

Hi Ram,

I am into Advaita for about 30 years. One fine day while meditating a voice told me "stop all this, just be," "drop all that you are doing, just surrender" That was it. I dropped kriya on my own as my mind wouldn't remain in the chakras or mantra. I went into self-enquiry AUTOMATICALLY. I never read a book on it but stumbled on it on my own. Later one of my friends told me that my experiences during the glimpses were Krishnamurthy's experiences. I read a bit of him here and there but I never remained in samadhi for long time. Then the same friend told me about Edji. Edji guided me to practice dhyaan with some changes. Due to Edji's guidance I was able to maintain samadhi oneness for much longer period of time. Everything melted and so did the doubts.

Ram: You did not ask me a question, so I am not sure if you want to hear from me on this paragraph, but I will assume that you would like feedback, so here are some questions:

So what or who was that voice? If it told you to rob a bank would you do it?

You say that you were able to maintain samadhi oneness for 'a much longer period.' How long? The way you write (it may be simply a language issue) you seem to be saying that you no longer practice samadhi. Is that true?

If it is not true, that is if you still practice samadhi oneness, why do you do it? What benefits do you get from it? Or do you mean that you used to practice samadhi oneness, but you quit when your doubts were cleared? Please be a little more specific. It is hard to tell what your question is.

Are you saying you have no doubts about who you are? If that is true, then why to you sign off "towards the one?" Presumably, if all your doubts were cleared you would sign off as 'The One.'

Hansjoerg: I never heard that the Moksha of yogis is different from the one of Advaitins until I got an email by an Indian, who is said to be realized. Would you comment on his statement below?

"To be One with consciousness which means samadhi you have to realize both the void ahead and the "beingness" in you. One without the other is incomplete. Then samadhi comes effortlessly. Yogis obsess over exploring the contents of the void and ignore totally the sense of beingness felt at the heart centre. The advaitins ignore the void and concern themselves only with "beingness". Both are looking at parts and not the totality of consciousness. Hence Samadhi is incomplete."

Per definition of Jim and some others, Samadhi is not the Ultimate, but I think, Rajiv means Moksha, if he speaks of Samadhi. Nisargadatta writes, Consciousness is still to cross. At least the consciousness being aware of itself, to the Consciousness, being unaware of itself (Awareness).

What is Your view ?

Ram: It is an interesting and confusing statement. It is interesting because it points to two important spiritual issues: the nature of enlightenment and the self and an argument that has been going on for a couple of thousand years. Is the Self a 'void?' And if it is, what does the word void mean? Or is the self being? There is not necessarily a contradiction but these terms need to be carefully unfolded before this statement can make sense.

But it is impossible to tell what Rajiv means by samadhi, advaitins and yoga. Being 'realized' does not make you an authority on anything except your nature as awareness. To be honest, what he says reveals a great deal of confusion, so much so that I cannot intelligently comment on it. However, I will make the following remarks.

If samadhi is an experience as Yoga says, it is not moksa. (See my chapters in Premananda's book, Arunachala Siva concerning Ramana's epiphany). The self is moksa (meaning always free) and it is beyond experience. Vedanta says that samadhi is useful for exhausting vasanas and experientially verifying non-duality but that it cannot be made permanent by a doer i.e. a yogi, because there is no such thing as a permanent experience. However, it sometimes defines awareness

as samadhi (the meaning of the word is 'seeing or understanding that everything has equal (value).') (See the last verses of Sankara's Aparokshanubhuti). So you have a natural 'samadhi' as the self. When you realize that you are the self, you 'become' samadhi. That is, you see everything, including yourself, equally. As what? As awareness/consciousness. The self is limitless and your nature and cannot be gained by any action, like Yoga. All samadhis are the self but the self is not a samadhi.

If the person means moksa when he uses the word samadhi, he does not have a correct idea of moksa because moksa is the nature of the self and the self is not a void. It is limitless being, but the way he uses the word beingness as the opposite of voidness, shows that he is confused. There are many realized people who cannot express their realization or these subtle states of mind and paradoxical concepts accurately. He may be a brahmanistha i.e. established in Brahman as Brahman, but he is definitely not a srotريا, a person who knows the scriptures. The scriptures are very clear about samadhi, moksa, etc. You can get as much confusion from an enlightened person who is not a srotريا as you can from an unenlightened person. Being enlightened does not make you a proper guru.

Rajiv's first statement is not correct. You cannot do anything to 'be one with consciousness' because you are consciousness. What can you do to be what you are? Being is a noun, not a verb, in this context. You can only understand who you are. Even before you desire to be one with consciousness you are consciousness. If you desire to be one with consciousness, you definitely have a problem. This is why Yoga is so frustrating.

His last statement that beingness and voidness are parts of the totality is also incorrect. Beingness is not an attribute of something else. And there is no such thing as the void, apart from the concept of voidness, unless the void is conscious. If it is conscious, why call it a void? The self is free of objects, but this does not make it a void.

