

Ruminations and Temptations of a *Jnani*

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Simon: Dear Sundari, I have been composing this email for months now watching the words dance on the screen like musical notes sounding out the melodious rhythm of *jiva* life. I have been reading more deeply into the *Mandukya Upanishad*. I have found the five capsules of Vedanta quite useful to contemplate:

1. I am of the nature of eternal and all-pervading consciousness.
2. I am the only source of permanent peace, security and happiness.
3. By my mere presence, I give life to the material body, and through the material body I experience the material universe.
4. I am never affected by any event that happens in the material world or in the material body-mind complex.
5. By forgetting my real nature, I convert life into a burden, and by remembering my real nature, I convert life into a blessing.

Sundari: Good for you! That pretty much wraps it up.

Simon: Furthermore, I read *The Yoga of Love*, and currently I'm just getting my teeth into *Inquiry into Existence*, and I read *Mystic by Default* last week for a little breather (great read). The devotion for scripture is as strong as ever, and I still wonder that perhaps a funded PhD could be a nice way to fund a few years of complete immersion and devotion to scripture.

Life has been cycling and recycling as it does. I found myself back in the cabin working away in the gardens, when a little angel showed up. She'd followed me home from Amsterdam. Since she was in the *karma* stream, I threw the dog a *karma yoga* bone. It was a lovely time together and a useful gauge for the impact of last year's *sadhana*, although I was often pining for solitude and more time with scripture. A good deal of *sat* was sacrificed with the arrival of this apparent angel, so perhaps she's a devil after all. I think that's often the way, in the beginning at least, when old relationship *samskaras* are at their strongest. It has been some time since she left, thus I have had time to consider things from a *sattvic* rather than the *rajasic* perspective. Currently, *jiva* thinks, in the long run, the relationship life is a good option. It understands life a zero-sum game. However, *Isvara* has blessed *jiva* with some frisky *vrittis*, and if it is a *sattvic* girl, it is possibly the wisest option, from the point of view of maintaining the most appropriate lifestyle. Then on other occasions *jiva* thinks this is ridiculous: a girlfriend, possibly a child or two, will be serious distractions. At the same time, *moksa*, Self-actualization and *tripti* could reinforce the idea that something special is to be done or needs to happen, when really it's about owning it and living it, and *jiva* is a young man after all. Anyway, I will most likely pay her a visit when her life quietens down and see how well our values line up, and if she wants to work on the qualifications.

Sundari: A relationship like everything else in *mithya*, is a zero-sum game, which you know. As you say, you are young and it's normal and natural for you to engage in life as it presents itself, while being very mindful how easy it is to get sidetracked by the allure of companionship and pleasures of the flesh. But, as James said in *Mystic*, if you are going to do a relationship and the love thing, then do it properly. Aside from the obvious discrimination required before getting too entangled in messy *karma*, assuming she is *sattvic*, then go into it with your eyes wide open and love 100%. You have nothing to gain, as we have discussed before, but you could have a lot to lose if it turns out to be another hook for the hungry love-whore *vasana* – which could be disguised as an angel!

Simon: Just before this angel arrived, *jiva* was having some insight into *Isvara*, *jiva*, *jagat*, which went along the lines of the inquiry below. I would be grateful if you could have a quick look. What causes awareness to identify with the non-eternal *jiva* as opposed to *jivatman* is *Maya*, i.e. the subtle body, predominantly, the *ahamkara* associated with non-eternal *Jiva*. This association apparently reinforces *avidya*, as when one acts in accordance with *dharma* desired results are obtained, reinforcing the sense of doership.

Sundari: Nothing “causes” awareness to do anything, because awareness is never affected by ignorance in truth and this world is only apparently real. But yes, knowing that *Maya* is *asat sat vilakshanam*, neither real nor unreal, and it is a power in awareness or it could not be unlimited, then, yes, *Maya* apparently deludes awareness into identifying with the subtle body. This identification is *avidya*, personal ignorance, which is reinforced by the sense of doership.

