

Conscious Me: The Watcher of the Thought-threshold



How do we master the mind? How can we become free from uncontrollable thinking? Though we may feel that thinking is occurring as if independently of us, that is because we are not in touch with our me, the one who is the source of thinking and the one who can ultimately control or intervene in it. Seekers have tried all sorts of tricks to gain some reprieve from their tyrannical minds, such as observing thoughts, conscious breathing, concentrating on mantras, chakras, or koans, all while hoping for the best. But none of these strategies really work because they can never be more than temporary diversions from the main obstacle, which is being unconscious. We think unconsciously because we are unconscious of *who* is behind thinking.

We can just keep letting go of thoughts one after the other, but for how long? Don't we have better things to do? And who is it that is letting go of thoughts? Ordinarily, it is the observer. But the observer's struggle with thoughts is a lost cause; he may be able to win the battle with thoughts for brief periods now and then, but he will eventually lose. What happens when you let go of a thought? A new thought will immediately replace it to fill the vacuum in the mind. We cannot defeat the mind by fighting with it, because the mind is not our enemy. The mind is not the problem – it is our relationship with *who we are* that is the problem. Unless we establish a clear identity beyond thoughts, incessant and unstoppable thinking is the only way that the mind can exist. However, even establishing such an identity through awakening our deeper consciousness will not automatically free us from the thinking. The mind will continue to operate in its habitual, fragmented way unless we actively learn how to tame it from the base of our higher identity in consciousness.

Are Thoughts Just Happening to Us?

A common myth about the mind is that thoughts merely arise without our cooperation. But where are these thoughts arising from, and to whom do they refer? Are we no more than mere puppets and passive receivers of incoming mental information? Thoughts arise from the unconscious and present themselves to the observer as mental information, which is then immediately converted



into subconscious or conscious thinking. Only on a very infantile level of consciousness do thoughts seem to arise independently of us, because in such a case, we are too unconscious to really participate in thinking; our mind does the thinking for us, instead of us doing the thinking – it is a case of the tail wagging the dog. But beyond that, and in most cases, we are actively participating in generating and sustaining our thoughts.

The mind is extremely poorly understood by humanity, including spiritual schools that teach about meditation and consciousness. Even in Buddhism, which is a path of the mind, there is only a very superficial understanding of thinking. Buddhism, more or less, states that thoughts occur spontaneously and beyond our control. It is astonishing how deficient our relationship with our own thoughts is. How can we possibly transform the mind if we have no understanding or control over our own thinking?

Again, a thought which takes form in the mind does not just arise from nothing – it requires our energy and cooperation in order to exist. When we are unconscious, our participation in feeding thoughts is also unconscious; we are so unconscious that we are not aware that we are creating our own thinking. This can apply even to those who have awakened higher levels of subjectivity, because a conscious relationship with thinking requires us not only to gain freedom from the mind, but to be in touch with our essential subjectivity. If one is abiding in a space of impersonal consciousness or awareness beyond the mind, one can have a sense of being a witness of thoughts, watching them come and go like clouds in the sky. But this is not the correct relationship with thinking. A truly conscious person knows himself clearly as the thinker and as the subject to thinking.

Sealing the Leakage of Consciousness

In order to stop uncontrolled thinking, we must stem the unconscious leakage of energy into the mind. This practice has several elements which need to be combined in order to yield positive and sustained results. First of all, we must awaken our pure subjectivity, and establish constant recognition of it and surrender to it. For instance, when you are abiding in consciousness and consciously recognizing your pure me, the mind and its unconscious activity will automatically stop. Why is this? Because by focusing your attention back to your subjectivity, you are no longer letting energy leak into unconscious thinking. However, the moment you forget to recognize your pure me (which is a function of pure attention), the mind will instantly use this gap as an opportunity to recommence thinking. This underlines the critical importance of constant recognition of our pure subjectivity as the fundamental precondition for integrating the mind. For this recognition to be strengthened, it must be based on the embodiment of our pure subjectivity. When pure me and conscious me are embodied, continuity of recognition is an automatic byproduct.

