

Awareness Is Not Characterized by Peace and Contentment

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1993>

Eric: Dear Ted, what a relief when the *jiva* finally realizes that chasing desires only results in more desires. Not really. You get to enjoy the object of desire if you manage to attain it. The suffering comes when you CAN'T attain the object. What do you have then? The *jiva* is left with a burning desire for the object. And because you've been feeding the *vasana*, you now have a very powerful *vasana* to deal with. Then what choice do you have but to (1) try to ignore the *vasana* until it eventually fades away or (2) continue to feed the monster by chasing desires.

This is the wheel of *samsara*, and until the *jiva* sees the futility of chasing desires, he will continue to chase desires. He has no choice. Attaining the object of desire only delivers temporary happiness. Why does temporary happiness = suffering? Because most of your time is spent in the chase (suffering) and very little time basking in the glow of reflected awareness when the object is obtained.

What is the answer? Go to the source. Cut out the middleman. We chase desires for the brief experience of reflected awareness we get when the object is attained. Why not just go for awareness? This assumes awareness is not something already present. Why do we not know or feel that awareness is present? Ignorance. What is the cure for ignorance? Self-knowledge. Why does it always come back to self-knowledge? Because it is the answer to any and all problems.

Why isn't self-realization the end? Because there will still be suffering for the *jiva* if the *jiva* doesn't self-actualize. What does self-actualization involve? Applying self-knowledge in every moment. This includes when a desire arises. Instead of automatically chasing the desire, ask yourself: What do I hope to attain by chasing this desire? The answer will be happiness (which translates into the brief experience of reflected awareness).

So the final answer should be: I don't need to chase this desire because I'm already awareness. The experience of awareness that I'm seeking is already here.

Ted: If by the "experience of awareness" you are referring to the understanding that the true nature of reality is non-dual, and therefore all experience – no matter what its energetic quality may be – is essentially nothing other than awareness, then yes, your statement is correct. Be perfectly clear, however, that any discrete experience of awareness is but a conditioned reflection of pure awareness appearing in the subtle body or mind.

Eric: Why don't I feel it? Because *rajas* and *tamas* are apparently obscuring the *sattva*, or peace and contentment of awareness.

Ted: Along the lines of my previous comment, be clear that the *sattvic* feeling of peace and contentment is only reflected awareness. Though a *sattvic* mind is the springboard to the assimilation of self-knowledge that comes as a result of the *akhandakara vritti*, the thought of limitlessness, appearing within it, *sattva* itself, is simply the purest and subtlest of the three

energetic constituents of which all objective phenomena, both subtle and gross, are comprised, and as such is nothing other than an object itself. Pure awareness is simply the limitless, undifferentiated “light” in which all objects appear and by means of which they are known. Thus pure awareness has no defining attributes, qualities or characteristics. It is non-objectifiable, and hence not available for experience as an object. It is simply the existence, or “field” of being, in which all objects obtain. I, awareness, know myself simply by virtue of the fact that I am.

Eric: We can't (and don't want to) completely get rid of *rajas* and *tamas*, but if there are excessive amounts of these *gunas*, we won't feel the peace and contentment of awareness; we will only experience what *rajas* and *tamas* deliver. And we all know what they deliver! So here's to self-knowledge and the peace and contentment it brings if the *jiva* chooses to ignore the siren song of desires.

Thanks, my friend.

~ Peace, Eric