

Self-Inquiry 101: The Practice of Knowledge

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Hello, Daniel. It seems you are quite confused. I have replied point by point below and have deliberately repeated myself to help you free your mind from the tenacious and aggressive hold of ignorance.

Daniel: I have been doing research since I wrote my last email. From what I have learned, it seems that a unification of being awareness and recognizing all things as made of awareness can be expected to occur.

Sundari: What do you mean by “unification of being awareness”? It is not possible to have a unification of “being” awareness because awareness is being and it is already unified. Therefore it is not possible to unify “being” awareness with the recognition of all things as made of awareness. Awareness can only be known for what it is. You either know it or you don’t. Your statement “can be expected to occur” means that you think something has to happen for you to know that you are awareness, meaning free. You do not need any special experience to experience the self, because you are always only ever experiencing the self.

Discriminating you, awareness, from the objects that appear in you, is self-inquiry. Discrimination means that although you recognise the apparent reality as having an apparent existence, you know that it is not real, meaning that it is not always present and that it is always changing. Thus you know that although the apparent reality arises out of you, awareness, and is made up out of you, awareness, you are always free of it. It is like the snake and the rope analogy: once you see that the snake is a rope, you can no longer see the rope as a snake. Discrimination leads to non-dual vision. Non-dual vision means that you see the world of duality superimposed on the dualistic world of your personal perceptions. Once the vision of non-duality is clear you will still perceive duality but it is known for what it is. It is like a mirage on the desert floor. It still has an apparent existence because you can experience it. But you know it is not real, so you would not try to drink the apparent water. This is the “unification” that you speak of. It is not unification in that unification implies duality, the bringing together of two separate principles. Non-dual vision is seeing that there is and always has been only one principle, one awareness out of which everything arises and dissolves.

Daniel: However, I still do not fully understand. I do not really know if this non-duality means my mind never existed or if the world as I previously saw it never existed.

Sundari: What does it matter if your mind or the world never existed? Your mind and the world have an apparent existence now. What is the nature of your mind? Apply the logic Daniel: “your” mind, like the world, are objects known to you, awareness. The mind (subtle body) is an *upadhi* (limiting adjunct) for awareness that allows it to experience the world of duality, the objects that you perceive.

Once self-knowledge removes the ignorance of your true nature, the mind (Daniel) remains as “before” but is known to be an object appearing in you, awareness. It has an apparent existence. It is made out of awareness, appears in awareness and has a dependent existence on awareness but as awareness you are always free of the mind, which means that you are always free of the person, the ego called Daniel. Once self-knowledge is firm you see the ego and its projections for what they are. You know that you, awareness, are (and always have been) apparently experiencing the ego/mind/the world – and not the other way around.

Think about who is asking the question. From awareness’s point of view, nothing ever happened: there is no creation. When *maya* is operating an apparent, or seeming, creation appears. Although the created world is also an object known to you, awareness, as a *jiva*

(enlightened or not) the creation is not under your control. The apparent creation is a lawful universe. Unlike the individual *jiva*, it has a relatively infinite lifespan but it too withdraws back into seed form after many billions of years.

Of course there is no time for you as awareness. Time apparently exists for the *jiva*, who is the self under the spell of ignorance, in order that it may measure change in the apparent reality. Time is an object known to you and therefore not real.

Daniel: I am not sure anymore if I exist inside my body (function of the brain) or in the world (something metaphysical).

Sundari: Who are you, Daniel? Who is asking this question? What does “metaphysical” mean? Who is observing the doubt whether you are inside the body or in the world? The one that knows and observes the doubt is you, awareness. There is no answer to the question you are asking.

What does it matter if you exist inside your body or in the world? The fact is you exist and the nature of your existence is awareness. Your body and mind exist in awareness, you. Examine the logic: your body-mind and the world are not real; how can you as awareness, who are real, exist in them? They are simply the means which make it possible for you as awareness to have contact with objects.