Your statement "Nisargadatta writes, Consciousness is still to cross. At least the consciousness being aware of itself, to the Consciousness, being unaware of itself (Awareness)" is completely confusing. Why? How can anyone cross consciousness? It is impossible because consciousness has no beginning and end. And there is not someone other than consciousness who could cross it. It is "one

without a second.” Secondly, consciousness is always aware of itself. It can never be unaware of itself, although when Maya is operating, it can seem to be unaware of itself.

Steve: I read on Your website, Osho was not the real thing, because his end was tragic. Then what about Jesus, Rama, or Krishna ?

Ram: Osho was not the real thing, not because his end was tragic, but because he did not know who he was. He had a few epiphanies and his ego co-opted them. He had a bad case of enlightenment sickness. The people who came to him had no idea what enlightenment was and took his word for it. Karma does not care if you are enlightened. If you violate dharma, like Osho did, karma will punish you. It has nothing to do with his enlightenment or lack of it. He was a dishonest person, a manipulator and a fame seeker. He had the mentality of a small man and spent his whole life trying to make himself look big. His whole idea was self glorification. When he first began he was a pure minded spiritual guy but quickly became corrupted when he experienced a little fame.

Ramana was the real thing and he died a tragic end. Karma is not a sign of enlightenment. Jesus was enlightened but he could not keep his mouth shut and he offended people, so they killed him. He seemed to lack manners and attacked people who he thought were not as spiritual as he was. Even though he was a realized soul and had the knowledge of non-duality, he was young and did not properly purify himself before he set out to enlighten the world. There is no reason why he had to make such a fuss. Buddha was enlightened too and he lived to a ripe old age because he was not confrontational. Jesus is reputed to have done a lot of miracles but he could not beat karma. I am not sure why you include Krishna in this list. His death was allegorical because he is only a symbol of the Self.

Towards the One,
Steve

Ram: All the best on your journey,
The One

Dear Ram,

Thank you for answering me. You are so right that language is the problem. I wouldn't see any difference if someone says "I am one with consciousness or "I am consciousness.' To me it is the same.

Ram: I understand. It is a subtle, but important, distinction. If you are happy with it that way, it is fine with me.

Steve: I am still on the way towards the One. When I am less identified with the body I could sign off as "The One."

I heard many holy men lecturing and received their silent darshans. The important inspiration never came through their word but through the example of their lives. I learned ten percent from their words and 90 % from the unspoken message from heart to heart.

Ram: So what was the unspoken message? Can you put it in words?

Steve: The usual stuff: Being one with everything, I am the screen on which everything is projected, I am an endless mirror, reflecting every visible and invisible thing, including Steve's own body and the body of the respective sage, who induced this shift of consciousness. The same shift happens if I sit in Osho's place in Cologne among average people.

Ram: I understand. Do you wonder why it happens? What do you think it will take for shift back to stop happening?

Steve: Still, you are right to say that an unlearned sage can confuse with his words.

You may have read the books of Nisargadatta Maharaj. In his terminology there is something beyond consciousness, he calls the Absolute. One of his books is called: Prior to Consciousness. Ranjit Maharaj, a Gurubhai of Nisargadatta, states

in his book “Illusion vs. Reality” that in his view, even the witness is not the Self. Most teachers say: witness and Self is one and the same.

Ram: It depends on what he means by consciousness. If he means the Subtle Body, which most people take to be consciousness, then he is correct. When he says it is beyond the witness, he is both right and wrong. The witness is consciousness, but consciousness is not a witness because from its point of view there is nothing other than it to witness. It is self-witnessing. Nonetheless with reference to the apparent reality, it is a witness.

Steve: In his books and films, Nisargadatta states, the Absolute is not aware of itself, whereas consciousness is. Or in other words: the I AM has to be transcended, to come to the Absolute, which is beyond I AM.

Ram: It is a long time since I read Nisargadatta so I don't know in what sense he uses the terms consciousness and absolute. He was not a traditional Vedantin so he may have used the terms in some special way. It is possible to be a *brahmanista* (a realized soul) but not a *srotriya* (someone who knows the scriptures) and therefore use language in an idiosyncratic and personal way. According to my experience and understanding, which is in line with tradition, consciousness is absolute, meaning all there is. There is no other principle. However, as I pointed out, if you take Maya into account, consciousness, the absolute, reflects in the subtle body (it is called *pratibimba*) and apparently becomes *chidabasa*, i.e. the jiva or the individual what you are calling the 'I am.' (the word *chidabasa* means luminous consciousness). The individual seems to be conscious but is not. Its 'consciousness' is only reflected or borrowed light, like the moon, and therefore is not absolute. So this statement is probably true, but you need to know that if there is an 'I am' it can only be consciousness because there is only consciousness...assuming that reality is non-dual.

