

In a Relationship or a Relationship in You?

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2012-10-17

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/453>

Uta: Namaste, Dear Ramji and Sundari!!

I've been chilling out and being a do-gooder this summer, and my mind got its lesson... inquiry has been going on anyway, and many times I have been entertaining the idea of actually being a person, which is painful.

Sundari: Ah, yes. Much better to be a non-person. ☺

Uta: Yep, yep, the relationship *vasana* has lifted its head. And nothing apparently has happened, I have been just playing around with the thoughts coming and then going. I know a relationship wouldn't set me free and probably living without one makes life easier.

Sundari: Yes, indeed you are right about that, a relationship definitely will not set Uta free. ☺ Living without a relationship is definitely easier, if you still want *moksa*, because *moksa* by definition is freedom from dependence on objects. Of course you will have to ask, who is wanting to be in a relationship? It's pretty difficult to be in one if you are the self, don't you think, seeing as relationship or the desire for one are both objects in you? Of course if you think you are a person, then Uta can think about having or indeed have a relationship. There is nothing wrong with going that route if you are prepared to cope with the *karma*, and you if keep in mind that all objects are value-neutral and incapable of delivering any permanent satisfaction or joy. Uta could have a relationship or not, but whether she just had the desire or the actual relationship, it would make no difference to you, awareness. However, until such a time as the knowledge of your true nature is firm – and presuming the desire for *moksa* is still stronger than any other desire, it is best to take a good look at why this desire/thought has raised its head. Desire is painful, and the mind seeks to rid itself of it as quickly as possible, which is why obtaining any object is temporarily blissful.

Uta: It's as if I have wants and desires, but at the same time I know what they are.

Sundari: Who has wants and desires? Awareness, meaning you, has no wants or desires; you are the one who knows that Uta has desires and who knows what they are. Nothing wrong with that, not all desires are contradictory to *moksa*, in fact you better have a strong desire to be free or you will not be getting there. There is nothing wrong with desire per se and you cannot eradicate it, like the Buddhists would exhort you to do. Simply know that you are the one who knows the desire. From the position of the self, you can very quickly know if the desire is in keeping with your pursuit of *moksa*. Once you know who you are and self-knowledge has removed the ignorance of your true nature, desire will not be a problem for you anymore. You will know that the joy is not in the object and will not be looking for anything to fulfil or complete you. You will simply be enjoying yourself, knowing that

you are the source of the joy. You are that which you desire. To quote our favourite *guru* Sri Sri Ramji, “You will then have contact with all objects happily, not for happiness.” 😊

Uta: Sometimes I act upon them (who acts? acting happens). I go and eat chocolate or drink a couple of glasses of wine. So one could say that knowledge is not firm when one battles like Arjuna with one’s *vasanas*. Right? Of course *vasanas* remain, but if they bother me... something is not right, right?

Sundari: No one acts on anything, although doers are convinced that they are acting. It is just a play of the *gunas*. Study the *guna* teaching. James and I have both posted e-*satsangs* on that topic recently, and there is lots more information at the ShiningWorld website. Until you understand fully what they are, the *gunas* are running Uta. When you understand how the *gunas* work, you will know why Uta is not the doer. The *gunas* run everything in the apparent reality and they govern the creation of all the *vasanas*, i.e. your likes and dislikes. Understanding how the *gunas* work is the only way to understand the nature of *maya/Isvara* and to end the folly of doership. The *gunas* are another name for *Isvara*. No one is ever doing anything; the *gunas* are running the show, they work the same way in everyone, 24/7, and are really not hard to see in operation once you are aware of them.

The solution to this of course is self-inquiry. For you to remove ignorance of your true nature and to attain freedom, you have to discriminate between self and not-self and permanently negate the doer. For this you need knowledge. This is the only way to end existential suffering, which of course is caused by the illusion of doership and the desire for objects. The most important spiritual practice is *jnana yoga*, self-inquiry. Nothing purifies the mind like self-knowledge. The practice of *karma yoga* and *bhakti yoga*, which are antidotes to the doer, are absolutely essential as well. Just as importantly, practise *triguna vibhava yoga*, the *guna* teaching. Learn what the *gunas* are and how they condition the subtle body. The *gunas* do not belong to Uta, they belong to *Isvara*, just like “your” desire is not Uta’s. It belongs to the *gunas*. Identify the *gunas* and then dis-identify with them having anything to do with you, awareness. Once you see this, the tendency to “go unconscious,” so to speak, will likely still persist, like the blades of a fan will still turn after the fan is switched off. But if you keep up the *yogas* diligently and continue your self-inquiry, you will catch Uta identifying with the *gunas* and be able to disassociate from them. Let them run, they will do so whether Uta likes it or not, but they have nothing to do with you, awareness. They are only a problem when Uta identifies with them.

