

Is It Wise to Advise?

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2019-09-26

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3947>

Tom: Yesterday I was thinking that rarely if ever am I asked for advice. It does not surprise me, because I have for years been suspicious of the ego-building upon “so-called wise counseling” and in a way because of that I have been glad not to be asked. So what happens is that I open my email and a friend is asking my opinion on a family matter. I did respond but as I did so there was this thought that the response was not coming from me, the storytelling *jiva*, but was coming from *Isvara*. My friend emailed me back, thanking me for providing a different perspective, but I thought it really was not me, take no credit but then I thought to take no blame. I asked myself, where was the *karma* in this?

Sundari: Yes, indeed, Self-knowledge in action. It’s never easy giving *mithya* advice, even when asked, and we are wary of doing so, egos being as fragile as they are. As much as one is tempted to throw in a bit of Vedanta, it is not often possible. But having knowledge of *Isvara* and the *gunas*, and since it’s all common sense anyway, it is possible to give advice in language a *samsari* understands. Everyone does know the Self; they just don’t know they know. Of course it’s not the *jiva* giving advice. How can anything possibly be the puny little doer’s doing? It’s not possible. The purer the mind, the clearer the vehicle it is for the knowledge to flow through.

Tom: Anyway, this morning I’m listening to James’ fourth talk on the *Bhagavad Gita* and what he was relating at one point sounded so similar. Then as he is describing the meaning of the *mantra* that he recites at the beginning, even though I’ve had no pull to recite *mantras* or prayers, I began to tear up. No sooner than this happens James relates the time he teared up upon hearing this exquisite teaching. For this storytelling *jiva*, these types of occurrences are evidence of the truth and power of the teaching and the blessed grace of the *guru*.

Sundari: Identity *mantras*, which are the *mantras* for Vedantins, are quite different from other *mantras* because we are fully aware of their meaning, which is why they are powerful. They are the Self “singing” to itself, and it often evokes a deep emotional response in the *jiva*, which is very uplifting and feels wonderful. The best *mantra* is always keeping the mind on the Self, not because you need to as the Self, but it keeps the mind *sattvic* and the *jiva* happy.

Tom: Thanks for reminding me that it is not possible for the puny little doer to give advice, and as I related, it really did seem clear that this puny little doer did not do anything (that it was coming from *Isvara*). Actually, as I inquire deeper into that conversation, as I was responding to my friend’s request, although I was mindful of the teachings of Vedanta, the reply was perceived (identified) as of the puny *jiva*. However, when my friend responded there seemed to be no attachment but rather a clear seeing that it was all *Isvara*’s doing.

Sundari: That’s the knowledge at work. It takes a while for *karma jnana sannyas* to

be spontaneous and default position for the ego in the *nididhyasana* stage of Self-inquiry. Eventually, the tendency of the ego to jump in to gain validation goes away as the identification with the doer is finally and completely dismissed.

Tom: But the question that sneaked into that story is – *Ishvara* being the macrocosmic causal body, the *vasanas*, the *karmic* laws, and the *jiva* IS *Ishvara* – help me understand, where in *mithya* does the *karma* accrue as a consequence of that conversation?

Sundari: Where else? To *Ishvara*, there is no other choice. However, if you think you are the *jiva* giving advice, the *karma* comes to you. If you know the Self is speaking through the *jiva*, there is no *karma* no matter the outcome. Nonetheless, *sama* and *dama* apply to the *jiva* enlightened or not because one does not want to disturb the minds of people who have no access to Self-knowledge and take themselves to be a person with a problem.

~ Much love, Sundari