Steve: In that quote from guru Rajiv I asked you to comment on I was wrong in mixing his Samadhi and Moksha descriptions. Here is what he said subsequently. I asked him if when he was speaking of Samadhi he meant moksha. This is what he said,

“No! Ssamadhi means oneness. Moksha or Liberation is self-realization. It is beyond all knowings and samadhis. We are beyond all experiences. What Maharaj is saying about consciousness being unaware of itself is precisely what we have

addressed in the latter part of our conversation. We are beyond all experience and knowings and beyond consciousness itself. We can not know the subject, we can only BE it."

Ram: If we take the words here at face value they reflect both knowledge and ignorance. Moksa is the nature of the self i.e. consciousness. It is beyond experience. But consciousness is aware of itself. Pratibimba, the Subtle Body, or reflected consciousness is not aware of itself. If this is what he is referring to when he says consciousness, he is correct. If he is referring to pure consciousness, he is wrong. Scripture is very clear on this point. It is self knowing, self luminous, self aware. This is very difficult for the intellect to grasp.

Steve: You say that beingness and void are not opposites. I agree. Still I believe in Nisargadatta's discrimination between consciousness with and without being aware of itself.

Ram: A belief is not knowledge but you are free to believe anything you want. In any case why do you believe this? Could you take a little more time and articulate your belief more carefully.

Steve: After watching his videos, I got the impression, that he is one of the most honest teachers. If he scolded someone, two minutes later this scolded person made a funny remark. Nisargadatta was the one who laughed the loudest. So I think he wouldn't say it, if it was not his reality. What do you say? Was he on the wrong track, or could it be, there he came to know a little more?

Ram: I had his darshan. He was honest. But many honest people are not especially articulate, Steve. He was a realized soul but his 'teaching' was incomplete and unsophisticated. There is always a way to check up the validity of statements of realized souls. You put them up against sruti, Vedanta, i.e. the Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, Sankara, etc. Sruti says that consciousness, *chaitanmyam* is self aware, self revealing, self luminous. I suggested the way around this problem above.

He has become an 'export' guru since his death, meaning Western seekers with a non-dual orientation, have come to take "I am That" as a kind of Vedantic Bible. But there are problems with "I am That," not the least of which it was written by Maurice Friedman who was not a jnani and who was not a srotriya. Much of it is

in line with tradition, some is not. I think you may believe that being a brahmanista, a realized person, means that whatever that person says is truth. But this is not so.

Ram: I know many jnanis with supernatural abilities.

Steve: You mean Advaitins? Are realized yogis, bhaktas etc. not called jnanis, too ?

Ram: It depends on what they know. It depends on the nature of their realization and how they formulate it. At a certain point the self no longer identifies with the individual, so you cannot really say that the individual has supernatural abilities. And finally, there are actually no 'supernatural' abilities in the apparent reality. In the apparent reality all objects have the same order of reality, although there seems to be levels. Why? Because everything is Maya, which is where the so-called supernatural abilities appear, is only the product of ignorance. In other words they 'never happened.' Only people who do not know the nature of reality make a big story of supernatural abilities.

Steve: What I get out of Rajiv s comparison between Yogis and Advaitins is that the Yogis get supernatural abilities on their way, whereas the Advaitins go directly to moksha without supernatural experiences or powers. Is that right, Ram?

Ram: It can be right, but it is not necessarily right. Supernatural abilities come from purification of the mind. You can purify the mind as well with knowledge as you can with Yoga. The Bhagavad Gita says, 'there is no purifier like self knowledge.' I know many jnanis with supernatural abilities.

This jnani/yogi distinction is not always helpful. Remember there is only one self that is bent on realizing its nature. It will follow whatever path is in keeping with the nature of the personality through which it is functioning. And at a certain point, near the end of the journey jnanam and yoga merge. These are limited identities that need to be transcended. And in the end, you should know that the so-called supernatureal abilities do not belong to the jnani or the yogi; they belong to the self.

I once was told, the historical Rama and Krishna, both died of a violent death. One committed suicide, and one was shot by the arrow of a hunter. Excuse me, if i was

told wrongly.

Ram: I see them as spiritual symbols, not as historical characters.

Steve: You say that the first statement is not correct. To quote, "You cannot do anything to 'be one with consciousness' because you are consciousness. What can you do, to be what you are?"

This is just a point of view. You must admit, that some people live in separation and some not. Both are (in) limitless consciousness - the one knows it, the other not. The fitting simile is that of the sun, which always shines in full splendor, but for some people it is veiled by dark clouds. So the question is not to create the sun, which is always there, but to dissolve the clouds, which stand for the mind.

