

An Envable Enlightenment Experience

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Ram: Hi, Judy. Here's another blockbuster *satsang* occasioned by your enviable enlightenment experience. It should give you something to think about for a few days.

Judy: A few days ago I had some kind of "shift" in perspective that I can't really explain... it was as if "I" was nothing and it was clear that this nothingness was no longer located in the body or anywhere. There was no reference point except that it was known that the mind and what was seen and heard was happening in awareness (and somehow more than awareness, but I don't know how exactly)... it just was not located anywhere and it was like there was nothing else anywhere in the world except what was going on right then. Actually, nothing was really located anywhere, but everything was where it was supposed to be. I can't explain it at all. That lasted a night and day or so and then "changed" back to the regular "Judy" point of reference. But even though I am still seeing the world from the Judy viewpoint... there is still the Knowing that this new, unlimited, undefined boundlessness can't go anywhere. It's like once you see something you can't undo it. This is crazy, but I am laughing about it, I can't help it. I know that this boundless nothingness is still right here and nowhere too. Even as Judy... the world somehow feels better. Everything seems very different, but the same too. Now things are really mixed up, but "I" seem to be happier with it this way. At this point... I wouldn't be at all surprised if you told me to forget all about it... that I am just plain nuts! ☺

Ram: Some people have all the luck! I know so many people who would give their eye teeth for such an experience. Now all that we have to do is to see what it means. This experience is an experiential confirmation of the teachings of Vedanta. It is a direct experience of the formless self. Your attention shifted from the self with form, Judy's experience, to the self without form. You can delete the "as if" in the sentence "...it was as if I was nothing..." You, meaning Judy, are nothing. I think I gave you that teaching in one of the first *satsangs* and you have undoubtedly heard it many times, considering your long history of involvement with spirituality. So here you have experiential confirmation of Judy's non-existence once again. It is a variation of the first experience you told me about and I analyzed. The next statement "there was no reference point" shows that it was the formless self. The self is here, there, everywhere and nowhere all at once. It is impossible for this to be true for a form because all forms, subtle and gross, are limited. So this means you are limitless.

Now we come to a statement that shows a confusion in your knowledge: "...except that it was known that the mind and what was seen and heard was happening in awareness (and somehow more than awareness, but I don't know how exactly)." The first idea to concentrate on was "it was known." This is a very important statement and is the key to finishing your *sadhana*. When you say "it was known" the "it" refers to how you knew that "there was nothing else located anywhere in the world except what was going on right then." How did you know? If Judy was gone, how did you know? You knew because you are the awareness of "what was going on right then." Mind you, it is the same awareness that is aware that McDonald's sells hamburgers.

The next thing you should consider is the statement “except that it was known that the mind and what was seen and heard was happening in awareness (and somehow more than awareness, but I don’t know how exactly).” For this statement to be true you have to be aware of awareness. It is quite true – and the essence of enlightenment – and I will try to help you think through it carefully. When you use the word “awareness” you mean Judy, or “reflected awareness.” There is only one Awareness, but when we take *maya*, the world of forms, into account we get two “awarenesses,” one real and one apparent. (The capital “A” refers to the real Awareness and the small “a” refers to reflected awareness.) It is called *chidabhasa*, or the subtle body in Sanskrit. The key to understanding this is the phrase “somehow more than awareness.” The “somehow more” refers to Awareness, so we have two “awarenesses.” Do you follow so far? If you do, it should cause another thought: Who knows that there are two awarenesses? Is there a third awareness? Suddenly self-realization gets complicated! Why? Because scripture says that there is only one non-dual Awareness. So are there three: awareness with form, Awareness without form and the awareness of both? Are they three distinct things or is one Awareness appearing as two “other” awarenesses? I’ll let you tell me the answer.

This is an information-packed experience. The next thing to consider is “the mind and what was seen and heard was happening in awareness.” This means that the mind (read: subtle body, or Judy) is an object. The subject cannot be the object. The subject is the knower of the object. So this experience confirms that you are not Judy. Well, you are Judy, but Judy is “not-you.”

The next statement again confirms the knowledge of the reality “going on right then.” This means that there is no time, that nothing happens in the past or in the future. It is all happening “now.” Actually, nothing is happening, nothing ever happened, but if it seems that something is happening, it is happening “now.”

