

Love, Mind, and The Grand Mechanism of the Manifest Universe

Ted Schmidt
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Ciao Ted,

I'm happy to hear you got home safe and sound. I assume you went back to work. What a difference your classroom must be to the rooftop in Tiru.

Thank you so much for allowing me to ask my questions, as I have many. I picked out three that are on my mind a lot.

Why is love not a feeling?

Ted: We say love is not a feeling in order to distinguish the true nature of love, which is the self, from emotions like affection and lust, which are objective phenomena arising in the mind and felt as sensations in the body.

The essence of love is identity with the object of love. This can be discovered through contemplation of the experience we refer to as love. When we say we love someone or something (i.e. animal, plant, inert object, event, etc.), it is invariably due to the fact that we feel a deep connection with that object. Often, it is because our mind stops squirming and striving and stressing when we are in the presence of the love-object. Rather than wanting something more, better, or different, we are totally (or at least sufficiently) satisfied for the moment. Consequently the mind stops its incessant nagging, and we drink the bliss of our inner nature, the bliss (i.e., security, peace, happiness) that is our true nature. This translates experientially as a warm, fuzzy feeling, but it is not actually the feeling itself that is the love. The love is the non-dual freedom that is our nature. Thus, we never actually love an object solely for the sake of the object, but rather more fundamentally for the sake of the pleased self, so to speak.

So, while love may be reflected as a feeling, love is actually the attributeless nature of the self.

Gerte: I've been happily humming away the new mantra that you gave. It works well. I've also noticed that I ski better (I'm in Italy now on a skiing trip) saying the mantra. But as my mind is well trained ;-)) the mantra doesn't always seem to be strong enough. Is this a matter of persisting or do you have an anti mind activity booster up your sleeve?

Ted: It is a matter of persistence. As you mention, the mind has been subjected to lifetimes of conditioning. It takes some time to sand away the varnish, so to speak.

The most effective "anti mind activity booster" is to constantly contemplate the teachings of Vedanta. More specifically, practice *atma-anatama-viveka*, the discrimination between the self and the "not self." The more you engage in this discrimination, the more you destabilize the ego (i.e., the I-sense that claims ownership, doership, and enjoyership for itself and get all hung-up over the conditions it thinks is necessary for its wellbeing). Eventually, you will know beyond a shadow of a doubt that despite the presence or absence of objects and no matter the character of

the objects that do present themselves, your essential nature as the “light” in which those objects appear is ever unaffected. Then, you will know you are free.

Gerte: I'm confused. I understood that on one hand *Isvara* doesn't give a damn if I'm enlightened nor does *Isvara* care about what I do. On the other hand my prayers will (eventually) come out and my actions create karma. So it does matter how I live and act. And *Isvara* seems to manage the whole/ greater good, so *Isvara* does care (in an 'impersonal' way). How can I understand this?

Ted: *Isvara* doesn't care in a personal sense because *Isvara* is not a personal entity. *Isvara* is the personification of the universal order that characterizes the manifestation. That order operates according to the law of *karma*, the nature of which is an impersonal and inviolable chain of causes-and-effects that inevitably and infallibly yield a result for every action that correlates with the intention that informed the action. Moreover, the operation is governed by a vast array of physical, psychological, and ethical laws (*dharmas*) that determine the character of the effects of any and all actions. These laws constitute the design of the grand mechanism of the manifest universe and serve to maintain its overall wellbeing. Therefore, actions that accord with these natural laws produce effects that we generally deem positive (i.e., they are pleasurable—at least in the long run—and contribute to the wellbeing of the total) and those that violate them lead to effects we generally deem negative (i.e., they are painful—at least in the long run—and detract from the wellbeing of the total). As the personification of these governing laws, *Isvara* is the *karma-phala-datta*, the giver of the fruits of action, but not in a personal sense. *Isvara* simply yields the inevitable results of whatever actions are perpetrated within the scope of its being. Thus, the way you act does matter in the sense that your actions will inevitably produce result that are in keeping with the nature of the actions. The results, however, are not determined by the personal agenda of some cosmic “father,” but rather are simply the impersonal effects produced by the design of the system.

Gerte: I'm sending you bright light and fresh air from the Italian mountains. Be well!

Gerte

Ted: Hope that helps clarify matters. Have a blast in the mountains, my friend!

All the best,

Ted