

You Are Unborn

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Frank: I've heard you speak about people coming to you and Vedanta with their psychological issues and your opinion on it. I think my *jiva* is okay. It's like a coat, not very stylish, well-worn, not that attractive to others who care about that sort of thing, but it does the job, so why throw it away for something else, it is only a coat? Not sure if the analogy works but it just came to mind and it feels appropriate.

James: Nice analogy.

Frank: You suggested that the nitpickiness might be masking some deeper issue, but like you I'm not really interested in wasting time on that either. Remember, that term was Sundari's, but my wife seemed to think it fitted, as she says that I'm always wanting to get into the details of certain things (though other things she says I don't seem to give a damn [about]) but that's another issue and I really don't care. Maybe I'm like your friend you spoke of that said of his shit: "Well, James, it's warm and it's mine."

James: Well, in his case it was just *tamas* speaking. He really wasn't okay with his shit. He was in denial. His life was cut short when he drowned in it.

Frank: So to Vedanta.

James: Vedanta is about you, so the topic above is also Vedanta.

Frank: I hear what you are saying in that first paragraph, so onto "what caught your eye." You say: "The idea that a dead mind is *moksa*, which your statement implies, is not true. The mind, thinking or not, is *mithya*." It definitely was not my intention to imply that and I am miffed how my statement led to that impression.

I do not think I've ever bought into the idea of a dead mind leading to enlightenment. Maybe when I was in Burma years ago, sitting for three months doing *vipassana* meditation, I had some idea of "getting *nirvana* if I just could watch my mind and control it" or some such fantasy, but that idea has long passed. One of your greatest gifts to me was the knowledge regarding experience, the myth of having or wanting some particular experience to change me. Just hearing that in itself was freedom for this *jiva*. I have shown no interest in *samadhis*, because it seemed to be way too much effort, for what? Maybe I did not know its value and I did not care.

James: Because I don't know you, Frank, I was fishing. I wasn't certain if you were confused about the knowledge/experience issue. The way the sentence was written caused a doubt. But it seems you resolved that issue a long time ago.

Frank: Through the practise of Vedanta and your teaching of it I am claiming in that statement of mine that this *jiva* is speaking from the perspective of the reflected self (am I wrong in stating this?).

James: Not wrong. There is no right and wrong here. It is an appropriate claim. I understood that when I read it.

Frank: Compassion and gratitude and knowledge of them is not Self but merely the reflection of Self in the subtle body, and that is okay because reality is non-dual and that all this *jiva* need do is recognize this fact, recognize what is *satya* and what is *mithya*, let the fan stop turning, meaning let the *vasanas* burn out and carry on firming up the *satya-mithya vasana*, practise *nididhyasana* till the day this gross body dies.

James: Here's a teaching that you might wish to contemplate. Shankara's famous dictum, the essence of Vedanta, has two parts: (1) *Brahma satyam jagan mithya* (The Self is real, the world is apparently real), which you seem to have assimilated in some form. But the next statement seems to suggest that a little more assimilation is necessary. (2) *Jivo brahmaiva na parah* (The *jiva* is non-different from limitless, non-dual, unborn, ever-present, ordinary awareness), which means that literally there is no *jiva*, only existence/consciousness – you.

But your statement implies that the *jiva* continues as a doer forever. But it doesn't. It isn't even a doer when it thinks it is doing *karma yoga* or *jnana yoga*. It never was a doer, because it is, was and ever will be unborn, ever-free, limitless consciousness. Non-duality means non-duality – no qualifications. Yes, *satya* and *mithya* do not equal duality, but taking seeming duality to be seeming duality can easily amount to duality for a *jiva*. *Nididhyasana* is deliberate thinking, i.e. comparison. It is a stage. Stages begin and end. They are *mithya* and they involve non-eternal, i.e. conceptual, *jiva* doers.

In a previous email you said: "I love reading the first parts of your books, particularly *Inquiry into Existence*, but also *The Yoga of the Three Energies*, and watching the first videos on *Panchadasi 2015* and *Bhagavad Gita Carbondale*, but my questions increase and my passion dwindles as I progress through them. This has not seemed to be the case with the *Mandukya* videos for some reason."

Perhaps the "some reason" is that *Mandukya and Karika* removes the non-eternal *jiva* altogether. There are two basic teachings in Vedanta: cause and effect (*karya karana vada*) and non-origination (*ajativada*). The cause-and-effect teaching makes it difficult to remove the *jiva* because it validates its existence as a product, a doer with *karma*. But *ajativada* makes it clear that the doer *jiva* is purely conceptual, i.e. a product of ignorance. So it can vanish in a trice (and not return, just as the snake does not return when the rope is known) when the statement "I am whole and complete, unborn existence/consciousness" is assimilated. From that point on there is no *nididhyasana*, because the doer has been destroyed. Here's the kicker: there is an apparent doer, but an apparent doer is as good a no doer at all because it has absolutely no impact on the Self, so you can't claim that you are enlightened, cooked, finished, etc., because you were never born. If the apparent reality with its doers has an iota of impact on the Self, freedom from experience is impossible.

Frank: Maybe it is because of the understanding “this character” has gleaned from your sharing that he accepts his old worn coat. It’s my shit.

James: Actually it’s nobody’s shit. It doesn’t belong to the Self and it doesn’t belong to Frank. Frank can only claim it if he created it, but he didn’t. And if you say *Isvara* created it, you would be wrong, because *Isvara*, like *jiva*, is *mithya*, which is to say purely conceptual, i.e. as good as non-existent, as I said above.

Frank: My wife says she understands why I like you; she thinks our personalities look somewhat similar. To put a finer point on it, does the *jiva* need to spend any effort to change its coat or does it just need to take responsibility and wear it, since it is recognized as only a coat?

James: Again, in this statement there is an implication that there actually is a coat and there is a wearer-doer of a coat. The coat is the emperor’s new clothes, which is to say there is no coat. Consciousness is entirely naked, meaning it’s not a “wearer.”

Frank: Now what?

James: I’ll let you figure it out because your statement implies time and doership. But I’ll give you a clue. If when you use the word “I” you do not include Frank and Frank’s body and mind, you are the unborn Self. End of story.