

Was Nisargadatta a Neo-Advaitin?

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Tommy: My path for the past 14 years tells me that the night dream is unreal and the “day dream” called life is also unreal. Now the ego does not like this idea. It is my understanding that awareness, or consciousness, or God, gave humans an ego so that we could fight over abortion and gay marriage, etc. You don’t see herds of elk going to war or fighting over gay rights, etc.

James: Well, I don’t agree that awareness gave humans an ego. I think that ego develops because human beings do not know they are awareness.

Tommy: James, I am reading your book, where you talk about gross, subtle and causal bodies. It strikes me that this only makes sense in the daydream of duality. If we accept the premise that we are dream characters, then it seems to me there is no one to have these bodies, since there is only “one.”

James: That is correct, Tommy. But insofar as a person does not understand this, it is useful to understand that the dream is impersonal, that there is no unique individual. If there is no unique individual, then as human beings we are all consciousness with three bodies.

Tommy: I just watched the interview of Joel Rumbolo and it seems to me he has it right. He says that life is just happening and we are not causing it to happen. Ramesh says we are being “lived,” which I think is saying the same thing. Your experience in the post office seems to me to be an example of your being lived.

James: Yes. We are being lived.

Tommy: James, you seem to look down on so-called Neo-Advaitians. I would think that Nisargadatta would be considered a Neo since he took his *guru’s* word for the fact that he was “that.” The ego would like to think that it can achieve awakening by doing things. I think awareness picks and chooses who will awaken. Nisargadatta said that seeking is an obstruction. I found a couple of years ago that seeking just seemed to stop for me.

James: Well, it depends on why it stopped. It can stop when you realize that there is nothing to find. It can stop when you realize that the truth is too subtle to understand. It can stop when you realize that you are awareness and not the seeker. It can stop because you fall in love and have children. It can stop because you get sick or become senile. It can stop for various reasons.

But I take issue with your idea about awareness picking and choosing. Awareness is not a doer, so it does not pick and choose. As the macrocosmic mind it delivers results, i.e. experiences

according to the actions we have done in the past. If the ego does not exercise the limited free will it has been granted and invoke the grace of the self, how will it ever get free? The squeaky wheel gets the grease. In other words, grace is earned. I am sure you did many actions to come to the place where you can say that the search ended. At the time you probably thought you were doing the seeking. How can you be sure that your exercise of your apparent free will did not lead to this result?

Nisargadatta was not a Neo, because he exercised his free will and contemplated the meaning of the words "I am That" and affirmed them all the time until he understood what they meant. The Neos say there is no need for *sadhana*.

Tommy: It seems that a lot of teachers promote reincarnation, which seems to only make sense in the dream world of duality, since in reality there is no one to reincarnate.

James: Vedanta agrees.