

# Post-Enlightenment: Facing Down *Isvara*

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**Maureen:** Dear Sundari, wow, thank you both for your reply to my last email! I almost didn't send it because I thought dream analysis was too trivial to bother you with. I printed it out as well as the attachments and have been reading it over and over as it's so chock-full of great information. The support both of you provide is astounding and much appreciated.

**Sundari:** I am glad that it helped, Maureen, appreciation much appreciated. ☺

**Maureen:** At first I was shocked because I thought I was done. I thought the remaining *vasanas* would just play out automatically and the bliss would grow each day. I'm not quite sure even after reading the attachments what the protocol for self-actualization is. Is there a structured application of additional knowledge I need to know and apply or is it a continuation of what I've already been doing, such as self-inquiry?

**Sundari:** Ramji's *guru* Chinmaya always said that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, and this has been my motto for most of my life. The fact is as long as awareness apparently appears as a *jiva* even though it is no longer under the spell of ignorance the *gunas* still function the way they always have and so does *Isvara srsti*. It is possible to be sucked back into *samsara* or for it to creep back like a thief in the night. And it is possible for the ego to co-opt the knowledge. When self-knowledge is firm this is usually not a problem because one of course knows this is happening and can therefore negate it without too much trouble but it takes vigilance to do so. *Prarabdha karma* takes as long as it takes to play out, it is different for everyone. You may well be done and have very little to still work out; only you will know for sure. There are some *samskaras* that are like smoke and disappear upon close investigation; there are those that are like grime on a mirror that with some elbow grease can be removed. And there are those that are like a foetus in the womb, it has to run to term and cannot be forced out.

With self-knowledge comes understanding, and all conditioning dissolves in its light. It is only with understanding that healing takes place. Self-realisation is usually where the real work begins. This is why we emphasise self-actualisation the way we do, because if self-knowledge does not translate into your day-to-day life, what good is it to you? Self-realisation is the easy part. Self-actualisation, which is understanding what it means to be the *jiva* from the perspective of awareness and what it means to be awareness from the perspective of *jiva*, is where all the work is entailed. One cannot understand the *jiva* without the full understanding of the *gunas* and what makes up the *dharma* field: *Isvara*.

The effects of ignorance do not disappear overnight, as they have been lifetimes in the making; ignorance is hardwired and beginningless even though personal ignorance (*avidya*) has been removed. *Prarabdha karma* takes as long as it takes to play out, like the blades of the fan still turn after the fan is switched off. It is not uncommon for the ignorance responsible for the *jiva's* conditioning to take some time before it all "comes to the surface" so that it can be understood

and dissolved in the light of self-knowledge. This does not mean that the *jiva* or its conditioning disappears “post-enlightenment.” The *jiva*’s conditioning is not under the *jiva*’s control as it belongs to *Isvara* and not to the *jiva*. To be free of the *jiva* all conditioning must be understood in the light of self-knowledge.

As peace of mind is your true nature and is therefore the primary goal for awareness no longer under the spell of ignorance (or the *jivanmukti*), there might still be some work to be done on the mind in order to fully render all the binding *vasanas* non-binding. For most inquirers “post-self-realisation,” or enlightenment, this is usually the case. This entails examining everything in the light of self-knowledge: lifestyle and values may require some modification. Some people give up self-inquiry once the self is realised and erroneously believe that, seeing that ignorance is an object known to them and the *jiva* is known to not be real, no further work is necessary.

If binding *vasanas* are not rendered non-binding they will continue to agitate the mind and bind it to objects, so freedom is not that free. There is no way around doing the work unless one is truly utterly dispassionate about the agitation caused by remaining binding *vasanas* and is prepared to live with it.

There is no protocol or additional knowledge for it other than to keep going with your *sadhana*, exposing the mind to the knowledge and observing what comes up for the Maureen. It is careful and dedicated application of self-knowledge on a moment-to-moment basis until all the binding *vasanas* are rendered non-binding.

This does not mean that one has to perfect the *jiva*, because you are fine the way you are – however, if the binding *vasanas* are not rendered non-binding, self-realisation does not equal *moksa*. In general, one feels a gradual increase of peace as the pressure of the *vasanas* is released. If this is not happening then you are not actualising self-knowledge. There is no getting around the truth that your life must serve the truth, not the other way around. There is no fine print to *moksa*; if you want to be free then everything has to come under the uncompromising light of self-knowledge. If the life you are living is not congruent with the truth of who you are you are not free. It is that simple.

