



Witness Consciousness

Talks with Babaji

In studying the Samkhya Karika, the notion of manifest and unmanifest is presented. What is the third principle? Is it the witness?

Jnana term is used, “the knower.” The knower is the witness of the objects known.

Is the knower the witness?

It is the Self, purusha.

Is that different from the witness?

Same. Conscious principle alone is the witness. The unconscious can't witness. Manifest and unmanifest by nature are unconscious. Unmanifest is primordial nature. Manifest is the intellect, ego, mind, 5 subtle senses, 5 subtle elements and 10 gross elements.

How do we develop neutrality toward thoughts?

Our ego of individuality is the biggest enemy of neutrality. It always works when the notion of neutrality is not there. What is neutrality for us when we are always seeking for self-interest? If we remove self-interest, then what will be the function of the ego? The ego will sit there dormant. In that state, the truth starts shining in the mirror of intellect. You can call it a state of neutrality because all aspiration and efforts cease. The ego merges in its own reality.

Is the witness consciousness experienced only when the mind is still? Or is it possible to experience the witness consciousness during our normal awareness?

It witnesses all the time but we are not aware of it. In a car accident, people see a crashed car and do not look at the license plate. But when they are hypnotized, they can tell what was the license plate number. When the consciousness principle works through the mind, then the mind witnesses the perceived world.

What is the relationship between the witness and enlightenment?

Enlightenment means achieving knowledge of the truth (Self). Witness is a conscious principle in the mind. Consciousness comes from the Self. So the Self is also called a witness.

Is it possible to witness the witness?

Yes, it is in levels.

So who is witnessing the witness?

The witness (Self) is witnessing the functions of the mind. It seems like two different rascals there. Witness witnesses the ignorant state in the mind. When the mind gets purified, the witness witnesses the pure mind as well as what was witnessed before.

Is the witness part of duality or non-duality?

Witness as the embodied soul is duality but in itself it is non-dual. As long as the ego functions through the mind-body complex, it creates duality.

Can the witness witness the different levels of enlightenment?

Yes. The eternal, infinite, the Self is the witness of everything.

Is there such a thing as supreme enlightenment or is it an endless process?

Non-dual state is the supreme enlightenment.

Is the witness the seer?

Yes. Seer means aware. These last verses are mainly talking about meditation and what we achieve by meditation. The human mind gets restless when one sits for meditation. A man went to a monk who was living in the jungle and asked him how to meditate. The monk said, “just don't think.” The man said, “It's easy” and got up and left. The monk yelled, “one more thing. Just don't think, especially about a monkey.” The man went home and started meditation. A monkey at first came in his mind. “The monk said ”don't think about a monkey“ and I won't think about a monkey.” But the monkey started chasing him everywhere. We carry a mind which always keeps a memory of those things which are not good for us.

In the vipassana technique, the mind observes the sensations without getting involved or without creating thoughts. How does that tie into the concept of renouncing the thoughts as given in Samkhya Yoga?

If the sensations are watched without attachment, then the mind will not get involved in sensation because the mind enjoys sensation when there is attachment. We may think “I am simply watching the sensation,” but internally we are enjoying the sensation.

The sense of enjoyment with which we watch our thoughts, isn't that part of the sattva?

Sattva buddhi is nonattachment. Sense enjoyment is an act of rajas guna. Its nature is desire and attachment.

How do you find out what that duty is?

By being neutral, you will know.

Sometimes my work is very fast-paced that it doesn't give me any time for reflection.

It's good. You can't reflect with restless mind.

But I don't have time to reason out and reflect on my attachments. It's hard to witness in the middle of it.

You do it for your worldly life. Nonattachment doesn't stop you from working hard. It is not hard to see the self-interest and attachment.

How can I practice nonattachment when there is not even the mental space to witness my reactions?

It's developed by training the mind. You have to have some time for meditation.

At the end of the day, I'm completely drained.

Because there is self-interest.