

Tipping of the Scales

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/953>

James: Hi, Annette. I get wonderful emails regularly, but this is the best one in years. This letter is scripture. I will give it pride of place in the *satsang* section at ShiningWorld, as it is as clear a statement of the nature of self-knowledge/*moksa* as there is. This document will live forever. In a way there is nothing to say about it.

Nonetheless, for those for whom it is intended – those great self-realized people, and there are many, for whom the knowledge that you speak of is the final destination – I will make some comments. I exclude you because you understand the significance. However, you are welcome to read them. 😊

Annette: There was an overall change in how that “conglomerate of beliefs” directs me to live my life, as if enough evidence was finally gathered on one side of the scale – slowly, slowly – to tip the balance irrevocably.

No matter what my experience, there is not enough evidence anymore telling me I should act based on the idea that I am small and limited.

I had to break through that glass ceiling to understand I was not an object, but that was not even close to being enough to stop my acting on beliefs to the contrary.

James: The key point about *moksa* (“being” the self as opposed to identifying with the self) is that action is not dictated by *samskara*-driven psychology. Because *dharma* is the nature of the self (*samanya dharma*), there is no need for the *jiva* to interpret the situation (*visesa dharma*) and come up with the right response. *Samanya dharma* is beyond *dharma* and *adharma*, which only apply to the *jiva*. In other words, it is the self responding naturally, not the self sitting above and operating through the *samskara* complex that evolved as a result of lifetimes of self-ignorance. Self-knowledge renders the *samskara* conglomerate like a burnt rope, to use an example found in our tradition. It looks like it is operating, but it isn't. You will notice that in this paragraph I did not use the personal pronoun – I could have said “one's actions, responses etc. are not dictated” – because we are not talking about a person here, so there are no good and bad actions. I also put the word “being” in quotes because being is not something that one does. There is no need to fake it till you make it, because the doer is gone.

Annette: It also strikes me that the mind is not on board with this. But the knowledge that “I am awareness” is not a goodie for the mind. In fact the mind will aggressively resist it. This is the utterly unique and invaluable thing about Vedanta: it tricks the mind into letting those beliefs get changed while it's not looking. I don't know how it does it, but it's a miracle.

James: It is a goodie for the mind in the beginning. It eats up the notion that “I am limited, inadequate and incomplete.” And while one is busy keeping this thought in mind – contemplating – the *samskara* complex gets transformed by the knowledge

and one's beliefs change. Eventually the intellect becomes very subtle, allowing the knowledge to illumine its source, the self. It is non-separate from the self, just like the knowledge of any object is non-separate from the object, or as some texts say, true to the object.

But from the position of awareness, which is not a position with reference to anything else, the statement "I am awareness" is not a goodie for the mind is the truth. The knowledge "I am awareness" only belongs to awareness, not to the mind. The mind is free to identify or not, but it has nothing to do with me, awareness. When the words "I am awareness" are spoken, who speaks them? The mind alone? Or is it awareness consciously using the mind?

Only the self can tell the actual origin of the words. A convinced mind can speak with the confidence of knowing the self based on personal experience or faith in scripture or some combination of the two, but the origin of the words is the mind, i.e. interpreted experience, or believed knowledge. But *moksa* is a word that only applies to the self, never to the mind.

Vedanta is very tricky. Vedanta lies, but it knows it is lying. We say knowledge is for the mind, liberation is for the mind, which it is when you look at reality from a certain perspective. Then we turn around and say that there is no self-knowledge for the mind, no liberation for it. This is why one needs a teacher. This kind of apparent contradiction can seem to be a real contradiction and therefore needs to be handled by the teacher.

Finally, the icing on the cake is your invitation to use your real name on this document. It seems you have completely understood. "Annette" is a word that now refers exclusively to you, the self. There is no one to praise or attack the person who wrote these words.

~ Love, James