

The Despair of Duality

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Eric: Hello, Sundari.

For about three years I study and apply the teachings.

Needless to say, it is an amazing “thing,” no matter how I look at it; it always works.

But I am in some trouble which exhausts me.

Since childhood I had existential questions.

I searched for answers, whether life was fine or very problematic.

Although I hardly ever thought of myself, not caring much about “me” being “me” and “simply” did what I thought was right and asked the hard questions, never satisfied and living from epiphany to epiphany. My intellect went through Western and Eastern philosophy. During my education, I hoped for knowledge, but the opposite was the case. The materialistic formula was what I learned: the truth, of any kind, could not exist. To make art under these circumstances got me in trouble. I was sure to be a “center” of sorts, as is everyone and everything else.

Sundari: Most of what is taught as knowledge is based on duality and is actually ignorance masquerading as knowledge. Knowledge is something that cannot be negated, that is always true and good, never changes, regardless of all else that changes, independent of opinion or belief. Self-knowledge is based the irrefutable teachings on non-duality and stands alone, although it can be interpreted if the mind is still trapped in duality, i.e. has not developed the qualifications for Self-inquiry.

Eric: I secretly trusted God – always – to exist. In some sense, I felt God as a presence. That is gone. I do not trust God at all. What I understand, finally, does not do anything good.

Sundari: What you don't trust is yourself. Who is the “I” speaking here? If you are referring to the small I, the ego, trying to interpret what it reads according to its limited, dualistic understanding nothing makes sense. This world is a zero-sum game. There is nothing to gain or to lose here, this world is not real, which is defined as anything that constantly changes and is not always present. The only “thing” that qualifies as real is the Self, that which is always present and never changes. The non-experiencing witness, Existence, with a capital “E.” You do not understand what God is and you are thinking like a *jiva*, a doer, trapped in *samsara*, duality.

Eric: I feel no meaning, value or purpose in this field of action. All I ever did was seek the truth, and now that I understand it – or not, I suspect – my life is just one of sheer existence. I feel and sense love – very subtle and for each little creature, rock and even people. I see how they are the Self, or Being, as I call it.

Sundari: You have seen that the joy is not in the objects, that life cannot give you what you seek. But you don't yet understand that there is nothing to seek, because you are what you seek. There is no meaning to "the field of action," It is not real. The only purpose of life is to realize your identity as the Self. You have indirect knowledge of what the Self is, but you don't know it means to BE the Self, with non-dual vision.

Eric: God – the field of action – is gone, and I cannot find any reason to exist in this form. I can't make art – the only thing I understand as a *jiva*, to make sense in "doing."

So I just work, hard mostly, in construction work. I can't write down a philosophy or make sculpture. Just live, pay tax and die, while knowing that I am the Self, but not really.

I must miss out on something quite fundamental still, otherwise I would not write to you and still battle with something I cannot see. What value does life have if one cannot follow his talents and must just get by?

I rather have all art and thought be gone out of my head, work and watch football or something like that.

I never cared for happiness, bliss and all of that, just the damn truth. Now I must understand that the Self is *sat chit ananda* also, maybe.

Since God is – if I get it right – also all that is mind, my very thoughts, habits and feelings. I often tell God to fuck off and leave me alone. I do not want deep insights anymore; it is not useful, but it keeps coming, visual and logical.

But for what? I just must paint houses and build stuff, nothing creative, nothing clever. That is then *karma*, "my" *karma* which has nothing to do with the insight of this mind – at all – the difference is too big a gap to ever make sense of the field as a whole. And to understand it means nothing but to know $1 + 1 = 2$.

Should I then just accept that? Or should I maybe do *pranayama* to clean up?

I want all these ideas to stop. I can't metabolize them into art, so I feel drained, without energy. All I do is "duty" to make sure the body has food, shelter.

I actually love me and all in a very quiet way, so what am I not seeing?

I wish I could be clearer and shorter, but this is the best I can do.

Sundari: This email is written in a *tamasic* state and repeats one basic idea, the disillusionment of the ego when it realizes that there is nothing "out there" – but it has not understood the "in here" – the observer, the Self. It is identified with the *jiva*. It is also what could be called "the dark night of the soul."

Vedanta does not believe in God, it explains what God is. It reveals that there is no such thing as "a" God. There is only God, and you are it. At the same time, God is your environment, the Field of Existence, which is run by certain natural laws, or *dharmas*, we must understand and live by to have peace of mind. What is God, not

who is God, should be the question. You should not search for God away from what you perceive. Therefore the question is, what do I see here? Through an investigation of what is known and experienced here, God will be revealed. You have not lost faith in God, you just think that “God” is separate from you, other than you. It is the small ego identity complaining about God as though God failed you because you have not got what you want or think life should be giving you.

If you think God (the Field of Existence) is separate from you, then you think the apparent (duality) reality is real, i.e. that it is permanent. So one of the most important qualifications for Self-knowledge to obtain, the ability to discriminate ignorance/duality/*mithya* from Knowledge/non-duality/*satya*, is not at all developed.

Your reasoning is taking place within duality, within which there are no answers and no solutions. All you see is the uselessness and emptiness of existence, of the experiencing entity, the ego, or *jiva*, without realizing that the despondent, *tamasic* experiencing entity/*jiva* is an object known to you, the full, ever-present, unchanging, blissful Self-EXISTENCE – that which makes the small existence of the ego-self possible. You have tried and failed to find a meaning to *mithya* (the apparent reality) within *mithya*. To find meaning, you must step out of *mithya* with the non-dual vision of the Self.

There is nothing inherently right or wrong about “doing” anything in this world, if your actions are taken with the *karma yoga* attitude and offered to the Field – i.e. *Isvara*/God – i.e. YOU, the Self. In fact it is better to do humble work just to get by than to be identified with being an “ARTIST” or anything else. The important thing is to do what is *dharmic* in the moment, and sometimes we must do things that are not entirely in harmony with our nature to put food on the table. What matters is, no matter what you do, it is done with an attitude of gratitude and service, leaving the results up to the Field, God, *Isvara*.

Karma yoga is the understanding that we can take appropriate and timely action, but we are never in charge results. When life is lived this way, the doer is negated, the pressure of our likes and dislikes is greatly reduced. And instead of whining about how lousy and empty things are, you will be surprised how quickly things can change, and you have totally different *karma* as a result. Life responds to *tamasic* self-indulgent or self-pitying thinking by giving you more of the same, as it does for desire-based, driven, *rajasic* mindsets. You need to aim for a what brings and sustains peace of mind – *sattva*.

You have work to do on your qualifications, values and mind (*guna*) management. You must make sure that your lifestyle, what you eat, how live, work, relate, use money, etc. conforms to the truth of the teachings. If it does not, Self-inquiry will not work for you. We need to purify the mind and the body.

You say you have been “studying the teachings.” What teachings? Have you read any of the Vedanta scriptures, particularly our contact page and followed the instructions we give for Self-inquiry? Let me know exactly what your *sadhana* consists of and if you have read any of James’ books we recommend.

~ Love, Sundari