

Doubt and Maya

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(An oblique approach to Jnana Yoga)

Doubt is a horrid thing, is it not? Imagine if the sun doubted, it would extinguish; or on a lesser scale, if a centipede had to think which foot to put before the other, it would make very slow progress, if any at all. What is the effect of doubt on humans? Tragic is an accurate description. Doubt removes us from the knowledge of our essential nature/Self, which results in becoming profoundly lost in this world (Maya).



Siva/Sakti

Fortunately a remedy is available, the Eastern discipline of Jnana Yoga. Knowledge (Jnana) subsumes Maya, it doesn't destroy it as some think, it transmutes it. In Jnana, All is One. Maya in her delusory aspect is a counterfeit representation of reality. The Advaitists (monists) describe it thus: when a rope is mistaken for a snake it is 'real' to the holder of the false perception. This experience is common to all of us at times; a lack of light and a paper bag 'becomes' a dog etc., not until we approach the object, is it seen for what it is. This proves without doubt that the mind is unreliable. Maya is actually a product of mind (and the mind is renegade).

The mind of the Jnani is dissolved in monadic Reality (Self or God) through constant practise of "viveka" (discrimination). Truth is realised by eliminating false perceptions (rope-snake etc) of the mind. This results in Maya losing her illusory power of enslavement. With diligence in the practise of Jnana Yoga we arrive at clarity or the reality of Consciousness, which is devoid of false or erroneous apprehensions. Maya is then appreciated for what it is - that transitory aspect of the process of Creation that is finite/measurable; or the superimposition of 'form' onto the formless.

The effect of false perception (Maya) on Joy is devastating. Alcoholism is just one example. We will use a fictional scenario as an illustration:

A wise counsellor was attempting to demonstrate that the drug (alcohol) was not the 'problem' as the purveyors of the dependence theory would have us believe. To make his point he ingested similar amounts of alcohol with a recidivist alcoholic. When a level of inebriation was reached, he asked the alcoholic how he felt. The alcoholic replied other than feeling slightly guilty he felt wonderful! The counsellor then asked the alcoholic why he (the counsellor) didn't feel "wonderful". The alcoholic gave many reasons as to "why?"

The counsellor then explained, if alcohol possessed the inherent quality to make one feel "wonderful" then everyone who ingests it should feel the same effect. The alcoholic had to concede that the effect of alcohol "differs from person to person". The counsellor then asked why... Space limits detailing a rather long and involved therapeutic session [the writer is also aware that some readers have already apprehended the import of the illustration] so for those who haven't, we return to

explanation.

The alcoholic was made aware that the effect derived from alcohol was located somewhere other than the chemical. It was the false perception/notion that the chemical supplied the peculiar effect that created a tragic bondage. It was easily demonstrated that if the feeling of "wonderful" didn't arise from the alcohol, the glass, bottle or outer space etc., its source was within the person - at that point the psychological dependence which the alcoholic maintained was broken and the rehabilitation process started. Decades of previous misery were the direct result of false perception and erroneous knowledge. Such is the power of Maya in her illusory/delusory mode.

We already possess all the knowledge that ever was or will be within ourselves. Did Archimedes discover his famous theorem in the bath or the water? Similarly, did Einstein discover his theories in the chalk or the blackboard?

The Buddha taught "right knowledge" as a necessary requisite of Liberation. Jnana Yoga is the means by which we achieve "right knowledge."

The practitioner of Jnana Yoga seeks direct experience of Absolute Knowledge. The experience of Knowledge is the result of intuition, instinct (chemical repositories such as RNA/DNA) and indications from mundane sources such as texts, testimony, preceptor, etc., which act as triggers or catalysts on Consciousness. However, a properly formulated approach/question is required to harness all the mental faculties. Every question 'begs' its own answer. The degree to which an answer is revealed is dependent on the method of formulation and intensity of the question. Jnana Yoga is a proven sophisticated method of posing the ultimate question!

Cognitive and intellectual faculties are focused into a single 'beam' of interrogation directed at the object of inquiry - the process to know. The causative factors of erroneous beliefs and false notions are exposed as a result; once causation is known delusory modes of thought are divested of their impetus and power to influence. The veiling/delusory power of Maya is slowly denuded of its repertoire of illusions and falsities and the original store of "right knowledge" becomes accessible or is 'discovered'.

This process of sifting the real from the fallacious is discriminative inquiry or Jnana Yoga. The tendency to misapprehension (Maya) is automatically immobilised by discriminative inquiry. The absence of erroneous perceptions and misapprehensions allows an uninterrupted flow of awareness to embrace knowledge at its very source - the origin of all things! With vigilance, diligence and constant application, we are able to apprehend the underlying Reality (Truth) of Infinity itself.

Human Beings are perfectly designed for the above practice. Would Maya lure us into dissipating our precious talents on frivolous and vacuous pursuits, or would we utilise all our potential and achieve that Glory for which we were brought into Being?

Om Tat Sat

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