

You Cannot Be in a State, and You Don't Have to Wake up (Part II)

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2015-02-27

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2148>

Conrad: Hello, Shams, thank you again for your answers. I, over the last days, can see they fit.

Besides rather intensive other Advaita study since 2013 of different, serious (not New Age) sources, I read *How to Attain Enlightenment* half a year ago, and watched YouTube videos and read other writings (at the site) by James. Our contact feels like a next round in all this. It gives a feeling of gratitude, in a silent way. All seems to happen on its own accord.

Shams: Thanks for sharing some of your background. It's helpful to me so I can give more accurate answers. Let me share an impression that I have, reading this and the last mails. Of course I'm not sure if I'm right, so please take only what suits with the actual situation of your mind.

As I told you before, there are two kinds of languages in the "spiritual" world: the language of experience and the language of knowledge. One is the manifestation of indirect knowledge and the other one is in line with direct knowledge. Advaita Vedanta is another name for the language of knowledge. The problem with this language is that it can't get mixed with the other one. When you take a true concept and use it with the language of experience, you can maybe get a nice image, but no more truth. There is a tale that says that God gave the truth to the Devil for the Devil to use it in all his actions. "Where's the evil in that?" you may ask. Well, he always uses the truth, but in parts. The same happens with the language of experience, it can never get the complete picture of knowledge, because it would stop being the language of experience.

The language of knowledge, Vedanta, is a means of knowledge (because it removes *avidya* in order to give direct knowledge of the reality) that only works when it's preserved pure. Long before the times of Shankaracharya, the people that kept this means of knowledge alive were aware of the importance of keeping the message impersonal because it's the only way that it can work. And long before the age of Shankara, this language had to coexist with lots of traditions that told parts of truth but were mainly hypnotized with the magic of experience. Even great teachers that knew their true identity were unable to communicate an effective means of knowledge, because all that they had was the the language of experience. This continues to our day, and is even the case with great and saintly people like Ramana Maharshi and Nissargadatta Maharaj who were very close to the teaching, but weren't trained in it, so they mixed it with their own views, which resulted in a confusing language that is not working anymore as the language of knowledge (because the whole structure is not there).

One could think that, when traditional Vedanta criticizes other teachings or teachers, it's trying to put them down. In reality, we are only talking about ideas, not about people (which we love and know as our own self), and we don't tend to do it in public, but just when it's necessary for the displaying the teaching. Why am I telling

you all this? Because I got the impression that you mix the teachings of Vedanta with the other teachings, included the so-called Advaita Vedanta teachers (like Alexander Smit and Jed McKenna, for example). Maybe I'm wrong. But if I'm right, I recommend you to note it and put the ideas that you took from them temporarily on hold. For now, these are only obstacles that are not in line with the knowledge of your true identity. I have the impression that your mind is qualified and very *sattvic*, but the knowledge is mixed with unexamined ideas. As I said, I cannot know it for sure, but I communicate this to you because it could be useful to your inquiry.

The first phase of Vedanta is called *sravana* (hearing) and the second one is *manana* (discussion). Clearly you are now in the third phase, which consists in applying the knowledge, but in order for it to work properly you have to completely understand the logic of Vedanta. So it could be a good idea to do the *sravana* part with an observing mind, putting aside all the ideas that you were taught, only leaving Vedanta. James' seminar is a big opportunity, and rereading his books would also be a great idea, but the main key is the attitude of discrimination.

Conrad: It was helpful to understand your comment with the repetitions in it, to see/understand more clearly the difference between a *sattvic* mind and (the process of) freedom/enlightenment (for the mind/*jiva*) itself.

Shams: Well, strictly speaking there's not really a difference, because they're two completely different levels. A *sattvic* mind is a feature of the mind like any other *guna*. On the other hand, freedom is knowledge. You can have a *tamasic* mind and the knowledge. As you understand, "freedom" is not something that you feel, but something that you know. Curiously, you don't know it as an object, but as a subject, yourself.

Conrad: After seeing/recognising this more clearly, a small (what is big/small?) shift happens: a clearer and more permanent seeing/knowing that (strange to type it, I feel a little like an Advaita parrot, knowing no better words, something like, "I am the light, space, formless, in which everything happens, and also free of it."

Shams: Yes, you are the freedom, and for the mind maybe it's the best to become a Vedanta parrot. It will always be like a parrot, since you are not the doer and the mind will keep endlessly flowing. So why not to teach the right words to the parrot?

Conrad: Simply so (not as an experience/state/feeling).

Shams: That is an experience too, Conrad. The immediate, clean, not-as-a-person, 0-dimensional and beautiful/joyful in a silent way can only be known as an experience in the mind, and is described as an experience (a subject and its objects). There's nothing wrong with experience, states, feelings, senses and thoughts. That's all that the mind has and will have, and it's our field of work. There's no problem with experience. The problem is when it's not backed with the right knowledge. Then you interpret the self as some special experience of impersonal bliss. That is *sattva* too, not that there is something wrong with *sattva* (we really need it for inquiry), but it has to be recognised as an object in you. The

mind and all its beautiful reflections of the self should all be recognised as objects. Why would you want to experience something beautiful or 0-dimensional? You are not changed by that; you don't depend on anything. If that experience began it will certainly come to an end. But you won't.

