



Holistic Self-Inquiry

“You speak as if you are here, and the Self is somewhere else and you have to reach it...

but in fact the Self is here and now, and you are always it.”

Ramana Maharshi

Inquiry is an ancient practice that has appeared in many different traditions as a direct method to come home to who and what we truly are. I share a holistic approach to self inquiry that invites us to dive into our direct experience, in body, heart and mind – embracing all dimensions of our being to go within. Different to classical advaita approaches that focus on reaching a particular state, this approach invites you to inquire firstly into:

‘WHAT’S here?’ – the arising phenomena. Since everything that arises can only be arising out of the same source, if we meet the ‘what’ all the way, we naturally land in **‘WHO’S here?’** without bypassing or manipulating our experience. I invite you to regard absolutely everything as a gateway home – from your egoic reactions to your soulful longings. This supports an integrated awakening where all parts of our being are included. Nothing is rejected....everything is arising ultimately from God.

Whether inquiring in meditation into more subtle depths of our experience, or working with a repeating question format, we tend to inquire with whatever aspect of ourselves we are most identified with. Typically, most people in the west are very identified with their mind, their thoughts, and so their inquiry really stays at the level of the mind and the emotional heart. Thinking about your experience or just reporting your emotional state is not inquiry. For the practice of holistic self inquiry open up to its potential to deeply unleash the wisdom, love, clarity and depth of your true nature, challenge yourself in inquiry practice to include aspects of yourself that you typically tend not to go towards. **BE CURIOUS WITH YOUR WHOLE BEING.**

INQUIRING MIND:

Following the unfolding of your experience in the moment, asking, *'what's here now?'* and lean into the space between what you know and don't know.

Peer inward into the depths that might include memories, thoughts, beliefs.

Ask *'how old do I feel in this?'* (such a question will reveal whether this is arising from your history or whether it is genuinely present time. You can almost guarantee that any ego reaction has history in it)

Relax the tendency to commentate about your experience.

Let seeing into your experience happen.....be aware not just of the CONTENT but also the AWARENESS that is seeing.

INQUIRING HEART:

To inquire is to FEEL INTO the AFFECT of whatever is unfolding.

As if every feeling offers a scent that draws you deeper into the truth of your own heart. This will include emotions, and if you relax the tendency to try to justify or simply talk about your feelings, it will also give rise to deeper qualities that do not need any reason such as love, joy, gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, space.

Relax the tendency to try to justify or simply talk about your feelings.

Rather, be willing to know by feeling everything. Ie:

'What is sadness/ tenderness/ hurt/ compassion/ delight actually like?'

'How are you affected by the tone of this experience?'

INQUIRING BODY:

Your physical body is not at all what you think it is. It is not an obstacle to enlightenment but a vehicle for God to fully live here on earth AS YOU.

SENSE INTO your experience. For everything that arises in your awareness, there is both an affect and also an embodied sensation.... at first more obvious things like tension, contraction, relaxation, and as we get deeper we regain access to more subtle dimensions such as tingling, subtle energy and dimensions of presence that contain the light of the universe. Really!

With everything, stay present and inquire;

Where is this located in the body?

Where does it begin and end?

The shape? (round/ square/ cylindrical/ oblong)

The texture? (knotted/ jagged/ hard/ jittery)

The temperature? (hot/ cold/ neutral)

TRUE INQUIRY IS NON-INTERFERENCE:

Remember with everything you encounter, your soul knows the way.

Transformation and deepening happens when we relax all fixing, trying, rejecting.

Holistic self inquiry when it really takes root, is incredibly enlivening, exciting and expansive. You can start to taste God alive in and as your own soul, with its intelligence, beauty and depth. Since your source and your very nature is boundless, there is no limit to where this practice can take you. In Yoga, Jnanni yoga which is the yoga of inquiry, is considered the direct path which switches on the inner teacher to guide us all the way home.