

# ***Dharma* Does Not Mean Identification**

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2014-03-27

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1162>

**Trent:** Hello, Ted. Here's hoping things have been going well for you.

Things have seemingly been progressing well with inquiry, with the usual fluctuations of viewpoint between awareness and the "subtle body." Some thoughts have arisen of late, and I wanted to run this by you for your perspective. Recently there was a patient who had to do home-dialysis. Hearing of the complexities and demands of this prompted the thought as to the *dharma* regarding this gross body. It prompted the thought, faced with that, I question whether I would seek the treatment as opposed to letting *karma* take its course without intervening since the source is *Isvara*.

**Ted:** I understand where you are coming from but the inclination to undertake medical treatment is equally prompted by *Isvara*, or we might say just as well, God's will in action. From an ultimate perspective, it is true that the gross body doesn't matter, that it is simply an appearance within the ambit of you, awareness, but that doesn't mean that it is a "throwaway" from the perspective of the apparent individual person. Obviously, a body is required in order for the apparent individual person to be an apparent individual person. Though the gross body is not you, pure awareness, you as reflected awareness in the form of the subtle body are its custodian for as long as its associated *prarabdha karma* obtains, that is, for as long as the *vasanas*, desires and fears slated to play out through the vehicle of the present mind-body-sense complex, remain unexhausted. As its custodian, you do have a certain *dharma* to uphold regarding it. In other words, you need to see that its basic requirements for survival are met. In this regard, your doubt concerning maintenance of the physical body is akin to deciding that brushing your teeth is an act with which you should not concern yourself since whatever condition obtains for your teeth is sourced by *Isvara*. While this is true, the fact remains that if you do not choose to brush your teeth, you will sooner or later have no teeth to brush, not to mention the fact that you will also have had to experience the pain, possible financial toll and inevitable inconvenience with regard to eating that is an unavoidable part of the process of losing your teeth. The bottom line is that the apparent individual person should wield the modicum of apparent free will allotted to him or her with common sense. In other words, it is best to remain unattached to the gross body, and the subtle body as well, for that matter, but to nevertheless act in its best interests, so to speak, bearing in mind all the while that the gross body itself is in fact a manifestation of *Isvara* and should be respected as such.

Moreover, though it will seem like it is by means of personal will that you uphold this responsibility, you as an apparent individual person are actually compelled to act by the *vasanas*, which are in turn set into motion by the *gunas*, so from a broader perspective we see that you are essentially acting at the behest of *Isvara*, or carrying out God's will, all the time whether you are aware of it or not. Therefore in the context of the circumstance you describe, you are free to choose what seems "right" or appropriate to you as an apparent individual person, for what truly seems "right" rather than what is simply an egoistic emotional reaction rooted in fear resulting from self-ignorance and the consequent erroneous identification with the mind-body-sense complex is the "program" that is "intended" to run through the vehicle of the particular

apparent individual person you seem to be as determined by his or her associated *vasana* load or *karmic* destiny. In short, any actions one takes to maintain the health of the gross body are not a problem in themselves. It is the motivation behind those actions that is the potential issue. If one remains unattached to the body as well as the results of his or her efforts to ensure its well-being, then those actions are non-binding. If one identifies with the body and acts to preserve it because he or she feels it is an intrinsic part of his or her identity, then simply enough he or she is not free.

In any case, there is no requirement that you take care of the gross body with which you as awareness are associated in any particular way. There are *dharmas*, or physical laws, that govern the operation and health of the body, and therefore if you act in accord with these laws the result will be a healthy body. Thus as an apparent individual person you will experience the results appropriate to the actions you take regarding the body's health. You as awareness, however, remain ever unaffected by any condition obtaining in either the body or the mind.

**Trent:** Also, whether there is still an identification with the gross body would seem to be ultimately tested by something along the lines of a cancer diagnosis. One may be inclined to be brought back to that level by identifying with the "body-am-I" consciousness rather than "I am the witness of the recipient of the diagnosis," in spite of all the work that might've been done up to that point.

This has been something about which I wanted to write you, to hear what you have to say.

**Ted:** Only one who has not yet fully assimilated the knowledge of his or her true identity as whole, complete, limitless, ever-present, all-pervasive, non-dual awareness could be brought back to such an exclusive identification with the gross body. One with self-knowledge will be able to see the experience from both the vantage point of the apparent individual person, which he or she will know is only an apparent entity and thus not suffer as a result of identification with, and that of pure awareness though truly speaking pure awareness has no vantage point since there exists nothing other than itself to view from a particular angle. Hence the one firmly established in self-knowledge will "see through the eyes of the apparent individual person" but will not be bound by that limited viewpoint and will remain, as you say, "the witness of the recipient of the diagnosis."

**Trent:** Thank you in advance, Ted.

~ Love, Trent

**Ted:** Love to you as well.