While awakening of pure me of consciousness forms the prerequisite basis for transforming the mind, awakening of conscious me is the next crucial element. Each thought has a sense of me behind it, even though this sense of self is initially very fragmented and weak. That sense of self is the seed of essence-me. In order to create the bridge between pure consciousness and the mind, we need to awaken this essence-me, meaning we need to meet it clearly and solidify it as our true identity beyond thinking. The awakened essence-me is what we call ‘conscious me’. It is only through properly embodying conscious me that we can master the mind. Conscious me is the mind’s rightful owner. Before essence-me has become conscious of itself, the uncontrolled and unconscious observer had usurped this role. But once awakened, conscious me sits on the throne



of consciousness, and using its qualities of intelligence, discrimination, and attention, it decides when to think and when not to think.

So the first level of integrating the mind is to think from our pure subjectivity, which is to think from not-thinking. Depending on our level of access to our pure nature, this can mean thinking from pure consciousness, thinking from conscious me, and, ideally, thinking from fundamental consciousness (the unified field of pure me and conscious me). In addition, when we think from conscious me, we need to be firmly seated in pure conscious me, which is the dimension of pure me that is activated directly below conscious me, and which connects conscious me to being, to the restfulness of the source. Conscious me on its own lacks a sufficiently stable foundation beyond the mind; it needs to be connected to pure conscious me.

Thinking from Not-thinking

When we think from our fundamental consciousness, we do not lose connection to our pure nature while engaged in thoughts. For this to be effective, we must have established an unbroken recognition of and surrender into our soul. This means that, firstly, pure attention is illuminating our inner self with, through surrendering into it and embodying it, moment to moment with constant recognition. Then our embodied soul is surrendering into universal I am as well. This further enhances and empowers our ability to embody our inner self. Ultimately, pure me must reach complete absorption in universal consciousness (horizontal samadhi), and both conscious me and pure me must reach vertical absorption (primordial me and absolute me, respectively). So not only is thinking experienced from our deeper individual identity, but also from the place of letting go into the universal I am and the absolute I am.

When we think from our awakened consciousness, there is no longer a need to impose unnatural constraints on the mind. In fact, the inverse is true, because the mind comes to be embraced by our pure nature. When thinking this way, there are naturally fewer thoughts, and those that do appear are both calmer and more discerning. The very presence of our pure nature links the mind with consciousness and dramatically changes its quality. If one has achieved access to consciousness but continues to have a fragmented mind, this is a clear indication that consciousness has not been awakened and embodied sufficiently. One should see it as a sign that further work with one's consciousness is needed.

Attaining the Silent Mind

The silent mind thinks very little, and there are long intervals between thoughts. This is because the silent mind has crossed the threshold of no-mind and reached natural transparency. It is no longer the ordinary mind, but has become an extension of the intelligence of the soul. With the silent mind, the experience of thinking is beautiful, and each thought carries the energy of bliss; each thought is now a form of light illuminating the mind.

How do we attain a silent mind? As we have said, we must first awaken our fundamental consciousness and embody it fully. But in addition, we need to become familiar with and master the part of conscious me that expresses itself as the observer, so that the higher presence we have awakened can gain a foothold in the mind. This continuing access will gradually integrate the subconscious mind, making it more conscious. When all of the components of consciousness are in the right place and the chain of identity (from our pure me of consciousness rooted in the universal I am through our conscious me to the mind) is established, we transcend the dichotomy



between consciousness and the mind. The mind itself becomes consciousness as well; it becomes silent and blissful.

Watching the Thought-threshold

So in order to reach true peace, we not only need to awaken our pure nature in consciousness, but also to enter the mind and work with it directly. Watching the thought-threshold is a specific type of practice which can help us to integrate the mind with our deeper consciousness. It points to the activation of a particular aspect of conscious me that functions to let go of a subconscious thought *before* it comes to be fully formed in the mind. When done repeatedly, this can have the effect of gradually reprogramming the underlying mechanisms of the subconscious mind. The ‘watcher’ in this practice should not be confused with what traditional teachings (such as vipassana, for instance) have referred to as the ‘watcher of the mind’. This watcher is just the ordinary subconscious observer which attempts to discipline the mind through means of concentration, but soon becomes tired and overly crystalized. In the practice of watching the thought-threshold, conscious me is actually not actively watching per se; its consciousness is entirely absorbed in pure subjectivity. When it needs or wants to, however, it can activate the functions of the thinker or the observer in order to align them with conscious intelligence. Even as it operates as the thinker or observer, conscious me does not cease to embody its pure subjectivity and surrender through pure conscious me into the essential channel of absence.