Just like every other object, there's an apparent person appearing in you. He thinks about himself as a subject, but you can let the knowledge of you (the real subject) grow in him, or not - you don't really have a problem with that, although it seems like you are the object (thanks to *maya*). That apparent person could have glimpses of your magnificence as something very incredible and beautiful, as you are, and for certain he could get addicted to that kind of experience - until he discovers that he is just an object. Then there will be no reason to look for better, faster, stronger, impersonal bliss. There will be only the understanding, the knowledge of you.

Conrad: Parallel at this, also in the recent days, a few rather difficult personal relationships (private as well as work) seemed/seem to resolve to some extent, which all triggered (old) fear (on which I also am working energetically). Also, the number of synchronicities that sometimes happen increased in the last few days.

Shams: Lightness, peace of mind, when facing difficulties, and the capacity to propitiate and detect synchronicities all are characteristic of a *sattvic* mind. That means that your mind is in good shape and ready for the only important job: inquiry, discriminating between you and objects.

Conrad: Another question (about which I feel has to do with my process). Often one sees the formulation, "Who am I?" or knowing "who you are," etc. My question: Would it not be more correct to formulate this as, "What I am," as "what" is cleaner, pointing out the impersonal character/deeper dimension? Maybe, I guess, since yesterday the "who" is related to the fullness/love aspect and the "what" to the wisdom/nothingness aspect of being/the self.

Shams: I think it's fine to say "what," which is equivalent to the traditional "that." We say, "You are that," but not, "You are her" or "him." So yes, using a personal adverb could lead to think of a person, which is a possibility when we use "who." However, this word "who" could also be very helpful, since it points to the consciousness, to the identity. When we use "what," on the other hand, we think more of an object and not of an identity. That's why most of the time we prefer to say "who."

About the aspects about the self that you mention, that divergence doesn't exist. I think that Nisargadatta Maharaj was the one who started talking about something like that. The problem is that he didn't teach Vedanta in its traditional form. That means that he used some Vedanta teachings mixed with *yogic* and *tantric* ideas, and his own personal views, although he called that Advaita Vedanta. Don't get me wrong, if there's someone who I personally love and devotedly admire, it's Nisargadatta, but I'm talking about the ideas that he taught, which keep inspiring and helping a lot of people (like many of us who came later to traditional Vedanta), but are generally ineffective for completely removing the ignorance of the self. This is all about the ideas, and ideas don't belong to people; they are impersonal, so we can analyse them and discover if they're in line with the knowledge of awareness.

To think of a fullness/love aspect and a wisdom/nothingness aspect is not the most useful way of thinking about the self, because love is equivalent to knowledge, and knowledge and love are exactly the same as the self. So love = knowledge = self. Yes, you wrote "wisdom," but that is the result of knowledge. There's nothing else to know for a wise man than the self, no other wisdom than, "I am the self." And the knowledge of self is nothing but the self. There is no self on the one hand, and knowledge on the other one. Self is self-knowledge. The fact that you are is pure knowledge. That's why we say you are self-evident. Look at it: the only thing you can know for sure right now is that you exist. Everything else is an inference. You don't need anyone to tell you that you exist, you don't need to believe it. You just know it. Therefore you (the self) are the knowledge.

Also, you are love because love is the nature of consciousness. Love is not in the objects, and it's not a state or an emotion. It is you, with and without objects. And that love, as I mentioned, is the same as knowledge. Therefore we also say that knowledge is the highest form of devotion. And that is just you, but you don't have aspects. Knowledge and love are just two more names by which you are known. Both are manifested in apparently different ways in the subtle body, and yet when they are understood, can be seen as the same.

About the other words: consciousness is always fullness. The idea of nothingness exists only from the perspective of the mind. Fullness of course is also an idea. However, it is much more accurate and consistent with the self because it is clearly limitless and complete and we surely cannot name it a vacuum, except from the mind's point of view, but Vedanta talks to you, and you are the self.

This little and maybe unimportant topic is part of the ideas that I recommend you to put aside, in order to understand first the complete structure, the integral logic of Vedanta, and then you can see if they fit with the language of knowledge. We are talking here about the knowledge, and this knowledge is only one easy thing ("I am awareness"), but for it to work, the mind has to understand its most important implications for the individual and the whole manifestation.

Conrad: I would like to clarify something: in my last email I wrote that I work on fear energetically: I did not mean "with much energy," but with the aid of energetic healing.

Shams: Thanks. I got it right when I read it the first time. In terms of *jnana* inquiry, it is much likely the same: both are objects apparently happening in you.

Conrad: Secondly, a new question, also about fear and other "negative" emotions/sensations/thoughts. In the *e-satsang* at the site, I read an approach which made me happy. Some elements of it were: "tell them to f--- off," "zap them with a bug-zapper," "James hates fear," etc. Yes, that was a good approach for me. Now I am in a different position, it feels/seems; now I feel/see much more, like "embrace it"; it also is a part of the/my self, of existence here/now; "experience it," etc. I assume that both are equally "right," just depending on the state of the ego/mind of that moment/period.

Shams: Yes, of course. And even now you can choose to react roughly towards

some negative part of your mind, but without forgetting that it is only an object in you.