

Mindfulness? Consciousness Is Ever-Present

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Arlindo: My dear friend, we are all delusional until we come to Vedanta. Moreover, you know “delusion,” while most people live their lives operated by ignorance (the delusional apprehension of the nature of reality) not even suspecting that. Life is but *vasanas* in operation. The work of the inquirer lies in reprogramming one’s own set of *vasanas* – letting the scriptures transform one’s ignorance-based *vasanas* into self-knowledge *vasanas*. Please don’t be depressed, and rejoice in your knowledge and welcome reality into the world.

Realizing the Self as your own self does not depend on your ability or not to stay present to your day-to-day “worldly experience,” because that is simply impossible; you are always present, both as awareness as well as the *jiva* in relation to its objects of experience!

The difficulty lies in the fact that you do not appreciate your common ordinary experiences of life – you somehow expect things to be different than what they are. And that is due to the fact that, on some level, you still think that the self is an object that you wish to experience and enjoy.

It is easy to fall for that mistake and get confused and attached to pleasurable subtle objects of experience, and to end up missing the most obvious fact: every apparent experience is an experience of the self. It is you, always experiencing yourself.

“...no effort is needed to be present!” Yes, you got it right. Consciousness is ever-conscious and ever-present. *Jiva*’s subtle body is a reflector. It reflects consciousness to illumine and contact the world of objects. So, the *jivas* are always doing the job they were designed to do: to reflect and shed the light of consciousness on objects, and fundamentally objects are thoughts.

But what happens with the human *jivas* is that they not ONLY illumine their environment but they interpret it as well. This interpretation (*jiva*’s subjective creation) is going to be a superimposition based on one’s knowledge or ignorance.

Everybody, willingly or not, is always reflecting consciousness (always present). The way people will interpret reality is going to make the difference. When they misapprehend the true nature of reality, they get anxiety – they desire and fear objects, and so on.

When they correctly apprehend the non-dual nature of reality, they relax and enjoy their lives with no anxiety. They experience, peace of mind, love, contentment and a sense of limitlessness.

The meditation on “staying present” (mindfulness) also serves a certain purpose in the spiritual marketplace. People sooner or later will understand the futility of trying to control their attention by an experiential means (the *gunas* cannot be forcibly controlled by *jivas*), and they will eventually develop a value for knowledge.

Yes, you are right when you say that self-knowledge is something “no one can ‘give’ you.” No *guru* will transmit self-knowledge to the student. *Gurus* may transmit energy, and energy may produce all kinds of phenomenal experiences. Self-knowledge has to be earned by the student through his own effort to understand and know.

Sometimes the student may be so ripe that he may understand who he is in his first contact with the teacher/teaching. It is very rare, and in that case it may appear as if the *guru* has given self-realization to the student, but that is not the case.