

The Most Obvious Thing

Follow this train of thought with a totally open mind. In the end you'll know what the intention is, but for now it's better not to know. What I'm saying is totally obvious. I'm not trying to trick you or show you something you don't already know. So if you think "so what?" while you read this, that's perfect. There's nothing hidden or elusive here.

What is the most familiar experience to you? Shouldn't that be easy to answer? I know it's a rather vague question, but still, doesn't it seem like you should easily know what it is? Think about it. It shouldn't take more than a few seconds but it may take a long time because the answer is soooo obvious that most people don't get it.

When you experience something all of the time and it never ever changes it's almost impossible to notice, like gravity. Gravity is pushing strongly on your body all of the time but you never notice it...because it's always there. What's interesting about the most familiar experience to you is that it is also a constant like gravity, but you **can** know it. Although it never ever changes, you can be aware of it. So what is it?

The most familiar experience to you is that you exist. Every single thing you experience and know happens within the context of your existence. This is super obvious, right? But it doesn't come to mind because it's in the background and we don't think about it or appreciate it for what it is because...well...because it is always there. As you think about the fact that you exist right now, you immediately 'feel' or 'sense' or 'experience' or 'know' your existence in some way, don't you?

How do you know you exist? Well, you just know it, that's all. It's not because you see your existence, or hear, feel, or think it...or for any other reason. No other source of information is required. That you exist is the most important knowledge that every person has. It is obvious, fundamental, and ongoing. And you know it simply because you know it. Nothing new here; I'm just pointing out what you already know, all of the time.

There is one more very important fact about you that you need to consider. That you exist is clear but what is the nature of your existence? What exactly is existence? Existence is awareness. These two words mean exactly the same thing. The most familiar experience to you is that you are aware. Existence, awareness, has to be there or you don't experience or know anything. Or you could say that existence or awareness has to be there, or you aren't there. Obvious, isn't it?

Some people in the spiritual world...most, in fact...seem to think that awareness is something special, something incredible, something somewhere else, something to be discovered or realized or experienced in some mystical way. I am pointing out how completely normal and obvious awareness is to you.

It is one thing to understand that you are existence/awareness but it is another to know what it means to be what you are. This will take a bit more time if you want to do it on your own but if you listen to what I have to say, it will not take very long at all. What it means is that you are always full, whole and complete. This is what we mean by bliss. It means you are always satisfied with yourself. You will, of course argue with me on this topic because your experience does not warrant that conclusion. Sometimes you feel positively dissatisfied. Before you stop listening consider this: why are you not satisfied with dissatisfaction? The answer is because you are not focused on your existence awareness, your self. You don't feel satisfied because you just got what you want or avoided what you didn't want...you feel satisfied because you are at one with you.

There is something that obstructs your appreciation of yourself...your fears and desires! If you can lay them to rest you can be satisfied all the time. There are several solutions to this problem...*karma yoga*, for example, but the quickest one, if you are qualified, is self inquiry. Apply the truth about your self...the knowledge I am whole and complete ever-existent actionless awareness... whenever a gratuitous fear or desire arises and you will eventually knock them out. Every time you do it you will feel very satisfied because you are standing as you are, standing as existence awareness, not as your silly desires and fears want you to think you are...a small inadequate incomplete little wimp.

It's like being in school and told by the teacher to erase the chalkboard of your past. When you take self-inquiry to your mind you are erasing the old stuff. Take a few swipes with the eraser and you'll see an immediate difference, which is a wonderful thing with Vedanta. However, some of that chalk has been on there for a long time and needs many wipes and a bit of elbow grease. If you doubt that the eraser will work, it won't work because you're not using it. Use it consistently and absolutely for sure, it will eventually work. That's self-inquiry.

Another terribly important point about enlightenment is to know that the idea that when you realize yourself you will discover something new is a complete lie. You will not discover or experience anything new. It will not fix your karma. If you're constantly looking for something new...a special kind of experience...then you are just feeding your self ignorance. In fact, when

you realize the self, what happens is that you see that the most obvious and familiar experience to you - your existence/awareness - is what you've been looking for. That's why it's not a big deal and it is not an experience.

Our thoughts, feelings, and body are obvious to us. We all have them and we all know that they are separate from us. Our existence/awareness is super obvious to us now, but nobody ever told us that existence/awareness different from them. So we assumed that our obvious sense of existence/awareness comes *from* the body. It doesn't. There's your body, your thoughts, your feelings, your ego, and then, standing quite alone...your awareness/existence. Although they are one because reality is non-dual, your body, thoughts feelings and ego are different from you, existence. They are objects...like trees and mountains. You, existence/awareness are what witnesses them. Awareness, the witness, is what you actually are.

Knowing this won't necessarily enlighten you, though it certainly could. But it is very important because it will keep your mind from getting all magical and spiritual about this mysterious awareness that everyone in the non-dual world is going on about. Even if you don't fully grasp it, be confident that the awareness you are thinking about is nothing more than that which is the most familiar experience to you - your existence.

It really is that simple.

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