

The “X” Is You, but You Are Not the “X”

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2010-11-18

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1496>

Kirby: Dear Ram, thank you very, very much. Your words help a lot. I have a question already though and I am not sure how much to chew on it myself versus asking for clarification. I happen to have the book you recommended, but I had not read it before. I read the first thirty-three pages this evening and got a lot of benefit, but decided to reread what I covered because it is very deep, as you say.

The first verse talks about Vedanta as a means of knowledge. I have spent some time on this passage now. Maybe I should give the book a “once-over” and go back after finishing it once. I find it interesting to my mind how meaning happens, which is what is being described. So here is the passage, on pages 4 and 5, about how words reveal, but without objectifying:

“Now, if the self is not available for objectification, then how is it known through the meaning of the words of scripture? ‘That which is not objectified by the words but by which the words are objectified, know it to be the self, *Brahman*,’ (*Kenopanisad* 1.5). This means the self does not require to be illumined or recognized by words. The words themselves come to do their job of revealing their object because of the self. Since the self does not require itself to be revealed by the words or seen by the eyes, it is called *agocara*, meaning ‘not available to the senses.’”

If Vedanta is the means to reveal the self because it is “not available for the means of knowledge at your disposal, but is available for Vedanta,” how are the words going to do the revealing? Since this comes right at the beginning, I bring this up. I feel like the answer is in the *Kenopanisad* quote somehow, but before I start chasing that down I want to check in with you.

Ram: Hi, Kirby. The self can’t be revealed directly by words, because the self is there before the words come into awareness. And the self already knows what it is, there is just a lack of clarity about it owing to ignorance. The words work by removing ignorance. So the words of Vedanta get you to look at the way you think about yourself – which you can see – and see if it stacks up against what you actually are.

For example, Vedanta says you lack nothing. When you are shown that all the things that you believe can complete you would not complete you if you had them, you let go of that bit of ignorance. For instance, you think something, “X,” will complete you. But using the common-sense knowledge that the subject cannot be the object, you understand that whether “X” is present or absent, the self is free of it. Its presence never adds anything to the self nor does its absence ever subtract anything from you. If you can’t see it, you may need more experience-based knowledge. For instance, when you go to sleep the object is not there, but you are there. By reasoning, you understand that you are free of the object. Even if your “X” is the person you believe you are, the waking state entity, you understand it is not you for the same reason: Kirby is gone, but you are not gone.

Or if this is not clear, then the words show you that the “X” is you already – but you are not the “X” – by getting you to analyze perception carefully. When you are led

through the stages of perception, you see that the object, "X," is actually just the idea of "X" in your mind and that the idea is made out of you, consciousness. The "X" is you. If it is already you, you will see that the desire for it is unnecessary and will stop seeking it. It is the seeking that is apparently separating you from your self.

Or if that does not work, you can reason further that you are not the "X," because it lacks the one thing that makes you what you are: sentiency. So you let go of the belief that you are incomplete with reference to "X" - which is the basis of your seeking. When you stop seeking you have not become someone else nor have you gained anything. You are still the same being you were when you were seeking - minus the ignorance. The ignorance made you think you are something other than what you are.

It is the actual experience of everyone that they are not the things they experience. Nor are you experience itself, because experience is known to you. It is always an object. But this is not how it seems to someone who is self-ignorant. It is not actually the words that remove the ignorance, it is the meaning of the words. Since the self cannot be objectified, words cannot describe it directly, so one needs to resort to the implied meaning. What actually removes the ignorance is inquiry. You, the self, need to investigate to see if the meaning of the words is true.

Anyway, it is not an essential point unless you have a doubt that knowledge is the solution. If you accept the fundamental premise of Vedanta that reality is non-dual, you will see that the solution to the sense of separation/limitation can only be self-knowledge and you will have no other choice but to subject your mind to the means of knowledge and let it work its magic on you.

~ Ram