

Ignorance Fades and Rips – Doing Happens

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David: Again, thank you for your last correspondence with me. Here's an update:

I am reading *The Essence of Enlightenment* slowly and daily. I'm on Chapter V, and am listening to James in the car, from YouTube through the Bluetooth as I drive as well. And I drive about 40,000 miles a year, so it's a lot of good quality-time.

Sundari: Hello, David, good to have your update and happy to hear that self inquiry has become your primary focus.

David: There are points where my thoughts feelings actions or words just drift away, and I just stay there and there's no pull from anyone, anything including my experiential *jiva*-self. It doesn't happen when I'm active, but I am most complete there. Then there are times when I just know I'm not my thoughts/feelings/actions/words/body/thing, but they are doing things and there's a faded pull from them although they are there. Then I go back to being the subtle body-mind thing again, that annoyingly controls me completely, although a lot less often. And it goes back and forth.

Sundari: The process of "tuning in and out of awareness" (or flipping backwards and forwards between the self and *jiva* perspectives) is quite common for most inquirers. It can go on for months or years, there's no telling. When the mind is continually exposed to the scripture, self-knowledge starts the process of dislodging ignorance from lifetimes of accretions in the mind, which are kind of like the slow piling up of sedimentary rock. Ignorance is hardwired, and there is no rushing the process, because this is no easy task. Of course one is never "in or out of awareness," because awareness is prior to and beyond space and time, but we have to have a starting point for the purpose of self-inquiry. The way you use the words "me," "my" and "I" indicate that you are discriminating increasingly as the self, although apparently not all the time. For instance, you say "controls me completely." Who would you be referring to? Awareness can never be controlled, only obscured by ignorance. Only the mind, or *jiva*, can be controlled by ignorance. Every time you hear yourself using the words "me," "my" and "I" press "pause" and ask yourself which I is talking here. Does it refer to the *jiva* identified with the body-mind, the *jiva*, who knows it is awareness but does not know what it means to be awareness (indirect knowledge) or is it the *jiva* that knows it is really awareness and knows what the means (direct knowledge)? It always one of the three options although it is always the self speaking, either in self-ignorance or self-knowledge.

David: It seems that when I'm doing, I'm more lost, and when I'm contemplative, I'm more found. Or when I'm more active, I'm more driven by the causal/subtle/gross bodies, and when inactive, am more awareness, although I know all is awareness.

Sundari: Here the way you use the word “I” refers to the doer – the one who contemplates, is found or acts. Awareness does not contemplate, is never lost and never acts. When the mind is controlled by the “I am doing or have to do” thought, it is completely extroverted, turned away from the self, towards objects. When it is still and contemplative, it is turned inwards, towards the self. The aim is not to stop doing, because that is not possible – the *jiva* will experience and do until the day it dies. The aim is to neutralize the “I am doing/have to do” thought. As a beginner, the practice of *karma yoga* (the consecration of all action to *Isvara* with the knowledge that the results are not up to you) lessens the pressure of the *vasanas* and the weight of doership. It is the most important of all spiritual practices. But the longer *karma yoga* is practised, the more it becomes just pure knowledge. No matter what one is doing, contemplating, meditating or acting in the world (even not doing is a doing), doing arises from the knowledge that you are not the doer. Doing happens. You could be very busy doing whatever you need to do or sitting in silence meditating, dispassionately observing the doer doing or meditator meditating/contemplating. Nothing touches you, awareness.

David: Is it correct to say that there’s experiential awareness, where awareness takes the form of the thoughts/feelings/actions/words/body, versus awareness, which is more of an observer of experiential or immersion awareness, where all the nonsense is no longer there?

Sundari: This statement is not very clear, but yes, in essence, if I understand you correctly. Awareness plus thought is experience. Awareness minus thought is the observer, awareness. Awareness does not think or act but makes both possible. No experience can take place without awareness, but awareness is not the experiencing entity. It is the knower of the experiencing entity, is unmodified by the experiencing entity and sees the experiencing entity as itself. “All the nonsense” is the mess the mind is in when it is identified with the body-mind and takes it to be real. To be free of the mess means that one has understood the conditioning that runs the mind in light of self-knowledge and is no longer in bondage to experience (identified with the body-mind). Remember that freedom is the ability to discriminate you, awareness, from the objects that appear in you. As I pointed out to you in our last exchange, objects whether gross or subtle (likes thoughts and feelings) are anything other than you, awareness.

David: I seem to be in three states.

