

All Vasanas Are Un-Bindable

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Maria: Hello, Ted. Here are my questions!

The “is-ness” that is awareness: is it referred to as *Bhagavan*, God or Creator? Or is it just known as awareness, consciousness (or in my spiritual vocabulary, spirit)?

Ted: The “is-ness” that is pure awareness is referred to in Sanskrit as *brahman* or sometimes *Isvara*, though when referred to as *Isvara* it should not be confused with the use of the name *Isvara* to indicate God the Creator or *Bhagavan*. *Brahman* is pure, limitless, attributeless, actionless existence, or “is-ness.” It is the self-luminous “light” of consciousness in which all objects both gross (i.e. tangible items such as rocks, cars, computers, clothes, etc.) and subtle (i.e. thoughts, emotions and sensations) appear.

Isvara, *Bhagavan* and God the Creator are personified terms for the macrocosmic causal body, the field of unmanifest pure potentiality in which reside the “ideas,” so to speak, of all objects. It is essentially pure awareness “wielding” or conditioned by its own inherent deluding power of *maya*, or ignorance. Ironic as it is, if pure limitless awareness did not have the power to apparently delude itself it would not be limitless. This delusion has two powers: *avaruna shakti*, the power of concealment, and *vikshepa shakti*, the power of projection. By means of *avaruna shakti*, *maya* seems to veil pure awareness and hides its limitless, formless nature. By means of *vikshepa shakti*, *maya* projects the dreamlike apparition of the apparent reality on the “screen” or substratum of pure awareness and thus makes formless awareness appear as the innumerable objects that comprise the manifest universe in both its gross and subtle aspects.

Maria: What is *japa*?

Ted: *Japa* is the repetition of a *mantra*, usually performed silently as a repetitive thought in the mind, that is used to consciously condition one’s thinking and thereby replace habitual erroneous notions about the nature of oneself with a notion that reflects one’s true nature. For instance, *aham brahmasmi*, which means “I am *brahman*,” is a *mantra* that could be used for *japa*.

Maria: “My” (or should I say “the”?) self and every one else’s self are all one (my “blob of light theory”). We are all one and not separate. But in apparent reality, *maya*, we are seemingly separate and have *vasanas*.

So I was looking at a friend once and saw her behavior and I wondered if her *vasanas* were hers and mine, or are the *vasanas* the same for everyone and how we deal with them is depending on how our *jiva* is “built”???

Ted: On the microcosmic level, i.e. within the apparently personal causal body associated with

the apparent individual person, each apparent individual person has his or her own unique *vasanas*. *Vasanas* are the impressions left in the causal body by one's past experiences that serve as the basis for one's likes and dislikes, desires and fears, that manifest in one's subtle body and compel the decisions that manifest as the actions executed through the vehicle of the gross body. Because each apparent person has had his or her own discrete experiences, each one's *vasanas* will be different and unique to them. This is why we all have different preferences and proclivities.

On the macrocosmic level, i.e. within the context of the macrocosmic causal body, which is the entire pool of potential gross and subtle objects, each apparent individual has to deal with the same *vasanas*. In this case, however, we designate these *vasanas* as God's *vasanas*. These are the *vasanas* that serve as the blueprints, so to speak, of the objects that constitute the manifest universe or apparent reality, such as the elements, various species of plant and animal life, the functions of the physiological systems, mind, intellect and memory, and so forth. For instance, all human beings have to eat food in order to live. Reports of "breatharianism" notwithstanding, there is no avoiding this *vasana*. In this case, how each person deals with this *vasana* depends on the make-up of his or her mind-body- sense complex, i.e. the "personal" *vasanas* associated with and expressing through it. So, for instance, while I might choose to satisfy my eating *vasana* with junk food, you might choose to nourish your body with a more healthy diet.

Ultimately, all *vasanas* are God's because you didn't choose your *vasanas*. As an apparent individual, however, you do have a modicum of free will that allows you to continue to indulge and thereby sustain the *vasanas* presently associated with your mind-body-sense complex or to refrain from feeding these habitual tendencies and thereby facilitating their exhaustion. And though you need not rid yourself of all your *vasanas*, it is necessary – assuming you are seeking *moksa*, or ultimate inner freedom – to neutralize those tendencies that are binding in the sense that you feel you need the objects they are compelling you to pursue in order to be whole and complete. Such attachments not only subvert self-inquiry by extroverting the mind but they directly counter the truth that you, pure limitless awareness, are already whole and complete as you are.

Maria: In one of the Berlin 2014 *YouTube* videos (Part 3, I think) about experience, James talked about "small" experiences where I do have control as opposed to "big" experiences which come from *Isvara*, and so *jiva* Maria has no control. Is a "small" experience, for example, whether we brush our teeth or not? What is a "small" experience?

