

Medication and *Moksa*

Ted Schmidt

2016-09-02

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2897>

Dalton: Hello again, Ted.

I (speaking as *jiva*) am on a considerable amount of medication, for the heart, body pains, bad limbs and the brain chemistry. I have chronic depression and bipolar illnesses, so I am on anti-anxiety and antidepressant meds. These conditions arose after I spent ten days with Sailor Bob Adamson in 2005, who had pointers that seemed to work to reveal awareness, but had no teachings for handling *karma*, *vasanas*, etc.

Ted: Yes, Sailor Bob definitely speaks the truth. Unfortunately, as you say, he offers little guidance about the practical steps one can take via self-inquiry and spiritual practices, such as *karma yoga*, devotional worship, meditation and energy management, that will enable one to apprehend the truth of which he speaks. It's basically an "either you get it or you don't" deal.

Dalton: But despite this, I sense the mind is reasonably clear. I am watching *Panchadasi* from Tiruvannamalai 2015 and loving it (I am on video #16 now). It has showed me the ignorance and has cleared up a lot of that. I have no doubt I AM the ordinary awareness, unbound and ever free, yet these *vasanas* continue to arise (of course). And I am for sure not yet free.

Ted: Let's pause for a moment here. You say that you are for sure not free, yet at the same time declare – rightly so – that you are "ordinary awareness, unbound and ever free." The reason I suggest we pause at this point is to give you the opportunity to closely observe and to consciously consider the ramification of these dichotomous statements.

The fact to which your statements point is that you – awareness – are free, while at the same time the apparent individual person you appear to be – or, more specifically, the self-ignorant mind of that apparent individual – is still bound by the notion that the body-mind-sense complex with which it not only is associated but has identified is its true identity and consequently that the condition of the body-mind-sense complex and the character of the experience had through it actually enhances or, as is the case here, diminishes it.

If you examine your experience carefully, however, you will see that while the condition of body-mind-sense complex has changed dramatically over the years and the character of its experience is in continuous flux, you – witnessing awareness, the nature of which is limitless conscious existence – have never changed. It takes a subtle intellect to discern the difference between the "light" that illumines the mind and the experience it illumines, but if you continually contemplate this notion, you will eventually see its truth. Just as the light and the space in which our worldly experiences take place remain unaffected by the events that transpire within them, so the luminous "field" of awareness in which all objects/experiences appear always remains the same.

Dalton: There is also much *rajas* – and also some *tamas* – in the waking state.

Ted: There will always be *rajas* and *tamas* to some degree. Granted, in order for the mind to apprehend its true nature, we want to minimize the relative proportions of these two *gunas* and cultivate a predominately *sattvic* mind (i.e. a mind that is free of binding *vasanas* – that is, a mind that is free of compelling likes and dislikes, desires and fears, that extrovert its attention and thereby interfere with its apprehension of the its true nature.

Dalton: I cannot sleep without Ambien (for sleep) and Ativan (anti-anxiety), which I was given together in hospital after a disastrous crippling fall. Since then they are badly needed. *Vasana*, right?

Ted: Not exactly. *Vasanas* are the impressions left in the causal body from our past experience. These *vasanas* give rise to our likes and dislikes, the desires and fears that arise in the subtle body, which is essentially the mind.

What you are referring to is what is called *punya-papa*, which is the merit or demerit, or the pleasurable and painful *karma*, that has been accrued through past actions – including actions from previous lifetimes. Right now, it would seem, you are experiencing much *papa*, or painful, *karma*. *Karma*, however, belongs solely to the apparent individual person and has no effect on the self. Thus, while this discrimination is difficult to make and, unfortunately, doesn't alleviate the pain of the circumstance, it does eliminate suffering in that the mind realizes that its essential well-being is unaffected by the condition and circumstances of the body-mind-sense complex.

Dalton: What I need to know is related to my first question to you regarding qualifications: will this preclude any possibility for *moksa* in this lifetime? I will keep going as you suggested, but I would like to know if it is even remotely possible to have *moksa* reveal freedom!

