

Action Figure

Daniel Band

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M: Hi, Daniel.

I have a short and practical question with regard to the following excerpt from *The Essence of Enlightenment*:

“[Life]... is like a merry-go-round with its brightly colored horses going up and down, around and around, as cheery music plays. What fun! But it is not alive at all. It is just a machine, seemingly living. It exists, no doubt, but it’s truly a dream. The realization that life is a dream is usually a big shock. When it happens you are well on your way to liberation,” (page 84).

Daniel: The excerpt points out just how incredibly seductive and captivating this Maya-projected merry-go-round called *samsara* is. It fools everyone – right up until self-knowledge breaks the spell!

“Seemingly” is an important word. Though the dream show is acknowledged to exist, it’s not taken to be “reality,” that which does not change. And the only “thing” that does not change is you, awareness.

When discrimination is firm, the mind’s able to take a stand in reality (*satya*) as reality whilst knocking off the apparent reality (*mithya*) as just a dream object. This in return changes the quality of the dream in the most beautiful way.

M: Would it be a valuable practice, in daily life, especially when many people are around (e.g. when walking in the streets), to keep this insight “it’s all just a dream” in one’s mind constantly, even maybe as a kind of *mantra*? I sometimes try to practise it, and at times it suddenly gives what’s happening around me a kind of dreamlike quality, as if I’m in a movie.

I just wonder what you think of it.

Thanks!

Daniel: Yes – it’s a very good practice. Especially if you can simultaneously objectify the dream as an object appearing in/to you, awareness. In other words, bring your attention to the “knower” of M (the action figure) and his dream world.

Whilst resting the mind in awareness as awareness, contemplate the nature of the dream. But more importantly, contemplate what it means to be awareness – the knower of the dream.

The nature of a dream is that of change, and therefore as inquirers we develop the quality of dispassion when engaging the *jiva* in the dream world because it’s totally undependable.

The dream’s very cool, but way cooler when we understand it to be for what it is and don’t

depend on it for our happiness.

As inquirers, we're all about stability and enjoying a sense of ease, and so we shift our attention to our ever-stable identity.

Taking a stand in awareness as awareness allows your action figure (*jiva*) to attend to its flick whilst in a very healthy, composed and easy style. Not depending on the movie makes it way more entertaining.

M: Thanks a lot for this clear answer! I love the image of the "action figure." ☺

Daniel: May your action figure be blessed with full ease!