Conscious me can guard us from becoming distracted by subconscious thoughts in two ways: through maintaining the continuity of pure attention (which translates as continuous self-recognition and surrender) and through acting as the guardian of the mind. If there is an actively focused continuity of pure attention, this by itself will stop the mind. However, when one is more absorbed inside, it is also natural for pure attention to relax, and this relaxation creates an opportunity for the mind’s random thinking to recommence. This is precisely the time to activate the watcher of the thought-threshold, who is able to let go of any mental formation that passes through the threshold of consciousness, attempting to capture our attention. This watcher is similar to the transparent observer without object, but in this case, external attention has not been activated at all. It is a pre-observer, who is in a position of readiness to notice when any thought enters. It is not checking the mind, or even looking at it, but the moment a thought manifests, it is instantly aware of it and can make a decision as to what to do with it. Conscious me might then decide that the thought is worth pursuing or choose to drop it. Initially, when training yourself in mastering the mind, you should let go of all your thoughts. But after some time, you may well discerningly choose to engage consciously and purposefully in some of them.

In order to be a watcher of the thought-threshold, conscious me must rest in pure conscious me. The more absorbed it is in pure conscious me, the more effective it can be. In that restfulness and absorption, conscious me can maintain a relaxed alertness, together with a panoramic watchfulness and sensitivity. In the beginning with this practice, you are not able to catch yourself thinking until after a chain of thoughts has already been created. Later on, you should find you are able to catch an arising thought before it has given rise to other thoughts, before the mind has started talking to itself. With more practice, you should be able to catch a thought while it is still in the process of forming a specific shape. And as you become even more skilled, you will be able to let go of a thought as it is just about to arise. Furthermore, as your mastery increases, you will be able to sense what a specific thought will be about before it has content, and choose whether or not to pursue it. This is especially useful when working with personality and dealing with the mind’s negativity. If you tend to have recurring negative thought patterns,



you can cut them off at their very roots. In this way, you will gradually reprogram your subconscious mind and purify its negative tendencies.

How do we let go of thoughts? The moment conscious me becomes aware that a thought has formed in the mind, it can choose not to give it energy. Through its intention, it retracts attention from the thought, and it instantly vanishes. In order to maintain the thought-free state, conscious me then focuses on channeling the energy of consciousness into the recognition of its own pure subjectivity, both the horizontal subjectivity of pure me and the vertical subjectivity of pure conscious me (and later, fundamental me or primordial me). When our internal pure attention is focused in this way, not only will thoughts not arise, but it is difficult for the mind to think – even if we want to do so.

In the practice of watching the thought-threshold, one has to develop inner discipline, which is based on complete commitment and dedication to our inner self. This discipline is a natural expression of our self-love: we are honoring our higher self by not losing control of the subconscious mind. Mastering the mind is an essential component of realizing our higher personality (on all level: conscious, integrated, and unified) because the only way to transform the compulsive tendencies of personality is align the mind with the will of the soul. As this practice progresses, there will naturally be less thoughts, and guarding the thought-threshold will become easier and more relaxed.

The more advanced form of this practice takes place when the thought-threshold practice is combined with the sleep-threshold practice. Normally, when we are falling asleep, we lose control over our subconscious mind, but because falling asleep represents the dissolution of our waking consciousness, it is an ideal time to work with mastering the subconscious mind. This practice will be further discussed in depth in the two articles that follow: "Samadhi in Sleep: The Art of Falling Asleep Consciously" and "Turiya: The Absolute Waking State."

Blessings,
Anadi

For a full glossary of terminology please visit our website www.anaditeaching.com/glossary