

Surviving Dark Periods

Recently my Sunday Morning talk on the forum section of the website Cystic Fibrosis News Today¹ was about the question of going thru and managing dark periods in life. This inspired me to an answer, which I rewrite in this Tale.

"I" have experienced some dark periods indeed. Although I was never heavily identified with personal drama because of my health², when I was a young adult, the transition from high school (living a sheltered life at my parents home) to university life (living in a big city on my own) did not go well at all. I was not prepared to thrive in the harsh and unnatural world of a metropolis alone, and I got very depressed with what I thought was "me" and with "the world out there". My severe state of depression, although recognized by a fine psychiatrist after a year, alas was not accepted by my parents, who were only acquainted with physical care and denied the possibility of mental suffering. So I lost my entire support system as a result of that within a few months, which of course added to my perceived utter misery.

It took me two years of continued darkness and old-school analytic Jungian therapy to go beyond this internal torture. This was a time before anti-depressants were invented, and only the "cold turkey" method was available. I had to surrender resistance and to learn that this was indeed an illusion of my mind only, and not the breakdown of my real self and the world. On the contrary, after working this out I re-emerged as sort of newly born from this and had lost quite a lot of ego/mind.

Later in life the rest of my personal illusions broke down too, after experiencing some other calamities like the unexpected ending of my first marriage of twenty years. Surviving and accepting this as well, two years after that my last identifications vanished and I fell awake, shortly after meeting Debbie. My ego lost all power of separation and I just stopped experiencing reality as a separate entity. What remained, is now for the past seventeen years living in harmony with all that is, with no resistance to what ever arises, together with Debbie who also came to the dropping away of all bondage and illusion.

What is perceived by the mind as darkness and disaster, and causes deep and intense suffering, often turns out to be the call of universal Love to accept what so far has been unrequited love. Surrendering to that call is grace. It is often the only way to go, and it takes only one step. Mostly we are not willing or able to take this step until it is really the only one left to make, when the thinking mind runs out of its fake solutions.

¹ <https://cysticfibrosisnewstoday.com/forums/forums/topic/sunday-morning-63-surviving-dark-periods/>

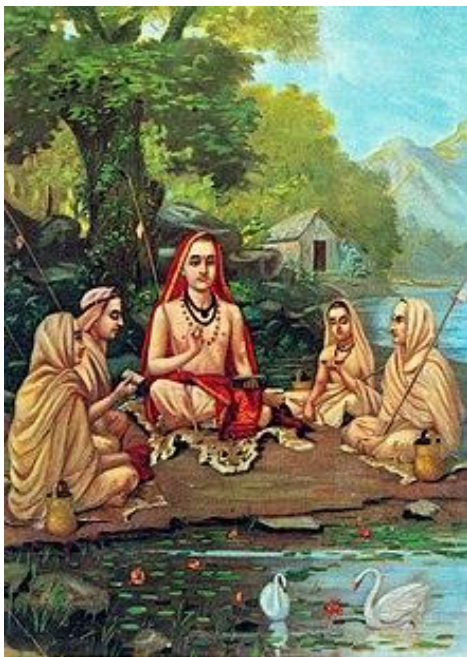
² See **J.Paul Jordaans**, *Falling Awake*, Tale no. 32 on this website.

This understanding has been communicated by the Indian Hindu philosopher **Shankara**³ around the year 750, and earlier between the years 28 and 31 by the words of the Galilean Hebrew philosopher **Yəhōšūa**, who said "The Kingdom of the Heaven is within you"⁴. Later he became known as Jesus of Nazareth, and even later as Christ. Much earlier the message can also be found in the Indian *Upanishads*⁵ (Vedic scriptures) as "*Tat Tvam Asi*" (that is how you are, or: thus you are), pointing us back to our real source of Being. It is a lesson seldom understood in the Western post-*Cartesian* world and even less often applied, for the thinking and separating personal mind thinks this is only mumbo jumbo (while in fact, this is what the mind is itself).

Shankara said:

"The World is an illusion - Only Love⁶ is real - Love is the World" .

The one who is able to work out this seeming contradiction by realizing it beyond the thinking mind, vanishes in Oneness and returns to the Source, where light and darkness are no opposites any more. This is called enlightenment⁷, but I prefer to call it liberation, which is freedom from the known.



Painting of Adi Shankara, with his disciples. By Raja Ravi Varma⁸

J.Paul Jordaans
Grathem, 22 May 2022
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³ **Adhi Shankaracharya** (appr. 700-750).

⁴ **Matthew** 11:11, 12 and 13:11, 13:24, 13:31, 19:23, 22:2 called it the Kingdom of Heaven, while in other places it is called the Kingdom of God, see **Mark** 4:11, 26, 30, and 10:14, and the gospel of **Luke** 11:20, 13:18, 20, 29, 18:16, 17:20, 21. Also other place in the Bible refer to the term: **John** 18:36, **Isaiah** 35:1. Clearly the two phrases refer to the same thing, which is Oneness, the Self, the Source.

⁵ One of the *Mahāvākyas*, the great sayings of the *Upanishads*. *Chandogya Upanishad* 6.8.7 of the *Sama Veda*.

⁶ He used the word **Brahman**, which is *Sanskrit* for the highest universal principle, the Source of all being. For me, this is Love. See also my Tale no. 27, *Experience (...) and Realization (...)* on the meaning of this phrase.

⁷ See **J.Paul Jordaans**, *Is Enlightenment a form of Neurodiversity?* Tale no. 39 on this website.

⁸ **Raja Ravi Varma** (1848 – 1906) was a famous Indian Painter and artist. [Wikipedia](#).