

# Eve and the Forbidden Apple of Self-Knowledge

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**Micah:** Norway is in this darkest time of year now; it is a beautiful time for lighting candles and deep reflection. I think of both of you every day and hope you are doing well.

I thank and bless both of you every day in my heart, and I feel so blessed to been taught by you. I bow to your feet. Just a few words to share with you some reflection about *bhakti* and the nature of the self. And I appreciate if you have some commentary or corrections, I really try to write as clearly as I can. Thank you.

**Sundari:** You have been on my mind and I have been wanting to write to you for over a week - I blame *Isvara* for keeping us too busy. We are immersed in writing the *guna* books and managing so much for Shiningworld as usual, planning India and the U.S. teaching schedule keeping us especially busy. We are also on the move again, packing up in South Africa to leave for Dubai on Thursday en route for India. I spend a couple of weeks with my darling girls there and then join Ramji, who is going straight on to India. He has a lot of work to do on the new venue.

I can imagine that the deprivation of sunlight can cause some interesting *guna* results - that must be why the Nordic countries have the highest suicide rates in the world. It's not easy to be the light when you live in darkness inside and out. We are so blessed to know that there is nothing that makes us shine!

Thank you for the *bhakti* and the honouring, we bow to your feet too! Your writing is beautiful and filled with the love you and knowledge you are. I have fixed up some of it, but not all.

**Micah:** Is it right to understand *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma yoga* like this?:

I am *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma yoga* because the self's nature is *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma yoga*. "Yoga" means when the mind has recognised or realised its own nature as the Self - the mind is now identified (yoke with, understood as) as the Self, and its nature has "become" recognised as non-dual love, free from bondage, just bound with the Self, with itself.

Communion and direct knowledge are taking place, like Krishna and Arjuna are bound, in communion, in love, for the teaching to taking place, the process of the teaching to realise non-dual love as my true nature, as the Self, and as a *jiva* too; freedom for and from the *jiva*.

**Sundari:** Beautifully put, Micah! There is no real binding other than that of love and knowledge, which is not a binding, because it is our nature as the self.

**Micah:** Like Ramji and Sundari and Micah have to first bind, in love, Micah asking for understanding, knowledge from the teacher, this for Micah to be taught. Micah must

trust the teacher, the teaching and himself, and then realises his own nature as the Self, and therefore free from Micah, free from the teacher and the teaching, now in love with love that is now recognised in and as everything, the teacher, the teaching, himself and as the nature of everything, the essence of everything is Love. Therefore I understand *bhakti* as non-dual love, as the nature/the essence of the Self, of myself (*jivatman*).

Also, the self-realised and self-actualised *jiva* is *bhakti*, *jnana* and *karma*, all three together assimilate and functionate effortlessly and in an appropriate way without compulsive bondage, just acting and non-acting naturally, having the same value (dispassionate) for everything. Everything is recognised as the Self, as myself.

I understand expression of *bhakti* when the Self expresses itself through the mind (*manas*), expression of *jnana* when the Self expresses itself through the intellect (*buddhi*) and expression of *karma* when the Self expresses itself through the ego (*ahamkara*).

All three functions are operating at the same time in *yoga*, this when the mind is identified with the Self as the Self.

Could I say that *jnana yoga* and *karma yoga* apply 24/7, operating now effortlessly like a habit, taking place naturally in mind fructified as *bhakti*?

**Sundari:** Perfect understanding. Yes, of course. A free person still practises *karma yoga*, but only in the sense that it is known to be common-sense knowledge because only *Isvara* controls the *dharma* field. *Karma yoga* is no longer needed to negate the doer, because there is no longer a doer to negate or *vasanas* to render non-binding. If there are still a few lingering *vasanas* to negate, *nididhysana* continues. Like *karma yoga*, *nididhysana* is practised even if all the *vasanas* are rendered non-binding, but no longer because they still bind, but again, because it is common-sense knowledge that I must dismiss the *jiva* when it arises. The *jiva* is always changing and so is the field in which it lives, so eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.

**Micah:** Also, when mind identified with the Self “becoming” itself, resolved in the Self, recognised everything as itself and can just but love everything as its own Self, self-loving (the fifth stage in *The Yoga of Love* book) and then “mind goes beyond” *jnana* and *karma*, and just operates as non-dual Love.