Sundari: You are never in any state, David. As awareness, you are the knower of the three states, but you are never “in” any of them. They are in you. The three states are waking, dreaming and deep sleep. All states of mind take place in time and end in time, and have no bearing on you, awareness.

David: Although in my doing – the pull of the causal/subtle/gross bodies seems to have faded, sort of like a pair of jeans originally bright dark blue but after 100 washes the fabric has faded to light blue and is starting to rip.

Sundari: Good analogy, in a way. The fabric of ignorance rips and fades with the constant application of self-knowledge to the mind. It is the best detergent! Now, if you had said “although

in doing” instead of “although in MY doing,” you would have been closer to the truth.

David: Also, there are times when the inside of my chest area talks to me and I talk back to it. There’s a conversation. It happens when I’m more *sattvic*. There were a few times I felt so loved I just cried and cried. These conversations don’t happen more than a few times a day, but what is that? Whatever it is, feels like home. But it’s also not happening all the time either. But there is a strong pull towards this conversation. Do you know what’s going on? Is it moving me closer or further from *moksa*?

Sundari: It is home and it is love loving itself, talking to itself. The chest area or heart centre is a physical approximation for the emotional centre. Vedanta refers to it as the “Cave of the Heart,” where the self is experienced shining in the *koshas*. This love is called *parabhakti* and it is your true nature, meaning consciousness. It is limitless satisfaction – *parama sukka* is the word used in the texts. Tapping into it often brings forth powerful emotions because one is tapping into the nature of the self. Awareness is also called *parama prema svarupa*. *Parama* means limitless; *svarupa* means nature and *prema* is the love that makes love possible. In its presence all other love, which is an effect of *parabhakti*, comes alive. Human or spiritual love no matter how pure is dualistic, a transaction between a subject and an object, a feeling of love, for example. When I know I am awareness, I am *prema*, limitless love. This love is knowledge because awareness is intelligent. *Prema* is permanent when the doer has been completely negated by self-knowledge. It will come and go until self-knowledge has obtained permanently in the mind.

Many inquirers confuse happiness or peace of mind with always feeling blissful. This is a big enlightenment myth. The bliss of self-knowledge is very different from experiential bliss, which is not a feeling, although it often generates feeling. When *moksa* has obtained in the mind one may and usually does feel experiential bliss regularly, but one does not depend on it, because one knows one is the bliss. Experiential bliss is an object known to you, and you are always blissful whether or not experiential bliss is present. In fact you could be sick, in pain and half-dead, broke, jobless or stuck in a situation you do not enjoy but cannot change – and be totally blissful because who you are is not influenced by what is or is not going on around you. You feel blissful regardless of what is going on in the mind.

David: I am practicing *karma yoga*, which is radical acceptance to me: try to effect change, perform actions to do so, but when my doing doesn’t work out accept it as the will of *Isvara*.

Sundari: Correct, but accept all results, “good” or “bad,” as the will of *Isvara*. True freedom comes from seeing all results as equal.

David: I am practicing *bhakti yoga*, which is radical unconditional love to me, although it seems the two *yogas* overlap.

Sundari: You are right. *Karma yoga* is really *bhakti yoga* because one consecrates all action with an attitude of gratitude and devotion to *Isvara*, taking all results as *prasad* – a gift.

David: And I am practicing *jnana yoga*, which is the continual discrimination of the ego (is the ego *jiva*?) from awareness, with a settling into awareness by distancing from the thoughts/feelings/actions/words/body.

Sundari: Excellent. If self-knowledge does not translate into the life of the *jiva*, what point is there to it? Freedom is for and from the *jiva* after all.

The ego is the “I” thought wrongly associated and identified with objects. The technical name for it in Sanskrit is *ahamkara*. The ego is the thought that limitless non-dual consciousness (you) is a limited separate entity called David. This thought gives rise to the idea that you are a doer: the one who experiences, is incomplete and needs objects to complete it. The ego is just a fear-thought. There is no such thing as an ego in reality; it has no existence other than as a thought arising in you, awareness. All egos function in the same predictable way; in fact it can be said that there is only one ego and all *jivas* share it, unless and until they know what their real identity is awareness. Egos do actions to get what they want or avoid what they don’t want. It is programmed thinking and the resulting actions that arise from the playing out of the *guna*-generated *vasanas*; in other words, ignorance.

David: Much love and gratitude towards you and James.

Sundari: You are most welcome, David.

~ *Om*, Sundari