

# AWAKENING NEWSLETTER

## #13

### WHAT IS ALREADY PRESENT

*“The only thing standing between you and self-realization is the belief that you are not already fully realized.” - Ramana Maharshi*

Right now, you are Awakened Consciousness, as you always have been and always will be. Nothing can change or improve that. Nothing can make that less or diminish it in any way. No thought or feeling that you can have, no good or bad deeds, no karma can have any influence. It is not something that can be attained, because you already ARE it.

If this is true, then all that needs to be done is to be finished with the idea that there is something wrong with you, that there is something that needs to be fixed with you; that there is some new experience, some new state that must appear in you in order for you to be what you are already.

Those of you reading this are probably already aware of the “story” with which we become identified. If we believe ourselves to be this “story”, then efforts must be made to improve the story, embellish it, trade it in for a better one. We believe satisfaction will be found when the story is sufficiently pleasing, or as we imagine it is supposed to be – I will feel like this all the time, have these kinds of thoughts, these things will happen to me, others will see me this way...

John Sherman of the advaita tradition reminds us,

***But here's the thing: the story about me has no meaning. The practices that I engage in to enhance and to do something about the story of me have no meaning either. Nothing whatsoever that I have ever tried to do has had any effect at all on how the story unfolds. So, all of my practices -- religious, spiritual or worldly practices -- are of no consequence.***

Ramana's claim is that once you have seen directly the actuality of what you are, the attachment to the story, the history, of thought, emotion, positive and negative states, of happiness and unhappiness is finished. History does not disappear, thoughts remain, pleasant and unpleasant feelings come and go, right or wrong action continues; but they no longer determine your happiness. From this place, action is spontaneous, not burdened with the heavy weight of the idea that I am doing something in order to be happy, or I am doing something in order to be awake or enlightened. Then, whatever is done is done as play, of no real importance. Whatever circumstance or thought or feeling arises, I am always awake. Whatever turn the story takes, however life lives itself through me, I am always here.

This is freedom, moksha. It is freedom from the “story” of “me”, and the attempt of this “me” to get the story to improve, the thoughts to stop, the feelings to go away, the circumstances to be arranged as I desire. But because thoughts remain, and feelings arise,

and circumstances challenge, we conclude this “always here” is not it, and seek elsewhere. This is the Great Illusion that keeps us always seeking, always looking for some concept or idea of Awakened Consciousness as something other than what is present, right here, right now, when our judgments and concepts of how it should be are seen through. When we stop trying to become something that will satisfy our ideas of what I should be, whether those ideas have to do with what I should get, what my position in life should be, what my material circumstances should be or ideas of what is right or wrong for me to be.

John continues,

*No spiritual idea is going to help you there. No ideas about enlightenment or realization or awakening, practice or no-practice, action or non-action, or anything else whatsoever can help you in the effort to know, in this moment, in every moment, the actuality of your nature. If there is no problem other than this false belief, then it must be that the only possible solution is to know the truth about who you are. No spiritual understanding, no mystical experience, no virtue, no good karma, nothing is needed apart from the determination to see directly, in this very moment, what I am. And if I know that truth is what I want, nothing can stand in my way. I am HERE, undeniably HERE, always.*

Is it not so? Are you not here, now? Haven't you always been here?

Whenever it occurs to you, intentionally move your attention to being here. The times when you are lost in the story don't matter. Just bring yourself back to what has always been present – the truth of who you are.

*You have to turn your attention to see what is already stopped. We keep waiting for the suffering to stop, or the pain to stop, or the pleasure to stop, and in that waiting, we overlook what is already stopped. Our attention is on the problem, rather than the solution. So the "how to" (stop) is to just shift your attention to the solution that is already here: what is already stopped, what is already at peace, what is already free?*  
*-Gangaji*

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