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WE ARE WHOLE,
PERFECT
AND COM-
PLETE BEINGS,
THROUGH WHOM
EMOTIONS
SWARM. WE ARE
NOT OUR
EMOTIONS

by **Suma Varughese**

Mistaken identity

Any seeker starting on the path of self-realisation will be told that he is not the body, nor the emotions, nor the thoughts. He or she is the deathless glorious Self hidden deep within these other identities.

One simply has to take this on trust, for one is so inextricably linked to these identities that it's impossible to even imagine that state of being.

Fortunately, as one progresses along the path, it does come to pass that one discerns the essential falseness of these identities – part of maya's intricate game. This happened to me a few weeks ago when I was extremely angry with someone and expressed myself with unguarded ferocity. This had negative consequences.

Later, as I reviewed the situation, it became very clear to me that the anger had simply surged up from without and taken control over me. For the first time, it became clear that the anger was not me. Anger and other negative emotions such as hatred, resentment, jealousy, resistance and fear operate much like viruses. They lurk outside – indeed we might well be swimming in a quantum soup of all these emotions – and they enter us when our emotional immunity levels are low because of low self-esteem, persistent unhappiness, or a strain of negative thinking. When this happens these emotions swarm up and periodically overwhelm our functioning. When they attack often enough, the person concludes that he is an angry person, or a jealous one. This is how we buttress the identity and make it part of our personality. In actual fact, these emotions are not us at all.

These days, each time one of them manifests, I tell myself that anger, envy or greed is manifesting through me, but it is not me. Language is crucial in breaking free of identification. We need to remind ourselves constantly that these emotions are not us. They are making use of us for their own purpose. What's more, now that I recognise that they are not me, I make bold to tell the emotions that they are no longer welcome and should take themselves off. I was not going to host them any more. Interestingly enough, the emotions meekly depart. Furthermore, because these emotions are not me, I am also free of the resultant guilt, remorse, self-condemnation and other secondary emotions. The relief of knowing that these emotions are not me is indescribable. All that suffering was unnecessary, after all. (And yet necessary, for I would never have got here without them).

Disidentification with emotions is breaking off huge chunks of ego structures rather like a beehive being broken apart to release the honey. I can see beyond the afflictive emotions and recognise that I truly am whole, perfect and complete, an embodiment of love, compassion, peace, calm, strength, inner power and other positive qualities.

Perhaps in some distant time or perhaps not too far away, parents will teach their children to disidentify with negative emotions in toddlerhood itself. "My, my," they will say, "anger is really manifesting through you today. Don't you think you should tell it to go away?"

Meanwhile, we can work on healing ourselves.