

Why You Cannot Forget Who You Are

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2014-01-29

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1643>

Mark: Dear James, it seems to me that, contrary to what you say many times on the website, that you can forget who you are. I'm sure that there is a different way to understand your statement that once you know who you are you can't forget. Please explain it. Thanks.

~ Mark

James: Hi, Mark. I enjoy it very much, not only when someone finds the website helpful, but when he or she exposes an apparent contradiction. It is certainly true that you can forget knowledge of objects. I'm in my sunset years, and just the other day I was going to see my dentist and I was preparing a clever little speech to make him laugh as I walked down the hall. Just as I put my hand on the door knob I couldn't remember his name! Relative knowledge - knowledge of objects - can be forgotten once it is gained because the object is not always present. But knowledge of the self is different because the "object" (in this case it's you), awareness, is always available to be known. It is not possible to know that you are not aware because to not know you would have to be aware. But it is possible to not know that awareness is you.

If you inquire into any object that object can be reduced to awareness. A shirt, for example, is actually threads. When I understand this I realize that there is no such thing as a shirt, only the name "shirt." When I look at thread I see that it is actually cotton fibers. Now the threads have been negated. If you keep analyzing you come to the point where you only have the Higgs boson, the "particle" - or wave, as the case may be - that apparently can't be reduced. You can actually negate the particle because when you look at it from a certain perspective it appears as a wave. And you can also negate the wave by observing it from another perspective - which makes it appear as a particle. This negatability is the most notable characteristic of relative knowledge.

Or you can reduce the particle because it does not stand alone, that is, it depends on the observer just as the shirt depended on thread. How can a particle - which is inert matter - vibrate without the help of some other factor? And how does it have any meaning without a knower? It does not stand alone. In fact these elementary particles, like our thoughts, appear and disappear in the cloud chambers in which they are observed - which makes them negatable. In what do they appear and disappear? Awareness. Awareness is always present and therefore not negatable. This is why they call "God" omnipresent, meaning present everywhere and always present. Once it is clear that you are awareness memory is no longer involved for knowledge because the "object" is you! This knowledge is "direct." Awareness, you, are self-aware. You do not need anyone or anything other than yourself to know that you exist. It is self-evident. Awareness is your existence, your self, your essence. Even before you learned that you were "Mark" and went on to accumulate experience under his name, you existed.

To summarize: when you think of the self as an object you can forget but when you know it's you, you can't.

I hope this is helpful. Write anytime.

~ James