

Happiness Is Not a Happening

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2013-04-18

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/415>

Sundari: Hello, Weyland, great to hear back from you. I have replied to your email in point form below.

Weyland: Thank you for a great initial email, and an equally great one today. I have been working through James' *How to Attain Enlightenment* and was planning to read that completely before I wrote to you. It had kind of overtaken my life, that part. I'm doing two courses online with Harvard and have even stopped, feeling behind with it. It is all good though.

Sundari: I am glad to hear this, Weyland, especially that you are not feeling stressed about progress. This is very important, as an agitated mind is not suitable for self-inquiry. James' book is probably one of the most important spiritual books you will ever read and definitely one of the best in terms of Vedanta for the Western mind. Remember though, don't skip, take your time, even if it means reading it many times. You have to sign on to the logic from the beginning if you want self-knowledge to work for you. Make sure that you have a good grounding in the qualifications and motivations, which requires a fearless moral inventory. One without blame or judgement! Watch the DVDs too, very important.

This is the foundation, what "stands under you," and if it is not solid self-knowledge will not stick. This is why Vedanta is so insistent on the qualifications.

Weyland: Getting the correct terminology to explain things has not been easy, ha, ha. I'm glad you knew what I was trying to say without going into semantics too much. Thank you for that. I have heard back from Isaiah but not from Paul. Paul focused on taking the importance out of the experience, which is really worthwhile. I'm going to email him after this.

Sundari: Yes, the correct terminology is vital because Vedanta is what is called a *sabda pramana*, meaning an oral teaching tradition. Sanskrit can be confusing, so we try to use as little of it as possible without changing the meaning or the teaching. Some terms have no good English equivalents, so we have to use the Sanskrit. So much misunderstanding, confusion and misinterpretation is a result of incorrect terminology. The other reason this important is that up until now you have spoken and are still speaking the language of experience. If you want *moksa*, you will have to learn a new language, the language of knowledge. Only this will set you free, not experience.

Sundari (from previous email): I am not sure what your *sadhana* has been, other than *reiki*, *yoga* and martial arts.

Weyland: I been doing things like meditating for around 19 years, at times involved with things

like Buddhism. For some time I've gone independent, which has been suitable. Last spring I chanced upon a guy, a millionaire businessman, for a security quote. Straightaway I noticed something was different about him. With my background in energy-type work, I'm quite sensitive to others, emphatically. It turns out he has been on his own search for many years, looking into Vedanta and people like Ramana and even Papaji. He took me under his wing and began to mentor me for free.

The method has been to look inward in meditation. It is a simplified form of even what Papaji taught, if you can even imagine such a thing, ha, ha! This is from where the experiences have come. I've dabbled with some of the Neo-Advaita stuff. I know what James thinks of it. I don't follow any path except my own, to be honest.

Sundari: This is the problem, your spiritual orientation has all been experiential and the teachers you mentioned do not have a valid means of knowledge. They teach experience, not knowledge. Except for Ramana, who taught Vedanta, but because he was not a proper teacher he is often misunderstood or his quotes are taken out of context. Meditation is a good practice for quieting the mind and preparing it for self-inquiry, but it will not set you free of the person, because the one who is meditating, the doer, is still there.

And when the meditator comes out of meditation, the mind may be quieter for a while, but very soon all the same *vasanas* will arise in the mind again. Then you have to meditate again to quiet the mind, and so on and on. We know people who have been meditating for decades and it took them that long to realise that they were getting nowhere. We highly recommend it as a practice to quiet the mind though, but not for *moksa* per se.

Sundari (from previous email): Vedanta stands apart from all other teachings in that it is not a path, it is not about gaining anything. In fact it is about losing something rather close to you, the "person" you think you are. *Yoga, reiki* and martial arts are all great disciplines and no doubt are very helpful in preparing the mind for *moksa*, which is freedom from the experiencing entity, i.e. Weyland. However (and this is a big however), they are all experience-based and herein lies the problem. Vedanta says that only knowledge, NOT experience, will set you free.

