

Is Intuition a Valid Means of Knowledge?

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Michael: I have a question about this quote that came on Facebook recently in a group I follow: "Intuition is a function of a *sattvic* mind, which provides clarity that allows you to see into the heart of things," (Ramji). Someone came up with this quote (probably from the Trout Lake seminar now in August?) and I have a bit a doubt about this quote because it seems to contradict, in a way, what is said below in the *dharma/intuition satsang*. Or maybe I do not see the whole picture of what was said in the seminar that is important to know about and did not contradict the *satsang* below. ☺ And since Vedanta is counter-intuitive and does not rely on intuition as self-knowledge, I am suspicious (having a doubt) of this quote that someone posted on Facebook, and if you have time to comment on it. Thanks. ☺

Dharma and Intuition, Ram (James Swartz, October 2015)

Tags: *dharma*, *samsara*

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"There is not one Vedanta scripture that supports intuition as a valid means of knowledge. There is a better way to deal with disturbing situations

"Intuition can be helpful – but never as one's primary means of knowledge, because appearances can be deceiving. One's views should be based on hard and fast evidence, and one should be careful not to ignore facts that contradict one's views. You are not being fair to the object if you run with your feelings, and you are not being fair to yourself either, no matter how much you value your feelings.

"There are always two sides to every coin. I had my suspicions about her too, but I had counter-intuitions too. It was never completely clear to me what she was up to, which suggests that intuition is unreliable. Which intuition should I believe? Situations like this argue for an objective evaluation of the facts, not how you feel about a particular fact. And, when all is said and done, the big picture – love and compassion – should determine one's actions, not a few minor infractions of *dharma*."

Sundari: James did make both quotes, but perhaps the one made on Facebook was taken out of context. Vedanta is counter-intuitive because it is usually a both/and, not an either/or. It requires a subtle and qualified mind to understand this. It all depends whether you look at things as the self or the *jiva*. So both statements are true.

As a *jiva*, a very *sattvic* mind is very intuitive because, being clear and alert, in harmony with *Isvara*, it can tune into the causal body. But that still does not make intuition a valid means of knowledge. A valid means of knowledge is one that is true all the time, in all situations, for everyone and stands independent of anyone's opinions, beliefs or interpretations. Only Vedanta, the scripture, fits the bill. Intuition is never accepted as a valid means of knowledge, because it is subject to individual

filters, likes and dislikes and it is always changing. I am highly intuitive, but I am also cognizant of the fact that intuition is *mithya* and I am *satya* – the knower of my intuitions.

Intuition and spontaneous response are two terms that can be synonymous and are very much open to interpretation. Both are quite often used in the texts to refer to self-knowledge, which if self-knowledge is firm, may be correct.

If self-knowledge is firm, I will automatically act and live in keeping with my *svadharma* and will always follow situational and universal *dharma* in every respect it affects me as a *jiva*. I do not have to think about my response or the information that is coming into the mind from the Field (*Isvara*), because I unfailingly and automatically respond spontaneously and intuitively as the self to my environment.

Karma yoga will be instinctive knowledge, no thinking is involved, and my actions are always appropriate and timely, in line with *Isvara*. Life works for me, supporting me, giving me all I need. So my response to whatever is happening in the Field is always the same, meaning as the self, non-dual, even though what is happening is always changing. I do not change.

But if self-knowledge is not firm, intuition and spontaneous response can be very misleading and unreliable indeed. If my intuition is not based on self-knowledge, what is it based on? Ignorance usually – interpretation. Intuition, in this case, is like emotion: you cannot rely on it, it comes and goes, always different from one moment to the next.

Taking ignorance to be knowledge, people feel moved by their “inner voice” or intuition to be “spontaneous” and do the craziest things. So as always, everything in Vedanta depends on context. Are you asking as the self, a *jivanmukta*, or as the *jiva* under the spell of ignorance?

If you are the latter, this morning you might feel intuitively that it is ordained for you to murder your annoying neighbour or your parents – or to dump your emotional garbage onto someone else in the guise of “honesty.” But intuition and spontaneous response will be spot on when self-knowledge is absolutely firm, not before. And if the knowledge is not firm yet, the only means of knowledge you can always trust is the scripture, nothing else.

So – bottom line: if ignorance of your true nature reigns, do not trust your intuition, as it will more than likely be wrong! Even if we think our intuition is about self-knowledge, if the knowledge is not firm, how will we know if what we think is accurate and in line with the scripture and not really our own interpretation of what the scripture is saying? If we interpret self-knowledge based on our own bias or intuition, it will not work to set us free of limitation. And we all know how entrenched the mind’s beliefs and biases can be. That is why qualifications are so important for self-inquiry. Unless the mind is qualified, it will stick stubbornly to its own interpretative thinking, regardless of facts that contradict it.

I hope that answers your question

~ Much love, Sundari