

The Darkness is You but You are not the Darkness

Hi James,

Thanks so much for your two last replies. I figured you were very busy and didn't want to impose, so I haven't responded until now. Not to worry, I have all my time - I'm not going anywhere, at least for now - so you never have to feel rushed in answering me.

Funny how your second reply has already addressed what I was going to write. I cogitated over the whole negative mind tendency story and realized that if it's a problem, it's a problem on how I view others responding to me. The fact is I don't really care much anymore how I'm thinking anymore - positive or negative - because it's just a game going on in me. Sure I can still react when people at work get in my face because I'm not responding at the drop of a dime when their personal interests aren't met NOW but even the reaction is, as I shall explain, not a problem. Hence, I seem to have been blind to the fact that it's never really a question of life being empty, negative, sad...out there...it's always a statement of how I'm seeing the picture, even on the relative level; which, of course, is nothing other than in the non-dual perspective.

Ram: Yes, it is all how you see it. The change I notice here is that you don't care much whether the thoughts are positive or negative. The notion that an enlightened person only has positive thoughts is completely bogus. Most thought is just *prarabdha karma* exhausting. If you see the big picture...if you are the big picture...then thought has nothing to do with you and Jacques actions and reactions take place within you. Anything that appears in you is you, but you are not it.

Herb: As I mentioned in my previous email, the 'not self' approach of self-enquiry no longer seems to be of much use to me. Stating that whatever presents itself is 'not self' has the result of only reinforcing duality. It negates my understanding that Jacques and everything he encounters is the self.

Ram: The implication of the not-self teaching is "I am the self." So it is only a reminder of who you are. But you are right. If you are awareness, everything is you, including Herb and everything he encounters.

Herb: Though I understand its importance in teaching seekers, in my case the not-self approach seems, on the relative level, to be a denial of my many warts.

Ram: This teaching is not about denying Herb's warts. It is just saying that the warts do not belong to you. There are always warts, enlightened or not. If anyone owns them it is Iswara.

Herb: I won't call it acceptance or surrender (since this too implies duality), but any form of opposing one thing to another seems for me to be a contradiction of reality.

Ram: That's true. This teaching is only for someone who is identified with the not-self.

Herb: Its probably presumptuous on my part, but even scripture seems limited to me these days. As I once expressed the desire to study them in more depth, I now no longer see the necessity. I can't outdo what I am by further (or more thorough) knowledge. As I read them on shiningworld (being well aware that my interpretation of them is limited), unless I'm completely deluded, they are all basically saying the same thing.

Ram: Yes, scripture is definitely limited. And yes, all it is saying is that you are whole and complete awareness and not the body mind. It is there to help solve a specific problem and once the problem is solved, it is of no use. It is a good sign that you can see this. You are assimilating the knowledge quickly. Good for you.

Herb: Anyway, the crux of the matter seems to be: *I am what I oppose*. Be it negativity, the feeling of emptiness, boredom, what have you...to oppose it only seems to keep it (duality) kicking. I can't get out of Myself...and any attempt just prolongs the suffering. This is my assimilation of knowledge into experience, or am I completely off base?

James: NO. You are right on.

Herb: Even when you say that I am happiness (being in the self), what is often whitewashed by scripture (since not too inspiring) is that I'm all the darker qualities as well.

James: This is only true up to a point. Remember those verses in the Gita where Krishna says the dark stuff is 'me' too. You have the right idea but the way you express it could be more accurate. You should say that the darker qualities are me, but I am not the darker qualities...otherwise it seems that awareness is made up of parts, a light and a dark side. You are always free of the dark and the light.

Herb: Actually, happiness seems like another permanent romantic fantasy game (hyperbole) similar to bliss and love. When seen as happening within awareness, fine. But people interpret it on the relative level and it becomes just something more to attain, to possess, to have. The way I see it - on the relative level - if life is a zero sum game (which it certainly is for me), then permanent happiness is just another illusion. You even mention somewhere on your web site that Ramana probably wished he were dead when in the throes of cancer. The same could be said of Nisargadatta (who was not a sattvic happy camper in the best of times) or any of the possible jnanis presently caught among the 15 million victims of Pakistan's flood.

James: There is always some kind of half truth involved when you use words, so they need to be explained. The word happiness is often equated with self realization and self realization is a kind of happiness in the sense that there is a constant sense of well-being that cannot be attributed to any circumstances. It is the nature of the self. But it is not 'feel good' happiness although it feels good. Confidence or certainty is a better word. The idea is that it is not circumstantial. It is a bad word, actually, although we use it to motivate seekers so the intention justifies it. Fullness is better but its PR value is less.

Herb: Knowing one's true nature truly brings more peace in Maya. But even then, I'm not sure being tortured by terrorists would cut it. Or maybe I'm missing something...?

James: No, you have it right. The body and mind are going to experience pleasure and pain and you will witness it, but it will not destroy you. I love that

symbol of Christ on the cross. He is not enjoying himself but you can see that he is beyond the pain. "Father forgive them..."

Herb: A last question concerning the causal body. Dreams are having a field day with me. Recently there's been a witnessing of past relationships intermingled with past *sadhanas* and the perspective of the self. Hence I was wondering what you mean exactly by "The causal body is purifying". Why does the causal body purify, or need to purify, and why does it need to purify? As always your help is greatly appreciated.

Ram: As long as you took yourself to be Herb there was a censor keeping the uncomfortable stuff from the Subtle Body so that Herb could function in his little life. Now that Herb is a thing of the past, the lid is off and all that repressed stuff is coming out in dreams.

Love,
Ram