

The Ultimate Definitive Experience!

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2012-10-17

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/846>

Sundari: Great to hear from you again, Gabriel, and I am glad that my last email helped. I have been away for a while with my daughter, so it has taken a while to get back to you, my apologies! I have answered the questions in your first email, as the second email was asking the same questions.

Gabriel: You were so very much on the money in the last email. I am still looking for the definitive experience. I know life won't be any different, but reading our email exchange was enlightening as to how insecure I am towards the knowledge, towards life. But the beautiful thing is that IT'S ALL OKAY! The dreamer isn't even real, so what makes the waker real anyways? The knowledge is getting firmer as the days progress, and with that life smoothes out. And you're also dead-on: I'm not doing the work; there isn't much effort involved, sans *sat-asat-viveka*. If anything, knowing you're awareness just means Gabriel and his worries are funny and fun. He gets grumpy without sex – he watches one too many TV shows a week – he loves sugary tea – he doesn't have much money! Yes, those are important things to work on for an easier life, but they are unreal ideations attributed by an ignorant mind to *vasanas* that *Isvara* is in control of. Moreover, these are only for the waker – just one-third of the experiencing entity!

Sundari: Nothing to add here, except in the first two sentences where Gabriel speaks as the doer. Keep vigilant about the language you use. You know this so well, yet firming up the knowledge means always speaking from the self's perspective, like you do in objectifying Gabriel further down in the paragraph. Having the awareness of the fact that Gabriel still has the seeking-*vasana* is all it takes; it is not a problem as long as you do not identify with it. The ego can still have doubts "after" enlightenment; they will fall away on their own when they are not owned. The knowledge does the work.

Gabriel: There is nothing more to do than firm up the knowledge, this I know. I know and I know I know. You are right about that, and your validation helps. With that, there are two small clarifications I'm hazy on and, as you know, I want crystal-clear understanding:

1. Awareness reflects off the subtle body and is the *jiva*, Gabriel, the flow of thoughts in the mind, etc. Regarding the knower, or ordinary awareness, of the three bodies, states, *koshas*, etc: Is it the purest reflection of the self or is it actually pure awareness?

Sundari: "Purest reflection" implies that there is an impure reflection; there is only one reflection, and the purity of that reflection is determined by how much *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* is in it. Ram refers to the "ordinary witness" as the experiencing witness, and pure awareness as the non-experiencing witness; scripture calls the experiencing witness *saguna brahman* (with qualities), and the non-experiencing witness *nirguna brahman* (without qualities). Greg Goode has a good definition of the distinction between them, referring to the ordinary witness with qualities as the

“opaque witness,” and pure awareness without qualities as the “transparent witness.”

The word “ordinary” is an important term, as it can refer to either pure awareness or reflected awareness.

Gabriel: The witness is untainted, free, whole, unaffected, transcended, etc. Everything is a reflection, and I am its source... so I've based my inquiry on this.

Sundari: The experiencing witness/*saguna brahman* is not entirely free and untainted, etc. in that it is apparently contaminated by qualities; the non-experiencing witness/*nirguna brahman* is untainted, free, whole, unaffected, etc. yet both can be referred to as “ordinary” awareness. From the point of view of the *jiva* awareness seems to be “extraordinary” but awareness is not extraordinary, because it is simple, uncontaminated ever-present awareness free of all qualities and definitions.

Gabriel: But I thought in Ram's commentary on the *Gita* he said that pure awareness cannot be directly experienced, only known to be the subject, the self. So is the witness “pure” awareness and all else reflected awareness?

Sundari: Ram said that pure awareness cannot be directly experienced – as an object; the effect cannot experience the cause, ergo it is the self under the apparent spell of ignorance that realises itself as the subject, and this can be experienced as a reflection in a pure mind. As stated above, there are not two witnesses, only one witness which is either apparently contaminated or not by qualities.

Gabriel: Or is the witness the purest reflection of the self? The latter doesn't make sense, but I want to be sure, so please clarify when you have the time. I read *ShiningWorld satsangs* and scripture, but am not super-clear.

Sundari: See above. The distinction here is between the experiencing and non-experiencing witness, which is determined by the presence or absence of qualities.

Gabriel: 2. What exactly do you mean by “the joy in objects is just the reflected joy of awareness, freeing it to truly enjoy the objects as they are”?

Sundari: Simply that *jivanmukti* means that you, awareness, know that Gabriel is an object in you, and is thus the source of the joy, which then frees the *jiva* to enjoy objects for what they are, without any dependence on them. For example, when you are having sex or watching TV, the pleasure is coming from you, awareness. ☺

Gabriel: I, ordinary awareness, am objectless relaxation. But Gabriel will try his best. ☺ Also, your pet-*jiva* metaphor was so lovely and true! It describes perfectly the vision of the *jnani*.

