

# KNOWLEDGE OF IGNORANCE REVEALS THE SELF

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## KNOWLEDGE OF IGNORANCE REVEALS THE SELF –

Self-knowledge is the most bizarre knowledge there is. It is so because it is the knowledge of the non-dual nature of reality and of course, of the Jiva seeking Liberation. For all seeking and finding of knowledge to occur, we need two factors; The subject and the object of knowledge. But how can we get knowledge of something which cannot be objectified, cannot be split into two parts so that one part can observe and know the other? The Self cannot be analyzed and much less proved by dualistic thinking, and all thinking is dualistic! Even in the Upanishads, all descriptions of the Self fall short because dualistic knowledge only serves the purpose of knowing Mithya. That explains why most of Janna Yoga teachings pointing to Self alone very rarely is of help in revealing the non-dual nature of the Self to the Jiva.

Moreover, we cannot know the Self because the Self is ever knowing. It is pure knowingness, pure knowledge... It is '*Satchitananda*' ever existent/present and ever conscious/luminous and ever whole/limitless. How can you illumine and see the light, once you know that the light is self-luminous? We would need another mean other than light to reveal the luminosity of 'that' which is the source of all light. We only need to understand! And that is the case with Self-knowledge, it cannot be known because it is the "knower", therefore any effort to know it by a direct approach is an exercise of futility. If we cannot know it directly, how to get to know the Self? Indirectly?

Vedanta scriptures is a methodology which objectifies and analyses Jiva's unexamined experiences to expose, by dualistic logic, Jiva's ignorance masqueraded by knowledge. And what do we mean by Ignorance? Reality is duality. Once, upon examination, Jiva's knowledge is rather proved to be ignorance, and by knowing so the Jiva enjoys for a moment what we call moksha or freedom from ignorance. The freedom from ignorance has allowed the Jiva to appreciate his ever free non-dual nature, which was always ever present.

The traditional Vedanta metaphor of the robe and the cobra brilliantly illustrates this fact. The non-apprehension of the robe as a robe (ignorance) produces a certain distortion of perception and therefore the misapprehension of the robe as a cobra. Only by the mean of sattva (knowledge) the apprehension of the robe as a robe takes place and the cobra 'puffs' out of existence because in truth it was never there in the first place. It was but an appearance produced by the influence of the two qualities of Maya (rajas and tamas).

True spiritual work lies in getting to know one's ignorance, over, and over again... looking at it from all possible angles... until we know exactly what it is. Not that we are obsessed by it, but only because our ignorance of the nature of reality is the only factor apparently concealing the truth. And as we have heard Ramji saying; Ignorance is hardwired, it is hard to die because it is contra intuitive.

The Self is ever Self-realized, ever-present, ever-luminous and we cannot do anything about it. If we think you can get it, find it... let's get over it, because we are already IT. We cannot look for IT because Self is the one doing the looking for... But instead, we can analyze and look for our

ignorance which is a product of Maya and extensively available to be found in our moment to moment experiences of life.

Even to say that the Self can be revealed by the scriptures is not accurate because in truth only ignorance can be objectified and revealed by dualistic logic. The Self is ever revealed as everything... within its attributeless nature lies the potential for all apparent attributes of Mithya. Scriptures cannot reveal the Self but only one's own apparent ignorance and by doing so, the ever-revealed Self shines as a clear and obvious reflection in the sattvic mind of the apparent Jiva. Self-knowledge is direct knowledge because it is the Self appearing as a Jiva, knowing himself to be the only Self there is. But Vedanta's vehicle of Knowledge is an indirect methodology that, by revealing self-ignorance to the Jiva, produces the proper mental condition (sattva) on which, for the first time, the Self as the apparent Jiva, entirely free from Maya's delusional projecting and concealing powers, shines its glory. It is all a function of neutralization of ignorance brought about by pure logic.

A friend: Is it not enough to know the difference between knowledge and ignorance? And why do you use the word "neutralized" rather than removed?

