

DHARMA FILTERED THROUGH OUR OWN IMAGE

The great Mahasiddha Saraha said:

“He in whose heart the words of the master have entered sees the truth like a treasure in the palm of his hand.”

I'd like to talk about the form that Dharma is realized by each of us. In my case, what little realization I have has NOT come as described in the dharma books and texts I have read, heard from the great many teachers I have listened to on tape or video, or the 1000 or so live teachings I attended here, in Tibet, Nepal, India, and so on.

Obviously, I searched in all of those teachings for what was described and explained there to appear in my own life, when it was time. The simple fact is, what few breakthroughs I have had never happened according-to-the-books. I feel it is important to understand why this is so. Some of you may have the same situation and be looking up the wrong alley. And the answer is quite simple.

Each of us is exactly who we are (and what we are) and not one iota different from that. And that will always be true. Our particular Self and personality-interface is, by definition, the only way we ever could understand the dharma. And this is because our “everything” is all the filter that we HAVE to receive the dharma through, no matter where it comes from outside, high or low. It only gets to us by way of our five senses and our particular mindset. There is no other avenue.

No matter how sophisticated or subtle the dharma teacher is in presentation, what filters through to us can only come through our personal filter. What gets through to us is sieved by our particular set of obscurations and unique mind-frame. What gets

through our filter may be only a shadow of the original or it may be a lot. And here for me, is the kicker:

What does get through to us will not be in some foreign-to-us language (Tibetan, etc.) or super-sophisticated pundit-style conceptual message. That just never gets through. At best, perhaps we can feel the heart of the teaching at some deep level. And what we receive will always be in our own tongue, in our personal language and vernacular, and tailored by us and just for us. It will be as familiar to us as we are sophisticated, no less and no more. That's a given. But that's not what I was looking for or expected.

Instead, I was looking for my realizations to be like in the books -- chapter and verse. That never, ever, has happened to me in some 46 years of dharma practice. However, I will tell you what HAS happened.

What has been the case is that as I'm learning, listening, or studying something, some bit of dharma, I'm not always sure what it is about, and then, very slowly, I realize that what I am realizing is what the dharma books spelled out, YET as interpreted by me without even knowing what I was interpreting. I get it. I REALIZE what they are talking about.

And so, if we have trouble listening and understanding the dharma, that's just how it is for us. Something will get through, but it may be very little. This is why each of us had best find an authentic dharma teacher whose form of teaching really speaks to us, meaning that the message they project gets through and is received by us with as little noise and as strong a signal as possible. It has to grab us by the short-hairs, so to speak. That's how we know we have found a teacher.

In fact, we are incapable of anything other than that. As they say: if you lack the faculties, you can't perceive the phenomena, plain and simple. And the reverse is also true, if we have the faculties, we can perceive the

phenomena. So, it comes down to the filter of our faculties, how much dharma we can absorb. And, of course, this is why there are so many purification practices, to help us trim down our obscurations until they are transparent enough for us to see through them and receive (tune in to) the dharma despite them.

And to go back to my original use of the word “amazing.” As mentioned, I was amazed to find the dharma being communicated to me in my own vernacular, so to speak, in a totally familiar language. This is what managed to get through the filter of my five senses and my particular set of obscurations. There could be no other entrance or way the dharma reaches me than that.

And if you reflect on this or allow the natural reflections and vibe of the dharma to create like a hologram, this explains a lot as to why the more advanced teachings, in particular the non-dual practices, will always be in OUR own writ and perfectly tailored to us. It’s like it is coming from inside us and not from outside. The Buddha was said to teach such that everyone hears what he taught in his own particular way. It’s true today, because we can’t help but filter the teachings precisely to our situation.

You can be sure, the dharma will be no smarter than you, because you are no smarter than you. Make sense?

What has happened with me is more like me talking to myself, understanding myself through my personal language and life experience. Mundane knowledge like this comes through what is called Self-discovery, and the dharma is no different. It still has to come through who we are, “Self” and all. So, prepare yourself to be instructed as filtered by your Self, not from an outsider or the outside. At best, imagine a lama speaking to you through your Self as a translator, because that’s what is going to happen. Prepare yourself to discover the

nature of your own mind, not in some pie-in-the-sky formal dharma terms, but in your personal vernacular. In other words, we are going to tell ourselves the truth. LOL.

If this sounds scary, it should not because we have never been any different. It has always been just exactly this way. They say that Recognizing the true nature of the mind is like recognizing the familiar face of a friend in a crowd. And that friend, is you! LOL.

[Photo by me of a helleboros.]

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“As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish.”