

Article

The Nature of Spiritual Bondage

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ABSTRACT

There is no bondage other than that which we create for ourselves. And the bondage we create is to trap ourselves into mode of creating unwanted rather than wanted experience through the mechanism of experiential entanglement, whereby we become locked into a resistant mode of being, locked into a relation of Self-resistance, owing to the way we habitually react to physical reality by trying to push away the unwanted and clinging to the wanted, i.e., through aversion and attachment. The bondage we create is to trap ourselves into a mode of being in which we are flowing against, rather than with, what is our Self.

Key Words: spiritual bondage, Self-resistance, experience, Existence, Consciousness.

Relations and the experiences that are created as a result of those relations are progressive. Being in a relation of resistance at the level of the creation of physical experience locks us into, or binds us to, a relation of resistance at the level of the creation of emotional experience. That is, at least to some degree, the bondage to which spiritualists refer.

We exercise our free will to place ourselves in relations, and we can do so at any of the three levels of experiential creation, i.e., emotional, mental, or physical. However, because experience is progressive, i.e., built on progressive relations, progressing from the emotional to the mental and then to the physical, placing ourselves in a relation at one of the more distal levels, i.e., mental or physical, also locks us into the relations taking place at the more proximal levels, i.e., emotional or mental, that are the basis of that more distal relation. Thus, using free will to be in a relation at the physical level, and using free will to maintain that relation, and so maintain our apprehension of the experience that relation creates, leaves us unable to use our free will to change the way we are involved in the more proximal relations, because we are bound to our involvement in those more proximal relations by using those more proximal relations as the basis for creating a more distal relation and a more distal experience, which more distal relation can only exist as long as the more proximal relation that is its basis is also maintained. That is bondage, in that we are literally bound to our involvement in more proximal relations, and to the experiences those relations create, owing to how we are choosing to be involved in more distal relations that create more distal experiences.

Thus, we are always free to change our mode of being from one of resistance to allowing, or vice versa, and so to change the emotional experience we are creating, but we are not free to change our mode of being if we are already in that moment exercising free will to create or maintain a relation that has a particular mode of being as its basis. Thus, we are always free to change our mode of being, but we are only free to change our mode of being if we are not, in that moment,

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already creating some more distal experience, i.e., some mental or physical experience, with that mode of being as its basis, in which case we then are bound in that moment to the mode of being that's being used as the basis for our involvement in the relation that is creating the present moment mental or physical experience.

Thus, to change our mode of being, i.e., the way we are involved in the fundamental relation with our Self that creates experiential wantedness and unwantedness, we have to cease, just for a moment, to be involved in the more distal relations that bind us to that mode of being, which means we have to stop focusing upon and creating the experiences that require our involvement in those more distal relations that bind us to that mode of being. You cannot exercise free will to change the way you are creating emotion, to change the way you feel, to change your involvement in the most fundamental and so most proximal Existential relation, while at the same time using your free will to involve yourself in a more distal relation that requires or has as its prerequisite your ongoing involvement in that fundamental relation.

And if you are looking at something unwanted, creating an unwanted physical experience, then as long as you continue to do so you are bound to also remain involved in the more fundamental relation of Existential opposition that is the basis of that unwanted physical experience. How does one not feel bad when faced with unwantedness? You can't not feel bad when faced with unwantedness. Because the only way you can be experiencing unwantedness, at any level, is owing to your involvement in a relation of Existential opposition, which by its nature creates unwanted emotion. You can't feel good while actively creating an experience at any level that has implicit in its creation the relation that creates feeling bad, i.e., emotional unwantedness.

So if you can't feel good when faced with unwantedness, and what one wants is to feel good, then what is the answer? Stop facing the unwantedness, stop looking at and focusing upon the unwantedness. Stop actively being involved in a relation that binds you to a more fundamental relation that creates negative or unwanted emotion. Of course this is easier said than done, but only because we have become so habituated to focusing upon the unwanted, so habituated to reflexively pushing against the unwanted, which pushing against requires that we remain focused upon it.