Weyland: This has caused some hesitation in me, only because I am used to experience-based with this kind of thing. Still, I am not free, so something is not working. And I am open-minded enough to realize, why would Vedanta not be telling the truth?

Sundari: Definitely the ego will not want to hear this! It just loves experience, it wants the high. And of course it is what you know. As you say though, you are not free, so something is missing. If experience had done the job, you would have been free a long time ago. It is good that you have an open mind because that is a prerequisite for Vedanta. Vedanta is not telling the truth, it IS the truth. The truth is that you are whole and complete, non-dual, actionless, unchanging, unconcerned, ordinary awareness. That is your true nature. You do not have an experience problem, you have a knowledge problem, therefore you do not know this to be the truth and this is why you have suffered. That is all that Vedanta is saying. How can you argue with that?

By constant exposure to the scripture, self-knowledge will remove the ignorance of your true nature and the self, you, will be revealed. As I said in my last email, self-inquiry is just examining the unexamined logic of your own experience. Hear it again, Weyland – and really hear it: as I said, if experience worked for you, you would be free and not writing to me.

Providing the qualifications for self-inquiry are present, these are the stages for self-inquiry:

1. *Sravana*: Listening or hearing the scripture. This requires that you leave everything you previously believed or thought you knew temporarily on the shelf. You can take it back if self-knowledge does not work for you. But for now, leave it on the shelf. This is very important; if you keep comparing Vedanta to all your beliefs and opinions and try to make it comply with them, forget about self-inquiry. It will not work, so go back to whatever you were doing before, as you are not ready for *moksa* if this is the case. Vedanta is a radical teaching, it is counterintuitive. Expect it to challenge everything you thought you knew about Weyland.

It all depends what you want most; if you want freedom and an end to suffering, then this is the only way to achieve that. If you want experience, nothing wrong with that, but then Vedanta is not for you.

2. *Manana*: Reasoning, contemplation. This is thinking about what the scripture is saying, examining the unexamined logic of your own experience. At this point, you look at your beliefs and opinions in the light of what the scripture says, NOT the other way around.

3. *Nididhyasana*: Applying the knowledge to your life, taking a stand in awareness as awareness.

Sundari (from previous email): The self, although it gives rise to all experiences, itself does not experience anything and does not feel like anything, which is why it is very difficult to describe.

Weyland: Isn't that the truth!!! Ha, ha!

Sundari: Yes, it is funny, is it not! *Maya* has played a joke on all of us and deluded the self into believing it is small and limited, it has made the impossible possible. Not only that, *maya* makes it impossible to know the self as it is, not an object of experience! What a bummer! Thankfully, the self, consciousness, YOU, evolved Vedanta (self-knowledge), which can through dedicated self-inquiry remove ignorance, and the self is thus revealed to be your true nature, setting you free of bondage.

Sundari (from previous email): The problem with this is: this is an experience. All experiences end, so by definition they are not real. Experience is like a time-release capsule; it is meant to deliver knowledge. If the knowledge is not assimilated, it is lost and the one who had this mind-blowing experience is left longing for another experience. Or they can get stuck in *sattva*, stuck in bliss, thinking that this is the Holy Grail. Unfortunately, it is not, unless the knowledge from the experience is extracted and understood.

Weyland: It has been 15 days now. I can see that it does waver slightly at times. There is an interesting time lately. My wife took the kids and left me some weeks ago. They were meant to come back home on Friday, though decided not to. We have an eight-week-old baby girl. My daughter began to verbally hate me. And my son went through hell, as I was not with him. We are very close. The kids were not doing as my wife Sue commanded, so they were all in a bad situation. There was an emergency with my daughter; she had a kind of meltdown, so I went to the town they were in. They have seen such a big change in me that they have all decided to come back home, and we are having such cool, relaxed fun now. Much healing has taken place. What should be a massive drama hardly impacts this experience. In the early days of this current phase, it felt like I was being ripped in two, in a good way. As of today, something else is happening again. It's hard to describe, but it seems to be going deeper. Boy, that is a poor way to explain things. There is a cessation of thoughts, for a time. The pleasure in the meditation is becoming so intense. Almost too intense. My heart beats really fast and it seems I have been on the brink of passing out a few times. Are things meant to be like this?

