

A Necessary Intermediate Step

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2012-10-17

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/107>

Kabir: Hi, Ram. Dayananda makes it very clear that without a contemplative disposition, being comfortable with ourselves, there is no place for the teaching to land. If we don't have an abiding mind we will be consciously or unconsciously seeking security, peace and happiness through objects. The wonderful thing I have found about the right understanding of God, as conveyed by the traditional teaching, is that it brings my mind into relationship with the whole and that relationship transforms the quality of the mind, i.e. it makes it *sattvic*. Without this my mind can't become imbued with the qualities that belong to the Lord. This is the necessary middle step between living as an isolated lonely individual compulsively seeking security, peace and happiness outside of themselves and a person who is living in the context of the whole. Living in the context of the whole is living a life of *dharma*.

When the mind is a reflecting medium in which the nature of the Lord is made manifest it becomes abiding because it has found the good that it is seeking in relative measure. Without this I found all I was doing was compulsively seeking and my mind was never be happy with itself and therefore not abiding. This was and is a big thing for me now.

It is very interesting that the great saying, "You are That," is translated by Dayananda as, "That Lord you are." I take it this is correct and there are not other translations. The people who are caught up in Neo-Advaita want to have the vision of non-duality... which is the recognition that the nature of the Lord and oneself is one and the same... however, what they don't see is that the vision of absolute non-duality presupposes a knowledge of the Lord. It is a knowledge they can't have without realising what you said in the poem.

They first of all have to recognise the presence of the Lord in the form of the cosmos and the law and order obtaining in it, and live in harmony with it.

This *dharmic* order and the laws operating in it include all their thinking, feelings and actions and all the thinking feelings and actions of other people. Of course the vision that all that is here is *Isvara* does not leave me as an individual in the central picture depending on whether I take myself to be limitless awareness or limited awareness, the individual. As individuals we are always depending on the Lord anyway. Dayananda calls this understanding of *Isvara* "objectivity," and it is only this vision that lifts us out of ourselves as lonely, frustrated, angry, fearful entities.

Ram: This is a lovely document, Kabir. I am glad that Vedanta has set you right. You have come a long way in the last two years. I understand what you are saying, but I think there are two words that need to be explained because both have a lot of baggage attached to them and are consequently easily misunderstood. They are "Lord" and "God."

When you say, "That Lord you are," you need to distinguish *Isvara* as pure awareness from *Isvara* as awareness wielding *maya* because if the person thinks of the Lord as the Creator and the giver of the results action, the word "you" does not apply – because it refers to awareness.

Awareness is not a “Lord,” because there is nothing for it to lord over. Furthermore, it is not correct to say you are the Lord if you are referring to either the *jiva* or awareness. Non-duality does not mean sameness. It is correct to say, “The Lord is you,” but you are not the Lord if “you” refers to awareness. Neither the *jiva* nor pure consciousness is “the Lord.” You could say the *jiva* is the Lord – but the Lord is not the *jiva* – insofar as it depends on *Isvara* for everything, but it does not equal *Isvara*, because it has limited power, knowledge and desire and *Isvara* has all powers. Scripture says that *maya/Isvara* is neither the self nor not the self. It is neither the not-self nor not the not-self. It is in a different category altogether. The *Isvara* concept is useful for putting the *jiva* in its place and giving it an abiding mind, as you mention, but it is not *moksa*. *Moksa* is, “I am awareness.” This removes both *jiva* and *Isvara*, the Lord.

~ Ram