

Self-Actualization Is More Than the Experience of *Akhandakara Vritti*

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Orion: Dear Ted, after the *akhandakara vritti* has risen and gone, can it be said ignorance is gone? I read that you said so.

Ted: Ignorance is gone in the sense that you have apprehended your true nature as limitless conscious existence, and now know that you are not the limited individual person you appear to be. Ignorance is still loitering in the mind, however, due the mental tendencies to which the mind has become habituated – i.e. the dualistic viewpoint and the erroneous notions of incompleteness, individuality and inadequacy that it has grown accustomed to accepting. These habitual thought patterns have been reinforced by lifetimes of conditioning, so at this point they have coalesced into rigid judiciary panel that is not going to readily give up its established position – especially in view of the fact that all objective evidence (i.e. the apparent dualistic nature of both the “outer” transactional reality and the “inner” subjective reality) supports it.

Though self-realization takes place as a result of the *akhandakara vritti*, *nididhyasana* (i.e. continuous meditation on and application of the teachings to each and every experience of one’s life) is necessary in order to remove every last vestige of ignorance. The reason *nididhyasana* is imperative is that there are two fundamental doubts that almost invariably linger in the psyche even after self-realization has dawned by virtue of the *akhandakara vritti*: *asambhavana* and *viparita-bhavana*.

Asambhavana is the sense that what the scripture says and what the teacher teaches cannot be the truth. Every experience speaks to the contrary. “Reality cannot be non-dual, and the limited apparent individual I seem to be cannot be limitless conscious existence.” Conditioned as deeply as it is to accept appearances, the mind does not readily give up its propensity to believe in the veracity of objective experience.

Viparita-bhavana is the feeling that “I am this body-mind-sense complex.” Even after the apprehension of our limitless nature, we still feel limited by the *upadhi* (i.e. limiting adjunct) of the body-mind-sense complex with which we are associated. By analogy, even though we realize that we are all-pervasive space, the portion of our limitless being that is associated with and even seemingly confined within a particular house can only experience the atmosphere and décor of that particular house and the events that take place within a certain range of exposure to the house. Similarly, though we are limitless conscious existence, the portion of our being that is associated with and seemingly confined with the body-mind-sense complex of the apparent person we seem to be is privy only to the sensations, emotions and cognitions arising within that particular person and the experience of those objective phenomena arising within its range of perception.

Nididhyasana is basically a twofold practice that involves (1) continual application of *atma-anatma-viveka* (i.e. the discrimination between the self and the “not self”) with regard to the experience of objects, which serves the purpose of breaking the identification with the body-

mind-sense complex and the negating the belief that objects are independently existent, and (2) constant meditation upon the fundamental non-dual nature of reality as revealed by the *akhandakara vritti*, which leads ultimately to the appreciation of the content of all forms (i.e. the *adhishtanam*, or substrate, of all *nama-rupa*, objective phenomena) as pure awareness. Though the two aspects of *nididhyasana* work in conjunction and complement one another, in general terms we could say that the continual application of *atma-anatma-viveka* takes care of *viparita-bhavana*, and the constant meditation upon the fundamental non-dual nature of reality takes care of *asambhavana*.

Orion: If so, then what is actualization?

Ted: Self-actualization is when you are as unshakably convinced that you are limitless conscious existence as you are now – or once were – that you are the apparent individual person you seem to be. This conviction is not the result of re-conditioning, but rather the result of having thoroughly negated the reality of every objective aspect of your being and apprehending the self-dependent limitless conscious existence that is the underlying reality of all that is.

Orion: Surely, if ignorance is gone by *akhandakara vritti*, there is no *karma* thereafter, so to speak, so whether we “actualize” or not is up to *Isvara*, which is not real. Or is actualization itself the *akhandakara vritti*? I find it hard to believe there is something “after.”

Ted: As explained, there is something after the event of the *akhandakara vritti*, as the full assimilation of the knowledge has yet to take place. All *karma* is nullified only when the full assimilation of the knowledge (i.e. self-actualization) has occurred. *Sanchita* and *agami karma* are nullified because due to the negation of the reality of the apparent individual, there remains no “doer” to whom the collected *sanchita karma* belongs and no “doer” who is performing actions through which *karma phala* in the form of *punya* and *papa* (i.e. merit and demerit) is accrued. And the remaining *prarabdha karma* (i.e. the portion of *sanchita* that is slated to fructify in the course of the current incarnation) is only a matter of perspective. From the point of view of other apparent individuals, it looks as though there is someone performing actions and experiencing objects. From the point of view of the *jnani*, or the one who is self-actualized, however, there is only a machine that has been turned off that continues to execute the functions of perceiving, feeling, thinking and acting that are the consequence of its design. While the body-mind-sense complex of the *jnani* still experiences pleasure and pain, suffering has ceased forever, for the *jnani* knows that no object or experience can enhance or diminish his or her essential nature – i.e. limitless conscious existence – in the least.