

Desire Is Suffering

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Sundari: I hope you do not mind me answering. James is a bit snowed under at the moment. I will pass it on to him first for a full Vedanta clearance. 😊

Seeker: Hi, James. I wanted to follow up on our little talk about whether or not self-knowledge felt like anything. Upon thinking about it more, I don't really believe that self-knowledge is an experience. However, is it wrong to think that it will affect my experience as far as reducing agitation in the mind and reducing the overall pressure of likes/dislikes? In your book you describe knowing who you are being "the end of suffering." I had taken that to mean either the reduction of agitation, likes/dislikes, fears, etc. due to understanding or just knowing that those things have nothing to do with me, and therefore agitation/fear/feeling of inadequacy is reduced. Can you please clear this up for me?

Sundari: You have concluded correctly. Self-knowledge does not feel like anything and it is not an experience although, as you correctly point out, it results in the reduction of the overall pressure of likes/dislikes, which does feel like something and is an experience. In short, it has experiential ramifications. As you well know, desire is painful and everyone tries to get rid of it in one way or the other. The gain of a desired object is the loss of the desire and the real reason why objects are pursued by the ignorant who are forced to accept the temporary satisfaction that objects afford.

Gaining self-knowledge is the only way out of this trap. When you know that all the objects are you, you give up desiring them. You can then have contact with them happily, not FOR happiness. The pain comes from seeking desperately to have the objects to complete you in the vain hope that the completion will be permanent, which it never is. When self-knowledge is firm, agitation, fear and the illegitimate feeling of inadequacy is permanently removed, not just reduced.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Sundari