



September & October 1998 Contemplation Theme

Quiet Mind

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A siren screams through the room where students are sitting motionless. A few are startled and turn their heads, though the ambulance is already gone. They turn back to an easy outer and inner stillness. Others, having cultivated their ability to sit in a yogic posture, remain outwardly still. After the class, some share that they did not even hear the ambulance, while others heard it and were undisturbed. Which of these is the yogic state of “Quiet Mind?”

Quiet Mind is an attainment as well as a practice. As an attainment, quiet mind is a steady state of non-distractibility. It is not the same as withdrawal or numbness. You hear the passing ambulance but are undisturbed, both inwardly and outwardly. In your daily life, caring involvement actually becomes more possible because you live in a consistent state of fearlessness and desirelessness. There is nothing to desire which could improve your inner state; there is nothing that must be avoided because it could diminish your inner state. Quiet mind is a portable yogic state that maximizes your enjoyment of life and your effectiveness in life.

Approached as a practice, quiet mind can take you to a deep meditative state called samadhi, where you do not even hear the outer sounds. It is a delicious feeling of inner absorption, from which you surface more fully refreshed than from sleep. It perpetually reinforces a deeper and more serene sense of Self.

When you are just beginning the practice of quiet mind, you may still hear and react to every sound; yet you return easily to quiet mind each time (this is called abhyasa, perseverance).

All of these are yogic states of Quiet Mind, which you can experience with some easy training. Your mind needs this training! You can use your body to develop quiet mind, by cultivating your ability to sit in an easy motionless posture. Your mind has been allowed to wander all over the cosmos for years. Now, you can treat your mind like a new puppy that you are training to walk on a leash. Do not jerk on the leash and yell at it, but call it lovingly back. Treat your mind lovingly, and it will love resting in its own inner source.

When I hear a siren, my personal practice is to include it in my perception while remaining inwardly (and outwardly) peaceful. I also offer blessings to all who are affected — those in need of the emergency assistance, their family and friends, and those who provide the help. In this small way, I can participate rather than withdraw, even as I sit in quiet mind.

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Rama'. Above the signature, there is a small heart symbol containing the number '31'.