There is an upside to the *gunas* as well. Without *rajas*, which is the mode of passion, or action, you would not get out of bed in the morning. Without *tamas*, you would have no staying power, or endurance, and never sleep. *Sattva* is your true nature: bliss, peace, clarity, etc. People get stuck in too much *sattva* as well, the experiential-bliss-seeking and “enlightenment” disease are both common with spiritual seekers who are not finders. You can use *rajas* to get out of *tamas* and vice versa. For *moksa*, you need to aim for a *sattvic*, peaceful mind, so manage the *gunas* by cleaning up your lifestyle: what you eat, what activities you do for work or pleasure, where and how you live, the people you associate with, how you manage money and resources, etc. Meditation and prayer is also very helpful in calming the mind and preparing it for self-inquiry. Start a practice of devotion on a daily basis, even if only for a few moments each day. Choose a *prakriya* to work with, like pressing “pause” every time Uta says, “I,” and ask yourself, who is speaking here?

Or ask yourself in any endeavour that Uta is involved in or object she has contact with: “Does this change, is it real?” Vedanta’s definition of “real” is “that which does not change.” This is the work. 😊

Uta: So one could say that knowledge is not firm when one battles like Arjuna with one’s *vasanas*. Right? Of course *vasanas* remain, but if they bother me – something is not right, right?

Sundari: Once self-knowledge has permanently removed ignorance of your true nature as awareness and you know Uta is an object in you, the *gunas* still operate as they always do and will, but they will no longer condition the subtle body. *Isvara*’s creation continues, *maya* still obtains, but it will have nothing to do with you, awareness. *Prarabdha karma* will still work itself out, *vasanas* may still be there, but you will not identify with them, so they will not be a problem. You will know that for you, awareness, there is no *karma*, because you are not the doer. The *vasanas* bother Uta because she thinks she has to do something to get rid of them or make them non-binding. No action is capable of bringing about a limitless result, because a doer is involved – and a doer by definition is limited. As long as that is the case, Uta will be experiencing agitation about “her” *vasanas* – but alas, they do not belong to her! Claim them and you claim suffering.

Uta: It’s like knowing you’re not a person, just five elements and *vasanas* one shares (meaning, macrocosmic) – but not somehow claiming the truth, “I am the light,” either. Like making a call and not being properly connected and hanging in some weird space in between...

Sundari: It is a difficult place to be, in limbo, so to speak. You no longer belong to the world but you are not free of it either. Just keep up the self-inquiry and all the *yogas*. The knowledge does the work, but you have to be determined to free yourself of ignorance. The ego is obsessively resistant to change. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance, no fine print. Only self-knowledge can set you free of Uta, the doer.

Uta: So it’s repetition, repetition. I’ve been slightly stuck with the *Isvara* thing. It’s like since you finally acknowledge you are the light, *Isvara* stays as the world and as this apparent person. This form is one of *Isvara*’s puppets.

Sundari: You will not understand *Isvara* unless you understand the *gunas*, so study them. Without that knowledge, yes, you are *Isvara*’s puppet.

Isvara, before the projection of *maya*, refers to pure consciousness/awareness, or *brahman*. *Maya* is a power (*shakti*) that exists in awareness or it could not be unlimited. Once *maya* is projected, *maya* operating ignorance is also referred to as *Isvara*, or God, the Creator, the *dharma* field, the macrocosmic mind, the causal body, or the *gunas*. *Isvara* “consists” of the three energies, or *gunas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva*, *Isvara*’s true nature, is intelligence, knowledge; *tamas* is the heavy dense energy of matter; *rajas* is the mode of action, or desire. The creation/*jiva* comes to be with the emergence of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Isvara* apparently

deluded by *maya* apparently becomes the *jiva*, the *dharma* field, or the “world,” in other words, the self under the spell of ignorance plus a subtle body. There are two powers existent in *maya*: *vikshepa shakti*, which projects (*rajas*) and *avarana shakti*, which veils, or conceals (*tamas*).

Although reality is non-dual, in the apparent reality there are two orders of reality: *satya* and *mithya*. They are not in opposition to each other unless one believes in duality, which is what *samsara* is, just the belief in duality. However, although *mithya* is only apparently real, it does not mean it does not exist.