So the first thing you must do to stop focusing on the unwanted is to stop pushing against it. Because as long as you are pushing against it you have to remain focused upon it, and as just pointed out, that focus binds you to, i.e., causes you to continue to create, the very unwantedness you are trying to rid yourself of. Make peace with where you are, for only then can you begin to create differently, only then can you free yourself to make a different choice regarding your involvement in the fundamental relation of Existential alignment or opposition.

To understand all of this it is helpful to understand the anatomy of Reality, meaning the way experience is built progressively through progressive relations of Existence to Itself from the emotional, to the mental, and then to the physical. Understanding the anatomy of Reality one can see how the more proximal relations that create emotional experience are the basis of the more distal relations that create mental and then physical experience, making it then possible to understand how our involvement in the more distal relations that create mental and physical

experience can bind us to the more proximal relation that creates emotional experience, and so creates the spiritual bondage that is our inability to align with our Self, the spiritual bondage that is our inability, even though we possess the ability, to involve our self in a relation of Existential alignment with our More Fundamental Individuality, because we are, unknowingly, using our free will in a way that gives us no choice but to remain in a relation of Existential opposition.

And so if we are in a cage it is one of our own making, and one that we ourselves maintain. And the glue that holds that cage together is our own resistance, our exercise of free will in a way that places us in a relation of Existential self-opposition. And the only way to escape that cage is to cease to maintain it, to cease to build it, and the way to do that is by exercising free will differently, i.e., in a way that places us in a relation of Existential alignment. Thus, while the glue that holds the cage of spiritual bondage together is our Self-resistance, the solvent that dissolves that glue is our Self-allowing.

You can't resist while you are allowing, you can't be simultaneously in a mode of both allowing and resistance, as it has to be one or the other, owing to the principle of experiential preclusion that makes it impossible for an Individual to be simultaneously involved in what are mutually exclusive relations. In order to be in a mode of allowing you have to stop being in a mode of resistance. In order to look South you have to stop looking North. But once you stop resisting you don't have to then be allowing, because once you stop resisting you are already allowing, since you have to be in one relation or the other and if you are not choosing to be in one then that is the same as choosing to be in the other, opposite and mutually exclusive relation.

So, from a mode of resistance do not try to allow, because it will seem impossible to allow that which is so unwanted. In fact, allowing is not about allowing the unwanted, it is about allowing yourself to flow in alignment with your Self, which aligned flow creates the wanted rather than the unwanted. And you can only flow in alignment with your Self if you are not flowing in opposition to your Self, and if you are not flowing in opposition to your Self then you are flowing in alignment with your Self, and you are then in a mode of allowing. Not because you then want the unwanted, but only because you are not pushing against the unwanted, which places you in a mode of allowing, and from which mode the potential wantedness that was always there comes forth as an experience you are creating according to your relation of Existential alignment.

Spiritual bondage is the inability of our Individuality to converge with that of our More Fundamental Individuality owing to our inability to create experiences that are mutually inclusive of those that are being created by our More Fundamental Individuality. As long as we create experiences that have resistance as their basis, we are creating experiences that have as their basis a relation that is mutually exclusive of the relation which our More Fundamental Individuality is using to create experience, which creates a divergence of these two Individualities, which divergence we feel as the sense of Self-separation that goes along with the apprehension of unwanted experience. But when we create experience through relations of aligned Existential flow, when we create experiences that have allowing as their basis, then we are creating experience using relations that are mutually inclusive of the relations being used by our More Fundamental Individuality to create experience, in which case there is no need for

divergence, and in the absence of the need for divergence, there is a convergence of these two Individualities, which convergence we feel as the sense of Self-connection that comes with wanted experience.

