

Isvara, the Angry Dog of Ignorance

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Samantha: It sounds like you had some profound moments this summer, and we are both happy to know you pushed through it all. I find it interesting even with the knowledge of who you really are, those mind-thoughts are stubborn buggers, ready to take you down *maya's* rabbit hole. You are an inspiration...

Trout Lake was the best yet, in our opinion. We certainly missed you, however. Ramji was in exceptional form and we soaked up his words more than ever. It was an extra interesting time for me. Please share this with James, as I told him I would write to him about it. On our road trip to Trout Lake, we stopped to camp at Sun Valley, Idaho. It's exquisitely beautiful there, and one fine morning we decided to go for a hike. As we got to higher country, we ran into a flock of sheep on the mountain... accompanied by three Great Pyrenees sheep-guard dogs... with no shepherd around. Well, they did their job in guarding the sheep, and one dog who was especially aggressive and decided to go on the offensive, and took a good bite out of my leg. Well, it was frightening, to be sure, and thankfully, Harris got us down the hill without any further injury.

To make a long story short, we went to the hospital, I got cleaned up and animal control found the owner of the dog. The owner was not 100% sure if the dog was up on his rabies vaccinations, but we left Idaho for Trout Lake in hopes that Tom, the owner, would leave word about the dog's vaccines.

We didn't hear from him the entire time we were at Trout Lake, and my mind was doing some amazing gymnastics of looking at the PROBABILITY of contracting rabies and my imminent death. These guard dogs live with the sheep in the forests and are just as much a critter as any critter out there. It seemed quite possible this dog could have rabies if he hadn't been up on his vaccinations. To be sure, sadly, Tom told us later he had the dog euthanized to expedite the rabies results. But the lab was behind on their workload and didn't get to the dog until after what I thought was my window to get the vaccine to prevent my death.

So this set the stage for my week at Trout Lake... really looking at my true nature... whole, complete, never changing, always present, limitless awareness, and KNOWING I wasn't "Samantha," the *jiva*. The circumstances forced me to go deep into my inquiry, usually all through the night, and I kept coming back to the realization that I am awareness, and it will be just fine if Samantha-*jiva* moves on from this world because I am not "her." It was wonderful doing my inquiry at night and then listening to James all day. I felt blessed that I was dealing with this while being immersed in Vedanta. It was an epiphany for me, to be sure. Needless to say, "Samantha" doesn't have rabies, as the dog tested negative in the end. I'm sorry the dog was put down, but the owner said he couldn't have dogs attacking people anyway.

We came back from Trout Lake stoked and hunkered down with Christian's *Calm to the Core*. Harris has been on overdrive with the course... I expect he will get his *moksa* by the end of next month. ☺ We have both appreciated the practical use of his lessons. On that, with Ramji's talks in the evening, we are working Vedanta with a passion. Although, honestly, I get a bit sidetracked with life's daily chores. But the feeling

of gratitude is blossoming in ways we never thought possible. Sometimes I don't see how we can even go about our daily business without being in tears of gratitude in every moment with all that *Isvara* has provided for us.

We were reading the recent ShiningWorld newsletter out loud (the best newsletter yet!), and I could barely read through it with each of your beautiful words resounding deep in our hearts. Your's and James' gratitude to your students, your gratitude to James... it was one big gratitude-fest and all spoken from such a beautiful place. Thank you for that. We were in tears thanking *Isvara* for bringing Vedanta, James and you into our lives.

So life is great and beautiful, and we will continue on with our studies until it abides in our every cell. You both are so precious to us, so please travel safely on your journeys.

Sundari: What a beautiful email, thank you for sharing your experience with us. That was quite a move *Isvara* pulled on you! If you see the dog as *Isvara*, which of course it was, the bite it took out of you can also be seen as *Isvara* removing a chunk of ignorance. The dog being "put down" is a sign that some ignorance is now dead, not you (or the dog). Any experience we have is only as good as our ability to assimilate its meaning, without interpreting it according to our likes and dislikes. Everything that happens to us is *Isvara* in form, showing us something we need to see. You correctly assimilated the meaning of your angry-dog experience and the result was self-knowledge - the hard and fast knowing that nothing affects you and nothing adds to, diminishes, negates or has the power to destroy you. Nothing can take a bite out of you!

