

Maya Fools Us All

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2017-03-29

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3214>

Claire: For years now I've been figuring out many things about the Self, ignorance, etc.

Daniel: The Self is ordinary, actionless, non-dual, limitless awareness. You are the self. The Self is not something other than you. We call this understanding self-knowledge. The opposite of self-knowledge is self-ignorance. Ignorance does not mean stupidity – even though it may often cultivate stupid ideas. Ignorance simply refers to the universally innocent act of ignoring one's true nature as limitless awareness and instead mistaking yourself to be a limited identity (*jiva*).

Claire: Often teachers speak of getting rid of the ego or mind. But I felt resistance to that. I couldn't find a reason to be rid of the mind; in fact I feel a simple, very subtle love for this *jiva* and all of its parts, and all that are other *jivas*, forms.

Daniel: I like how you've objectified the *jiva* by saying "this *jiva*." Good for you! This already demonstrates Vedantic Discrimination 101. Who's the knower of "this *jiva*"? You, awareness. The *jiva* is an object that appears to to you.

Exactly – it's not a matter of getting rid of the ego or mind but rather just getting rid of the notion that "I am the ego" or that you are limited by the mind. In other words, though the ego/mind exists, you know very well that you're not it. Thoughts are not the problem. The problem only arises by a misidentification with the thoughts.

If you know the thoughts, then are you your thoughts you? Of course not. You can't be something that you know. Continue to discriminate yourself (awareness) from the thoughts (objects) that appear to you. You, awareness, are always free from what you know.

Claire: This personality makes me function in the world. Perhaps I function badly or at least very bumpy, sloppy, etc. but "it," me, or however one could formulate, isn't wrong. It, or I, feel ignorant most of the time and limited to frustrating degrees.

Daniel: Actually, you are not the personality, nor are you subject to any type of function. You are the awareness that knows of the personality (person) and life's function. Identification with/as this limited personality will of course result in frustration. This misidentification is the crux of suffering.

But if the above is a little too subtle, then here's another view that you could apply:

Your *jiva* functions perfectly because it's a piece of *Isvara* – the already perfectly functioning Total. *Isvara* is a perfectly set up, self-equilibrating program that takes care of itself. In other words, *Isvara* has always and will continue to take care of your *jiva*'s functioning (*prarabdha karma*).

Simply acknowledge your *svadharma* (“personal functionhood”) and do your best. What’s there to worry about if everything in the apparent reality has, is and will continue to always follow its program? Love your *jiva* and take it easy.

Claire: But to try and get rid of “ego” made it worse.

Daniel: The ego trying to get rid of itself sure is a joke. Of course this made you feel worse because it’s an impossible task. The only thing to get rid of is the notion that “I am the ego.”

So instead of identifying as the limited person (ego) your attention shifts to your true identity as limitless awareness, the knower of the person. When self-knowledge is firm the ego merely appears as an object known to you. And the understanding that “I am always free from objects” in return offers a sense of total relaxation and peace. We call this *moksa*.

Claire: So I started exploring ignorance, and although it hurts like hell sometimes, it also is in its own way nothing but love in essence. I can easily see how my personality is just a kind of stuff, let’s say, that simply is what it is. As such it’s not a big deal, yet hyper sentient and open to pain, joy, deep thought, etc.

Daniel: Yes – this is a non-dual reality and its essence is nothing but love. You are this love.

Claire: However, I want clarity to “gain” and confusion to go, or stop being a problem.

Daniel: This will gradually occur as you continue to apply the teachings of Vedanta. Though the knowledge does the work – your job is to make sure that the mind is qualified to reflect clearly on the teachings. Here’s a [link](#) that explores the topic of qualifications.

Claire: I see everything as *maya*, and yet it seems to be *Isvara*, or the perfection of what “limits” can be, the end of a limit, where the chair stops and the table begins, where one experience stops and another begins it is all all right, fundamentally, whatever I feel or think of it.

Daniel: Keep it simple: *maya* and *Isvara* can be seen as the same thing. Both are just terms describing the play/projection of the three *gunas*. Here’s another [link](#) that further fleshes out this topic.

Claire: My inner life struggles a lot, so friction – as limit – is still dominant more than reality as such; it truly is. So that is why I write to you.

Daniel: Ignorance is hardwired, don’t feel bad, Claire. *Maya* fools us all.

But the good news is that you’re on the Vedanta bus and it will take you right back home, right

back to your limitless, free self, if you vigilantly attend to your homework by revisiting the qualifications.

The very fact that you've written to me is an encouraging indication that *Isvara's* granted your *jiva* with the ability to qualify itself. Take advantage!

Claire: To sum up: I do not feel any need to kill off my mind.

Daniel: Good!

Claire: I do want it to be as free as possible.

Daniel: Continued application of the teachings to a qualified mind fruits freedom.

Claire: Ignorance isn't bad or evil, but neither is it clarity.

Daniel: Ignorance just means to "ignore one's essence." In other words, to miss the fact that you are already free, limitless, whole bliss.

Claire: My intellect sees through duality; my experiences do not.

Daniel: Duality is experience and vice versa. But I think I get what you're saying.

Experience/duality ain't bad – it's only the attachment to dualistic thinking that causes suffering. You, awareness, are always free from experience – including from the experiential thought called "Claire."

Claire: Mostly I follow the Golden Rule or *dharma* without trying to be a good *jiva*; *dharma* simply "acts" as the best solution in any given situation.

Daniel: Exactly! *Dharma* trumps enlightenment any day. Appropriate action and an attitude of gratitude is the most important thing, ever.

Claire: To myself – however – I am still quit destructive (smoking again, don't do what I love doing, etc.).

Daniel: You will just need to receive the results of this *adharmic* action like a big girl – or just stop like an intelligent girl. ☺

Claire: I cannot say where my mind gets its view correct and where it dreams.

Most of the time I am aware that life is like a lucid dream, *maya*, and I cannot wake up from that, so I bounce back into habits. That I do not like at all. *Maya* is at the same time inner or around me in One – not-two – and so wherever I end or begin is only a matter of perception. How to refine that if doing anything at all does the “trick”?

Daniel: As you continue to apply the teachings of Vedanta everything will become perfectly clear and your mind will be peaceful. But self-inquiry does require work and it should be known that it ain't a quick fix.

Claire: Awareness seems lesser than impulse, so that's the problem I want to solve. Writing you is impulsive already...

Anyway, thanks for reading and have a great day!

Daniel: I'm not so sure of your first statement. But you're most welcome.

~ *Om om*