Sundari: Yes, you are objectless relaxation, so how can Gabriel “try his best”? ☺ He is an object known to you, inert. As the knowledge becomes firm that Gabriel is an object in you, the ego will quit trying to experience the self and finally relax knowing that you, awareness, are always “experiencing” Gabriel – and he is just fine the way he is!

Gabriel: Thank you, Sundari. Thank you again. And I had no idea about South Africa. I knew it was bad, but not like that. I grew up in the DC suburbs around extremely wealthy, *rajasic* people. Nebraska and welding are serving me well. It’s all just funnier as time... which is a mental construct and I am not limited by this... moves on.

Sundari: South Africa is such a great place, I love it, and it is really not bad when one is living here. It is only when one moves away from the constant awareness of potential danger that one realises how much one has normalised the abnormal. It is a pity though; it is such a beautiful country, so diverse and extraordinarily vibrant. I was born in East Africa, in Tanzania (formerly Tanganyika), and I grew up with Africans. I have met very few that I do not instantly like! I spoke Kiswahili before any other language – there is nothing like Africa. There is a saying in Africa that once the dust of Africa gets up your nose, you never get it out. It’s true. Even in SA with its racial history and now its typically kleptomaniacal black government, its mostly black crime and the general malaise of the country socially, economically and politically, the blacks here are mostly great people. SA is going downhill though; who knows where it will all end up, so many different opinions abound? Africa runs on its own particular *samasti vasanas*; it is all *Isvara’s* doing.

Gabriel: Much love to you, Sundari. Thank you for everything and for clearing up those residual doubts after dropping of ignorance. Certainly it is a wonderful way to pass the time.

Sundari: Much love to you, Gabriel, always such a pleasure having a self-to-self chat. ☺

Gabriel: *Om* and *prem* to you and Ram. Safe travels and enjoy your daughter and the empty home!

Sundari: We both send our love to you and your family, and hope to see you in Spain one day! Or maybe in Golden next year June.

Gabriel: Hi, Sundari! Yes, I did receive your email last week. I accepted a short-term job at an office, and with welding classes, I’m gone from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm, with little time to return emails. And indeed it all feels so meaningless and unreal at times, but you know those are just inert thoughts in I!

Sundari: It is meaningless and unreal. ☺ You are the meaning, the reality and the fullness.

Gabriel: I found this last conversation of ours to probably be the subtlest inquiry into enlightenment and the self to date. What I mean by that is how once you see you are the self and therefore free of everything, the reality of the *vasanas* doesn't actually matter. Bondage doesn't even exist! I say this from the self's point of view, and that's just non-negotiable, so Gabriel can paradoxically go on bound if necessary. Wow.

Sundari: Yep. ☺ It can be a bit frightening, as you said in your last email. The ego does not take too well to the depersonalisation that occurs when you realize that you are awareness. The objects flatten out, the person is known not to be real, and the ego has nothing to attach to – the familiar ways of orienting to objects is gone and there is *karmic* drag. So it feels like it is “floating,” like trying to drive a car in space where there is no traction. It is unsettling, but stick with what you know and give the ego time to adjust. It will because it has no choice.

And yet at this point the ego can be and do anything; it does not matter. James says to me that he gives James full reign to do whatever he wants to do, he can “travel far and wide” in the apparent reality because he knows that James will not transgress *dharma* and will always come home to him.

It is great to have a *jiva*. We really love ours with all their peculiarities! It's a bit like having an adorable pet. ☺ We take care of them lovingly, feed them well, exercise them, hug them and enjoy them. They are such fun to have. ☺

Seriously, when you know you are awareness, this is how it is. Life is just about enjoying because there is nothing to gain or lose. Trust is no longer an issue because you are a solid rock of unshakable confidence. Nothing that happens in the world worries you. You are completely dispassionate, so nothing reaches you. What “others” do or say is of no importance – because there are no others. You see absolutely everyone and everything as the self because your vision is completely non-dual. You just watch the unfolding movie and see it for what it is. This is freedom.

Here is the revelation, the real kicker in the so-called “enlightenment” charade: *moksa* is there so the *jiva* can enjoy its mundane life in the apparent reality. This simple fact is a definite let-down for those seeking the rarefied transcendent stratosphere of the chosen, who, like shooting stars, blaze a trail to the beyond and then fall to earth as *avatars* to save the planet!