Ted: A "small" experience is, as you suggest, an experience over which you, as an apparent individual person, seem to have a greater or lesser degree of influence. For instance, you can decide what to have for dinner from the possibilities at your disposal, you can choose whether to watch mindless television dramas or view James' Vedanta talks, you can choose to lie on the sofa and take a nap or do *hatha yoga* in order to re-energize your mind and body, etc. Even these actions, of course, are subject to myriad variables that interfere with the degree of control you have concerning their execution and outcome, so you never have total control over anything in life.

"Big" experiences are those circumstances and conditions that are outside the range of your personal will, such as natural catastrophes, major accidents, seemingly uncaused occurrences of

good fortune, etc.

In all cases, however, it should be understood that you always have control over the most important factor influencing the quality of the experience your reaction or response to it. Rather than seeing the essential truth underlying each and every situation, circumstance, encounter and interaction, one mired in self-ignorance will react to situations based entirely on the degree to which they satisfy his or her *vasana*-driven cravings or desires. If she doesn't get what she wants she will whine and complain and wallow in self-pity or self-deprecation. The seeker of knowledge, however, will see every experience, especially those that are deemed "undesirable" due to his or her *vasana*-influenced value system, as an opportunity to do inquiry, neutralize or exhaust a *vasana* through moderate restraint, and cultivate a peaceful mind.

Maria: Whilst on a walk I was thinking about "I am my coat but my coat is not me" because it is illumined by me, awareness, where I AM awareness, i.e. the "big blob of light" analogy, which you may kick into the grass after you have read my biography and questions. All objects can only be experienced because of awareness, and everything is awareness and not as they appear? (This is where being a physicist must be an advantage to really get this.)

Ted: You don't have to be a physicist to understand the non-dual nature of reality. In fact you experience it every moment of your life but overlook this fact because you identify with the viewpoint of Maria rather than with your true identity as pure, limitless awareness. If you contemplate where your experience of objects really takes place, you will see that all objects are known in the mind. Though they appear to be external objects, their image or sound, taste, texture or whatever registers in the mind. And what is the mind? How far is the mind from awareness? If you sit with this and allow yourself to "get subtle" you will see/understand that there is no distance between the mind and awareness. In fact, the mind is simply the name we give to awareness appearing in objective form, be it shape/color, sound, taste, kinesthetic touch or smell. Since everything is only an appearance in mind, therefore everything is nothing but awareness, including Maria and all her thoughts, feelings and sensory experiences. From Maria's viewpoint the objects look as if they are separate from you. Observed from the viewpoint of your true identity of pure, limitless, formless, all-pervasive awareness, however, you see that everything is only an object in you.

The last little added bonus to this realization is the fact that while all objects depend for their existence upon you and are indeed nothing other than you, you are not the objects. In other words, you are not comprehensively defined by any discrete object or even all the objects collectively. In order for objects to appear in the first place, there needs to be an "arena" of awareness in which they can appear. You are that "arena" of awareness. Whether objects appear or do not appear (such as is the case in deep sleep) you always are. Hence while objects depend on you, you are ever free of all objects. No object can enhance, diminish or otherwise affect you in any essential way. Sure, Maria will be affected. But you, awareness, will remain ever the silent, pristine and perfect witness to all apparent objective experience. Thus while pain and pleasure will persist (to a degree), existential suffering will cease, for you will know that you are ever unaffected by any apparent happening that occurs within the scope of your being.

Maria: I have had a lifelong friendship *vasana* which is very destructive, i.e. I can end a very

close long-term friendship in the blink of this *vasana*! Now in my later life I have recognized it for what it is, so I can stop myself from actually pressing the destruct button. PMS can also be a catalyst to this *vasana*. But I was wondering if this *vasana* is just one that I, as Maria, am stuck with (if that is possible) so that the *jiva* called Maria can just deal with it as part of her experience/*karma* (bearing in mind that no experience is mine but *Isvara*'s and I that I am free, limitless, non-dual awareness). Are all *vasanas* potentially non-bindable?

Ted: I'm having a difficult time following your train of thought here. Are you referring to a *vasana* or desire that has fueled and sustained a particular relationship that is destructive or are you expressing your relationship with the *vasana* itself figuratively as a friendship?

