

Q: When I meditate I feel a certain bliss at times. On such occasions, should I ask myself 'Who is it that experiences this bliss?'

A: If it is the real bliss of the Self that is experienced, that is, if the mind has really merged in the Self, such a doubt will not arise at all. The question itself shows real bliss was not reached. All doubts will cease only when the doubter and his source have been found. There is no use removing doubts one by one. If we clear one doubt, another doubt will arise and there will be no end of doubts. But if, by seeking the source of the doubter, the doubter is found to be really non-existent, then all doubts will cease.

Q: Sometimes I hear internal sounds. What should I do when such things happen?

A: Whatever may happen, keep up the enquiry into the self, asking 'Who hears these sounds?' till the reality is reached.

Q: Sometimes, while in meditation, I feel blissful and tears come to my eyes. At other times I do not have them. Why is that?

A: Bliss is a thing which is always there and is not something which comes and goes. That which comes and goes is a creation of the mind and you should not worry about it.

Q: The bliss causes a physical thrill in the body, but when it disappears I feel dejected and desire to have the experience over again. Why?

A: You admit that you were there both when the blissful feeling was experienced and when it was not. If you realize that 'you' properly, those experiences will be of no account.

Q: For realising that bliss, there must be something to catch hold of, mustn't there?

A: There must be a duality if you are to catch hold of something else, but what is it only the one Self, not a duality. Hence, who is to catch hold of whom? And what is the thing to be caught?

Q: When I reach the thoughtless stage in my sadhana I enjoy a certain pleasure, but sometimes I also experience a vague fear which I cannot properly describe.

A: You may experience anything, but you should never rest content with that. Whether you feel pleasure or fear, ask yourself who feels the pleasure or the fear and so carry on the sadhana until pleasure and fear are both transcended, till all duality ceases and till the reality alone remains. There is nothing wrong in such things happening or being experienced, but you must never stop at that. For instance, you must never rest content with the pleasure of laya (temporary abeyance of the mind) experienced when thought is quelled, you must press on until all duality ceases.

Q: How does one get rid of fear ?

A: What is fear ? It is only a thought. If there is anything besides the Self there is reason to fear. Who sees things separate from the Self ?

First the ego arises and sees objects as external. If the ego does not rise, the Self alone exists and there is nothing external. For anything external to oneself implies the existence of the seer within. Seeking it there will eliminate doubt and fear. Not only fear, all other thoughts centred round the ego will disappear along with it.

(From "Be as You Are: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi" Edited by David Godman, Chapter 16, 'Problems and Experiences' )