

Low Self-Esteem, *Prarabdha Karma* and *Nididhyasana*

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2016-04-25

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2682>

Low Self-Esteem

Samuel: It's been a tough couple of months. I have felt increasingly like a raw nerve. I regularly lie awake at night mulling obsessively over some issues that concern me in my current work situation. My knowledge of myself as consciousness suddenly seems feeble, and the happiness I know it delivers out of reach. I remember Christian's article about when it is time to turbocharge one's practice... *Rajas* and *tamas* are having a field day. I know that everything that happens happens in the perfect order of *Isvara*, and yet it seems damn hard right now to know myself as ever-free, unaffected awareness with confidence. I am not working at the moment, so I could be meditating a lot every day or watch James' talks, but I am not doing this. I meditate some, listen to James some, read some *satsangs*, which is always great, but then I do nothing much or watch a soccer game and uncharacteristically sleep much. I consider this another round of purification and a gift from *Isvara* (not that I am grateful all the time). It seems I still want to feel free rather than simply know I am free.

I am looking forward enormously to coming to Bad Meinberg to spend a week with James – I need it!

Sundari: The desire to feel free is common when self-knowledge is not firmly rooted in the mind; some ignorance remains to be rooted out for freedom to be known to be your true nature – and freedom does not feel like anything. Self-knowledge is still indirect and has not fully translated into the life of the *jiva*; self-actualisation is not complete. There is a great deal of *tamas* behind these patterns of behaviour you mention above – I would go so far as to say you are depressed and that depression stems from buried anger you feel that you are not entitled to have or express. It's been stuffed down for so long, probably since you were a child; maybe someone in authority (probably a parent – father, most likely) abused you in some way or just never acknowledged you. If this is so, it will have taken away the ability to individuate fully and to develop genuine self-esteem. Parents can never be “perfect” parents, because there is no such thing as a perfect *jiva*, but a child does not need a perfect parent. They just need to be seen, acknowledged and loved for who they are. Indifference can be more damaging than physical abuse.

Samuel: This topic of extremely egocentric personalities seems to be a recurrent theme in my life. I am the proverbial “helper,” often overextending myself in the job. The binding desires on my end are obvious – wanting to be appreciated, liked, loved, etc. And *Isvara* always provides me with people around me who are more than happy to milk this attitude to the max. Like right now I have again a boss who transgresses my boundaries much of the time, and I have great trouble to set and hold simple and clear boundaries, a lesson it is high time for me to learn. I am going to have a talk with my boss soon about my issues with our work relationship and see

where I can get with her.

Sundari: People with low self-esteem typically crave acknowledgement and validation from those around them and will take a lot of punishment to get it. Talking with your boss is fine but you need to identify where this need to seek validation and the tendency to accept abuse is coming from. See the *guna* that is behind the creation of that *vasana*; allow the mind to open up that blocked pipe and release the stench. Let your mind feel those unconscious thoughts/emotions consciously, even though they stink and are painful. However that *samskara* was born, you did not create it, so have compassion for poor Samuel who has suffered so much as a result of it. Identify the pattern as not-self and take a stand in awareness as awareness. I have attached a *satsang* on *samskaras* that James and I co-wrote.

Don't just discuss your issues with your boss (or whoever abuses your boundaries) from a position of weakness – tell your boss in no uncertain terms what your boundaries are and show her that you mean it with the appropriate actions. *Karma yoga* is a great practice but it does not mean we don't fight when we need to. Allow some very large canine teeth to grow. Show the world you mean business, that you value yourself because you are the self and will not be used anymore by anyone. No object can validate you – you validate all objects. Sometime the self has to give a very large roar and take a big swipe at ignorance before it will go away. Be a lion, Samuel; honour that meek and kind man who always says yes to everyone, but give him a kick in the pants too. ☐

Love Samuel unconditionally as the self. It is time you gave him what he needs (and everyone needs) – a real backbone grown from the unshakeable and irrefutable knowledge that you are the self. Love Samuel enough to free him from subservience to those he believes are more powerful than he is – and from the futile search for validation from objects.

Just say no. And stick to it.

Samuel: I translated a few passages from Jan Storms' book on psychopathic tendencies into English. I thought I'd send it to my friends who have been with Andrew [Cohen] for educational purposes, but I decided against it in the end. So I send these passages to you now for your interest so you can get an impression, short as it is, about how he writes about this topic. It is not a finished article, just some pieces that struck me.

Sundari: Thank you for these excerpts, much appreciated. They all concur with my understanding of psychopathic tendencies. I think you could send these thoughts out to other Cohen victims, as it's time you all see that your victimhood was not Cohen's doing. He is *Isvara* too, showing you all how foolish it is to believe in the word of a self-professed, egomaniacal "spiritual leader." Your intentions were all so good, but you were led astray because you did not know the difference between knowledge and ignorance. Now you do – move on, let it go. Forgive yourselves for everything because you did nothing wrong. And forgive him because he was a good teacher of ignorance and you cannot be blamed for that. But nor can Cohen. He is a victim of ignorance too. Forgiveness is never about the other person, because no one does anything to us. Forgiveness is like gratitude – it is a gift for the mind from *Isvara* so that it can be at peace. *Isvara* does not need our forgiveness, but the *jiva* does. By

forgiving you are not saying that the abuser was right or even condoned; you are saying he is the way he is because of ignorance and if he could be different he would be.

Samuel: You nail everything, from Andrew to self-esteem to father/mother issues, all woven into the fabric of your beautiful non-dual vision. Thank you. Very much. I feel I am beginning to come out of a slumber of sorts. As you say lots of *tamas*.