Sundari: It is clear that you are having an experience of the self, which has helped to calm the mind; your *vasanas* are thus not as binding as they usually are. Weyland is in a *sattvic* state and not so identified with the person and his likes and dislikes. The pleasure that he is getting from meditation has become like a drug, it feels so good. You can see the problem here. If you do not gain the knowledge of what is really happening "to" you (who?), this state will wear off and the *vasanas* will be back, Weyland will be back, because the doer/experiencer is still there. You need self-knowledge to assimilate what is "happening" to Weyland.

Remember that awareness, your true self, is limitless. This means it does not modify to anything and is not modified by anything. As the apparent person (called the *jiva* in Sanskrit), you believe that you are limited and small. All action as a *jiva* is therefore limited, so it follows that something that is limited will not achieve an unlimited result. No action will result in an unlimited result except for self-inquiry. Self-inquiry into the true nature of Weyland is also an action. However, self-inquiry is capable of giving an unlimited result because the result of self-inquiry is self-knowledge, which sets you free of the doer.

Weyland: I know nothing of Vedanta, so any advice is really welcome. It is clear why folks can become stuck in this.

Sundari: My advice is to start self-inquiry from the beginning and follow the instructions I gave you above.

Weyland: Although what Weyland might have liked no longer applies, I'm not sure if I am using wrong words, but the truth wants to go further with this. There is a passion to do so. I am not sure exactly why.

Sundari: Good, you are objectifying Weyland; excellent. His likes and dislikes are the *vasanas*, which is a Sanskrit word meaning "deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour," or "your" conditioning. These *vasanas* are governed by the *gunas* (which are what make up the field of existence; we call it the *dharma* field) and are underpinned by what you value or do not value.

They are what keep you stuck in the wheel of *karma*, the whirlpool of *samsara*, of suffering.

Self-inquiry, in contemplating the true nature of the apparent reality, will reveal fully to you that Weyland is an object known to you; he is not real, “real” being defined by “that which is always present and never changes,” remember. Only you, the one who knows Weyland, is real. Your words are a bit obscure, but I understand what you are really saying, which is what is important.

Weyland has suffered a great deal and wants an end to the suffering. He is ready to be free of Weyland; this is why he is “passionate” about finding different answers now. The “why” is that Weyland is really the self under the spell of ignorance and wants to know itself as the self, not bound by or to anything.

Weyland: I mean, folks chase enlightenment all their lives.

Sundari: Yes, and those who chase it seldom find it, because the one who is doing the chasing is it. I have a friend who has a great sign in his study: “I have gone off to look for myself; if I should return before I get back, please keep me here.” ☺

How can you gain something you already are? You can only lose something you are not: the false notion that you are bound to objects and need them to complete you, that you are limited and small, hopeless and helpless.

Weyland: Now something is happening it does not seem important at all, not really. Still, there is a passion to go further, with fervour, maybe a burning curiosity, innocent-like. Oh, all my thoughts and actions are like this now.

Sundari: Nothing is happening, that’s the point here. Freedom is not a happening. It is freedom from the need for anything to happen, because you know that you are the happiness. The burning fervour is an important qualification for *moksa*, and you will need to stoke that fire because it will help you go the distance when the mind does its best to trick and delude you into believing this is all nonsense, which it always tries to do. That is the nature of *maya*. The innocence you have is the real nature of the mind, of who you really are; it is *sattva*. It is purity of mind, a very big must for self-inquiry to stick.

Weyland: I suppose the bliss is nice. Well, yeah, it is, but it seems incidental. I assume that is good to view it like that.