Ted: Whether you are on medication, *moksa* is always possible because *moksa* is, truly speaking, your already-existent nature. The only problem is that the mind has other notions. It thinks that the body-mind-sense complex is who you are. Now, there is no doubt that you experience the body-mind-sense complex, but it is not your true identity, for the simple fact of the matter is that you cannot be what you see – the word “see” in this case being code for anything you can perceive or conceive. From the ultimate perspective, it is true that everything is awareness. From the relative perspective, however, no object or even the collective whole of all objects combined can comprehensively define or represent that which is limitless. Thus you are not the person you appear to be. Or, if you like, you are not limited to the person you appear to be. Though the mind cannot “see” beyond a limited range of perception/conception/experience due to its being part of the body-mind-sense complex, its true nature is limitless conscious existence in the same way that the true nature of a wave is water or the true nature of a holographic image is light. If the mind can apprehend this, it is more likely to let go of its attachment to certain objects and/or conditions. And when the mind is no longer dependent on the presence or absence of certain objects and/or conditions for its sense of well-being, then it is free.

So closely observe your experience and see if the experience is you or if you are the “luminous field” in which the experience is taking place. If you can see that just as the images that condition

the light and make it appear to be a holographic image don't actually affect the light itself, so the experiences appearing within the scope of your being don't actually affect the limitless conscious existence that is your true nature, then the mind will realize its already existent freedom.

Dalton: This has been quite hard to write. I suppose I have trouble facing facts!

Ted: That is completely understandable. I honor the courage it takes to honestly address the issues that arise within the psyche.

Dalton: Thanks, as always, for your time and wisdom.

~ Love, Dalton

Ted: Much love to you, my friend.

~ Ted

Dalton: Dear Ted, I did as you asked regarding the two contradictory statements of knowing I am awareness and being not free, and I saw that I have no distinction between *mithya* and *satya*! Pondering that as I watch *Panchadasa* from Tiru (I am on video #65 now) makes it clear that these two statements belonged to these two different "orders of being," and now I can see that when speaking as a *jiva* in *mithya* I would do well to keep my mouth (and keyboard) shut tight.

The ramifications are somewhat scary with regard to attaining (or rediscovering) *moksa*, aren't they? I claim to know the self, yet invalidate it straightaway due to a lack of discrimination.

Ted: Everybody does that initially. The question is whether you can make the distinction between you – pure awareness – and the thoughts, feelings, sensations, etc. arising within the scope of your being. This discrimination is the basis of self-inquiry. If you can make this distinction, then you can see that you remain unaffected by the condition of the body-mind-sense complex and the character of its experience. Once you are able to see this, then the only course of action is to continuously dwell on the teachings and apply them to the best of your ability to every situation of your life. This is the grunt work of self-inquiry, so to speak. The mind is so deeply conditioned to hang its hat on the belief that it is the limited apparent individual that it takes quite a bit of convincing to gradually wear away its conviction. Since the truth is that your essential nature is limitless conscious existence, however, the outcome of the exercise is a foregone conclusion. You will ultimately realize who you are, for only limitless conscious existence will remain when all else has been mentally negated.

Dalton: I understand the concept of being free yet, as you said, this discrimination is difficult to make. I am still concerned that I don't qualify.

Ted: You are qualified. If you weren't, you wouldn't even be interested in making the

discrimination between you and the objective phenomena appearing within you. You wouldn't even consider the idea that you can be free of their binding influence. You can hone the qualifications, but it is best to quit dwelling on the question of whether you are qualified and simply engage in process of self-inquiry through which you will ultimately realize your true nature and consequently gain liberation from the belief that you are limited.

Dalton: I love the teachings though. I can't see any point in stopping so long as I am enjoying learning Vedanta!

Ted: Exactly. In the words of The Grateful Dead, "Keep on truckin'."

Dalton: I understand that I am intrinsically free, open and limitless but my experience differs. I am applying the teachings to my experiences though and sometimes, rarely, I admit, I can see the self as existence-consciousness appearing as experience, thanks to *Panchadasi*... any comments?

Ted: I'm not sure what you mean by "seeing the self as existence-consciousness appearing as experience," for the self is not an experienceable object. While from the ultimate perspective we can say that in a non-dual reality every experience is the self, it is equally true that no particular experience comprehensively defines or represents the self. The self is simply the "light" of awareness in which all experiences arise and by means of which they are known.