How glorious it is to be an ordinary free *jiva*! Yet see the paradox: awareness is the most ordinary thing there is, yet it IS incredibly awesome for an individual who knows beyond a doubt that he or she is actually an experienceless experiencer, a knower of the knower and the known. And what a blast to be having a good old time here in the world! To see the dream and to be awake in it – how can you beat that?!

Gabriel: Once I really look into whether anything binds or affects awareness, I cannot say that anything reaches the I. I can't even do anything about this either. That's the hilarity about it. From the absolute level, I can't even be bound if I want to! I say all this, of course, from the self's point of view, which brings me to another subtle point. *Moksa* is *mithya*, and therefore peace of mind is *mithya*. But since *mithya* obtains (and gets its existence from awareness), then *moksa* is a relevant concept to gain peace of mind. I've been looking at it from the absolute level, and what pain Gabriel holds onto and whatever notions are there, slowly unwind by the knowledge alone.

Sundari: Yes, it is very funny when you look at things here from the self's perspective! I can add nothing much to your statement. *Moksa* is a word used to explain the absence of ignorance – that is all. It is liberation for the *jiva*, the self under the spell of ignorance. How is that possible? *Maya* makes the impossible possible.

The language of experience is to blame for most spiritual problems. It is built into the whole spiritual seeking thing. It exhorts one to go “beyond,” to “transcend,” to “seek within,” to “connect” with the sublime being we truly are, to “become” or “embody” our true magnificence. Instead, all that is required is to realise we are already it by negating the objects arising in us at any moment. The objects must be negated to see the apparent reality for what it is, not so the *jiva* can leave the world or magically make it disappear, but so it can live freely here.

The word “absolute” is not a good word either, because it gives rise to the belief that there is something other than awareness, something “beyond” it. James does not use it. Apparently Nisargadatta said the absolute – it cries for a capital A! – is beyond awareness. When self-knowledge removes the ignorance of your true nature, there are no longer any levels, and all objects flatten like the ocean on a calm day. There are no more waves; it is all ocean, the bliss of awareness.

Before that happens, there is usually the experience of emptiness, which lasts until one sees that one is the fullness that illumines the emptiness – negating the doer. When this is understood the doer's lofty pursuits are seen for what they are – the hubris of a status-conscious person striving for a spiritual pedigree, the seeking by mystical means for a crown and kingdom! How silly most spiritual seeking really is. *Moksa* – self-knowledge – gives the *jiva* total peace of mind for an ordinary person here in the world. Peace of mind is the kingdom of heaven, and you, the self, are its ruler. Because Vedanta gives self-knowledge it is the king of all teachings.

Gabriel: I'm also rethinking the application of *triguna vibhava yoga*. It's really only there to create a *sattvic* mind for Gabriel to reflect me perfectly. It's there to trace and root out deeply-rooted bits of ignorance to be destroyed in the fire of knowledge of who I am and really make this knowledge firm. This includes eating healthier, etc. Thank you for clarifying doubts I didn't know I needed to contemplate, and what else is there really to do than mess with the mind?

Sundari: Yes, this is my favourite teaching. It lets the *jiva* off the hook so that it can enjoy itself, stop beating itself up and stop beating others up with its stupid story about what happened, is happening and will happen. It stops fault-finding, complaining and self-inflicted misery.

If you understand the *gunas*, you understand *Isvara*. James and I are using this teaching extensively. It is the best model to permanently end doership – what was done to you or by you. When you understand that the *gunas* control reality, you will not be bothered if the mind is still a mess. Understanding the *gunas* teaches that the mind does not belong to you. When you realise this, you let it be.

However, the mind will eventually become clear because the *guna* teaching reveals the self, and there is no purifier like self-knowledge. This will change your life because self-knowledge inevitably leads to a pure mind. When you know who you are it is painful for the mind not to be in *sattva*.

Gabriel: Knowledge, once firm, therefore automatically negates ignorance! Ha! It's undeniable that I'm the light of lights, and all shine after me. Indeed what can exist without me there? And I have to be everywhere, as scripture says, and I'm constantly interacting with apparent *jivas* with apparently three bodies, three states, etc.

Sundari: Yes, the knowledge works and it is the only thing that is capable of removing ignorance, as you well know. All lights do shine because of you. You are the light.

Gabriel: There is one doubt that keeps appearing in me though. A very subtle one. I am non-dual and therefore without lack. We have discussed to some extent being free from the dependence on objects. I, awareness, am untouchable and transcendent (but, paradoxically, my innermost self).

Sundari: Yes, it is impossible for you, awareness, to lack anything. Yes, you are untouchable and transcendent. However, awareness is not "your innermost self." This implies two selves. There is only the self.