Sundari: The bliss is nice, but it can also be a trap that keeps you stuck. Vedanta calls this state the “golden chain” of *sattva*. It feels so good, but it is still a chain – and it does bind you. Also, it is incidental and not necessary for *moksa*.

Weyland: Though I don’t say it to pander, the truth says it. There is a feeling of something else, something new. The more I am aware of awareness, it is as if my body expands outwards, merging with reality. I suppose that one might fear to lose their identity once that happens, yet

there is no fear. It seems so natural for this to happen. There is no forcing of it, just a knowing.

Sundari: The “feeling of something else” is awareness, you, and it is completely natural. As the person, or the doer in the apparent reality, we have normalised the abnormal to such an extent that abnormal is normal. It is so weird that Vedanta is such a stretch for most people because it is the only thing that is normal. Everything else is a distortion of the truth. The body feels like it is expanding because when self-knowledge starts working, there is a lessening of body-orientation, objects flatten out and one really feels “one” with everything. It can be scary for the ego and it often interprets this negatively and reacts with fear. Of course it does fear the loss of identity, which is a real fear for the ego because the person you previously thought yourself to be will be negated.

Once the ego realises that this does not mean that it has to go, it relaxes. There is no need for the ego to go, because it is just an object; you are the knower of the ego. What changes is that you are no longer an ego trying to experience the self, you are the self apparently experiencing the ego, or Weyland.

Moksa requires that the binding *vasanas*, the conditioning that runs the mind, be rendered non-binding. This is because the *vasanas* agitate the mind, so they have to be non-binding if you want to be free of the mind. This does not mean that you have to perfect the person, please note. It is the understanding that you are not the person, and loving the person just as they are, because their conditioning is a result of the *gunas*. They never made themselves the way they are. If they could be different, they would be. And then from this standpoint adjusting lifestyle in order to manage the *gunas* for peace of mind.

Weyland: Yes! I am in contact with you in order to make sense of all this. That feels true and right. It is almost as if this body had better die rather than carry on with how things were!

Sundari: If you are ready to die, you have come to the right place! You are now ready to learn what it means to really live, and live free.

Weyland: Yes, please, that would be cool!

Sundari: Great, I will email him and ask him if he would like to communicate with you. I am sure he will. His name is Otto, and he is awesome! He looks not a day older than 60, totally positive and very funny. We adore him. ☺

Sundari (from previous email): This is the problem with these powerful epiphanies, they can be a blessing or a curse, depending on how one assimilates them.

Sundari (from previous email): We also know an 83-year-old man who had the same kind of epiphany at 21. It disappeared after a few months and he spent the next 60 years of his life exploring every nook and cranny of the “spiritual world” trying to find it again. He said that he would not recommend it to anyone! His search did make him highly-qualified though, and at

80 years old he met James and finally and permanently realised his true nature as the self and set himself free. I can put you in touch with him, if you so desire.

Sundari (from previous email): You are in *savikalpa samadhi*, which is seeing as the self sees, that everything is non-different from you, it all arises out of you, but you are free of it.

This is non-dual vision and it feels intensely good, although feeling is not a good way to describe it. It just feels normal, because this is what is normal. While you are in this state, *maya*, or ignorance, no longer has you, the self, under its spell and you see clearly. But, unfortunately, sooner or later you will come out of this state and Weyland will be back.

Weyland: I can go with this for sure. It is clear it is something different. I had to look it up because I don't know the term. It's not important though. The experience is cool and is important, I guess. A little attention is on what is beyond, and knowing Weyland is blind, I am learning to crawl.

Sundari: The meaning of *savikalpa samadhi* is not important and it is just how I explained it: it is a state of mind where everything is seen as non-different from you, but you are aware of this, meaning the mind or thought is still there. *Nirvikalpa samadhi* is also a state, but one where there is no thought at all and you are only aware that you were in it by inference when you come out of it, like the deep sleep state. Neither *savikalpa* nor *nirvikalpa samadhi* nor deep sleep produces *moksa*. The reason I give you the technical info on these states is so that you can understand that they are common – and not important as an experience. After all, who has not slept? If no-thought produced enlightenment, *moksa*, then everyone would be enlightened because everyone has slept. It's the same with *savikalpa*: unless the knowledge "I am awareness" is retained, it can be a tantalising and frustrating tease.

