

Who Is the One Trying to Stop the Ego?

Shams Martínez

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Conrad: Thank you! Mailing a number of times in this way works, an exercise for the mind/intellect. "Getting back to what i/I always/timelessly already am," occurred again when reading your mail, and, over time, is happening further; being "myself," this ever-free Awareness/Essence/Being/"the" Self, this tiniest of tiny specks, the quantum zero-field, limitless beyond infinity/possibilities, subtler than subtle, greater than great, total intelligent/loving presence/reality.

Shams: You are already that, you will never cease to be it. Nothing special at all. And the most important thing: not an experience.

Conrad: (Some "protesting" is happening here, as you can imagine.) Still, it feels right to ignore this and to also say here I am all experiences; yes, as you wrote, it's about you, I am/is "my" *jiva*, all *jivas*, all beings, and free from all of this, of all inner and outer objects; I am Awareness/Consciousness, (re)discovering itself in/as this *jiva*, e.g. writing this email now.

Shams: Yes. You are discovering you, just apparently, because you are completely self-discovered, self-revealed. In fact the intellect-mind is the one that is getting this actualization. You are not touched by that lack of knowledge, but it's the natural course of the *jiva* to let the ignorance go away.

Conrad: There is a growing sense of presence/love/being, seeing/knowing that all existence is one interconnectedness, that Existence indeed is Awareness. A sense of a subtle spaciousness/freedom, of knowing that all is one universal wisdom, one Happening.

Ego/mind, "my" *jiva*, with its semi-real, ever-changing content is getting more transparent/relative again, better seen as an appearance, an object in Me, a temporal/spatial subtle manifestation.

What seems to have happened is that the clarity/differentiation in your answers, the patient/truthful quality, in combination with the possibility of me to recognize/appreciate this, help to make a further freeing/disidentification possible.

The doubt about whether all this further realizing is mainly/only mental/ego, whether this is only/mainly a kind of enlightenment sickness, is seen now again as mostly superego-activity/old conditioning of/on the mind itself, superego attacking, as it is sometimes called.

Shams: Maybe it's the superego, but it has a great utility for you in the world and, in your case, is being managed with maturity. In truth, the tendency to doubt about the ego, to feel that the ego is a liar or an impostor, is a characteristic of the spiritual types. The fact that you check you up for traces of enlightenment sickness is a good

sign that discrimination and dispassion are working, and that it won't be easy for that little tyrant that every *jiva* has inside to get away with it.

On the other hand, there is no reason to stop thinking that you are the whole - because you are it. But the person has to understand that it will never be a super-*jiva*. It's just a change in understanding. Existential suffering will end and hopefully the individual will be more clever, but liberation means that you are free of that person. So if the person starts to feel that knowledge is giving him or her some special status, then it's time to think about enlightenment sickness. And in our Western culture that is quite common because of an education more focused on individualism than on *dharma*.

So, in summary, good for your mind that doesn't trust your ego.

Conrad: On the contrary, it is seen again that there is a positive/functional co-opting of ego here (the "fake it..."). Although it was the content of your email as a whole, also/especially these sentences were of help:

"Thinking of liberation as a process could be confusing."

"I don't know if I correctly pointed what mean, but the main reason I want to communicate this is because I think that your mind is still very preoccupied about phases, indications and evidences, which are just objects in you and are very far from the true goal: just knowledge."

"But subject and object are not merged. There is only you, and you are not merged with anything." Yes!

The link to the PDF *What Is Maya?* Rereading these issues, training the mind, helps.

"If you are looking for the root of experience, then your only faithful guide would be knowledge because every experience is born form the idea that duality is real."

"A more useful approach would be to realize that there is only one experience, as there is only one object, called non-self. That non-self is the "creation" of *maya*. The idea that it is real actually cannot be confirmed at all. When you try to approach the objects, you only get experiences. It doesn't matter if the object is a table, your body, an emotion or your mind-intellect, you only get experiences, experiences, experiences."

"You only have to know you."

"But who is the witness to all this, who is the one that never changes?"

There are no questions now; asking more would be more something like a loss of the subtlety, light and joy there is now, at times.

Shams: But you will lose that subtlety, light and joy because they are only objects in you. There is no necessity to keep them. I get what you try to communicate, but let me keep pointing out these aspects of the experiential language. *Jiva* wants to stay with the light and joy (*sattva*) because they make him feel free (from obscurity and pain). What knowledge brings is the understanding that you don't need light and joy (that are experiences), but only certainty about who you are: the source of light and

joy (and obscurity and pain). When that certainty comes, then there is no need to struggle to get or extend some experiences or to avoid other ones.

That doesn't mean that the nature of a *sattvic* mind is not to stay *sattvic*. Stay *sattvic* but understand that you are even free of it.

Conrad: To be complete, to mention the fear: it is partially associated with periods of stress earlier in my life, that occurred as a consequence of being confronted with myself. Also, intuitively, there must be a relationship with disturbing impressions in early (preverbal) infancy, which seem to be felt again now. And third, also intuitively, it feels like a release of the kind that is sometimes referred to, and a result of, a degree of ego-death process. (Maybe you can comment on this latter point?)

Shams: I can say that the concept of ego death is a problematic one, and sometimes is related to enlightenment sickness, by the way. So it's important to inquire into it.

Who is the one trying to finalize the ego? The ego itself. So when you try to kill it, you only reinforce it. Ego will never die, mostly because it's impossible to kill something that is not alive. Ego is just a function of the mind, an idea. Nothing more.

The essence of the inquiry is understanding that you are not the doer, i.e. the self is not a doer. And the *jiva* is just a part of an infinite field governed, not by you, but by *Isvara* (that, after all, is you). Some teachings don't have this clear and assume that the ego just has to "die" in order to let the mind identify with the Absolute. That is nonsense. If you kill the ego, you kill the mind, and then who would enjoy the fruits of *moksa*? So you have to think twice. Who is apparently doing all these things, who is getting the motivation and who is dreaming about being in the middle of a process of ego death? The ego! The one that owns all kinds of stuff and also loves to identify with subtle personalities.

The real problem is not the ego, but the immature ego. All the qualifications that Vedanta prescribes are meant to build a mature ego. So the solution is not killing it but showing it its place according to *dharma*. And never stop watching over it. Swami Chinmayananda says "the price of liberation is constant vigilance." Yes, when the knowledge is firm, there is also an ego to deal with. And much of the time it's a pretty common ego, with its own habits and its secret drives. The only difference is that it's known as an object.

Conrad: Care is taken for it by healing work and inquiry/meditation, with positive effects in general.

Shams: Yes, and all this work is always helpful if you want a mature ego - not if you want to eliminate it.

Conrad: But/mostly, as you made me aware of (again), I can see better/again/naw how relative all this is, all these seemingly-real experiences are, just objects in Me.

Shams: Yes, and that is all.

Conrad: Also, in this respect, a deeper recognition is taking place that, on the relative level, everything, at any moment and place, is always exactly what it is, not more, not less, right, in the field of the total, of *Isvara*.

Shams: Yes, everything (the ego included) has only one meaning, one identity.