

No Need for Enlightenment

Hi James

I have a point of confusion I'd like to ask you about. If you are busy, or not inclined, that's fine. I certainly don't require an answer. But if you are inclined, I would be interested in what you have to say. I find some of this to be very difficult to formulate, so bear with me.

No matter how much I look for this separate entity I have long taken myself to be, I cannot locate it. It seems to only exist as a thought, and like all thought, it comes and goes. Yet, there is an undoubtable knowing of being. I exist. So whatever the word "I" refers to, it must be this, since the separate entity cannot be found. I am aware of being. This awareness of being is known directly. It is self evident and needs no supporting facts of any kind to be known.

James: Correct so far. Awareness, being, is self aware so it would never need to look for itself.

Jack: Awareness, like the separate entity, cannot be found either, but for a different reason. Looking for the separate entity, I find that knowledge of its reality is tenuous at best, being merely in thought and always coming and going. Awareness, on the other hand, is known beyond doubt, it's always there when looked for, but doesn't seem to have any qualities or properties to get a hold of, i.e. it is not an object. We know the objective only because of awareness. In this sense, the world depends on awareness, the world is in awareness, including the separate entity (as thought). The world only IS because of awareness.

James: Correct.

Jack: It occurs to me that no matter what happens in this life, it simply doesn't matter. There is no separate entity making choices, performing actions, thinking, feeling, perceiving. It is all awareness. Every grain of sand, every organism, every star, even space and time itself is awareness, or at least depends on awareness for its existence.

James: Yes. There is only awareness, with form and without. Nothing 'matters' unless awareness is under the spell of apparent ignorance.

Jack: So "my" query revolves around this. It doesn't matter one whit whether "I" get enlightened or not. There is no me to get enlightened, awareness is already everything and in no need of being enlightened. I mean, how can something that is singular find something outside itself! Or, for that matter, IN itself (not made of parts). How can awareness be ignorant? Why do you try to help others lift the ignorance? Who/what is ignorant?

James: Enlightenment does not matter if you know what you know. But if apparent ignorance is operating, it matters. Not to awareness, but to the apparent entity that ignorance concocts. You cannot say this entity is non-existent because it is experienced as a thought. But it is not real, meaning enduring because it ends when self knowledge dawns. When awareness under the apparent spell of its own ignorance...it never really forgets...seeks to know itself it gets help from awareness in the form of apparent people like me who show it how to remove its apparent ignorance.

Awareness is not ignorant but it is limitless and if it was incapable of apparently forgetting who or what it is, it would be limited by its inability to apparently forget. So it does what is impossible. It seems to forget and then seems to wake up. This is called Maya. It makes the impossible possible. It seems completely irrational if you think that both a think and its opposite can't exist simultaneously, but that is how it is.

Jack: When I investigate these questions, it occurs that there is no point in even asking a single question. I might say "To alleviate or remove the suffering", but who is going to alleviate the suffering that is non-existent! Auuggghh! It's a paradox of the first order! I hope you catch my drift here, but my basic question here is, Who is going to enlighten something that is in no need of enlightening? And why?

(I just went outside for a bit and sat in the dark. It occurred to me that there is no enlightenment, at least in the sense of adding something. Enlightenment is removing the camouflage created by identifying as a separate entity, so it's more like a subtraction in that sense (removing the identification). Awareness, the One, God, whatever is hidden precisely because it is One. Now that I think about it, you've said this a million times on your web site, but I guess I never really got it: If there is any enlightenment it is simply the removal of ignorance via knowledge.)

*James: Got it! You **really** got it because you reasoned it out. You are absolutely correct. I don't enlighten anybody. People see the truth when they hear the words of Vedanta and the seeking stops. The seeking is a big joke. You are the self. You were always the self and this means that nothing can be added to you or subtracted from you. When you think you are limited, you want something to complete you, but nothing can complete you because you are not limited like you think. Good for you, Jack.*

James

Anyway, as I said, putting this into words can be cumbersome. Hope it has been a slog getting through it!

Dan