As awareness, *Isvara* is a synonym for the self. When *maya* is operating, however, *Isvara* refers to the Total, or macrocosmic, mind, the *dharma* field, or beautiful intelligent ignorance. You need to understand this apparent contradiction because it is not a real one. As such, *Isvara* has unlimited knowledge and power. As the *jiva*, enlightened or not, you have limited knowledge and limited power. *Isvara*, the *jiva* and the creation (*jagad*) all have the same identity, awareness. *Moksa* is for the *jiva*, as the self is self-aware. So when the subtle body has realised its true nature as awareness, Uta will still operate “in the world” even though she knows that the world (and Uta) is in her. However, you cannot impose *satya* on *mithya*, which is to say that even though the world is not real, it does have an apparent existence which functions in a certain way. If you don’t look where you are going, for instance, and step in front of a fast-moving bus, you will still get flattened, whether or not you know that you are awareness. Discrimination is still very important. As Uta, you cannot not act in *mithya*; it is owning the action or identifying with the *gunas/vasanas* that brings the suffering, because in so doing the doer is back. Free or not, Uta had better play by the rules in *mithya* if she wants to be happy and enjoy being free.

Uta: It’s like having two levels. If knowledge is firm, whatever apparently happens is okay, but if not, one can identify with “tragedies” (thoughts) in one’s life and then fight with life. And so one is back with *karma yoga*. 😊 But this part confuses me a bit.

Sundari: If the knowledge is firm and self-knowledge has removed the ignorance of who you are, existential suffering ends because you will have negated all objects and the doer. You will no longer be vacillating between the two “levels” (*satya* and *mithya*) of reality. You will see only non-duality and know that all objects arise out of you, which obviously includes all thoughts.

Uta: You have answered to somebody, “Your whole life is a mental creation born out of you and devoured by you. The fear that you have about going under anesthesia or riding on an airplane is manufactured out of your own mind and one day it will dissolve back into it. You have nothing to do with it. When the lights go out, you do not go out. You continue to shine on the absence of perception.”

The first sentence seems to allude to that I personally choose the world I see and live in.

Sundari: If you read the above sentence as Uta, it would appear that to indicate that she creates her own reality. So who is asking the question? Uta is asking the

question. The person/individual *jiva* (Uta) does not create the world they see and live in. The individual *jiva* projects their interpretation of the world they see and therefore experience, through the lens of the *vasanas* that run them. *Isvara* is Lord of all creation; the *gunas* created Uta's *vasanas* and they colour everything she sees, including the illusion that she is the doer.

Uta: But since there is only macrocosmic ignorance, I really don't? I mean, we as a *jiva* or *atman* don't create the world.

Sundari: No, the *jiva*, enlightened or not, does not create the world, *Isvara* does. See the reply above.

Uta: But it's a paradox, since if we drop the form the world ends. No?

Sundari: What do you mean by "drop the form"? Who is dropping the form? When self-knowledge has removed the ignorance of your true nature there is nothing to drop, because the one who is doing the dropping has been dropped. You cannot drop the form; *mithya* has an apparent existence and you cannot get rid of it. You can only negate it through knowledge and once you have seen that all objects are inert, you then realise that all objects are you, like the wave cannot be separate from the ocean. *Isvara's* creation continues when Uta has realised her true nature as awareness. Uta will no longer think she is Uta, therefore she will no longer be interpreting or projecting her dream onto *Isvara* or identifying with any part of the creation. As awareness she will know that the creation arises out of her but she is always free of the creation - as the *jiva* who has realised its true nature as awareness, Uta will live free of all the objects and enjoy herself, knowing she is not the doer, in joy in herself.

Uta: The world is thoughts, but we don't create our thoughts. What's the part I am missing here?

Sundari: The part you are missing is you, awareness, the one who knows the thoughts and knows that Uta does not create them.

Uta: Is it that this *uphadi* brings out this projection, what I called in Holland "the monologue" - basically I have no idea what kind of worlds other *uphadis* live in, and do they even exist since only *brahman* is?

Sundari: All doers live in their own *pratibasika* (subjective, or dream, world) which they think is real and project onto *Isvara*. It is not real, it is the apparent reality, or *mithya*, it is created by *Isvara* and the *gunas*. Everything dissolves into pure consciousness, *brahman*, including *Isvara*, the *gunas*, the *jiva* and the world.

Uta: Also, you said Greg Goode's direct approach is good, but I got confused reading his book with he not mentioning *Isvara* at all or just, "...the thoughts appear, all is *brahman*." Where did *Isvara* go in The Direct Path?

Sundari: The Direct Path is based on pure Vedanta, but unfortunately has become influenced by “New” Vedanta. I have copied an email that James sent to Greg regarding his book. James is in discussion with Greg and hopes to clarify some grey areas in his book *The Direct Path* with him.

Uta: Thank you so much and much love to both of you.

Sundari: Much love to you as well. 😊