

No Bondage or Liberation

Ram (James Swartz)

2012-05-02

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/591>

Terrance: Dear Ramji, thank you so much for sending *Experience and Knowledge*. I'm honored to have the first copy, and the timing was perfect! I'd been feeling stuck for the past two months. When I got your new book, I read the first 12 pages and thought, "Oh, no! You're taking away my warm fuzzy *mantra* of, 'I am limitless, changeless, non-dual ordinary awareness.'" That sentence had been, along with my *karma yoga* practice, a bulwark of my self-inquiry and of my self-knowledge. But on page five of *Experience and Knowledge* you blew the person that I usually think I am, the one that was reveling with 100% certitude in the knowledge that "he" was awareness, right out of the water by reminding him that:

"...the real you is the awareness of these apparently contradictory thoughts, or 'yous,' if you prefer. It is neither limitless nor is it limited. It neither changes nor is it eternal. It is neither in the body nor is it out of the body. It is the knower of both 'in' and 'out.' The knower is always free of the known, in this case limitation and freedom from limitation. It knows that you can't have freedom from limitation without limitation. Both limitation and freedom, *moksa*, are unreal. In *Nirvana Shatakam* Shankara, speaking as the self, says, 'I am neither bondage nor liberation.'"

At first I felt quite uncomfortable reading this, but on reflection it was obvious that since the self is not definable by or constrained by concepts of time, space, matter or energy, words like "limitless" were simply convenient devices for presenting truths that are subtler than the intellect. In about a day, the power of your words worked its magic, and I can again simply say, with absolute confidence and conviction, "I am limitless, changeless, non-dual ordinary awareness," knowing that "I am That" which is aware of experiential concepts of limits and limitedness, change and changelessness, etc.

Then I simply went back to my computer, sat down and started doing the work I had been avoiding for months. I have a sense that my recent "stuckness" is related to lifelong *vasanas* and *samskaras*, and to subtle *karmic* residue inherited and learned from day one. I don't feel a need to try and therapize them or consciously expiate them. With *Bhagavan's* grace they will or won't work themselves out... it doesn't feel like a big problem.

The more I delight in self-knowledge, the more life amazes. My old friend Candy told me I'm the smartest person she knows and asked me to deliver the eulogy at her funeral if I outlive her, and also asked me if I would send her a copy of *How to Attain Enlightenment*. I hadn't even been talking about the book! Isn't life curious and wonderful?

~ Much love and gratitude, Terrance