Ram: I don't know what you mean but 'a point of view.' Perhaps the distinction between 'being one with you are' and 'being who you are' is too subtle for you to grasp. In any case, although the example you give is true, it does not apply to this statement except in the sense that only knowing who you are will give you the full appreciation of who you are, not some action (being who you are). As I said, 'be' is not a verb. You cannot do anything to be what you are. You can only know what you are. In this case the knowing is equivalent to the being.

Steve: You know the simile of the half filled glass of water. Some say, it is half empty, some others, it is half full. This is a point of view. So it is with becoming enlightened. If one sees the whole picture, then it is right to say you can't become enlightened because you already are. But to say that you have to dissolve duality before you realize is also true.

Ram: That's true. All are the self, consciousness, which is 'the light,' but nearly everyone is ignorant of this fact. Only knowledge removes ignorance. But a self ignorant person cannot teach his or her self. So he or she needs to be taught what reality is (this is the reason the science of self inquiry evolved) so that he or she can remove his or her ignorance in line with what has been taught. I think you would be greatly benefitted by reading my new book, which is the whole traditional teaching of self inquiry (Vedanta) in clear English, organized and taught in the traditional manner. All these issues that you bring up are covered there in great detail. For me to give a proper answer to your question would take several

pages and would include a lot of background knowledge which you would have to understand. The book is called How to Attain Enlightenment, The Vision of Non-Duality.

Steve: I never was drawn to Osho nor am I his follower. Still , if anyone applies the method of David Hawkins, given in his book, Power vs. Force, the result is that Osho was a big one. If one is good in dowsing, one can also use a pendulum and a chart from 0 to 1000. The dowzers found out the energy level and spiritual development of mountains, saints and philosophers. They found that Osho and Ramana are not far apart but Ghandi is pretty much lower, and so on. Dear Ram, if the last remarks offend You, please quickly forget them.

Ram: I am not offendable. You can say anything you like and believe anything you want. I have no emotions invested in our communication. You are a polite respectful person and are speaking your mind honestly. That is all that is required. However, all due respect, but I think this kind of comparison is ridiculous. What good does it possibly do to compare this person with that? It is a kind of parlor game for spiritual types who do not know what enlightenment is or who they are. People are very status conscious and they want to rank everyone and everything. It is duality par excellence. It is ignorance. There are no 'big ones' and small ones. There is only one consciousness functioning through various instruments. Hitler was a 'big one' too if you count the number of people who followed his teachings. I think that Rajneesh did more harm to the spiritual world than anyone in recent memory. I have spent a lot of time and energy helping many of his ex-devotees get their heads and hearts straight about the nature of enlightenment. Westerners are particularly gullible and he was a very clever, powerful person, with a strong spiritual vasana. But just because someone attracts a lot of people does not mean that his or her words are the truth or that his or her life is an inspiration. In fact, his life was a complete sham, a disaster. You can find the truth in his teachings but it is so intertwined with his opinions and beliefs that these works do not amount to a proper means of enlightenment. Put the totality of his 'teachings' up against Vedanta and they are just a big joke.

Steve: I don't know if Osho was beyond veils. Here in Cologne is the biggest Osho centre next to Poona. If I go there, i feel uplifted. The very same way like at Arunachala. He may have had some strange traits, but if I watch his videos, I can easily see, he has so much love for his disciples!

Ram: Sure, why not? Many people go to church or a rock concert and feel uplifted. It is the shakti and the bhakti that does the job, not some personal power of Osho's. He operates as a symbol of something spiritual for you and when you contact that symbol, it lifts you up. It has nothing to do with whether or not that small person named Osho was enlightened or not. Sure, he had love for his disciples, but love for other people is nothing unique. Parents love their children and their pets. Friends love each other. Love is commonplace. If he loved himself properly, he would not have come to such a bad end and have misled so many people about the nature of enlightenment. I have four ex-Rajneeshies in my class who have bhakti for him and who are grateful to him but who realize that he was not a proper mahatma and that they got erroneous notions from him about the nature of enlightenment. If you read his books with a sense of impartiality you can see the truth and his unexamined opinions sitting side by side. He did not do this deliberately. He was so in love with his idea of himself that he could not separate his personal stuff from the truth. He thought that because he was enlightened anything that came out of his mouth was scripture.

In any case I do not want to argue with you about Osho. He had his good points and he had his bad points. I have been in India for over thirty years and I have met quite a few pukka mahatmas and Osho was not one of them. I do not mean to denigrate your bhakti for him at all. He was an entry level teacher whose personal views got in the way of his teachings. In fact, he thought they were his teachings. There are no personal teachings. There is only wisdom and it stands free of all teachers. When you love someone and you feel that they have helped you, it is not always easy to stay discriminating and non-attached. All gods have feet of clay. Osho was no exception.

Dear Ram, I am sure, You have happy and meaningful days in Tiru.

Thanks again,

Steve

You are welcome, Steve. All the best to you.