**Maureen:** Specifically, since *moksa* when physical pain happens, as I have some dental problems at the moment, I don’t really care about it or add any drama or self-pity to it. I don’t even want to tell anyone about it. It’s like, “Oh, well, body sensations.” I’m not specifically practicing any technique, it just shows up like that.

**Sundari:** Yes, that is a good description of how the self typically reacts to the body and its needs. Obviously, one must do what has to be done to heal it and take care of it because if one does not the agitation is not much fun and does not make for peace of mind. But it feels far away and one does not make a huge song and dance about it.

**Maureen:** Also, a huge, resistant *samskara* showed up a couple of days ago for the first time since *moksa*, interestingly just after the dream I mentioned. The issue involves self-duty, allowing family members to live off us, having poor boundaries and financial drain. There was also a big ongoing conflict with my grandson’s behavior in my house. The difference this time is that I have an absolute certainty that the right thing for all is that they have to leave. When big upsets like

that use to happen I would feel guilt, shame or doubt afterwards. I no longer have any attachment to having their company, as my husband has, and I trust that if there is agitation then there is a violation of *dharma* and things have to change. I was easily manipulated before when someone suggested I could have handled it better or that love always has to be nicey-nice instead of a swift boot in the arse. I feel a rock-solid clarity that this needs to be done. I also noticed that there is no need for me to apologize for who I am in a relative sense.

**Sundari:** Well done! This is absolutely how it is: once the knowledge is firm dispassion makes it almost impossible for others to dupe you or manipulate you because you can identify the *gunas* with no trouble. You will also not take on other people's *dharma*, because serving yourself is as important if not more so than serving others. The *gunas* are so easy to see because they always work together and in totally predictable ways. So you can read people and situations like a book; you will not be fooled by them unless you buy into them, which is unlikely. It can appear to others as though you are cold and detached, unfeeling, but this is just another ploy by the *guna*-driven *vasanas* that run their psychology to hook into other *vasanas*. It is easy to negate and avoid.

**Maureen:** Although I'm handling the *samskaras* differently, as you stated in your last email, I not experiencing bliss but I am experiencing confidence and clarity.

**Sundari:** Enlightenment does not feel like anything and is not dependent on how you feel. It is the bliss of knowledge, which is just the rock-solid confidence that you speak of. One does not "handle the *samskaras*," because the doer doing the handling has been negated. As awareness one observes the conglomeration of *vasanas* that make up the *samskaras* and by applying self-knowledge, allowing understanding to render them non-binding. As the *jiva* you will then see that the *vasanas* no longer condition the mind the way they used to, and when situations arise where you would have reacted in predictable ways you no longer react. And if you do it is for peace of mind and therefore in harmony with your *dharma*.

**Maureen:** As peace of mind is my true nature and is therefore the primary goal for awareness, is there still more work that needs to be done other than addressing things as they appear? Is that what you mean by "facing down *Isvara* and rendering binding *vasanas* non-binding"? Is there a road map? Will there be any discussion in Spain regarding self-actualization?

**Sundari:** The work to be done is the application of self-knowledge to your life on a day-to-day basis, moment to moment, thought by thought. Self-realisation should be the most obvious thing, but applying the knowledge to the mind is the hardest thing you will ever do because ignorance is hardwired and obsessively resistant to change. Yes, this is what I meant by "facing down *Isvara*" in my previous email. The road map is Vedanta and, yes, there will definitely be discussions regarding self-actualisation in Spain. You can tune in to the webinar if you want to take part in it.

**Maureen:** I learned about what house to live in from *The Three Little Pigs*, so I live in a brick house. I learned about *maya* from *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* and I learned about how confounding life can be from *Who's on First?* when your conditioning doesn't allow for the idea

that someone can actually be named "Who." But I learned about self-knowledge from you guys, which trumps all.

~ Much love, Maureen

**Sundari:** Yes, Vedanta is the knowledge that ends the search for knowledge. Much love to you too, Maureen, and I hope that your surgery goes well.

~ Sundari