Judy: “...everything was where it was supposed to be.” “Supposed to” means that everything, meaning you, Awareness and all the forms in it, are perfect.

Ram: Now we come to a very important point. You say, “That lasted a night and day or so and then ‘changed’ back to the regular ‘Judy’ point of reference. But even though I am still seeing the world from the Judy viewpoint... there is still the Knowing that this new unlimited, undefined boundlessness can’t go anywhere.”

This was an experience. Experience changes, so you cannot hope to make such an experience permanent. What you can make permanent, however, is your understanding of yourself as it is revealed in this experience. The key to a perfect understanding lies in the word “I.” You say, “But even though I am still seeing the world from the Judy viewpoint... there is still the Knowing that this new unlimited, undefined boundlessness can’t go anywhere.”

In this statement, which is true, there is a problem. What does the word “I” refer to? I contend that it refers to you, the Knower. The knowledge that “this new unlimited, undefined boundlessness can’t go anywhere” is the nature of the self, awareness, the knower. The only problem with all this is that when you use the word “I” it does not refer to awareness. It doesn’t refer to Judy either – you have already established that Judy is not you, an object in awareness. But somehow this “I” seems to be free-floating and not tied to anything. We need to tie it to awareness. In other words, you need to identify yourself as awareness – because that is what you are. In your statement you say that “this” unlimited boundless can’t go anywhere. What you mean is “I” can’t

go anywhere. You, the self, do not come and go.

Obviously, from now on you will not correct your friends when they refer to you as Judy – unless you want them to think you’re nuts – but when you say “I” you should henceforth know that “I” refers to awareness and awareness alone. When this is clear you are fully enlightened. That is the end of your spiritual search. There is nothing more to know. Knowing this breaks your identification with Judy. If there is no coming and going for you, then there is no reason to study Vedanta, meditate, do good for the oldies or anything else. These activities may continue to take place “in you” but they happen automatically without a sense of doership.

There are other ways to express this understanding but they all boil down to this: “I am awareness.” Period. Judy, reflected awareness, will operate automatically in you, but you will understand that she is just a name for awareness as it reflects off the subtle body in *maya* and is not the “real” you. The real you, as you can see, does not “come and go.” “Come and go” means change. So you do not change. Awareness is whole and complete, so you are whole and complete. You are immortal because awareness is immortal. *Et cetera*. You’ve read enough of the Vedanta at my website and in my books to know what the nature of awareness is – if you need more words. Mind you, the words are very useful as you go about erasing your identification with Judy. When the “I” thought comes up, have a look to see which “I” it is. You have enough experience and knowledge to discriminate the absolute “I,” you, from the relative “I,” Judy.

Your last statement indicates the truth about knowledge: “It’s like once you see something you can’t undo it.” Here the word “see” means “know.” It means knowledge and experience are one. You experience yourself as awareness and you know who you are. This knowledge gives rise to uncaused bliss. “This is crazy, but I am laughing about it. I can’t help it.”

“Everything seems very different but the same too. Now things are really mixed up but ‘I’ seem to be happier with it this way.”

Ram: You’re happier “this way” because you don’t have to do anything about “things.” They are just what they are and you are the knower. You can’t do anything about being the knower either. You can’t do anything about anything, because you are not a doer.

Two small points remain. You say, “Everything seems very different but the same too.” This is a classic statement of self-realization. What is different is your perspective. What is the same are the objects in awareness. Self-realization is just seeing from the self’s point of view, which is your point of view. Nothing outside changes. There is a “shift” (refer to the same “shift” that happened to me when I realized who I was at the end of my autobiography), but the “shift” is in point of view, not in objective reality. You “maintain” and solidify this “shift” by practicing knowledge. By the “practicing knowledge” I mean seeing to it that the mind is clear about who you are, setting it free from its identification with the non-existent Judy and firmly establishing its identification with limitless, eternal awareness. You cannot complain, as so many do, that you need some kind of “experience” to back it up, because this is the enlightenment “experience” if ever there was one. Remember, the essence of experience is understanding. Experience is fine but it always changes. Understanding, if it is “under”-standing, should never change. By “under”-standing I mean the platform from which you live your life. You can live as awareness because you are awareness. You are already always doing it anyway, but now you know it – and this frees you of Judy and her search and her limited ideas about herself. You’re not nuts, Judy, you’re completely sane. The world is nuts.

~ Much love, Ram