From the beginning again: freedom from the identification with objects requires that you discriminate all objects from you, awareness. This is called negating the objects. An object is anything other than you, awareness; no object is conscious. Only you, awareness, are conscious. Because you, awareness, shine your light on the objects (like the sun shines on the moon, making it appear to have its own light) the objects appear to be real. They are not. All objects arise out of you, awareness, like the spider’s web arises from the spider. They are made up of you, awareness, and have a dependent existence on you, awareness, but you are not the objects and are always free of them. The objects are inert, valueless, not conscious, empty. You are the fullness that gives apparent life and meaning to the objects; this means the joy is in you, awareness.

Daniel: Also, I do not know if I should continue to try to recognize all objects as separate from me/appearing in me...

Sundari: Are objects separate from you or not? What is your experience?

Daniel: ...as is advised until one realizes one is awareness.

Sundari: Look at your experience: if you are asking from the point of view of the person, you will see that the objects are apparently separate from you. If you are asking from the point of view of awareness, the objects are also apparently separate from you, so they cannot be you, even though they are made up of you and arise out of you.

Daniel: Is it wrong to feel like everything is me?

Sundari: What has feeling got to do with it? But no, it is not "wrong." Everything is you but you are free of everything.

Daniel: Should I continue to seek to view everything as within (or known by) me but separate?

Sundari: Yes. After all the objects have been negated as not-self, then you will know that all objects are you, awareness, but you are not the objects.

Daniel: If all conflicts are resolved, what will be my nature?

Sundari: Your nature is awareness, whether you have conflicts or not. Resolving conflicts will not make you awareness, because you already are awareness. Your question here implies that if you perfect the *jiva* by a process of elimination you will end up with awareness. You already are awareness, and the *jiva* does not have to be (and cannot be) perfected. Freedom, or *moksa*, requires simply that the binding *vasanas* have been rendered non-binding and the sense of doership negated.

As the self no longer under the spell of ignorance, you will know your true nature to be whole and complete, non-dual, action-less, unchanging, limitless, ordinary awareness, unaffected and untouched by anything, free of everything. As the free *jiva*, the self no longer under the spell of ignorance, you will still function as Daniel with his apparent nature, or *svadharma*, given to him by *Isvara*. You will know that Daniel is a name that refers to you, awareness, no longer under the spell of ignorance and therefore no longer identified with or chasing objects in the vain hope of completion. You are already whole and complete. You will love the apparent person called Daniel unconditionally. You will not expect him to be perfect, but as you want to experience peace of mind, Daniel will follow *dharma* because, being awareness, he wants to experience peace, his true nature. Daniel will have contact with all objects knowing they are not real but enjoying them for what they are, a reflection of him, awareness. He will not expect them to give him anything because he will know that all objects are incapable of giving anything other than temporary bliss. As Daniel will know that his true nature is awareness, he will know that he and

nothing else is the source of all bliss, all joy, fullness. Daniel will apply self-knowledge to every situation and no matter “what happens” in the apparent reality, which is not under his control and he knows this, he has the confidence not only to cope but to remain free. Nothing sticks to him. He will live the knowledge, which means he will know that although as awareness he is beyond *Isvara*. As the apparent person, or *jiva*, even as an enlightened *jiva*, *Isvara*’s creation functions according to its own laws, and as a *jiva* he abides by those laws at all times.

Daniel: If you have any guidance, please let me know. In the meantime, it is back to self-inquiry from from beginning to end again with patience in the hopes of finding these answers.

Sundari: Just keep at it, Daniel. Ignorance is hardwired, and to remove the notion of duality from the mind is a difficult task. There are no answers to find, Daniel. I have already given you the answers.

Now you need to contemplate what I have said until it makes sense. Once you have seen that it makes sense you need to practice the knowledge instead of trying to work it out intellectually. Just take a stand in awareness as awareness and negate the objects, the thoughts and feelings that arise from ignorance. The basic problem is that you do not have faith in the words of scripture. You do not have to work it out intellectually on your own. And what are the words of the scripture? Simply that you are awareness and not the person called Daniel.

Daniel: I know how fortunate I am to have your guidance. Thank you.

Sundari: You are welcome, Daniel.

~ *Om, shanti*, Sundari