



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

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Big Questions #5

Why Is My Mind So Crazy?

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Your mind is like a mirror. It reflects back to you what you show it. If you fill your mind with worldly images and thoughts, it will repeat them back even when you're alone. Computer people call it "garbage-in, garbage-out." You get back what you deposit into it. That can be crazy-making. Doing more yoga takes care of it!

Most peoples' minds are like fun-house mirrors that distort the image. What you are seeing may not be accurate. I learned this by questioning family elders on a special occasion when they were all together. I asked about their childhood. The range of answers was astounding. It got better as they began to disagree with each other about details, like years and locations, as well as who was in the proverbial doghouse at the time. They were good natured about it so we laughed a lot!

Your mind may obsess on these types of things, especially if no one helps you realign your mirror. Another problem surfaces: your understanding may be limiting. For years I wrestled with memories of painful childhood events and, working within a psychological perspective, I made progress on them. Yet meditation shifted it dramatically. As I was surfacing from a deep meditation one day, my mind started in on its familiar complaints. I was almost sucked into it but Consciousness intervened. I saw that my parents also had imperfect childhoods. They offered me the only thing they knew. My new understanding was a big relief.

Yet another step awaited. As I continued studying yoga's teachings, one day I realized the laws of karma applied to me personally. I had karmically earned my childhood. Whatever I had done in prior lifetimes meant I needed to go through what I went through as I was growing up. In that moment, I owned my childhood. It meant that I owned my future as well, for I already knew how to create a better quality of future karma.

Continuing with a mirror as a metaphor for your mind, I'll describe it like two-way glass, where one side reflects. From the other side, you can see through it. The side facing the world is reflective. When you're outside yourself and look inward, you see what you've filled your mind with, including reflections of yourself. But when you're inside, you see through the glass without distortion. It's not a fun-house mirror anymore. You can see clearly.

More importantly, you're the one who is seeing. Who is the one who is looking through your eyes? There is only One looking through all eyes. You know this when you look deeply into someone else's eyes. You see who is in there. That is the Self, the same Self that is in you — not merely "in" you, but being you. Can you see that Self in you, even when no one else is looking?

Your mind is an important tool. It makes you able to experience the world and express yourself into it. Like with two-way glass, from inside you can see out. This makes you able to experience the world as well as your own thoughts. When nothing's happening outside, your mind often runs reruns, usually painful things. Instead, if you select something wonderful to remember, your mind will stop and you'll be happy.

When you're happy, your mind is quiet. It's peaceful inside your head. When your mind starts up again, it disturbs your happiness. This is because your mind is incapable of happiness. Happiness comes from the Self. The best your mind can do is a brief sense of satisfaction, like when you check a task off your to-do list. Your mind must stop for you to experience happiness. Thus yoga says, just quiet your mind and you'll be happy. Even if things aren't perfect on the outside, you can be happy. You see, if you wait until everything is perfect, when will happiness come? How long will it last?

Your mind also gives you the ability to express yourself into the world. You communicate through your words and body language, through music and many other arts. Your mind makes you able to do things you care about, to shape the world into what you'd like it to be.

The reason your mind is working so hard is that it is trying to make you happy. It compares how things are to how you want them to be. Since there are so many things that can make you unhappy, your mind does an inventory, checking on all of them. "How's my family? How are my friends? How is my

home, my car, my lawn? How is my bank account? How's the political scene? How's the weather?" No wonder your mind is so crazy!

If anything is imperfect, your mind tries to make it better. It comes up with plans, solutions and maybe even who to blame. If you're the one to blame, then your mind runs a guilt trip. I caught my mind in the act once and asked: "Why are you guilting me now, when that thing happened years ago?" My mind actually answered me! It said, "So you won't do it again." I was quite heartened that my mind was trying to help me; I had thought it was trying to make me feel pain.

I reassured my mind, "I haven't done it again and plan not to. I learned my lesson then. You don't have to help me on this one." My mind quit harassing me about it. That was the beginning of a new relationship with my mind. I began making it a best friend, like the yogic texts say, instead of having it be my worst enemy.

Your mind is doing only what you've told it is important. For example, you probably did not check today's weather forecast in Morocco. If you're not from there, not going there or don't know someone living there, you haven't told your mind to keep track of this information. Everything your mind is tracking is something you've selected. You said to your mind, "This is important to me. Remind me of it." Your mind is doing what you told it to do.

Why did you tell it to do these things? Each and every one of them is something you use to prop up a shaky sense of identity. Since you don't abide in Self-Knowingness all the time, you construct your sense of self by who you know, what you do and where you go. Not all of these things agree with each other, which can create more craziness inside.

By contrast, yoga is about discovering a deeper sense of your own Beingness. It's the inner knowing of your own essence and existence. Based in your own Self, you can still go and do in your life, but none of it makes you who you are. Instead of looking for others to make you feel full, you bring your fullness with you. You share from the depths of your being.

When you feel empty, your mind goes crazy. It tries to find something to fill you up. It's like trying to fill an empty reservoir with a teaspoon. You need an underground stream to be filling it from the bottom up. That's how it feels when you're being filled by Consciousness. In meditation, once you've received Shaktipat, your own Self arises within. When you allow your mind to settle in, close to the Self, your mind experiences bliss. It is the bliss of Consciousness.

You are not your mind. Your own words prove it. When you say "my phone," you are different from your phone. When you say "my hat," you are different from your hat. Similarly, by saying "my body," you are different from your body. And saying "my mind" means you are clearly different from your mind.

I've used many metaphors and examples to help you see and understand your mind. In each of them, I used the term "your mind." Who are you, the one who has a mind? Your mind is something you have and use. It's very important, but it is not who you are. When you know who you are, the being who has a mind, then you know your own Self.

In *Svaroopā*[®] yoga, we use yogic tools to plunge you deep within, so you experience your Divine Essence. You know who you are. From this inner vantage point, you can see and use your mind more effectively. In other yogic systems, you have to work on your mind, specifically to get it out of the way. But tantra says that you need your mind! You simply need to be able to use it without getting trapped in it. For that, you must experience your own Self. Every time you experience Self, your mind is transformed.

Every *Svaroopā*[®] yoga class gives you this experience. While you move your body and breath, it is for the purpose of experiencing the greater reality within. Your body and breath are both important, but you are the one who lives in this body. You are the one who has a mind. You are the Self, called *svaroopā* in Sanskrit. That's why we call it *Svaroopā*[®] yoga, because it's about the experience of your own *svaroopā*.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, "BIG QUESTIONS"

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