Thus, spiritual bondage is about far more than just the inability to create wanted experience, as it is also about the inability, always self-imposed, to align and converge with one's More Fundamental Individuality, with the other aspect or pole of one's own Individuality, which other pole is just as much what you are as is the Individuality you presently know yourself to be.

The only way for Existence to simultaneously apprehend experiences that are the products of mutually exclusive relations is through two Individualities, because a single Individual cannot simultaneously be involved in mutually exclusive relations. But what if there is a single Individuality, and that single Individuality has projected Itself into another level of Self-relation, where at that level it operates as an autonomous extension of that More Fundamental Individuality? It is truly then an Individual, because it is an Indivisible Duality of Existence consisting of an Individual operating at a more fundamental or proximal level of Existential self-relation as well as an Individual operating at a more distal or less fundamental level of Existential self-relation. And so it is still a single Individual, but it is an Individual which is operating autonomously at two different levels of Existential self-relation, meaning that at each level of Existential self-relation the Individual at that level is able to choose autonomously its direction of flow, i.e., is able to exercise free will freely, without restriction, and so without regard to how any other Individual is exercising free will, be it another Individual operating at the same level of Existential self-relation, or the More Fundamental Individuality operating at a different level of Existential self-relation.

That is the nature of the relation between what we call our Individuality and what I call our More Fundamental Individuality. An Individual, an Indivisible Duality of Existence operating, i.e., exercising free will, autonomously at different levels of Existential self-relation. What we call our Individuality is operating with a focus upon what seems to be the most distal level of Existential self-relation, which is the one where the relations of Existence to Itself create physical experience, while our More Fundamental Individuality operates, i.e., exercises free will, with a focus upon the more proximal levels of Existential self-relation, at the levels where emotional and mental experiences are created.

To the extent that these two Individualities are involved in what are mutually inclusive relations, there is no divergence of the single Individuality, and where there is no divergence of Individuality there is a convergence of Individuality. However, to the extent that these two Individualities are involved in what are mutually exclusive relations there is a necessary divergence of Individuality, what seems to us to be a separation of Individuality, although there can really be no separating that which is ultimately singular and indivisible. To the extent that these two Individualities are involved in what are mutually exclusive relations there is a necessary divergence of Individuality because that is the only way Consciousness-Existence can simultaneously be involved in mutually exclusive relations, i.e., through the auspices of different and so divergent, but not necessarily divisible, Individualities, which each then create and apprehend an opposite experience.

The More Fundamental Individuality consistently chooses Self-alignment and so consistently chooses to create and apprehend the most wanted experience possible. We, as Individuals, ensconced as we are in physical reality with the attendant confusion it often brings, sometimes choose Self-alignment and sometimes choose Self-resistance or Self-opposition. When we choose Self-alignment we feel good, i.e., create wanted emotional experience, and our Individuality converges with that of our More Fundamental Individuality. When we choose Self-opposition we feel bad, i.e., create unwanted emotional experience, and our Individuality must then diverge from that of our More Fundamental Individuality, as we are then each creating opposite and so mutually exclusive experiences requiring the Existence of two different or divergent Individualities rather than one identical or convergent Individuality.

Thus, spiritual bondage involves not just the inability to create wanted experience, but involves perhaps more importantly the self-imposed and self-sustained divergence of our Individuality from that of our More Fundamental Individuality, the seeming walling off of and separation of our self from that aspect of our self that is the basis of whatever concept we have of God.

And so if bondage is the problem then liberation must be the answer. But liberation from what, since we ourselves are the builder of the cage in which we reside? Liberation in this context is the ability to freely choose, in a given moment, the nature of one's involvement in the fundamental relation of flow relative to one's More Fundamental Individuality that determines whether one, as an Individual, either converges with or diverges from their More Fundamental Individuality. And one is only free to make that choice, one is only free to choose to be in a relation of Self-alignment, if one is not, in that moment, already unconsciously choosing to be in a relation of Self-resistance as a result of reflexively pushing against or clinging to some already created experience, which reflexive pushing against and clinging to already created experience is what is meant by aversion and attachment, respectively.

