

sri mooji

DIRECT EXPERIENCE OF 'I AM'.

Interview by Paul Congdon

Sri Mooji is a disciple of Advaita master, Sri H.W.L. Poonja or 'Papaji', as he is affectionately known by devotees. Mooji's path through life has brought him through many experiences and led him to dedicating his life to the calling of the Heart. He warmly spoke to us about truth, consciousness and the challenges each one encounters in life as a person, and how to transcend them by the grace and light of the inner Being.

What do you feel is the true nature of consciousness?

Consciousness is life itself. It is the functioning and perception of life as the manifest world of names and forms and all sentient beings including our own existence. In India, the true nature of consciousness is said to be Satchidananda. 'Sat' means existence, 'chid' is consciousness, and 'ananda' is pure bliss or transcendental happiness. Its most profound aspect is its play as the natural sense 'I am' or 'I exist', which is the untaught way of knowing oneself as being.

What is the 'I am' practice?

I don't generally give practices as they

tend to imply that truth is something other than what and where we already are, to be reached after some striving. However, if one could be offered, it would be to just rest in and as the natural and effortless feeling 'I am'. Don't add anything further to it nor allow it to connect up with any concepts, thoughts, feelings or intentions. If a thought comes, be aware of it but don't engage with it. Just remain one with the sense of being and stay present as that.

Anyone from any religion or background can do this simple exercise and it will strengthen the sense of intuitive presence—the divinity within. Even people who have never meditated or read any book on spirituality find that they begin to experience some kind of vibration, a deepening silence and stillness as the attention begins to turn away from the field of sensory information and rests in the emptiness of presence. Avoid expecting anything or using your imagination. With a little practice you will soon find that you are able to remain here quite naturally. This unmixed awareness is already introducing a certain spaciousness inside, a deepening tranquillity, joy and intuitive sensitivity. The more you do it, the more you will love and value it.

What is one thing from your master, Papaji, that really sticks out for you?

One thing that Papaji always advises is simply to keep quiet. This is the most simple and profound pointing because our tendency is to follow whatever thoughts come. If you are in the habit of running off with your thoughts you will soon run into trouble in the form of some kind of chaotic, agitated state. When the mind arises, don't just follow it out of reflex or habit. Instead, be aware of the unmoving space in which phenomena arise and be one with that.

Papaji is total experiencing and immediacy. He is always coming from emptiness, so he is not predictable. He is not a teacher who expounds any philosophy. Papaji simply points to the direct experience that truth is, without any frills. That is the potency of my master.

When the mind comes up with erratic thoughts, should we stand up to them? Or should we simply rest and watch as awareness?

First, recognise your place as the awareness itself. Without awareness, even the perceiving of thoughts could not arise. There would be no experience, for awareness is the root of all. This is often missed because, like a reflex, the attention goes out to the 'crime scene', and then we comment and get caught up in this story rather than being aware of the untouched witness. There is a great and immediate power in just staying as presence. It is a most profound pointing, for when this guidance is followed, thoughts lose their magnetism and bypass your attention and you quickly come to a beautiful place of rest within your own being.

Thoughts are nothing to be afraid of. They only become powerful when you identify with them as a person. As you begin to observe thoughts instead of identifying with them, they rapidly lose their power and your mind returns easily to the natural state of presence, which is always here in you. But when the attention goes towards the mind's projections, you become distracted. Through the exercise of remaining as the formless perceiver, it becomes self-evident that you are witnessing from and as presence itself. Thought activity, particularly psychological thought activity, just loses its appeal and fades away in the light of true self-recognition. This is experienced as a great relief and freedom from the spells of the ego-mind.

Remember this: all problems are

personal. We only have problems because we identify so personally with our thoughts. Thoughts by themselves are powerless; it is our identifying with them that gives them significance.

What advice do you give people who are going through some tough times or whose minds are running the show?

Well, I would not want to try and do anything with the mind, because the mind is just impossible. The mind also grows with conflict; the more you try to fight it, the more reality and strength you give it. Simply let it play and you remain as the impartial and detached witness. When attention and presence are one, mind is nowhere to be found. Mind has no power by itself. It runs on phantom



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