**Sundari:** Yes, but there is no “beyond” for the self (as the mind) to get to. That word uses the journey metaphor, which we steer away from because it implies that you must do something to get “to enlightenment.” Enlightenment is not an event, a state or a place. It is simply the absence of ignorance. When the last of the ignorance goes, you realise that the steps to “get there” are the qualities of “being there.”

Knowledge, like ignorance, are objects known to you, awareness. You no longer need to practise self-knowledge; you are the knowledge. Before self-knowledge has fully obtained, you need to practise the knowledge, keeping it consciously in the mind and applying it to every ignorance-inspired projection that arises until all projections are negated by self-knowledge. Ignorance is the only object that does not die a natural death, like all other objects. It must be “killed” by self-knowledge or

it will grow back like a tenacious weed.

**Micah:** I understand the sweetness of the ripened fruit as *moksa*. I am the seed (*karma*), the tree with the leaves (*jnana*) and the fruit (*bhakti*). The sweetness of the fruit is *moksa*, the mind realised and actualised as *Brahman*. I am *Brahman*. To actualise myself, I must “taste” myself to know myself, my own nature, the nature of everything. When mind recognised its nature as non-dual love through *jnana* and *karma*, the fruit came (becoming a mature person, a fruit ready to be ripened at every moment).

Then I have to allow the sweetness of this fruit, me as self-knowledge, to be eaten, shared. Allowing my nature, nurturing my life, my existence, all the people around me and blessing everyone with myself, self-knowledge. This pure non-dual Love, self-knowledge, that is Me, the sweetness of the fruit of Love. Sharing myself.

**Sundari:** You are a non-dual poet, Micah!

**Micah:** So I reflected about Eve...

The apple that Eve tasted in the Garden of Eden is presented as the defended fruit, when it is actually the right thing to do, no choice either, it is the one way to Rome. It is a symbol of *moksa*. Eve is the Self when she tastes the apple. She is Love, she is the apple itself, “becoming” one with the apple.

So the metaphor is telling people “if you taste the apple like Eve does, you will miss your self-knowledge and then you will be impure”; religion has introduced this misunderstanding (consciously or unconsciously, I don’t know) to keep people’s minds and beliefs bound and in fear so that they do not taste the fruit of knowledge, to not get *moksa*, get understanding their own nature as *moksa*.

It is just an apparent conditioning and just a belief, hardwired in the world, in the mind. And it works because it is well known that metaphors work for conditioning the mind (like TV, radio, marketing, music, etc.).

**Sundari:** Spot on, Micah! The conditioning of ignorance is everywhere, masquerading as the truth. This story is as old as time, and you will find it in all worldly religions, prevailing beliefs and philosophies. This is what is taught as truth. In fact what most people believe to be self-knowledge is usually based almost entirely on ignorance of the self. Even if you are a confident, emotionally and mentally healthy person with self-esteem, without knowledge of the self, your idea of who you are is based on ignorance dressed up as knowledge.

**Micah:** I am *moksa*, the sweetness of the fruit, self-knowing myself.

Eve is the feminine, the mother that nurtures the “baby,” the “little self,” this apparently ignorant mind with the fruit of self-knowledge, allowing the sweetness of the fruit of self-knowledge to be tasted and shared, embodied as self-knowledge.

**Sundari:** Indeed!

**Micah:** It is interesting that Swami gest the name Saraswati. Is it a self-actualisation denotation? Do you know what is the symbol of this tradition?

**Sundari:** Yes, there are different categories or lineages within the main lineage of Vedanta. Saraswati is the goddess of wisdom, so this denotes a particular kind of *swami*, mostly devotees of Shankara.

**Micah:** I am not sure about my English sometimes... I am sorry for that, and hope it is good enough for understanding. 😊 Thank you so much to always be there, taking time to read it. I am so grateful. I know you have a lot of work to do, so I understand if there is little or no time for answering.

~ *Om* and *prem*, much Love to both of you from Micah

**Sundari:** Ah, Micah, we love your writing and your English! You do just fine. You are a bright spark in a dull ocean, a twinkling star on a dark night, a very bright light that we love to hear from. You make our hearts happy!

~ Love, always, to the love I am in you, Sundari

**Editor's note:** Apologies to Micah for cleaning up his charming English, but it was for the sake of clarity as well as for the sake of readers for whom English is not a first language.