

First Realization, Then Actualization

Ram (James Swartz)

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Kumar: Dear James, it seems like after enlightenment I am in this in-between state that is troubling.

James: In between what and what?

Kumar: Now that the filter (ego) is gone I have direct access to the subconscious which is disturbing.

James: This is often one of the unintended consequences of self-knowledge. It is important to know that you need to be careful when acting on the knowledge of the subconscious – assuming it is somebody else’s subconscious – insofar as they will not be privy to the same information and conflict with them will develop. But I assume that you mean that you now have information about your personal subconscious that is disturbing. If this is so, you can remove the agitation about it by understanding that whatever you see there belongs to *Isvara*, not to you. You did not put it there. It was “given” by *Isvara* in accordance with your *karma*. Purifying it is an option, however.

Kumar: Also, the moral compass that was highly-tuned and sensitive is gone.

James: This is a good sign. Highly-tuned and sensitive moral compasses are much overrated. They are usually a source of much internal agitation in the form of unloving judgments and they tend to produce conflict with others. Your nature as awareness is *dharma* and it guides your responses in a natural, un-self-conscious way.

Kumar: My wife says I have changed for the better since I know who I am but I think ego is actually not a bad thing after all. There is an evolutionary advantage and disadvantage to having an ego. One main advantage I see is that constant chatter and vanity hides the collective unconscious from the thinking mind. I actually feel like the character (Bill Murray) in the movie *Groundhog Day* going around in circles. I know intuitively that there is nowhere to go since I know who I am and nothing I can do is going to make me feel better.

James: Are you saying that you are experiencing less ego? By “ego” I mean small-self-centeredness. That certainly has to be an upside.

I do not understand what you mean by this sentence “One main advantage I see is that constant chatter and vanity hides the collective unconscious from the thinking mind.” Would you explain?

As for *Goundhog Day*, the *jiva* IS going around in circles. It is the nature of the *vasanas*. As in the movie, *jiva* has to keep doing it until it gets it right, meaning until you have completely accepted the fact that there is nowhere to “get.” This feeling is due to a residual sense of doership.

Kumar: Since in my case the whole process was backwards maybe it might make sense to go back and practice the eight *jhana* states that the Buddha, Adi Shankara and lot of the adepts practiced.

James: What do you think that would accomplish?

Kumar: I have made a serious commitment this year to spend time in solitary retreat. I talked to my wife and I see no other way than this to bring my life in alignment with self.

James: Good for you. First self-realization, then self-actualization. It is slow and patient work. It is good work. The mind needs a noble goal or it will eat you up, enlightened or not.

Kumar: For a long time I thought finding one’s self is the end but it seems like it is the beginning. I understand now why the masters of yore spent so much time in contemplation and solitary retreat after their initial enlightenment experiences. There is no other way if you want to align your life to the self.

James: Amen. Lovely to hear from you, Kumar. Keep these reports coming.