Either way, it is good that you recognize the *vasana* for what it is. When you are no longer an unconscious victim of the *vasana* and simply acting in accordance with its commands, then you can take steps to neutralize it. You don't have to willfully repress it but you can observe its appearance and apply self-knowledge in order to "talk it down," so to speak. This is the work aspect of self-inquiry. You need to apply the knowledge to every situation, circumstance, encounter, interaction and experience of your life. Leave no experience unexamined. Observe your thoughts and apply new *mantras* (they don't have to be Sanskrit phrases from scriptural texts but can simply be sentences that align with the teachings and reflect your true nature). Take charge of your mind. You can do this as awareness because the mind is only an object in you. Reprogram the thoughts that play out through your internal sound system. They are simply erroneous notions that the mind has been conditioned to accept. Stop buying into their bullshit. All binding *vasanas* can indeed be rendered non-binding. You simply need to recondition your mind with valid thoughts that give voice to your true identity as whole and complete, pure and perfect awareness. In this way, you will gradually assume a more and more confident stance as your real self. Though initially this practice may seem fueled by a false bravado, over time through repeated application of the knowledge you gain through diligent self-inquiry you will inevitably see the reality of your limitless nature and naturally abide in ultimate inner freedom.

Maria: Gee whiz, this is hard but I hope my questions are worthy of asking, or should I go back and do some more reading?

Ted: Your questions are perfect. But never stop reading and doing inquiry. Make it the top priority in your life.

Maria: Thanks a lot and thanks for your time, and I hope you can "sort" out this student of Vedanta!

~ LOL, Maria

Ted: You'll undoubtedly "get sorted," Maria. The whole grand affair, after all, is nothing other than the self seeking the self. And how can the self not find itself when it is itself? More to the point, how can you not find yourself when you are yourself?

Take care, my friend, and give me a holler, so to speak, if or when you have further questions.

Maria: Dear Ted, now that is what I call service – a speedy reply!!!

And it would appear that I am not as dim as I thought re understanding of Vedanta teachings. Last night in bed, I realized about my so-called friendship *vasana* that I was forgetting self and was identifying it as little ol' me Maria!!!! Duh!!!

You queried whether my friendship *vasana* was a desire or a *vasana* – good point!!! I will think about that. As friendship is an object – I would have to be honest and say it is a desire – but other hand, it could be a *vasana*, a condition or tendency. Hard to say, as I am only aware of this existence and to be honest I do know how to deal with it with tools of self-enquiry and knowledge that I am awareness, period.

Next time if/when it is triggered I will try harder to not enter into the fantasy of it all.

Thanks, Ted! I may have more to say after I have read your reply properly and digested and bathed in it.

I do say to folks when situation arises that God just wants to have fun!!!! I like to think that the thought finds it way into their true self and they let go of brainwashing of the church and religion.

Have a nice day!!, as they do say in America, because they said it to me the one time I visited America, skiing at Lake Tahoe.

I have distant German cousins who stay in St. Paul, Minnesota.

~ Maria, xxx

Ted: Hi, Maria. I'm glad my response was helpful.

Concerning the friendship *vasana*, however, I think there is a little confusion.

I was not asking whether your friendship *vasana* was a desire or a *vasana*. Desires and *vasanas* are virtually the same thing. *Vasanas* are the impressions left by our past experiences and are stored in unmanifest form in the causal body. These impressions may be pleasurable or painful depending on the tenor of the experience from which they have resulted. These impressions then sprout in the subtle body or mind as desires and fear, attractions and aversions, likes and dislikes. Pleasurable *vasanas* manifest as desires, attractions and likes, for we want to repeat such an experience. Painful *vasanas* manifest as fears, aversions and dislikes, and compel us to avoid similar stimuli in an effort to avoid repeating the experience of pain.

My question concerning your friendship *vasana* was whether the *vasana*/desire was compelling you to continue a relationship that was not serving your peace of mind or whether you were referring to the *vasana*/desire as if it were a friend itself of whom you are having a difficult time letting go. I'm sensing that you were referring to a particular relationship that is not working or that you have a compelling desire for relationships with other people in general that may interfere with your peace of mind and ability to do effective self-inquiry.

In either case, go back and read the first chapter of *How to Attain Enlightenment*. In that chapter, James clearly explains that the love, joy, happiness, peace, contentment or fulfillment that we

seek from objects is actually our own inherent nature. It is only the desire for an object that we think will complete us, which has arisen due to our ignorance of our true nature as limitless awareness, that agitates our mind and destroys our innate peace and happiness. Obtaining the object temporarily allays our desire and its consequent agitation, and thus we think that the joy came from the object when actually our mind has simply quieted enough for us to experience our true nature. Because we don't understand the underlying dynamic of the situation, however, we associate the joy with the object and then try to hold onto the object, regain it, re-experience it or whatever in an attempt to sustain the joy. Not only is it impossible to maintain our possession or experience of an object indefinitely due to the fact that the essential characteristic of the apparent reality is change or mutability but, ironically, the desire itself serves only to re-agitate the mind and put us right back into the same painful predicament that we were trying to remedy through seeking the object in the first place.

Understanding how this "trick" of ignorance works is the basis for all further self-inquiry, so read and reread that chapter until you have fully assimilated it. Once you see how this "trick" is the essence of every gratuitous desire that arises in your mind, then you are better equipped to identify its presence and take a stand against it.

~ Take care, Ted