However, in keeping with the methodology of Vedanta at this stage of the teaching, it is okay to call the self innermost, to say it is untouchable and transcendent, which implies duality. Once the objects have been negated these words do not apply.

Gabriel: Being already free, how does the freedom of the dependence on objects occur and relate to the *jiva*?

Sundari: There is no "occurrence" as such, because freedom is not an event. Once you know, objects still exist, as stated above, but the knowledge negates the belief that they are real, reveals them to be the self and makes it clear that the self is always free of the objects. *Jiva* contacts objects the same way as before, but it knows that the joy in objects is just the reflected joy of awareness, freeing it to truly enjoy the objects as they are.

There is nothing wrong with anything when it is known to be a reflection of you, awareness. Only then can the *jiva* enjoy objects without the desperate need to suck meaning from them, meaning they do not have and are incapable of delivering.

Gabriel: Over time by steady application of knowledge to neutralize binding *vasanas*?

Sundari: Yes. The steady application of the knowledge that Gabriel is not the doer means that the *vasanas* can be dropped because they belong to the *gunas*, not to him. Own the *gunas* and you own suffering. When the *gunas* are understood and managed, Gabriel will not have to worry about binding *vasanas*. At some point Gabriel no longer practises knowledge, because he has become the knowledge, meaning awareness.

And the mind dies. It is no longer conditioned by the *gunas*. It no longer wavers or reacts to likes

and dislikes, even if they still manifest – which they do. So what? Ramji's favourite description of firm knowledge is: the mind sits unmoving on the self, like a bee sits on a flower sipping its nectar.

Gabriel: At one with the direct knowledge that I am the whole? Or any other way?

Sundari: What other way could there be? It may take some time for the knowledge that you are object-free awareness to firm up. Ignorance is hardwired, and the ego is stubbornly resistant to change. Old programmes, *prarabdha karma*, wind down like the blades of a fan deprived of electricity. *Vasanas* play out, but they are known for what they are.

There is no magic formula, the knowledge does the work. What is that lovely saying? "Everything will turn out wonderful in the end, and if it is not wonderful, it is not the end." If the knowledge does not work, then you have to work the knowledge on your mind. Continue your *sadhana* and practise the *yogas* until there are no longer doubts. What else is there to do? Actualising the knowledge is where the rubber meets the road, to quote the great Ramji!

Gabriel: I still feel dependent on objects, though not so much anymore, and I know that *moksa* isn't *nirvana*, nor is it an event, and feelings don't mean shit, but there is a doubt I can't yet express.

Sundari: It's okay, just trust the knowledge and let it do the work. As stated, lifetimes of programmes do not instantly vaporise. It takes time to actualise the knowledge. Don't worry about it, just take it easy. ☺ You are young and have a lot of *karma* to attend to on a daily basis. Working and looking after a family is not an easy path for someone with the temperament of a *sannyasi*. The big thing is to not expect things to be different – because they won't be.

Isvara has given you this knowledge when you are young; it is a great blessing, but it will not always be easy until the knowledge is firm. The doubt you can't express is probably the old *vasana* that wants THE DEFINITIVE EXPERIENCE. It still hooks you into thinking that you have missed something, that there must be something else. You haven't missed anything. You are clear as a bell. Trust the knowledge!

Gabriel: I want to say that I haven't had the realization that I'm whole and complete and therefore don't need anything else (read: I now approach objects as the source of happiness but not for happiness). I'm also thinking about this being the FINAL TRUTH!!! I think I'm thinking about this incorrectly. Am I? What are your thoughts?

Sundari: These statements are virtually incomprehensible, a completely illogical hodge podge. My thoughts are that Gabriel is driving himself crazy being Gabriel. ☺ He still wants to have some kind of experiential validation, is still convinced that there must be more to this and he believes it can't be so simple. Relax, Gabriel.

There is nothing else to understand, you are whole and complete. Think about it. Your life is your

life. As you work with the idea that you are whole and complete, as you apply it to your fear-and-desire-ridden mind, you will soon notice how effortlessly things just work out, whatever is going down: financial hassles, relationship hassles, work hassles, whatever. If Gabriel approaches all of it on a moment-to-moment basis without identifying with any of it, the power of the knowledge, "I AM AWARENESS," sorts everything out for Gabriel. It just does. This is because there are no difficulties for the self; they do not exist. Chill out, enjoy Gabriel. Love him madly! He is a great guy and how often does anyone come across a *jnani* who wields a welding torch like nobody's business, who is really an undercover *rishi* living in Nebraska?! You are doing just great! We have your enlightenment certificate all ready and gilded for you. ☺

Om and prem.

~ Much love to you, Sundari