

Time and Detachment

Ted Schmidt

2015-12-12

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2451>

Tabitha: Hi, Ted. I hope all is well with you.

Life is good. I've been slowing a bit on the reading and listening to Vedanta teachings. The dreams/*vasana* show continues. I have a sense of being carried along right now.

Ted: Actually, we are always being "carried along." Awareness illumines *Ishvara* (i.e. the grand mechanism of the universe) and all the *jivas* (i.e. the myriad apparent "components" of the grand mechanism that house subtle bodies, and are thus able to "reflect" awareness, or conduct sentience), and action takes place. It's like several billion organic computers empowered by the cosmic WiFi that is *Ishvara* – though, technically speaking, *Ishvara* is at once both the computers and the cosmic WiFi (i.e. both the material and the maker).

Tabitha: Something peculiar is happening to my perception of time.

Ted: Time exists, but it is not real. That is, time is the name we give to the space between events that arise in limitless awareness, which itself is the scope of being within which the objective phenomenon of time is known (i.e. perceived and experienced). Limitless awareness "itself," however, is altogether "beyond," or "outside," time. On the one hand, we can keep chopping time into smaller and smaller units until it becomes immeasurably small and essentially dissolves into timelessness, or eternity. On the other hand, we can keep increasing our measure of time (i.e. from seconds to hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, ages, etc.) until time expands infinitely and thereby becomes eternal. The ramification of either scenario is that time is simply an arbitrary method of referencing the appearance, continuance and disappearance of objective phenomena.

Tabitha: It seems to be flattening out and distilling down to just a one-time occurrence of each event. I wake up in the morning only once, there is one husband who says good morning once, making coffee only once, looking at the computer once, seeing the same client one time only, the same thoughts, feelings and internal habits, etc. I'm finding that I see and experience pretty much exactly the same thing in the same order every day, so it appears to be just one eternal day. It doesn't matter so much if I do a lot or very little, the perception of it is pretty much the same.

Ted: Yes, from one perspective, life is quite boring. The same actions and events occur over and over and over again in infinite minutely different variations. Action is the product of the infallible law of *karma*, which in most basic terms is the principle that for every action there is a corresponding reaction, and is governed by *dharma*, the vast array of inviolable physical, psychological and/or ethical laws that determine the experiential nature and effects of the results of action, and thus account for universal order.

Tabitha: To be honest, it seems a bit psycho and a little scary, but sort of normal. I'm wondering what to make of this.

Ted: It sounds like you are experiencing a sense of detachment that is enabling you to get an objective look at the essential hollowness of the happenings that constitute worldly life.

It is crucial to understand, however, that this experience of emotional detachment is not what Vedanta means by *vairagya*, or indifference to the results of actions, which is one of the essential qualifications for self-inquiry. *Vairagya* is a product of the twofold understanding that (1) since *Isvara* (i.e. the infallible laws of *karma* and *dharma* that maintain universal order) is taking care of the best interests of the total, which includes oneself, there is no binding need for a particular result, because whatever happens is determined by the universal order that ensures of overall well-being of the whole, and (2) limited and ever-changing objects (i.e. anything perceivable or conceivable, such as items, interactions, events, experiences, achievements, etc.) are not the source of the eternal security, peace and happiness that is the true goal of all our objective pursuits. Most significantly, *vairagya* is an experiential reflection of the essential non-attached nature of the non-dual self.

Ironic as it may seem, *vairagya* is an implicit understanding that enables one to fully engage in the experience and enjoyment of "worldly" life while at the same time not getting "hooked" by its false promise of lasting satisfaction and permanent fulfillment. In contrast to the unattached engagement of objects that characterizes the quality of *vairagya*, your present experience seems to be one of emotional disinterest. That is not to say that it's bad. Such a state of being quite often ensues after one's initial exposure to teachings that expose the fundamental insubstantiality of objective phenomena. Even if one hasn't fully assimilated the teachings, the truth begins shifting the paradigm of our understanding.

Tabitha: It seems that a life that is unadorned with personal meaning or a continuum of special moments is not what it appears to be at all.

~ Much love, Tabitha

Ted: Reality is totally value-neutral. Our *guna*-rooted, *vasana*-based likes, dislikes, desires and fears are what color our interpretation of experience and invest our lives with meaning.

~ All the best, Ted