

Denying the World Denies the Self

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Ram: Dear Franklin, I am sorry that our relationship has deteriorated. We are not communicating in a positive way. The good news is that we are still communicating. This may be my last letter to you, depending on your reply. I am not writing as your teacher. That relationship no longer obtains. I am just telling you this to help you move forward.

I know that you are a very dedicated student of Vedanta and I will put our argument in the context of scripture. If you still cannot accept what is said, then you can argue with the scripture. The bad energy started when I suggested that our relationship suffered because you confused *satya*, the self, with *mithya*, the apparent self and the world.

Chapter XV of the *Bhagavad Gita* talks about two selves, the *kshara purusha* and the *akshara purusha*. The *akshara purusha* is pure awareness. This you have realized. The second self is called the *kshara purusha*. It is known as *avyakta*, the unmanifest. At first glance it may seem that this just refers to the causal body, to ignorance, and the storage place for the effects of ignorance, the *vasanas/samskaras*.

Kshara means “changing.” So this self is awareness as *mithya*, the apparent reality. If you just take it to mean the causal body and dismiss it as only apparent you are missing an important lesson. It is not wrong to dismiss it as apparent when you are trying to realize the self. It is essential to dismiss it as not-self to break your attachments to things so that all your attention can flow to contemplation of the self. But once you know the self it is important to revisit the not-self teaching because it contains the key to the next step. It is wrong to think that when you know the self you know everything that needs to be known and dismiss everything as only apparent. Why? Because *mithya* IS *satya*. The world and the objects in it are the self. So by dismissing the world you are disrespecting yourself – even as you live in it. When you dismissed my thinking in the email before last you were making a mistake. This is why I said you were superimposing *satya* on *mithya*, the real on the apparent. I wanted you to relate to the thoughts I was presenting in a dispassionate way, not to just blow them off and think that your statement was as good as mine. It is true from the level of awareness that everything is equal, but from the perspective of the apparent reality nothing is the same as anything else. This argument is taking place in the world, which is where we are.

It doesn't matter if I am the self or Ram or your *guru* or your friend or a father surrogate – or whatever. You are not right nor am I right. I long since realized that I would rather be happy than right. I am only interested in love, getting love from the people in front of me and giving love to those same people. I have found that being right is a sure way to kill love. So when you communicate you should keep in mind what your real purpose is. It is very easy to win any argument by bringing in the self or scripture or dismissing it all as *mithya*. Nothing is gained by it – assuming that what we want from each other is love, love being awareness as it moves from object to object.

The average seeker is so concerned with realizing the pure self that he or she does not realize there is still something left to realize once the pure self is known. But knowledge of the pure self

is basically useless without the apparent reality. It is intended to make life in this world joyful and easy. If you think self-realization is the end then it makes sense to stop eating and die because there is nothing more to know, nothing more to do here. Sometimes *yogis* do this, at least they did in the old days. Now they realize the value of the world and go to America to make money or molest spiritual women. ☺

But the person lives on once the self is known. Life is full of people. So the knowledge should be good for something here, apart from keeping the ego out of trouble. Obviously it didn't work too well to keep our egos out of trouble in this situation. This is not the outcome that either of us would have wanted had it been up to our egos. Actually, I was never angry with you. I was both perplexed at first and irritated because we could not communicate.

In any case the purpose of this letter is to point out the value of *mithya*. The value in *mithya* is the value of *satya*. But when unconscious forces are operating and not owned, it is easy to dismiss the world and the people in it. Why would they be dismissed if they are actually you?

Life has not been going well for you and you have been distracted, and I think it caused you to miss the love I have for you. Love is actualized awareness. It is awareness filling life with meaning. I was surprised that you could no longer feel my love, because you have been feeling it for many years now. Why are we here in this world if not for love? I write this for love. The words are love in the form of knowledge.

When you think you are enlightened you need to be very careful. In fact it is better to stop thinking you are the self, that you know the self, etc. It is best to go back to what you left when you started seeking the self and pick up there and forget that you ever sought anything. Everyone is the self; it means nothing. After I realized I got off the plane dead broke and started scavenging for trash on the street, I had to feed myself. I went back to being Jim and let the knowledge work unconsciously in the background as I lived my life and went through the experiences that *Isvara* had in store for me. What I am now is the result of living in the world as Jim.

Please don't say you don't need a teacher. You need a teacher. Life is just beginning. Your enlightenment only got rid of the wrong thought you had about yourself. The teacher you need is life and it will teach you what you need to know. It will grind away your sense of intellectual superiority. Having a good intellect does not make you superior to anyone. You will learn what love is.

We are all the same as awareness, but in *mithya* we are not all the same. You are not superior to me. You have what I have, but you lack the one thing that makes a real difference: the maturity that comes from properly assimilating life's experiences.

In the end we are all the self. So for me nothing ever happened. A small drama took place and hopefully lessons were learned. You were you before we met and you were you before you started seeking the truth. And you are you now. A wave of unkind thoughts washed over the mind and caused a few small events to wash over the surface of life, leaving everything as it always was.

~ Love, Ram