

What do You Taste Like?

Dear James

Thank you so much for your email which has brought tremendous clarity. I deeply appreciate your guidance. My feeling is that I will need to sit with it, and contemplate your words deeply?

James: Yes. If you stay absorbed in this topic, it will become more and more clear as time passes.

After reading your email, there was a sense of clarity, yet the ever questioning mind then jumped in a I hope it is okay that I share with you some of my sticking points, or questions for further clarification, and to make sure that I have understood the teaching.

James: Yes. It is fine.

Luke: You clear up the whole confusion between experience and understanding. To clarify, we experience the sky to be blue, yet we can investigate into it and we will find out that it is technically not blue, even though we do definitely experience it as blue. In the same way, We do not experience the self because we have the false belief that we are not the self. Therefore it is not the experiencing that is at fault, but rather our false belief that we are not the self.

James: Yes, absolutely. You are whole and complete. Nothing is missing. If you see it any other way, it is just a belief.

Luke: Therefore we need to deeply affirm, that 'I am the self', pure eternal untouched awareness that is unaffected by anything and is ever the same. This must become a steadfast and firm belief in the mind, and then this is self realisation?

James: Close. It will be a belief at first because your experience in life so far does not confirm it. It seems like you are small, inadequate, incomplete and separate. So you have to investigate to see if the way you think of yourself is true or the way scripture sees you is true. Your investigation will eventually convert the belief into hard and fast knowledge.

Luke: It is a belief that is congruent with reality, because we are the self. So it is more like an accurate assessment of reality. It is an accurate interpretation of what is true, rather than the belief that I am not self. Is this like, having a conviction that something is true, even though we cannot know it by experience? Just like I experience the sky as blue, yet I know that it is not really blue?

James: Yes, precisely. When the magician saws the lady in half it definitely seems like she is cut in two and you may even feel some kind of emotions, but you know very well that it is not true. A mirage looks like water even when you know it isn't water. Experience does not have to confirm knowledge.

Luke: I can say to myself that I am a wonderful person, or I can convince myself that I am a bad person. Both beliefs would be false, because they are not eternal truth. I can try convince myself that I am the self, ordinary actionless unchanging ever present awareness, and this is good, because it is the truth?

James: How do you convince yourself? You need to think about who you are until it becomes clear that you are neither a wonderful or a bad person, you can only be the one who knows the good or bad person. When you look into the one who knows i.e. awareness you cannot find a good or a bad person. Even if you cannot see that you are not a person, it pays to see yourself as awareness because the thought of awareness is not separate from awareness so when you contemplate on awareness you 'go to' awareness. You see that is you. You see that you have no limits. The thought that you are Luke does not set you free. It 'means' something. That meaning limits you. You may think you are Luke because of some thoughts that are in your mind based on some events that happened to the body that you have observed for many years but when a stranger looks at you he does not see Luke. He sees awareness and a body.

I am not sure what the word 'convince' means to you, Luke. We don't want to brainwash you. Vedanta is not religion. It is just good psychology to take the most generous view of yourself that you can. They have found that people who believe in God without having a clue whether or not such a being exists, are actually happier than those who don't. When you think about it...irrespective of the truth...you have no actual evidence that you are small, inadequate and incomplete either. If there is no evidence that you are not the light and there is no evidence that you are the light, it is wise to think of yourself as the light since there are more benefits to this view than its opposite. The half empty glass is half full. If Obama is a black man, he is a white man.

Luke: It appears that Vedanta is: simply being told about the truth, that you are the self. Then surely after hearing this truth, and one accepts it, that is all that needs to be done?

James: Yes, assuming that it cancels your sense of doership and renders any binding *vasanas* non-binding.

Luke: You mention about inquiry? How does one inquire?

James: You are inquiring now.

Luke: And what is the inquiry? Is it the question, who am I?

James: It is not a question. You know the answer. The scripture has the answer. It is seeing if what the scripture says is true.

Luke: The answer is the pure unchanging self that is beyond the body and the mind, and not affected by anything and ever the same and it is all that is. I do believe this to be true. I still see this as intellectual, rather like hearing what ice cream tastes like without actually tasting it?

James: Tell me what awareness tastes like, Luke. There is not a human being at any time or place that can tell you what it tastes like...because it is you. What do you taste like? You don't taste like anything because you are not an experience. You are not a body with senses. You are awareness. It has no qualities to taste or feel. It can only be known as your self. Do not say that because it cannot be experienced, it does not exist. If you exist, it exists. It is the knower, not what is known. It sees Luke tasting life.

Thanks you again for clearing up this one's ignorance and lack of any knowledge.....

Kind regards

Luke