

Q: I wish I had the bullshit detector you do, Robert, and trusted it too.

A: It's not a question of trust, but of seeing that your own discernment, trustworthy or not, is all you have to go on.

If you deem my words valuable, that is because YOU have come to that conclusion. It's ALL you. Another person might prefer the TV evangelist's spiel, and that person does not choose to see the evangelist that way any more than you have chosen to regard my ideas as worthwhile. That's just the way the cookie crumbles.

Q: Yes I think I understand. If I have come to any understanding and act from it, it is only because that is what I have understood. It is not correct or incorrect, but just what is in the moment.

A: Yes, that's one perspective on it. Your understanding in this very instant is all you have. If you find an idea useful or credible, it is upon your own discernment in this very moment that you make such a determination. In the next moment, you might think differently.

Q: Yes, and there is no outside authority!

A: Inside and outside are just words. If you look more deeply, no such distinction can be made. It's ALL you. You see what YOU see, and that is ALL you see. You understand my words in the way that YOU understand them. The next reader may understand them quite differently or even perhaps not at all.

Q: I think that when you tell me that's it's all me, you refer not to an imagined separate self but more to an integral bunch of sensations, feelings, ideas, etc.

A: I mean that all you can see is what YOU see. Another person will see a different world, feel different feelings, and think other thoughts than yours.

Q: Yes, that is clear. Because of different makeup no two persons are alike, but then what? What if still there is a sense of having a personal self that causes a lot of problems?

A: Suppose there is. What do you propose?

Q: Nothing can be done, of course, that is what happens, Nobody can tell another one how to get out of the sensation of and belief in being a particular self. If it happens that someone does get out of that belief like in your case, it just happens. Nobody can tell another one how to get out of the “me” story?

A: It is not a question of trying to escape from the “me story” by convincing oneself that "all is one" so that separate people don't actually exist. That bit of spiritual gobbledygook is worse than useless. Of COURSE, we exist! People exist as much as anything else exists. What happened in my case was seeing with great clarity that the stream of sights, sounds, feelings, and thoughts that had always seemed to be happening or occurring TO me, was not happening “to” anyone. Sights, sounds, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, etcetera just arise spontaneously—no one ever CHOOSES them--and that stream of experience IS “me.” No "myself" is making that stream, and no "myself" gets to control it. If you see this clearly, nothing remains to be found or attained.

You don't have to believe that no separate self exists. That "nondual" trope may appear factual from one point of view, and not another. All that is needed is to admit that there is not a "myself" in control of reality.

Q: Yes, but the realization that there is not a self that makes anything happen is a relief because then there is no more conflict based on the idea that there are many separate selves. Things happen as they happen, and no one is in control trying to do something to change the situation. So looking for enlightenment is the supposed self just imagining having control, making this or that happen, and believing itself to be someone who can get something. So yes, wars happen because the belief in a separate self brings conflict, but that is what happens and that is it.

A: What is, is, including everything I see, feel, and think moment-by-moment. Since you mention it, an idealistic denying of the existence of a “separate self” will not prevent war. The tendency towards violent expressions of power and territorial hegemony is encoded deeply in the human genome, almost all of which we share with chimpanzees who probably do not philosophize as humans do, but also kill one another often, just as humans do, including organized killing of individuals from neighboring groups in order to expand their own territory—just like us humans.

The spirituality buffs hate that idea, and so do the social constructionists who claim that humans are born tabula rasa and that all tendencies towards violence are culturally inculcated, but we humans are a species of primate animals after all, and all the pretty words about sacred this and divine that cannot erase our membership in that club.

Q: OK. Perfect. Yes. Relax or not relax is just what happens. I think that is very clear. How much money people pay in hopes that what the teachers say is true and one day they will realize their “true nature.” Spiritual business.

A: Yes. Partly business and partly self-deception on the part of those teachers who need to sell *themselves* on the idea that this ordinary aliveness as a human animal is an illusion.

That is bunkum. What is here now, including everything one feels, sees, thinks, or otherwise experience IS true nature—naturally! How can that possibly be denied? On what basis?

On what basis, for example, can it be said that violence is not part of chimpanzee nature or of human nature. What could be more truly natural than that which manifests in each moment?

Waking up in the morning with a beating heart and breathing lungs is about as natural and as real it gets, I say. The fantasy of an “enlightened” self that is not here now, but perhaps will be attained at some future time is avoidance pure and simple. All we ever have is now. This should be obvious.

If you see that, nothing remains to be “realized.” That which is reading my replies, and making sense of them is “it” right now--the only it there is.

Be well.