

Free Will, One More Time

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/383>

Katja: Dear Guruji, you left me with a serious addiction to Vedanta, and here are the results of that fact. ☺

There are some contradictions in the usage of the term “free will” in the Vedanta teachings, in yours and in Swami Dayananda’s too. (I’m sorry to say that!!!)

Ramji, *Gita* talks, Tiruvannamalai:

“It’s created by God. It’s a perfect creation. Everything is fine. But when human beings enter the picture, problems come because they were given free will and desire, and so it’s possible for them to contradict *dharma*.”

Swami Dayananda, *Gita* 1, page 581:

“Because human beings enjoy free will, there may be abuse, which can lead to the destruction of law and order, *dharma*.”

Sorry, Guruji and Swami Dayananda, but there is no free will unless free will is another name for ignorance. So the sentence must be, “Because human beings are ignorant, there is abuse... and... they were given an ego and desire, and so it’s possible for them to contradict *dharma*.”

Nobody would freely choose to violate *dharma* if they were aware of the consequences. If they had knowledge, they would not violate *dharma*. The violation of *dharma* therefore is always a consequence of the lack of knowledge, and that is what is called ignorance. Here the term “free will” can only mean the ego’s point of view, and that seems to be a kind of will, but it is definitely not free at all. It is usually called “ignorance of the truth,” and not free will. That’s what I have learned from Vedanta so far. Maybe I’m wrong...

Guruji: Okay, Katja. Basically you are right, but there is one fly in the ointment of your argument: What about criminals? They are not ignorant of *dharma*. They consciously choose to violate *dharma* and know full well the consequences. Every thief, for example, locks his door and hides his valuables.

Katja: Swami Dayananda, *Gita* 1, page 582:

“The infrastructure for human behaviour is based upon one’s free will and when this free will is abused at every turn, something drastic needs to be done.”

Okay, but my *guru* says:

Ramji, *Gita* talks, Tiru, Part III

“You don’t structure your own personality. Nobody structures the personality. The personality is given to you. Astrologers know this. Enneagram people know this; it’s obvious. Your patterns are already there, imprinted on you. You are going to

act them out.”

In this quote there is no “free will regarding the infrastructure of human behaviour.”

Guruji: From this level there is no free will, but the *jiva* who is in ignorance of this fact thinks there is, so there is free will for it.

Katja: Ramji, *Gita* talks, Tiru, Part IV:

“Surrender is just knowledge. You don’t surrender unless you understand you have no choice. You think you should have a choice in life. But you have no choice here. Well, that is not completely true. You do have a little choice. But about the results you don’t have choice. You have a kind of indirect choice, insofar as your actions are appropriate and timely and if they are in harmony with the total, you may very well get what you want. There is a certain discretion. There is a certain amount of free will.

“But if you ask who is making the choices – who is doing the actions – then it is very difficult to find a doer there. Or if you do, you see that the doer is just a very tiny factor in a grand chain of causation. When you see that you are basically helpless, you surrender. Surrender just means knowledge. You stop wanting thing to be a certain way.”

Is there here some kind of free will?

Guruji: There is and there isn’t. From the *jiva*’s point of view there is. You can choose to do action A or action B. You can choose when to do it. But if you look at it from *Isvara*’s perspective, there is no choice. Everything is programmed, regulated and governed.

Katja: Before one surrenders to *Bhagavan*, there is no free will at all, because the ego and the *vasanas* are operating and one is unconscious about that fact. Even modern scientists prove that our ego (the little I) is claiming to be the doer after the action has already taken place.

Guruji: Yes. This is from *Isvara*’s perspective. But from Katja’s perspective there is apparent free will. That is good enough for Katja because she is only an apparent entity. She can choose to eat an apparent apple or an apparent orange.

Katja: You and Swami Dayananda do not define the term “free will” properly while using it. (By the way, the free will question is one of the top issues in Western philosophy.) So if you use the term, you need to define it. But anyway, in my opinion, there is no free will and Vedanta proves it.

Guruji: You can be the *guruji* then, Katjaji. If you think about what I have said so far, it might make sense to you. If you want to look at it only from *Isvara*’s perspective, that is great. That is *moksa*. It makes you a robot – which is good – a happy robot. Free will is a pain in the ass – always having to choose and depend on the

consequences for your happiness. Why not just turn everything over to *Isvara* and lie like a baby in His or Her arms, completely looked after?

Katja: So what is will? What do you mean when you use the word? And what is “free” in the term “free will”? This needs to be answered. Do you mean by “free will” the decision function of the intellect?

Guruji: Yes, the discrimination function. You can choose to understand my words or you can choose not to. It is up to you. Whether you actually understand what I say, however, depends on your capacity to understand.

Katja: Do you mean the *vasanas*?

Guruji: No.

Katja: Or the ego’s intentions?

Guruji: No. There are more *satsangs* at the website that deal with this topic. It is the most commonly misunderstood teaching. Here is one I wrote last week. I am going to have to write a big one for the home page with blinking lights, *THE LAST WORD ON FREE WILL!!!!*, so morons like you don’t tell me I am a moron. 😊

Katja: Okay, I surrender. That sounds very reasonable to me! The *jiva*’s point of view only exists for the *jiva*. It does not exist for *Isvara*. The question then is, am I a *jiva*? And the answer is, I am a *jiva* when I see myself as a *jiva* and I am something else when I see myself as something else. There is not an actual contradiction between these two points of view. They are equally valid if you look at them from the point of view of awareness. For awareness there is neither free will nor is everything determined, because there is no total and no individual.

Let me know what you think about this. Yes, you’re right, it’s a question of the standpoint, the point of view. For the *jiva* there is “free will” because it “feels” like it and she doesn’t know better. The “apparent free will” is not an illusion from the *jiva*’s standpoint, because she experiences something like “free will.” But from *Isvara*’s standpoint it is illusion. And from awareness’s standpoint the question of “free will” doesn’t apply.

~ Love, Katja

Guruji: Good answer! I’m perfectly satisfied! Once again the great Guruji, an Ocean of Mercy, lifts his number-one disciple out of the darkness of ignorance!