

Vedanta Is Not a Concept

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2015-10-12

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2359>

Thabo: Dear Sundari, thank you for taking the time to respond to my question.

Sundari: You are most welcome, Thabo.

Thabo: I find the timing of your question, “What do you value most?” very interesting in that I asked that very question of some close friends and my partner a few days before I received your email.

Sundari: Divine synchronicity.

Thabo: Your emphasis on peace of mind resonates very much with me as well as your suggestion to pay attention to how our thoughts and feelings are typical of a particular *guna*. I pay attention to my thoughts and feelings almost every moment of my day, and that is how I use my discrimination to invite *sattva* into my life.

Sundari: This is the work of self-inquiry if freedom is what you are after. The *gunas* make up the field of existence, which is synonymous with *Isvara*, so in observing the *guna* governing each thought/emotion/*vasana* what we are actually doing is solidifying the understanding that the thoughts/feelings/*vasanas* do not belong to the *jiva*. You say “my” thoughts, but the point here is they are not your thoughts. They originate from the causal body/*Isvara*, and correspond with “your” particular *vasana* load, or filters. But they are not your filters, or *vasanas*, either. They too originate from the causal body. And who is “inviting” more *sattva* into “your” life? See the duality in that thinking and use of words.

You cannot “invite” more *sattva* into your life, because *sattva* is the nature of the mind when it is not clouded by *rajas* and *tamas*, just like you cannot become more aware, because your true nature is awareness, a fact clouded by ignorance. In order to experience peace of mind (*sattva*) and your nature as awareness, *rajas* and *tamas* have to be brought into balance with *sattva*. This is what aiming for peace of mind really means.

Thabo: I have never thought of *gunas* as forces that bind me to objects, so your teaching on this point is very valuable.

Sundari: Without understanding the *gunas*, i.e. *Isvara*’s psychological and physiological order, there is no way to understand the *jiva* and its identity with *Isvara*. Without understanding *Isvara*, freedom from bondage is just not possible, full stop. This is where all the teaching takes place in Vedanta. It is easy to understand that your true nature is awareness; after all, it is obvious you are

aware. It is quite another matter to know what it means to be awareness for the *jiva*. Unless self-knowledge translates into the life of the *jiva*, what good does it do the *jiva*? After all, *moksa* is for the *jiva*. As awareness you are already free. This is why being able to discriminate between *satya* (what is always present and unchanging, i.e. you, awareness) and *mithya* (what is not always present and always changing, i.e. everything other than you, awareness) is the essence of *moksa*.

Thabo: I like how I feel when I am not bound by objects. I like how I feel when I do not identify with my *jiva*. Even though I almost never think of the SELF or think that I am AWARENESS, I find it fairly easy for me not to identify with my *jiva*. I generally do not get reactive to life events that make most people reactive, and when I do, I am able to let go of my reactivity most of the time. I achieved this ability because I developed a practice of seeing my *jiva* in the third person and seeing what is going on in my life as if I am watching a play. When someone offends or insults me, I notice that Thabo is disturbed and I notice that he either can or cannot let go of it. I also notice the emotional charge and ego display of the *jiva* that hurls the insult that causes Thabo to be disturbed.

Sundari: This is very good, Thabo; it means you are applying self-knowledge to the *jiva*'s life and it is working to create peace of mind, even though your knowledge of the self is still indirect – which means you know about awareness. Direct knowledge is knowing that you are awareness; seeing everything as the self first and foremost all the “time” and second as the *jiva*. This is non-dual vision – and once the knowledge is firm, it is permanent knowledge, i.e. it cannot be negated or lost, because it is who you are.

Thabo: I feel quite blessed to have discovered Vedanta at this point in my life. My best female friend introduced me to the enneagram twenty-five years ago and it changed my life. The enneagram has much in common with Vedanta in that the enneagram has a concept of the inner observer, which is similar to awareness, and the enneagram sees the personality as a *jiva*. The enneagram is a powerful tool for assimilating experience so as not to repeat a harmful, fixated pattern that is typical of a particular enneatype. Like Vedanta, the enneagram is revealed knowledge. My best male friend introduced me to Vedanta, and Vedanta also changed my life. Vedanta is logical and consistent. In some ways, all my personal growth and Buddhist studies have led me to and prepared me for Vedanta.

Sundari: The enneagram is a useful tool to understand *Isvara*'s psychological order, i.e. the *gunas* and how they govern the creation of the individual's/*jiva*'s *vasanas*. It can in no way be equated to Vedanta, because although it points to the truth that your true nature is awareness, it does not have a means of knowledge for awareness. It cannot set you free of the person; it can only help you to understand the person. It is a means of knowledge for objects – thoughts/feelings/patterns of behaviour – which are all objects known to you, awareness. Vedanta is the only valid means of knowledge for awareness, having the power to set you free of the person and their attachment to and identification with objects.

I have never heard the concept that the enneagram is revealed knowledge, although that may well be the case in that all knowledge comes from *Isvara*.

Thabo: Reading your response to my question inspires me to reflect on the Vedanta ideas that I put in practice in my daily life that have brought me immense peace of mind. I reread your answer to my question numerous times and I highlighted for myself what I most want to remember and incorporate as a practice in my life.

Sundari: If an end to existential suffering and freedom from bondage to objects is what you are after (remember that an object is anything other than you, i.e. gross objects and subtle objects – thoughts/feelings/conditioning) the whole point of self-inquiry is to put the knowledge into practice. As I said above, what use is the knowledge unless it is put into practice 24/7?

Thabo: Thank you for teaching me some very important Vedanta concepts.

Sundari: If you think the Vedanta teachings are concepts, you have not understood what Vedanta is and you have the wrong idea of self-inquiry. Vedanta is the only valid means of knowledge for awareness because awareness is beyond our means of knowledge to know anything: perception and inference. These two means of knowledge only work for knowing objects. They do not work for knowing awareness, because awareness is too subtle for these means. Awareness (consciousness) is the cause and everything else is the effect. The effect is not conscious; although it appears to be because the light of awareness shines on it, making it appear conscious. So how is the *jiva*, the effect, or object, and inert, going to know you, awareness, the cause, or subject? Vedanta, or self-knowledge, removes the ignorance in the mind that prevents you from knowing that your true nature is awareness and that is what you are experiencing 24/7 without knowing what it means.

~ Much love, Sundari