most people, you will have a chatter going on in your head almost continuously. There will be a voice inside the head through which you will be "talking to yourself". Stop this chatter completely and stay totally silent for, say, several hours. Once you can do that, keep at it whenever you can find time. Everything else will happen automatically, but in due course of time — which could be days to years!

I don't care how you achieve the Inner Silence, what "method" you follow or how long it takes for you to reach this Inner Silence. Take it as a challenge and just do it.

Q: What exactly will happen "automatically" when I do this?

A: There will be an inner transformation which manifests differently in different individuals. The resulting experience in that State is not verbalizable and everyone who has tried to communicate it has failed. The best one can say is something like this: The "you" of today will die, disappear, dissolve into something which, let me call the Absolute, for the sake of discussion. (You can call it anything you like!) I am sure the previous sentence doesn't make logical sense or even says anything definite! But this is the best people have managed in describing the indescribable!

Q: Why should I do it? Why do I need the Inner Silence or the transformation? I seem to be doing fine as it is!

A: There is no logical reason at all. It does not serve any "purpose" any more than climbing Mount Everest or deep sea diving or exploring unknown terrains do. If, and only if, the spirit of adventure which prompts people to explore the Unknown, prompts you to take up the challenge, try it out. If not, you could possibly stop reading this right now. Let me repeat, it is not done with any purpose in usual sense of the word.

Q: Do you mean to say reaching the Inner Silence will give no benefits for me?

A: Absolutely no benefits to “you”. In fact, after the inner transformation there will be no “you”. The life and actions will be led by the Absolute into which “you” have dissolved, Since there is no “you” it is meaningless to ask what benefits “you ” will get. The remarkable thing about the State you reach after the inner transformation is that it is so very ordinary and natural; this is why many Zen masters are said to have broken into laughter when they reach enlightenment; you “get” the cosmic joke at that moment.

Q: So there goes the promises of eternal youth, happiness, healthier body, peace of mind etc. etc.?!

A: Yes, no promises. You may want to keep in mind that Dalai Lama has a painful knee condition and a Zen master once said, “I had severe asthma before I was enlightened; I still have the same asthma after my enlightenment”! Ramana maharishi and Ramakrishna paramahansa died of cancer. As I said, the Absolute will lead your life thereafter — the familiar “you” would have died — and it just might happen that the Absolute leads your body to a healthier condition or to an unhealthy condition. “You” are no longer there to control anything. Actions are performed through you and not by you.

Understand this “no promises of benefits” very clearly. Any “religious” movement or “spiritual group” which tells you otherwise, is at best ignorant and at worst trying to fraud you. I, for one, sell nothing and I save no souls!

Q: But what about everyday living? Will I become a zombie?

A: Recall that Buddha lived for decades, “managing” his affairs after enlightenment (well actually, he did not manage anything; they were managed through him), just to cite one example. You would hardly say Buddha was a zombie. Will you?

Nothing changes in your everyday life; in fact, it is very likely that those around you do not recognize you as someone in whom an inner transformation has taken place — unless you specifically wish and try to communicate. Even then, usually people won’t believe you because people have very definite ideas as to how an “enlightened” person should look, behave etc. — like, for example, he/she should be compassionate, loving, peaceful, always have a beatific grin and all sorts of such goodies — and you may not fit other people’s profiling of an enlightened person. You will look very ordinary and very normal. Again, as a Zen master once said, “Before enlightenment I drew water and chopped wood; after enlightenment I draw water and chop wood”. Drawing water and chopping wood has not changed but only the “you” has changed! You do not exist as a separate entity from the rest of the universe and you do not control anything.

Q: But what about the so many issues we face in everyday life? How do you deal with evil people in the world? How do you react to poverty, injustice and misery around you?

A: “You” do not deal with anything, “you” do not react to anything once you have undergone the inner transformation. After that the Absolute will deal with every situation your body comes across and will deal with it appropriately. The situations

will be dealt through you and actions will be taken through you. As I said the “you” which currently exists is dead; so it cannot deal, react etc. The actions which ensue are the best possible ones by definition, because it is the Absolute which is playing the whole drama out with you as an actor in the play.

All these questions you ask will disappear after the transformation or, rather who will ask these questions when “you” no longer exist? (It is not that the questions will be answered; they just disappear.) So if you have these questions — and I have listed many of them at the beginning of my article *The Answer for your convenience!* — you can do either of the two things: (1) Choose any of the answers I have listed in that article in first few pages. (2) Make the questions, or rather the questioner, disappear. You take the pick.

As I described in my article in *Gita*, all these make lot more sense if you are capable of believing in a Personal God and dissolving in that Personal God. Unfortunately, most of the literate, erudite, sophisticated people of today are incapable of understanding the concept of Personal God, let alone dissolve in it.

Q: What about morals, do-s and dont-s, good behavior etc. which make up a large part of almost all religions?

A: Obviously, these concepts do not apply to the Absolute and if “you” have died and only the Absolute remains, what is the backdrop in which such questions could even be asked?! But recall that I told you to reach the Inner Silence by whatever means you choose. Some of you may find that, certain patterns of behavior help you to reach the Inner Silence goal while some other patterns of behavior hinder your progress. It is entirely up to you to experiment and decide what works best for you. Most of the religions prescribe do-s and dont-s assuming that these restrictions and procedures will help people to reach the inner silence. The religious tenets of any religion are neither necessary nor sufficient for reaching the Inner Silence.

Q: So I am supposed to try and reach the Inner Silence goal with no promise of any kind of benefit with just a claim that some strange “inner transformation” will automatically take place. Why should I believe you?

A: Of course you shouldn't. This is not a belief system I am talking about but a set of facts. You take the first step only if the spirit of adventure and innate curiosity compels you to take up a challenge. In fact you will reach the Inner Silence faster if you do not have any expectation of some glorious transformation, you dissolving into a state of eternal bliss etc. etc. These conceptualizations will only increase the mental chatter, not decrease it. You do it if you think it is lot of fun. Otherwise leave all these aside and lead a “normal” life!