

Self Liberation in Phenomenology and Dzogchen, Essays

## PRAJNA: THE DISCERNMENT OF DIRECT AWARENESS KNOWINGNESS (GNOSIS, JNANA)

By Rudolph Bauer, Phd Wed, Oct 23, 2013

Rudolph Bauer Ph.D., Author

Judgment as a function of superego can be relentlessly cruel and concrete. This cruelty can be focused on one's self or the self of the other, the "self" of a culture or the "self" of a gender. The focus can be on the very self of one's family or the very self of one's closest companion. The internal drama of deprivation and annihilation are sources of superego judgmentalness and self-destructiveness. Survival, in its most primitive forms, is the source of much of superego orientation. The superego's relentless pursuit of achievement and functionality destroys children's psyches, relationships, and the sense of whoness in one's self and in others. As the superego arises in ascendancy, whoness (which is awareness itself) disappears both in one's self and in the other. Objectivity of cognition pervades, and the sense of righteousness is paramount, so anything and everything can be done to anyone. The gods are truly on one's side. Inflation is the superego's arc, often followed by deflation. The hero-zero show.

When you look beyond the judgment of mind, there is the luminous discernment of awareness knowingness, gnosis, or *jnana*. As you look into phenomena, discrimination is necessary. The duality of phenomena requires discrimination for action. In the discernment of awareness you are looking directly, seeing directly, gazing directly into phenomena and into *the essence* of phenomena simultaneously. You are gazing both into the phenomena and the essence of phenomena simultaneously. As you gaze into phenomena, discrimination arises naturally; gnosis arises naturally. The duality of phenomena requires discrimination for action. The duality of phenomena requires the discrimination of right or wrong, good or evil, true or false, safe or unsafe.

As the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* suggests, "choose carefully who you connect your karma with." The *Guhyagarbhaar Tantra* also suggests that the duality of phenomena arises from within the non-duality of primordial awareness. And so, within non-duality, there is duality. Within the vast unbound sea of non-duality, there are the infinite currents of duality. And within duality itself, is the basis of non-duality. To experience non-duality is to experience the oneness of the indivisibility of appearance and the essence of awareness, the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness. To experience phenomena as the manifestation of non-duality is to experience the purity and equality of all phenomena. And to experience the required action *within* the duality of me and you and *within* the duality of me and the world requires *prajna* . . . discernment and the discrimination that arises out of discernment -- gnosis or *jnana*. Duality is in actuality; it is not simply a distorted mode of thinking. There is a me, and there is a you. There are infinite

singularities of phenomena, infinite differentiatedness within the non-differentiatedness of the primordial ground awareness, emptiness, luminous potentiality, unbound knowingness.

This *prajna* is an empowerment of *Guhyargarbha Tantra* and also one of the six parameters. *Prajna* is the nature of awareness of awareness . . . *rigpa*. *Prajna* is direct perception, gnosis, *jnana*. *Prajna* is discernment and the discrimination that arises out of discernment. There is a discrimination that arises out of mind alone, and there is the discrimination that arises out of discernment.

The multiplicity of phenomena of the world requires discrimination for action to take place. Compassion itself is non-duality manifesting the dualities of phenomena. Compassion itself is the discernment of essence, and such discernment requires discrimination for actions. As the *Shiva Sutras* declare, knowledge is action. And so action requires the discrimination of *prajna*. *Prajna* is the remarkable direct focusing into the non-duality of luminous radiance of awareness within the duality of phenomena while simultaneously gazing into the duality of phenomena within the non-duality of primordial awareness. *Prajna* is simultaneously gazing into duality and non-duality. Duality and non-duality are completely complementary and are the two views of the manifestation of awareness as phenomena.

Some forms of Eastern philosophies declare that only non-duality is real and duality is delusion, and, in fact, duality does not exist. This view can result in lack of agency and lack of action. As phenomena is experienced as unreal and without validity, passivity and lack of agency takes place. If one sees only goodness, only purity, only the light of non-duality, and the singularity of the reality of phenomena is itself foreclosed, then there is a dissociation between the signification of experience and the luminous essence of the phenomena. In this splitting, the path of phenomena and emptiness is foreclosed, appearance and awareness is foreclosed. The path of one's life is no longer the path of realization. The divinity of appearance is muted and glazed over by descriptors such as "delusion" and "illusion." Such descriptors invalidate the actuality of phenomena, which is the path of self-illumination. Such descriptors invalidate the actuality that phenomena has character and signification, that phenomena is the manifestation of the infinite qualities of primordial emptiness awareness.

