

The Three Types of Enlightenment Sickness

Arlindo Moraes

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***Jivas'* Sense of Inadequacy and the Three Types of Enlightenment Sickness**

A *jiva* is pure consciousness under the spell of ignorance of its own nature. Such ignorance, the non-apprehension of one's eternal, limitless, all-pervasive nature, simultaneously produces the misapprehension "I am this body-mind construction limited by all means, who feels small, incomplete and inadequate." *Jivas'* feelings of smallness, wrongness or rightness is due to this deep sense of limitation, which is a property of its apparently impermanent nature.

All *jivas* feel somewhat inadequate to different degrees. Righteousness is a compensation effort to cover up one's feelings of insufficiency, wrongness and smallness. This feeling of limitation is the deepest binding *vasana* in all *jivas'* causal bodies. It is the *vasana* that compels the *jiva* to waste life after life running after objects of experience as an attempt to complete itself and rest for a moment or two in his own nature as pure adequacy.

Self-knowledge is the only event in time with the power to dispel or at least weaken the power of this *vasana*, which is always hungry for food in the form of love, approval, validation and appreciation from others. Self-knowledge is the most powerful purifier of the causal body. *Karma yoga*, *dharma yoga*, meditation, contemplation and discrimination are all great purifiers – they prepare the mind for self-inquiry, and self-inquiry is the only "path" to produce self-knowledge.

What is self-knowledge, or enlightenment, then? It is awareness, appearing as a *jiva*, realizing (not only theoretically) that in fact its true identity/nature is awareness. In other words, it is *jiva's* hard and fast knowledge "I am awareness." Okay, one would say, that is clear, but what is "enlightenment sickness" and where to find the cure?

As I have already mentioned, self-knowledge produces a profound purification or dissolution of those energies around inadequacy, those self-insulting *vasanas* which constantly seek love, appreciation and validation from others. The very moment the *jiva* realizes his true nature, somehow most of those energies in the form of these erroneous limiting notions are neutralized. If before the *vasana* of inadequacy was kept alive by the misapprehension or ignorance of the truth, once *jiva* sees the truth, the inadequacy-*vasana* is automatically deprived of its food (one's belief in those notions) and begins a diet of starvation. It happens the same way the misapprehension of the rope as a snake is dissolved by the apprehension of its true nature as "rope."

Once *jiva* realizes that in truth he is awareness, his identity kind of "shifts" (it is a shift in understanding/knowledge) and the *jiva* feels a great difference as far as his relationship with his environment goes. It feels very new because most of those *vasanas* that used to stress or depress the mind are no longer operating. He/she now experiences a fresh sense of freedom because she/he no longer needs to go and get things in order to be happy and satisfied. Sometimes the *jiva* does not really understand the cause of this feeling of lightness and freedom, especially if he/she does not know Vedanta. This sense of freedom is the effect of the knowledge "I am the light of consciousness and as such I am whole, full, complete, eternal and infinite

- I need anything to fulfill myself."

How then does enlightenment sickness (E.S.) come into the picture?

In fact there are three kinds of enlightenment sickness. Let's call them types A, B and C.

The type "A" is a delusional state of mind of a *jiva* with a very deep *vasana* or feeling of inadequacy and a disturbed mind (with predominance of *rajas* and *tamas*). It usually develops as soon as *jiva* contacts the knowledge of Vedanta. You see, Vedanta can be very direct. It will affirm that the *jiva* is the light of consciousness, and that *jivas* are already free! Most seekers love to hear that, and they fall for the ego's voice, which says, "You already know you are enlightened - the search is over!" The *jiva* is very anxious to declare to himself and the world that he is enlightened. His/her deep sense of inadequacy may easily deceive her/his intellect and compromise discrimination. He wants to free himself from that uncomfortable sense of smallness and insufficiency, and unconsciously she/he may take a shortcut which will definitely not bring the desired result. This type of E.S. usually goes away as the *jiva* stays with the Vedanta teachings/teacher doing his/her *shravana* and *manana* to develop certain qualities, among others patience and perseverance, together with higher self-esteem.

Type "B" of E.S., which is the most difficult to cure, is the result of a mind with a predominance of *sattva guna* and a strong *vasana* for spiritual experiences together with an equally strong *vasana* for appreciation and validation due to his/her deep sense of inadequacy. Her/his *sattvic* mind becomes more interested in the mystical experience of "enlightenment" it produces and loses the focus of his/her final goal, which is to get the direct knowledge "I am ever-free awareness." This is very common in the spiritual world of the *gurus* and *yogis*. They develop a dualistic understanding that enlightenment is "experiencing the self," but since the self cannot be experienced, because of its non-dual nature, all they experience is an idea of the self, represented by certain experiences. They usually have big egos because they feel very special since they believe to experience things (subtle objects, such as epiphanies) that common people do not experience. Scriptures may refer to them as "stuck in *sattva*."

Type "C," which was the one I have experienced for a short time, is the result of the direct self-knowledge to produce the certainty "I am pure consciousness, or awareness." Self-knowledge is the greatest purifier, but it often leaves behind a residual *vasana* of inadequacy, among others (food and sex is at the top of list of "needs"). *Jiva's* remaining ignorance sometimes builds the strength to press the *jivamukta* to forget or betray his/her self-knowledge. It means that the self-knowledge still needs to be reinforced through constant application of the knowledge of the scriptures until it becomes firm and solid enough to neutralize those remaining energies which often compel the newly-born *jivamukta* to seek fame, power, recognition, appreciation, love, sex, etc. This type of E.S. is not something the *jivamukta* should be much concerned with. It will easily go after some time, just like the clouds on the blue sky.

~ Arlindo Nagar