

Am I an Individual or Am I Limitless?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Cathy: Hi, Ram I'm looking at your *God and Man* DVD which, by the way, I am finding extremely interesting. One question though. In your chart you have self up top, then you have ignorance, then on the left hand side you have the individual and on the right you have God. You say that depending on what point of view we look at life from, what we see will depend on it. If we look at life from the individual's point of view, the ego's, we will have fears and desires and our own individual *karmas* and *vasanas*, and our knowledge and view will be limited. Got that. Then you say that if we look at life from God's point of view, then our knowledge and understanding will be so much greater, and our identifications, fears and desires will disappear. Got that too (please correct me if my understanding is not correct). Now comes my question. Then you say from the self's point of view there is no duality, no individual, no God. But can we, as individuals, see life from the self's point of view? Would we not need to be above or behind the self to see from the self's point of view? Do you understand what I am trying to ask here?

Ram: Yes, I understand. No. If you are an individual, you will see as individuals see. If you are the self, you will have non-dual vision. In fact although you think you are an individual, you are actually the self. So when your ignorance is removed, you see as the self.

Cathy: And another question about this mirror idea you bring up. I have heard it said that "I am everything, I am That." I am assuming this is referring to the self and not the ego, so is this what you mean when you say that as individuals we are limited? If we look at life through the ego, then yes, there are only *vasanas*, desires and fears. But if we remind ourselves that we are actually the self, then the ego disappears and we are "That," the self. Is this correct?

Ram: Yes. When you think of the self you "become" the self because you are always the self whether you know it or not. To say, "I am That," is just to say that "I understand that nothing is apart from me, that I am whole and complete, that I can adequately deal with whatever life has to offer." An individual is the self under the spell of *maya*. *Maya* makes what is non-dual appear to be dual. An enlightened person just knows that *maya* is working all the time. It is like going to a magic show. You know it is all a big fake but you enjoy it nonetheless.

Cathy: I also had an interesting afternoon in another sense. Part of me wanted to ring somebody to go out with, and part of me kept reminding me that to meet somebody just to go out was a stupid reason. So I sat with it. A lot of angry thoughts came up about different things and I kept reminding myself "we are all doing the best we can, and so-and-so and such-and-such is also doing the best they can, as I am also doing the best I can." Anyway, I had a good afternoon. My negativity seemed to lose some of its force. I am glad I did not run away from this loneliness and faced it and saw it dissolve. Hopefully, next time they come up I will remember this and sit with them again.

Thanks, Ram.

~ Cathy