And when non-duality is foreclosed, as it is so often in the West, the person sees only phenomena, and only from mind alone. What remains is "technical mind" in a technical world. What remains is opportunistic life and opportunistic relationships. What remains is the thing

alone. This thing is the thing unto death. In this hobbled frame, the superego becomes so powerful and so destructive, as the superego, the source of judgmentalness, becomes the base of relatedness. Without the presence of non-duality, the medium of *prajna* does not arise, and the unbound support of non-duality of *prajna*, then gnosis, *jnana* is lost.

Duality and non-duality is like the horse and carriage, you “can’t have one without the other.” When gnosis or *prajna* is grounded in primordial non-dual knowingness, the dualities of phenomena become translucent and transparently open. The character of the phenomena is directly entered into, and the very light of non-duality manifests and reveals the character of the dualistic phenomena. *Prajna* is seeing directly into the character of phenomena and the nature of phenomena. The light of awareness reveals the essential purity and equality of phenomena, and the light of awareness reveals the character of phenomena. The non-dual light within the phenomena itself reveals the character of the phenomena. In this way *prajna* gives knowledge for discriminative action and knowing discernment of essence.

The action of direct knowingness takes place within the duality of non-duality. Within the very character of phenomena, there is the luminous light of awareness. Within the luminous light of non-duality, the character of duality shows itself and shines forth. By relating through the phenomena of duality, the pervasiveness of non-duality is completely experienced, and it completely supports our relating to the dualistic phenomena of our circumstances. Natural liberation takes place within the unfolding of dualistic phenomena within the context of timeless non-dual *prajna*.

In the *Vajrakilaya* practices, the drama of the *phurba* is the symbol and empowerment of awareness destroying demonic manifestations. From within the non-duality of discernment, the power of awareness cuts through the dualities of negation, the forces of negation and obscuration. The more you have the energy and view of non-duality within you and through you, the more capable you are destroying the demonic duality manifesting within duality.

The more access you have to the non-dual dimension of experience, the more capable you are of destroying the demonic forces manifesting within phenomena as phenomena. The more subtly the non-dual connection is experienced, the more power manifests to deconstruct the problematic demonic energy -- both within self and within circumstances. This deconstruction can take place at the level of appearance and at the apparitional level arising from within pure awareness of *prajna*.

The skillfull means arising through the doorway of non-duality gives access to appearance as *nirmanakaya*, apparitions as *sambogakaya* and to vast non-dual *dharmakaya*. The dimensions of appearances, apparitionalness and pure potentiality become apparent through discernment. Discernment becomes the basis of discrimination.

If a person forecloses duality and has or is within only non-duality, then discriminations about specific phenomena become a mind-alone action, a mental action. The signification of dualistic life and dualistic experience as the path of liberation is foreclosed. The path of appearance and awareness is foreclosed, and the path of liberation becomes the archetypical path of apparitions and deities alone.

If a person forecloses non-duality and the view is only duality, the person cannot perceive the purity of phenomena and the essence of phenomena. The person cannot access the power of non-duality. If a person forecloses non-duality, then the person does not experience discernment. There is only signification and a vast absence of the non-conceptual, vast field of direct, timeless knowingness. Mind within awareness bring forth discrimination and discernment.

Dualistic experience is highly deterministic. Reality is determined by unceasing causes, known and unknown . . . infinite causes manifesting one event . . . infinite events arising causing one event. Reality is determined by personal historical fields, contextual cultural fields, ageless generational fields and physical actualities. Fantasy is determined by cultural context, familial context, generational context and physical events. Opportunistic events and no events whatsoever are the web of causality. Events are not only determined by what happens, but also by what does not happen.

Historical past is determined and fixed forever, as is the present that arises out of the past, and the future that arises out of the present. Within duality there is not much spaciousness or openness for liberation -- just locked-in potentiality. As non-duality is accessed, the non-duality of *dharmakaya*, the non-duality of *prajna* -- the vast spaciousness and light of awareness -- enters into the present, it enters into the space between reality and fantasy, between thought and action; it enters into the historically determined mind, it enters into the bound sequence of causality and it opens the space between events and the sequencing of events; it opens the space of the present, it opens the space of the past and it opens the space of the future. That is why within the great compassion, the person extends to the present, extends to the past and extends to the future. And so, spaciousness opens, *prajna* cuts through and the light illuminates and invigorates.

Timeless awareness alone liberates us in time. *Prajna* is timeless awareness in time.

Written by Rudolph Bauer, Ph.D. A.B. P. P.

The Washington Center for Consciousness Studies