Arlindo: Absolutely, for the advanced inquirer, to know it = to have it neutralized, because the satya-mithya vasana is already well established; a perceived object cannot be me. In every sense, 'neutralized' is a better word than 'removed'. If you only "remove" your ignorance you may end up with the problem of having to find another place to store them.

Knowledge neutralizes ignorance the same way light cancels darkness. Even after self-knowledge grows roots, some of what we could call "remaining of ignorance" may still survive. At that point, to know means to discriminate or separate you from phenomenal objects such as self-limiting thoughts.

Of course the nature of the Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance and therefore we could say that the Jivamukta discriminates himself from both; knowledge and ignorance. But since all Jivas are governed by self-ignorance, the first step is to bring knowledge into the equation so that ignorance may be canceled or neutralized.

The Self is beyond (other than) knowledge and ignorance. To know what ignorance is and to see it in operation is the first step to separate you from your self-limiting thoughts. This knowledge grows roots and fructifies only to the degree of its application against ignorance in operation.

Another friend: I've been thinking a lot about this. Even when the understanding of one's true nature is absolutely clear---this is where the hard work comes in! I've been doing this as much as I can these days and I think it may be paying off.

Just the other day, I was in a situation where I was confronted with my number 1 binding vasana. Ordinarily it would have been a struggle or I would have given in. However, the thought arose that "not giving in to the vasana would result in peace of mind/moksha/freedom/happiness and that would be a better feeling than giving in to the vasana and having to deal with the suffering later on". I remember seeing this thought as clearly as can be. I applied the teachings and did not give in and felt great happiness and peace of mind immediately and it has continued since then. I don't believe that I could have achieved this had I not been meditating on my ignorance and examining it from every possible angle (as you have so nicely written).

Even though I am a firm believer in knowledge (over experience), it occurs to me that the experiential aspect of moksha (feeling of freedom) is so wonderful, that it can be a very useful partner in helping remove some of the ignorance that can persist even after self-knowledge.

Which begs the question, is moksha a natural binding vasana after self-knowledge? .

You also say; “Scriptures cannot reveal the Self but only Jiva's own apparent ignorance and by doing so, the ever-revealed Self shines as a clear and obvious reflection in the sattvic mind of the apparent Jiva.”

So well stated and so true. All that is needed is to remove the veil of ignorance. Everything that remains is the luminous and illuminating Self.

Arlindo: Hello my friend, lovely to hear from you. Self-knowledge is definitely not an experience because an experience is always in reference to an object. A favorable experience is an indirect mean to obtain the sense of freedom you refer to. Experience does not translate in knowledge unless the Jiva exactly knows what he is seeking in the experience. But Self-knowledge radically changes the relationship between the Jiva and the world of experience.

The Jivamukta, once freed from the compulsive tendency to contact or avoid objects (rajas and tamas) will naturally experience a predominance of sattvaguna that will translate as a sense of freedom and satisfaction. It is a vicious circle; more sattva, more discriminating power, more sense of freedom, more sattva and so on. Self-knowledge is the greatest purifier and its power to neutralize one's remaining of ignorance does not stop there. It carries on as one develops more and more confidence in the knowledge.

***“Is moksha a natural binding vasana after self-knowledge?”*** I would not put it this way. Self-inquiry is a knowledge-based vasana with the power to neutralize ignorance-based vasanas. Moksha is the fruitification of self-knowledge. Self-inquiry on the other hand, once well established in one's mind becomes effortless and mechanical... that is what James likes to refer to as a satya-mithya vasana. This vasana has the power to neutralize ignorance to produce moksha. But moksha is not a sort a vasana, but freedom from biding vasanas.

***“All that is needed is to remove the veil of ignorance. Everything that remains is the luminous and illuminating Self.”***

The light of the self is ever luminous and ignorance does not veil it, although I do understand the metaphor. Ignorance's veiling and projecting powers (tamas and rajas) do not need to be removed because ignorance is a byproduct of the misapprehension of the nature of reality. All that is needed is a moment of clear apprehension (sattva) of the truth and that is only possible thru understanding and knowledge, not by removal. Understanding neutralizes ignorance. If it would just remove it we would be left with a big problem; where to keep or store all the ignorance we have removed?