I think it is incredibly clear and beautiful how you describe that buried psychological content has to be made conscious before it can be released and that, "The unconscious mind, or causal body, has a drive for wholeness, and one's 'issues' definitely will appear sooner or later – and we have no control over when." You are so right that what I am dealing with is material that never was allowed to stand in the light of day, deep-seated existential fears, sorrows. As a result of our exchanges I think I am no longer fighting with *Isvara* in the way I was. Some relief. *Prarabdha karma* will play out as it must; *vasanas* will get projected onto this *jiva* existence; *Isvara* will do whatever it is that he must do.

The issue of low self-esteem seems like a red threat amongst most ex-Andrew Cohen students. No person in their right mind would have taken the beatings that many of us did. I realize now that even the people who seemed to have the strongest personality structures were also subject to this low self-esteem in some way. We all lacked some fundamental maturity and therefore ended up in a cult of worshipping a human being rather than a teaching. We actually believed that the teacher and the teaching were one and the same. A fine example of non-duality!

By the way, after making such a strong point that Andrew is a consummate psychopath, I just heard from a friend who recently met him that he really seems a broken man. He apparently said that he wakes up every morning not knowing what to do, that he is incapable of meditating (not that he ever did while I was with him) and of doing his *yoga* practice (and his *yoga* practice was a big stability factor for him. He would never miss his *yoga* practice, ever, and spend at least three hours a day on it.)

At the same time I heard from another friend that Andrew had written him asking if he wanted to meet with him. He had asked this in an email, and the email was signed by Susan. My friend asked, "Who is Susan?" And Andrew replied that he had been dictating this email to Susan (a lone devotee who still dotes on him). So the guy still can't even write his own emails and has someone do it for him as one of his stature deserves, obviously! So it is still a mixed picture. If his brokenness is real, than maybe there is hope for him. If he is mimicking even this part, well, then it is not looking very good.

I also wanted to tell you that you are right about Andrew being abused as a child. His older brother beat him up relentlessly, for years. His mother took him to a psychiatrist at the age of five because he had social problems and learning disabilities. He went weekly until he was 15. I think he had few friends at school, if any, and was unpopular. Do you know that Andrew's mother was a student of his for the first three years of his teaching career, then left him and became a "student" of U.G. Krishnamurti, and then wrote a book about her experience with Andrew called *Mother of God* in which she called Andrew, her own son, a "power-hungry psychopath"? I don't know anything about his childhood experiences with his mom and dad. I know he had been very close with his mom until this happened.

You are right, Sundari – I am still not free of the story with him. I am still angry, still hooked. It ain't over till it is over. Everything you say about the impersonality of the whole event, and forgiveness, I have worked with, but I am going to give this some good attention because it is time to move on, like you say.

I want to thank you and James for your support. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and simultaneously it is clear there is no tunnel at all. And what a light is that! You saying that I was depressed was a gift. It brought it into the light of day, rather than knowing it through a fog. I have read many *satsangs* about *samskaras* and the *gunas* in the last week; it's been enormously helpful and clarifying, beautiful really. *Karma yoga* has taken its rightful place in me again. I am just getting aware how tight certain structures, *vasanas*, still operate this subtle body, those structures you spoke about, stuffed-down notions, feelings that I still struggle to allow to stand in the light of day. Actually, any bit of relaxation with this feels like a big relief, a big relaxation, total acceptance of *Isvara* rather than a fight with him. Not a good idea anyway. No winning here for the *jiva*! The biggest relief is the simple assertion of myself as awareness, full and whole, with nothing lacking. I am so grateful to you and James and Vedanta for your unerring and unceasing emphasis, elucidation, clarification, context-giving and affirmation of this most powerfully liberating truth, so hidden, so in a way exquisitely hidden from sight by *maya*, and yet of course never hidden at all.

Sundari: I am so happy for you, Samuel. I know that with your humility, dedication and commitment to the truth you will prevail and free the *jiva* from any remaining bondage to its conditioning.

Samuel: One pattern I am becoming aware of how much pressure I always carry to contribute to a situation, to give, to be perceived in a positive light, etc. So tiring. I have done this my whole life. Low self-esteem. I was at a gathering yesterday and I was distinctly aware of all this, and delightfully I did not need to do or be anything, seeing it all as *mithya*. I just left it all in *Isvara's* hands, and then things all happened as they would. Of course. I am so tired of this pattern. Fundamentally, I think all this is exactly as you said, self-knowledge working its way to uproot the deeper psychological structures that still lurk there in the deep half-conscious regions of my mind. Bring them to the fore and allow them to resolve in awareness.

Thank you so much, Sundari. You and James have been so generous with me. I cannot tell you what a light you are in my life.

Sundari: So good to hear the knowledge speaking through your words here. It is a sobering thought that no matter how much self-knowledge one has, if it does not translate into the life of the *jiva*, it is of not much use. How persistent and tenacious ignorance is! And one cannot do away with the *jiva*, it is what it is. I believe that certain imprints, or *vasanas*, never fully go away; they are part of the fabric of the *jiva* overlay. Freedom from this is only possible by seeing the patterns as they play out in the mind as not-self, and loving the *jiva* dispassionately, without censoring it. It will never be perfect, that is for sure, so why bother trying to make it so – it is not real after all?

However, when persistent patterns that cause debilitating depression or deep agitation keep surfacing, one has to root them out to improve the quality of life for

the *jiva*. And, as you know only too well, the only way to achieve that is with self-knowledge, there is no other permanent solution. It takes constant vigilance in order to dis-identify with the patterns as they arise in the mind. No one said the “work” of actualising self-knowledge is easy!

The main thing is you have seen and objectified the underlying issue and you love Samuel enough to give him the life he deserves. There is no magic wand, unfortunately, self-realization is not a quick fix for the *jiva*. Well done to you for doing whatever it takes to free the mind of its suffering.

~ Much love to you, Sundari