It's really a great story. You just have to love that foxy old *Isvara*! It will get a grip on any remaining ignorance one way or the other. Well done to you, Samantha. You stuck with it and did not give up; the fruit of self-inquiry is knowledge. When *Isvara* challenged you, the knowledge came into play and you used it to discriminate yourself from the *jiva*. You understood not only what "happened" but inquired into the nature of the unaffected knower of the experience, you, the self, to whom nothing happened. You let go of the fear of death with the knowledge that nothing ever dies or can die. All experiences are *mithya*, but correctly understood, they reveal *satya*, the non-experiencing witness.

Yes, I have recently undergone a similar experience. Old *vasanas* can get re-ignited whenever we return to where major imprinting took place for the *jiva*. I had a few run-ins with an old and hidden *jiva*-Isabella program, found there was still some stuff that needed cleaning out, a tiny bit of duality based on past *karma*, which is no more.

What took a bite out of "me" was not a physical dog but the vicious dog of the last remaining bit of duality. The dog always arises from the causal body and will bite, when the time is right and ripe. And it will hurt! Most self-realised and (almost fully self-actualised) inquirers still have some cleaning up to do on unconscious content. It is very rare to find a *jnani* who does not, and is 100% free of the causal body. As I said in the newsletter, I have met inquirers, *jnanis* and great souls from all over the world, but the only one, in my experience, fully free of the *jiva* program is Ramji. I have not met the Indian *mahatmas*, like *swamis* Paramarthananda, Dayananda, etc., all who undoubtedly are and were also totally free of the *jiva*. But our Ramji is very rare indeed.

It is amazing how tenacious, hidden and subtle ignorance can be. *Nididhysana* never ends for the *jiva*. But once the *jiva* program is totally dismantled, one continues *nididhysana* purely for the edification of your own mind, not because there are any remaining binding *vasanas*. And there is definitely no need to improve the *jiva*. Thankfully, this experience brought about a major breakthrough for me and the joy and lightness of being is sublime. I can now say that I too am free of the Isabella program, but that does not mean I stop *nididhysana*. Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom. *Isvara* is very sneaky!

It goes to show that when there is even the tiniest layer of duality or ignorance still lurking in the microcosmic causal body, it is truly amazing how much bliss it limits. But you don't realise it, because you already feel happy (almost) all the time. But you don't realise there is much more where that comes from. It is like this – you can see the self, you know you are the self, and there is only you, the self. But what you can't see is that there are a few remaining layers of ignorance covering the knowledge, like cling film, which you can see through, but they are there, and they limit your access to the bliss of the self, your true unlimited nature. Only *Isvara* can remove them, when the time is right. And that time always comes, but it is grace when it does – and it will only free the mind if correctly understood and assimilated. Only when the last bit of duality goes do you realise just how truly blissful it is to be you, all the time.

You will not be different “afterwards,” because *karma* keeps unfolding until the death of the body. *Moksa* is not associated with a change in *karma*, because it does not affect *karma*, except over time, indirectly. It only affects the quality of the *karma* and how you relate to it. The *jiva* still has an apparent existence, and its life circumstances do not necessarily change. It still has to “do business” and transact with the world, taking care of its *karma*. But it keeps its *karma* on a very short leash, like a little dog at your heels, as Ramji so succinctly puts it. It leaves no unfinished business, not ever. There is no time lag in the function of the knowledge in the *jiva*'s life and what is presented to it on a moment-to-moment basis. You are the knowledge. How the self responds to the *jiva*'s *karma* is as the self, for whom there is no *karma*. Nothing is ever a problem for the self.

When the knowledge “I am awareness” and “I am not the body-mind” have the same meaning to you, you are liberated while living. Clear knowledge is liberation as you live. Self-knowledge does not become permanent as long as you believe that what you experience is actually real. When self-knowledge is permanent, the *jiva* program, when it arises (which it will because it is *Isvara*) is dismissed as *mithya*, as it arises. It is only apparently real. The apparent never becomes real. Only you, the knower of the *karma*, are real. This firm knowledge is the only true freedom.

~ Much love to you, Sundari