Moreover, experientially, the apparent individual you seem to be will always feel limited. The reason for this is that it is the body-mind-sense complex will always have a limited range of experience. Once all objective phenomena have been mentally negated as the self through the logical analysis that constitutes self-inquiry, the mind is able to apprehend the limitless conscious existence that is the substrate of all objective phenomena and experience. But the mind's capacity for knowledge and the body's capacity for action will always remain limited. By analogy, when the wave discovers it is water, it doesn't become the whole ocean. Rather it simply recognizes that as water it shares the same essential identity as the entire ocean. And by extension it understands that no matter what happens to itself as a wave or even the ocean as a whole has no effect on the essential nature of the water of which both are made.

Dalton: Re qualifications, I see myself coming up way short, especially on dispassion, discrimination, surrender to *Isvara* and burning desire for *moksa*. I am a former race car driver, as you know. For us it is all about control. That is just the way I am, apparently. I accept that. And I think it is extremely inauthentic to simply claim I am free when there is little or no evidence for that assertion! Yes, evidently there is a big load of *papa karma* involved... and a severe case of mistaken identity, i.e. I am the body in a deep-rooted belief system. So I am awareness, and I don't know that! ☺

Ted: Along the lines of my previous comment, even after one understands that one is awareness, there are two specific doubts that persist.

The first doubt is *asambhavana*, which is essentially the idea that what the scripture tells us can't be true. Scripture tells us that we are limitless conscious existence, but how can that be? It doesn't seem to make sense. We still look like individuals. We don't know everything. We can't do everything. We wonder how this apparently limited individual can be all-pervasive awareness.

The second doubt is *viparita-bhavana*, which is the feeling that persists that we are the body. We still feel confined within the body and can only perform such actions as are within the body's capacity to perform.

Through constant contemplation of the teachings and the application of *atma-anatma-viveka* (i.e. the discrimination between the self and the "not self"), which is essentially the same as *satya-mithya-viveka* (i.e. the discrimination between the real and the apparent), these doubts are eventually laid to rest. *Drg-drishya-viveka* (i.e. the discrimination between the seer and the seen) is another helpful method of discrimination. It is based on the principle that we cannot be what we "see," in which the word "see" is understood to represent anything we can perceive or conceive. Hence the body-mind-sense complex that is ordinarily taken to be the seer is understood to be only another object appearing within the scope of awareness.

Dalton: I suppose that the "bottom line" is that I am simply NOT healthy. I have two ultimately fatal illnesses, COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder], chronically serious heart failure and damaged limbs; one shoulder has no rotator cup any longer, and I have very limited range of motion in the arms. And legs are quite weak, etc. and likely I don't have all that much time left.

And I often pray to die. Enough already!

I am just too worn out to, as James says, get to work. I barely have the energy to function, never mind put forth the kind of effort I see required to complete this teaching. I have invested a lot in videos and mostly enjoy them, so I'll keep on with those (I am retired, so have plenty of time to watch the videos) but otherwise I am just flat out exhausted and see no viable way to "remove obstacles," as James puts it.

Ted: Removing obstacles is for the most part a matter of reaching the understanding that all objects are limited and none will provide permanent fulfillment. That understanding coupled with the understanding that you are source of the happiness you seek, which is the conclusion reached through the initial analysis of experience that James and I both make in the chapters on "motivations" in our books, over time lays to rest the mind's binding desire for objects and results in a mind that is no longer unduly disturbed by extroverting desires and fears, and is therefore quiet and clear enough to apprehend the limitless conscious existence that is the substrate of all objects/experience and abide in the joyous freedom that is one's essential nature.

Dalton: I sincerely appreciate the time and patience you have demonstrated to "coach" me and I offer you my love and thanks! I'll do my best to see that as awareness I am always the same, and see what happens.

~ Much love, Dalton

Ted: Great approach. Once you encounter Vedanta, there is really nothing else you can do. If you catch a “glimpse” (i.e. apprehend) the truth that Vedanta reveals, you thereafter realize that all you can do is keep applying the understanding until such time as the conviction that you are limitless conscious existence is as strong as the conviction that you were a limited apparent individual once was.

~ Love to you as well, Ted