Yes, it is true what you say, Weyland is blind. It is not the eyes that see. He can only "see" because the light of awareness illumines the mind, making sight possible. Awareness does not see either. What is there for the self to see? There is only awareness, the transparent witness of the one who sees.

But answer this: If you know that Weyland is blind and learning to crawl, are you Weyland? Are you blind and learning to crawl?

There is no "beyond this," because this is not really a journey from one place to another. It is realising that you are and always have been present and unchanging. Nowhere to go, nothing to do, just understanding.

Sundari (from previous email): This happiness and bliss you are "experiencing" is the bliss sheath, *anandamaya kosa*. Read up on the sheaths in James' book *How to Attain Enlightenment* which, if you have not read, is a must. (We insist on people reading it if they want us to help them effectively.) This bliss is called *ananda*, and it is experiential and therefore does not last, even though the nature of the self is *sat-chit-ananda* – awareness, existence, bliss.

Weyland: I have this and will keep studying it. Thank you.

Sundari: Don't study it, Weyland; that is the doer talking. Expose your mind to the scripture, contemplate it and let self-knowledge do the work for you. I know it sounds like a doing, but it really isn't. Vedanta is not a course you take, something to learn and get "right." It is about you.

Sundari (from previous email): *Anantum* is the bliss that you intuitively want to find "beyond" the bliss you are currently experiencing. You must intuitively know that what you are experiencing is going to end, which it will.

Weyland: Yes, I do feel this. I don't care though. I have glimpsed something different, the truth, albeit a reflection. It is enough for me to know the further journey will bear fruit.

Sundari: You have glimpsed the self, you. The fruit is self-knowledge and the journey is not a journey – you can't go anywhere, because there is nowhere that you are not. The reflection will "take you to the source"; all you have to do is turn around and see who it is that is casting the reflection, YOU. The source is right there, there is no separation; the self-luminous light that knows itself and needs nothing in order to shine yet illumines all things.

If you are ready for truth, you have come to the right place. This is the placeless place where you have always been.

Sundari (from previous email): It is not a contradiction that you are writing to "me." As I said above, Weyland is a name that refers to the self under the spell of ignorance, seeking freedom from the bondage of ignorance. This is why you are writing – to yourself. The self wants to understand and assimilate what it is experiencing.

Weyland: Perfectly true! You are spot on with this!

Sundari: Yes, but it is not me that is right here. Vedanta is not my truth. It is the mirror that you, the self, are looking into and seeing that the light is you.

Weyland: Thank you, I keep studying this.

Sundari: Don't study it; see above.

Weyland: Okay, they may be interesting in some way, but are no big deal, and not important.

Sundari (from previous email): To do this one needs a thorough understanding of how the apparent reality/*dharmā* field, or macrocosmic mind, functions. I have attached a very brief email I wrote to an inquirer on this very important teaching. It is called the *Isvara-jiva-jagat aikyam*, which means the identity between pure awareness, awareness operating *māyā*

(*Isvara*), the individual (*jiva*) and the world (*jagat*). It also describes how the *gunas* govern the apparent reality.

Sundari (from previous email): The number of seekers who have had mind-blowing epiphanies (James included) is legion. Not many gain permanent self-knowledge from them. More often than not, they are not understood, so become more of a hindrance than a help. What is very important to understand is that these kinds of experiences are not necessary for enlightenment.

Sundari: Great, you have got that right.

Weyland: Thank you for your help and support! It means a lot.

~ Warmest wishes, Weyland

Sundari: You are very welcome, Weyland. It is lovely chatting to you, self to self. ☺ And it is an honour to hold up the mirror for you, because you are me!

I am very happy to engage in further discussions about this, so please feel free to write any time! Much love to you too.

~ *Namaste*, Sundari