

A Dharma Bum

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Sundari: Hello, Reeves. I am replying on behalf of James.

Reeves: Thank you for your response. I have come to realize that trip and everything that happened can truly only be interpreted by myself.

Sundari: From the point of view of the person Reeves, this is correct. From the point of view of Vedanta, we ask: who is the “myself” that is interpreting? All interpretations are a result of pre-existing conditioning, or *vasanas*; in other words, interpretation is a subjective version of truth as seen through the filter of the mind – not the truth.

Reeves: It is still teaching me. I have also come to notice when I have reached the necessary amount of actual analyzing needed for such events. In other words, looking too much into one thing, then moving on.

Sundari: Who is the teacher and who is the “me” that is being taught – and taught what? It is true that everything that happens in life is our teacher from the person’s point of view. Your statements imply that you are identified with the mind and you think that you are the person who goes by the name of Reeves who is the sum total of all his experiences, analyzing himself on the basis of his experiences.

The guiding principle of Vedanta is that only self-knowledge, not experience, can remove ignorance from the mind.

Self-knowledge is different from knowledge of objects, such as your interpretation of your trip or any other experience, because self-knowledge is subject-based, not object-based. Self-knowledge is always true because it is true to the self, meaning it cannot be dismissed or negated by any other knowledge. Knowledge of objects is not knowledge unless it is true to the object. If it is my knowledge, then it is my interpretation of an object, which is not necessarily knowledge. Ignorance (or my point of view) causes me to see or experience objects in a certain way because of my conditioning. People believe that ignorance is knowledge because they believe that what they experience is knowledge. It may be knowledge but it may not be.

Self-knowledge depends on the nature of the self, not on knowledge gained through personal experience, meaning through object-knowledge. Self-knowledge is based on irrefutable logic, which is why we call it the science of consciousness. On the basis of self-knowledge the individual can retain or reject the knowledge gained through his or her personal experience.

Vedanta is a valid means of knowledge designed to remove ignorance of the true nature of reality – and to reveal that your true nature is awareness, not Reeves. Although life indeed is the teacher, unless one understands what life is and what the true nature of the person is, any

knowledge gained through experience is limited because it happens in time, therefore has a beginning and an end, so no experience can ever become a permanent or continuous experience. Experience alone will not remove ignorance unless self-knowledge is present and the mind is qualified to receive and assimilate it.

If you want self-knowledge, subjecting the mind to self-inquiry, into the true nature of reality, is required; you need a teacher and scripture. You need to be taught how to discriminate yourself, awareness, from Reeves, your reflection in the subtle body, or mind.

Reeves: So *dharma* is a direction playing its part to induce the experience, and direction to travel, leading to the next? The synchronistic aspect of the events is just a portion of the *dharma*.

Sundari: *Dharma* is doing what is appropriate in every situation, in accordance with your inborn nature, your *karma* or life situation and with the natural or universal laws that operate in and run the field of existence – of which the person called Reeves is a part of. If the actions you take are in harmony with your *dharma*, the steps to take will unfold naturally without agitation of the mind.

Reeves: I was mainly trying to understand what a *dharma* bum is (“bum” has many definitions), and putting too many names to things (i.e. synchronicity and *dharma*) while over-exerting/over-analyzing my conscious brain and forgetting to go with the flow, such as now (LOL).

Sundari: The only valid criteria for determining whether or not you are acting appropriately in any given situation is to evaluate if what you are doing brings you peace of mind or not. There is no such thing as one *dharma* fits all on the personal level – *dharma* is different for everyone because everyone has different conditioning and *karma*. Apart from personal *dharma*, there is also universal *dharma* which does apply to everyone, such as non-injury.

If you are running away from your responsibilities or doing something that causes agitation or suffering for yourself or others in the short- or long-term, then it is not dharmic. That said, maybe doing what is right for you agitates others but that is not your problem but theirs. Only you will know by the level of peace of mind present.

Reeves: Forgive my babble. I will not be having access to computers for a very long time starting in a few weeks. Everything in the last two years, and my entire life, have led me to an experience I have always dreamed of accomplishing, and following my heart in nature will finally be one.

Thank you for your insight and I hope you enjoy your journey to the fullest.

~ Reeves

Sundari: You are welcome, Reeves. Good luck with your adventure and may it bring you what you are looking for – and some things you do not know you are looking for. ☺

~ *Namaste*, Sundari