

You Are Not an Experience

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2015-05-10

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2145>

Debra: Hi, Ted, I hope I'm not spamming your inbox too much!!

Ted: It's all good, Debra. I'm here to help.

Debra: Regarding the spiritual literature, I meant that most of it, in general, from ancient to modern, is aimed at the extroverted *rajasic* person running after objects in the world. There's nothing wrong with that. Many people are that way. James talks a lot about it too because it's his experience (so it seems, listening to his audios).

So it's totally understandable that it is the angle. I'm just saying that I don't really relate to that, not because I'm special or better or worse or anything. It's just how it is. I haven't had much *rajas*. I love extroverted *rajasic* people. I have many friends like that, but I am nothing like them.

Ted: Yes, most spiritual literature is aimed at improving the person. But Vedanta (in whatever form it comes, be it through the traditional teachings of the *sampradaya* that is part of India's rich spiritual heritage or other traditions that equate the individual and God by means of acknowledging the essential nature of each as nothing other than pure awareness), is not a self-help program. It cares about self-improvement only in regard to cultivating a *sattvic* mind that is capable of assimilating self-knowledge. Rather than improving the person, Vedanta is concerned with resolving – not dissolving, mind you, but resolving through understanding – the apparent individual into its true identity as limitless awareness.

Debra: What I meant with regulating *tamas* is that, yes, if I don't have an interest or healthy desire I get into a state of inertia, that is neither fun nor healthy. That is why I have had to regulate *tamas* through, among other things, coming up with little fun pursuits that I can occupy my mind with. It has worked very well.

Ted: Got it. It is good to keep the mind-body-sense mechanism occupied with *dharmic* activity. Action is unavoidable, and if one isn't engaged in beneficial actions it is easy for one to get caught up in doing things that are not beneficial for spiritual growth. For the *jijnasu*, the seeker of self-knowledge, the most beneficial pursuit is the continuous contemplation of the teachings of Vedanta.

Debra: I am certainly not trying to “help” people, change them, excessively care for them, influence them or work out their *karma*. Yikes! I have more than enough of my own!! ☺ I have no ideas of changing the world whatsoever. It's fine just as it is. I just love to express myself in multiple ways, that's the sharing.

Ted: Beautiful.

Debra: My core desire looks like this – and thank you for allowing me to expand on this, go deeper and start to really SEE it and untangle it from my “inverted desire” *vasana*, and I thank you deeply for your suggestions on how to handle it if it comes back, but I have to say that being able to look at it with your supervision has had a tremendous impact; I think it may be completely deflated; we shall see – okay, here’s what the desire looks like: I want to enjoy people. I want to experience awareness recognizing awareness (I don’t know if these are the correct words to use, but hopefully you understand what I mean)...

Ted: Awareness itself is not an object that you can experience, because awareness is always and ever the one observing not only the object of experience but also the relative experiencer (i.e. the apparent individual person you seem to be) who is experiencing the object. In other words, you are the one in whose “light” all three aspects of experience – the known, the knower and the phenomenon of knowing – have their existence.

As for the experience of awareness recognizing awareness, from the viewpoint of awareness, you are already awareness recognizing awareness all the time. You know that you are and you know that all apparent others are as well. If you recognize the true identity of all that is, then you see that each and every experience is a reflection of awareness or awareness in manifest form.

Debra: ...only because it feels so good and it’s such a lovely thing to enjoy while here on Earth.

Ted: Yes, it is nice to share a mutual recognition of each other’s true identity with another within the context of dualistic reality.

Debra: So it’s not for others’ betterment, it’s for mutual enjoyment and freedom. And when it happens, WOW! It’s so beautiful. So in that sense I know that this desire gives infinite pleasure when it is satisfied.

It’s not a fantasy (only in the sense that it may not be realistic to find many people who have the same inclination). But it’s rarely satisfied. There are few people who can meet me there. It’s a slightly *rajasic* desire, but so what? It’s an indulgence and an earthly luxury with heavenly overtones. ☺ I love it when it happens. It’s a joy from my toes up through my soul and on, expansion and transcendence.

To be *rajasic* in this way feels very *sattvic*, and with my history of *tamas*, I embrace it. It’s euphoric in its stillness.

I have this same feeling when I write poetry. I also have it with my dog. She is such a blessing. Talk about awareness seeing awareness! Sure I can go on playing with her and on my own, but it’s so much more fun to do it with others. It just is. But I guess I just have to accept that this is the way it is, not many takers and fellow sharers. If it’s given to me, I will love it. If it’s denied to me, I will accept it and just give the overflowing to my dog, myself and infuse it in my poetry. I don’t feel

it's energy wasted, it just keeps replenishing itself. It's the expression of what I am. I just have to learn to not be disappointed or allow it to limit me when it isn't happening with others.

I think I now have thoroughly dissected this desire! It felt almost as good as the desire itself! ☺

Oh, wow, this just in: that is what has been happening! I have allowed others' non-response to limit and restrain me all these years. What a revelation! All these years. Will reflect on this.

Ted: It would also be beneficial to reflect on who exactly it is observing all these moments of recognition, transcendence, euphoria, earthly luxury, heavenly overtones, *rajasic* desire and *sattvic* stillness because none of those experiences is the self. They are all apparent objective phenomena arising within the scope of pure awareness. That is not to say that they should be denied or that you shouldn't enjoy them. But don't be fooled into thinking that those experiences are any more the self than the moments of disappointment and limitation or any of the myriad other negative or bad experiences that can be had within the context of the apparent reality. In short, no experience is you, for you are not an experienceable object. You are the one forever illumining the relative experiencer (i.e. the apparent individual person with whose mind-body-sense complex you illumine through association).

Reflect on the fact that while all experiences come and go, you remain unchanged, the ever-present observer of them all, and what's more, that even in the absence of all experience, you do not cease to be. If you did, the apparent person you seem to be would never awaken from the state of dreamless sleep, for had you ceased to exist, who would be there to wake up? Moreover, due to the fact that something can't come out of nothing, were you not present prior to the appearance of objects, the manifest universe could never have appeared in the first place. Thus while all experience depends on you, you are completely independent of all experience.

Debra: Your words, which allow yourself the recognition of your true nature as pure awareness, are very hopeful, beautiful and moving.

Thank you and have a wonderful day!

PS: I promise I won't keep writing at this pace. It has been extremely helpful and revealing though. The momentum has been growing. I think the peak is reached. Time for assimilation.

Ted: All the best.