

Akandakaravritti

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Monique: *Namaskar*, Ramji. I have been following your site since about October last year and have read through your book, website and *satsangs*. I have been seeking for as long as I can remember; now I am 40. For about three years I have been having, sometimes deep and sometimes subtle, awareness and knowings that are not normally accompanied by an experience. In fact I really have not had any experiences to speak of.

I would have a split second of knowing that everything was perfect and that the end of seeking comes when I am completely void of objects and experience and in that is a contentment beyond words, a fullness, not an emptiness or void as some teachers describe. This “emptiness” feels wrong; true, there is a lack of mind play/attachments and aversions, but this brings a fullness rather than a void or purposelessness.

James: Yes. The end of seeking comes when you realize that you are the fullness. Most people don't understand that the emptiness is only empty because the self, the fullness, is not noticed. It is always there observing the absence of objects.

Monique: These momentary experiences have led to a few days or hours a day of completeness here and there over several months; however, as soon as manic children or demanding work comes into play it dissolves away. And my children seem to be able to push all the wrong buttons continuously. In about June last year after much abiding in the self, the sense of Monique just dissolved one afternoon in literally a blink of an eye; again, no Big Bang experience or grand knowing occurred here. I struggled to find a “sense of me” to abide in after that, and relaxed practices. In fact I got very ill that day and consciousness seemed to throw illness all around, redundancy, my car stolen, etc. for months after and even into this year. In July I started to get the feeling that I was full and complete and did not require anything. This lasted until October when I found your site, and when reading through the work realised that this might have been the *akandakaravritti*. However, since then the feelings of knowing that I am complete as is, and the times of profound peace, have gradually dissolved and I am struggling to tune in to it consciously.

I know without a doubt that I am not this body or mind, but interaction with the world/kids/job issues seem to pull me out of that space of contentment. IT has not taken hold of me completely. I also get irritated very quickly and that does not help. I used to be able to feel that “devoid of objects and experience, yet complete and full place” fairly easily, but if working it would be in the background and when relaxed it would come to the forefront on its own. I completely can identify with having no centre, no inside no outside, no desire and many of the things you mention in the book where you describe who you are; these feelings have been strong for a number of years coming through awareness after regular and deep contemplation.

James: If you want to experience the fullness more consistently then you need to move from a *samsaric* lifestyle to a *yogic* lifestyle. But I think this is probably not possible. It seems you have

considerable extroverting *karma* that keeps your mind from *sattva*. This experience of fullness comes when the mind is *sattvic*. There are moments of *sattva* in the midst of a *rajasic/tamasic* lifestyle, but they probably the result of *punya karma* from the past. So I think the solution for you is *karma yoga*. In this way you gradually reduce the *rajasic* and *tamasic vasanas*, and the mind slowly becomes *sattvic*. In other words, the *karma* that is keeping the mind extroverted and away from the fullness is burned out.

But you should know that while this will make you a lot happier, it will not set you free because your idea of *moksa* is experiential. The *akandakaravritti* is “I am limitless, non-dual, actionless, ever-present, ordinary awareness.” It is knowledge. If you just remain fixated on the experience of fullness you will remain as the experiencer and you will become conditioned to the bliss. It is not the kiss of death, obviously. It is certainly a lot better than most everything else in *samsara*, including a bunch of bratty kids. ☺ The *akandakaravritti* properly contemplated sets you free of the experiencer, Monique. You will notice that I said above that the end of seeking comes when you realize that you are the fullness. The operative word is “are.” In other words, what you are seeking is a new identity, not a special liberating feeling or experience for the old Monique-identity. This will probably be news to you.

Monique: Clearly, this journey is not complete, although for a while I think it may have been near the end, but now I feel a backwards movement rather than forwards. I would be so, so grateful for your advice, as I have supreme faith in Vedantic teachings and knew that there was a way “enlightenment” could be conveyed in a methodical manner, so was very glad to see you mention the same.

James: It is not complete, but you are very close to the end. Most people who contact me are near the end of their spiritual journeys. I suggest two things: simplify your life. If this is not possible then do what you do with the *karma yoga* attitude. Second, if you can, set aside one hour a day for contemplation on the *akandakaravritti*. You say you read my book, but you missed the most important teaching. Reread Chapter II very carefully. You need to convert the quest for experience into a quest for self-knowledge. I can tell by the way you used the word *akandakaravritti* that you associated it with a certain feeling, an experience of fullness. The experience of fullness is the container and the *vritti* is the knowledge that sets you free, assuming you are looking for self-knowledge. If you are caught up in the feeling you will miss the knowledge.

If you want it very simple, the *akandakaravritti* only means “I am free.” No experience can set you free, because you are already free. When you realize through contemplating the teachings of Vedanta that you are free, then the experience of fullness is with you all the time because “I am free” means “I am full.” Presently Monique thinks she is missing something, in this case the experience of fullness. But you are not Monique, the one who is missing something. You are the ever-free awareness of Monique. So this is what you need to think about.

Monique: I’m not sure if this is important, but I also have had for about six years this strange thing happen when I would awake from a deep dreamless sleep into a complete black void and a death-like fear would overcome me; it used to take about 25 minutes to come back to earth and I would have to walk around the house to come back to myself. I used to think this was due to a

fear of death, but the last time it happened I was dreaming about being made redundant and having no income, and then woke to this fear. I never used to have dreams about this. I have since started to read the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, and this death-like state is mentioned, but I do not quite understand if these experiences are linked or indeed if they are of any consequence.

James: It is just fear, not worth thinking about.

Monique: I also had about one year of no dreams, just a deep sleep, almost completely unaware of what happens between closing my eyes and opening them, but again since October my mind has been hyperactive day and night with no rest.

James: I don't think this means anything, unless you let some thought of limitation – like fear of losing your job, etc. – obsess your mind and it became *rajasic/tamasic*.

Monique: I wish I had found you years and years ago. I humbly request, if you could accept me as a student and any guidance to bring me back on track and a real finality to this journey of seeking, it would be much appreciated.

James: Okay. You are signed up. Read Chapter II, the *satsangs* on knowledge and experience, etc. and think about “I am free. I am full.” Then get back to me.

~ Love, James