Simon: However, acting in the *karma yoga* spirit, the clarity of *sattva* shines and shows that *jiva*'s limited ability to act and obtain a desired result is most likely the microcosmic reflection of *Isvara*'s macrocosmic capability to take care of the needs of the total.

Sundari: It sounds like you are equating *sattva* with Self-knowledge, and if so, that is not correct. *Sattva*, like all the *gunas*, is inert, is *mithya*. It seems to shine only because of the light of the Self shining on the mind. When *sattva* predominates and *rajas* and *tamas* are suppressed, the mind can think clearly, and so Self-knowledge obtains, which is where the realization arises that everything comes from *Isvara*, who is the only “doer.” Only Self-knowledge can remove ignorance, not *sattva*.

Simon: As I relinquish the sense of doership through *karma yoga*, it becomes easier to understand that non-eternal *jivas* are all just the one *jivatman*, each one bound by *Maya* appearing as its own personal *avidya*, that is, by means of the *ahamkara* associating with the gross and subtle bodies as opposed to awareness. This fact is bolstered as I take a stand in awareness as awareness; there is only ever one subtle body appearing in it in any given transaction or moment (an idea supported by schema theory). As awareness is constantly shining between the apparent *upadhis* of the personal non-eternal *jiva* and the apparent other non-eternal *jivas*, both of which are merely the one *jivatman*, *jiva* sees it as if there are many *jiva* individuals. Increased level of *sattva* shows this to be true as the gap between *mithya* objects

can be more clearly heard.

Sundari: Very good, except again, it is not *sattva* that shows this truth, it is *SATYA* – Self-knowledge shining in a *sattvic* mind.

Simon: In this sense, awareness is only ever speaking and listening to itself in apparent relationships. Personal *jiva* takes itself to be a real individual simply because it is the observer's predominant *upadhi/samskaras/pratibasika*. The frequency of personal *jiva* appearances makes it appear to be real and thus separate from other *jivas*. Furthermore, the gift of *jiva's* schemas/*samskaras* such as mind, ego, organs of action, perception and physiological functions, without discrimination, only serve to enhance the illusion of separateness.

Sundari: Yes, *Maya* is a great deceiver, and therefore Self-knowledge is so counter-intuitive that it goes against all our sensory perception and subjective identifications.

Simon: However, using the intellect correctly to discriminate *satya* and *mithya*, it is clear that reality is non-dual, that there is and only always ever has been one awareness anywhere. For example, even when it seems that there are hundreds of people in a street, that is just one thought appearing in awareness, and as we know from inquiry and research, *jivas* see far less than they believe.

Sundari: *Exactamento!* Amen.

Simon: On a more melancholic or perhaps humorous note, *jiva* has recurring thoughts of *jiva* cancer. At least, the suicidal thoughts have been fully deconstructed due to contemplating the teachings, particularly of doership. And now life is quite sweet; those thoughts don't come anymore. However, it seems every second person *jiva* meets has some story about cancer, and who knows what the great trickster *Isvara* will pull out of the bag next? ☺ It is most likely *Isvara* offering the opportunity to truly inquire into the fear-of-death *samskara*, perhaps the ego reorienting itself. It would be nice to watch *jiva* fully ripen into the fruit of knowledge. But if not, so be it. *Isvara* knows best. It's been a good opportunity to practise the opposite thought and see that in reality I don't die, but rather I witness this infinite symphony of objects, conducted and played flawlessly by *Isvara* and *Maya* the great composers.

Sundari: What is death but another sleep? You basically die every time you fall asleep, so what's the big deal? If you are unborn and undying, death is of no import to you. To the *jiva* it seems fearful because it ceases to exist as an ego, but so what? You know the ego is not real anyway. You can be assured that death will be the greatest experience of the *jiva's* life when the time comes, second only to Self-realization! Die every moment, hold onto nothing.

Much love to you too, Simon, and big hugs.

~ Sundari