

You Do Not Do Your Thoughts

Ted Schmidt

2015-02-27

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2060>

Layla: Hi, Ted. Thank you!

I think there has been an “aha” moment of sorts following this last email (although you have been pointing to it all along!)

Ted: This is how the practice of self-inquiry works. To learn anything requires repetition. In this case, the eradication of erroneous notions about oneself and the nature of reality in general requires consistent application of the teachings of Vedanta to each and every situation of one’s life. Old habitual tendencies die slowly.

Layla: I think I was erroneously taking “doer-ship” to apply mostly to – actions!

Ted: Thoughts are actions. Anything that changes is an object in action. Thoughts are simply subtle actions.

Layla: That the “doer-ship” also refers to “ownership” of the thoughts was being overlooked (conveniently!) by this mind. The thoughts too are “objects” arising IN me (awareness), and while recognizing them as such and let them go – not to take ownership (“my” thoughts – I’m annoyed, I’m frustrated, I’m being dissed, I’m right, etc.) is the same as “no doer-ship.” I think I was stuck on the verb “do”! Does this make sense?

Ted: Yes, your statements reflect correct understanding. Thoughts spontaneously arise within the scope of the mind as a consequence of the *vasanas* associated with the mind-body-sense complex that constitutes the apparent person you seem to be. The apparent person neither generates the thoughts nor has control over what thoughts arise within the mind. Thus the apparent person is not the thinker in the sense of being the source or initiator (i.e. doer) of the thoughts, but is rather simply the witness of them.

Layla: Even eating, drinking, cooking, driving, etc. are all thoughts, as are people, trees, cars, houses, etc., as also are success, failure, joy, anger, impatience, expectation, judgment, blame, etc. All these things and happenings come to life only when illumined by me as awareness under the influence of *maya*. “I” am separate from them, the non-experiencing witness and knower of them. Lots of work to make this knowledge stick and be really firm... ☺

Ted: This work in Vedantic terms is referred to as *nididhyasana*, meditation upon and continuous application of the teachings, which is essentially a matter of *atma-anatma-viveka* (i.e. discriminating between the self and the “not-self,” the real and the apparent), to each an every

circumstance and encounter of one's life. This practice eventually breaks one's attachment to objects and reveals one's innate perfection as whole, complete, limitless, self-dependent awareness. The assimilation of this understanding is *moksa*, liberation. As we say, however, the price of freedom is constant vigilance, until the vision of non-duality becomes unshakably firm.

Layla: So, taking an example... The subtle body sent a *vasana*-driven dislike of a situation (they wronged me); in response, I react (rude to them) because I think it will make me feel better. Nothing changes in the situation (they're still there in my life with the same characteristics). Applying *karma yoga* here, I recognize that the fact the result of my action (rudeness) had no "desired" outcome, because *Isvara* has its own plan = I am not the doer. Also, because *Isvara* captains its own ship under a complex plan...

Ted: ...which inherently serves the best interests of the total...

Layla: ...this "no outcome" is the best possible outcome possible. I am grateful for it...

Ted: ...because I realize that as part of the total, my best interests are being served as well.

Layla: Does this make sense?

Ted: Completely.

Layla: I was having a hard time seeing *karma yoga* in situations like this, unlike what seemed "simpler" ones to this mind; for example, heart set on a project (desire) – make effort, and yet something does not work out, then leave it to *Isvara*'s will and be grateful for whatever the outcome, etc.

Karma yoga on moment-by-moment thoughts... At the birth, life and death of a thought (sometimes during an interaction) – release it to *Isvara* during its rise, leave the outcome (good reaction or not) to *Isvara*, with gratitude for the outcome at the passing of the thought. In the words of a popular *bhajan*, "*Tujko tera arpan*"...

Ted: You seem to be getting the hang of this self-inquiry business. ☺ Good for you.

Layla: Sorry for being so repetitive. Maybe I am thinking this out too much.

Ted: As mentioned, repetition is good. It is how we learn and how we break the habitual tendencies that have thus far kept us bound.

Layla: Tons of gratitude to you

~ *Namaste*, Layla

Ted: *Namaste*.