

Shifting Points of View

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Karl: Dear Ramji, in one of your *satsangs* you stated, “As long as you rely on something other than yourself to know who you are, you are not free.”

Are you saying that “not being dependent on Vedanta, inquiry, discernment, discrimination or anything else to know that you are free, you are free”?

Ram: Yes. But if you do not know it or do not appreciate it fully, then you need Vedanta to help realize it. Vedanta is only a means, not the goal. Once you see that you are free, you can forget Vedanta.

Karl: And when you are saying, “You are cooked and the seeking stops,” you are meaning the same thing?

Ram: Yes. When you see that you are full, you don’t want anything from outside. You are happy with yourself alone. The self is self-aware.

Karl: And the understanding is the absence of the dependence on anything?

Ram: Yes.

Karl: Yet for the love of devotion and Vedanta, it is natural to continue?

Ram: Yes. I have not needed Vedanta for forty-one years, but I love it. It is a beautiful way to communicate what I am and what I know.

Karl: From a one of your lectures you stated:

“I am the one who knows the objects (thoughts). Objects are made out of me, they appear in me and I am free of them. When you shift your attention from awareness to the body, then the body, “I,” identifies with the body. Then the object turns out to be over there; that is called separateness.

“As soon as you shift your attention back to awareness the object (or thought about the circumstance, the like or dislike) does not appear to be over there – it appears in me. It is only what my point of view is, my point of reference. (There is really nothing happening.) Where does perception occur? In me. How far is perception from awareness? No distance.

“The perceiver is awareness, all of these objects are just thoughts, perception is just a thought, isn’t it?”

Is it not true then that the apparent, or seeming, shift in point of view, which to me seems disconcerting (and strange, like getting off a roller coaster), that sense is as well only an apparent object in awareness?

Ram: Good thinking. Yes. My statement above was addressed to the ego, the individual, helping it to get an idea of the relationship between the self and the objects, i.e. the ego. Unenlightened people take themselves to be the subject and the self, awareness, to be the object. But it is exactly the other way around. Experience is only and always the self experiencing the ego as an object.

Karl: While it too seems to be in me, I am free of that object (that sense of disconcertedness)?

Ram: Good again, Karl. You are inquiring properly now. Yes, the disconcertedness is an object in you, awareness. It can be dismissed as “not-self.”

Karl: From the viewpoint of the experiencing entity, I would have named that disconcerting strange sensation as an epiphany or experiential and continue to take actions over and over to re-experience that?

Ram: Yes. But if you are doing inquiry, you recognize that sensation as an object and dismiss it. One should never desire to experience anything. Experience comes from *Isvara* and it is to be appreciated for what it is, never longed for.

Karl: And once the viewpoint of the self is solid, the shifting from one viewpoint to the other would cease?

Ram: Yes, indeed. That is the whole point of inquiry.

Karl: Everything is only known by a thought... feelings and sensations are as well objects in awareness... and with a glad heart, I can welcome them. There is nothing to do, as there is nothing happening or really occurring in awareness.

Ram: Yes! Good for you, Karl. You are coming along very nicely.

Karl: Even though you subtly suggested that I not write to you and were very busy with 100 folks at your *satsang*, I am bit tenacious, I suppose I am a bulldog too... and you can suggest that I not write to you again... but being devoted to knowledge, I will not stop the inquiry.

Ram: It is fine if you write. Sometimes I get a bit jammed up, but now the teaching in Tiru is over and I have three weeks off, then a month off with no events. I want to teach you. You are tenacious and sincere. It is good.

~ Love, Ram