

Two Blisses

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Shiman: Dear Sundariji, *namaste!*

Today for the first time "*aham brahmasmi*" came from within. This happened after another "aha" moment. There was bliss for around an hour or so. While it feels like the code is cracked, there is no permanence of bliss. In fact while I type there is no bliss experienced by me even though my mind is quiet (i.e. *sattvic*) at the moment. To fix this aspect, I will continue to make my mind abide on self. Besides this, if you can suggest something, please do let me know, if possible.

~ Kind regards, Shiman

Sundari: Hello, Shiman. *Aham brahmasmi* simply means that you know you are limitless awareness. It does not "come" from anywhere, because there is nowhere that awareness is not. There is no "inside" or "outside," because it is all you, awareness. By saying "for the first time it came from within" I take to mean it did not come from the ego. There was just the realisation that this is your true nature; awareness shines in the mind and the *akandakara vritti* appears; this is self-knowledge. The knowledge removes the ignorance of your true nature and then both knowledge and ignorance are gone, leaving only the self. The self does not feel like anything because it is not an object of experience. It is subtler than the experienter.

This is what Paramarthananda says about the two kinds of bliss, *anantum* and *ananda*:

"The *Taittiriya Upanishad* takes up this question of *anantum* versus *ananda*, the two kinds of bliss. In the scriptures both *ananda* and *anantam* are used to describe the indescribable *brahman*. *Sathyam jnanam anantam Brahma* is one of these definitions, *sat chit ananda*, referring to *atma*, another one."

Paramarthananda now gives the following explanation:

"*Sathyam* means time-wise limitlessness, *anantam* means space-wise limitlessness, so he translates '*sathyam jnanam anantam brahman*' into '*brahman* is the eternal all-pervading consciousness.' *Anantam* as a term to describe limitlessness is not sufficient as it does not include time.

"*Ananda* in '*sat chit ananda*' again means limitlessness. There are two kinds of *ananda*: *bimbaananda* and *pratibimbaananda*. *Bimbaananda* is the original *ananda*, also called *atmaananda*. It is my nature, always present but not experienceable. It cannot be gained; it is to be claimed and owned.

"*Pratibimbaananda* is reflected *ananda*; it can be experienced in a *sattvic* mind. Translating *ananda* into 'bliss' is reducing *ananda* to *pratibimbaananda*, experiential bliss. In the spiritual world you find this mistranslation and misunderstanding all over, especially in *yoga*."

Keep your mind focused on the self and you will not go wrong. Keep in mind that self-realisation is the easy part, and it is an experience. Like all experiences, it ends.

The effects of ignorance, however, take however long they take to be removed by self-knowledge, so continue your *sadhana*. Taking the knowledge from the experience and understanding what it means to be awareness in the apparent reality, which is where the *jiva* lives, is the hard part and is called self-actualisation.

As you experienced, the self does not feel like anything, because it is simply your nature as awareness. It is unmistakeable as supreme confidence, knowing that everything is good, perfect the way it is and nothing that *Isvara* sends your way could affect you. This can be “lost” if the knowledge is not yet firm.

I am happy for you, Shiman, keep up the dedication to self-inquiry and you will not fail.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Sundari