Everything we do we do because we think that it will make us feel better, that it will result in the creation of a more wanted or better feeling emotional experience. This is our Nature, as it is the Nature of Existence to want to create a wanted rather than unwanted emotion, since Existence has no choice but to create one or the other. And the Individual point of Existence is always free to choose which of these two types of emotional experience it will create, unless that Individual is bound by a choice it is already unconsciously making. Because we don't understand the actual relation underlying the creation of wanted and unwanted emotional experience, or wanted and unwanted experience in general, we instead picked up the idea that the way to create the wanted is by eliminating the unwanted and by clinging to the wanted. However, unbeknownst to us, these attitudes actually place us in a mode of Self-resistance, whereby we unknowingly and unconsciously then create the very unwantedness we are trying to eliminate, and put out of reach the wantedness to which we are trying to cling, while at the same time creating a divergence of our Individuality from that of our More Fundamental Individuality. That is bondage and the opposite is liberation, i.e., not reflexively and unconsciously pushing against or clinging to already created experience and so not unconsciously choosing to be in a relation of Self-opposition, which unconscious choice is the only thing that makes it impossible to choose to

instead be in a relation of Self-alignment, not because one has no choice, but because one is already using the choice granted in the present moment, albeit unconsciously.

Free will functions as if in each moment we are given a coin that we can spend in one of two ways, to seemingly purchase experiential wantedness or unwantedness. However, it does not matter what we think we are buying when we spend that coin, as we are always trying to buy, in one way or another, more experiential wantedness. Rather, all that matters is the way we actually spend it. Because although the coin may seem to be used to purchase, i.e., create, experiential wantedness or unwantedness, when we spend the coin what we are actually doing is buying Existential alignment or opposition, which Existential alignment or opposition then consistently creates what we apprehend as experiential wantedness or unwantedness, respectively. And so when you push against the unwanted or cling to the wanted, although it may seem to you that you are spending your coin of the moment in a way that will purchase wantedness, what you are actually doing is spending your coin of the moment in a way that buys you Existential opposition, which with complete consistency then produces what you apprehend as experiential unwantedness. And as long as you are spending your coin of the moment in that way, i.e., in a way that buys you Existential opposition, you have no coin with which to purchase Existential alignment. And so you feel worse rather than better and more cut off from your Self rather than more connected, and you don't know why. And the harder you try to break free, the more you push against the cage of unwantedness you are inadvertently constructing, the more confining the cage becomes, because without knowing it, by pushing against it you are just creating more of it. That is bondage. Liberation is understanding the futility and counterproductively of pushing against the unwanted and clinging to the wanted as a way of obtaining more experiential wantedness. The error, to the extent that there is any error, which there really is not, is not in desire, for desire is unavoidable. The error, to the extent that there is any error, which there really is not, is only in the method one chooses to obtain what they can't, according to their Nature, help but desire.

And here I would like to say something about the concept of liberation as it is presented, or at least as it seems to be presented, in Eastern religious traditions. In Eastern religious traditions liberation is often presented, or at least seems to be presented, as a state reached where it is no longer possible for the Individual to fall into spiritual bondage. However, for an Individual operating within the level of Existential self-relation where physical reality is created, and probably for any level of Individuality, there is no such state, because the very nature of the Individual and free will is such that in order to be able to create the wanted, in order for there to be convergence, there must always exist the possibility of creating the unwanted, there must always exist the possibility of divergence. It may be that the choice becomes clearer and so becomes easier, so that it is less likely that one will choose resistance rather than allowing, as it is easy to choose between getting hit on the head with a hammer or getting an ice cream cone, but the possibility of spiritual bondage must always remain viable because where spiritual bondage is not possible choice is not possible, and where choice is not possible there is no free will, and where there is no free will there is no Existence, which is not possible as there is nowhere that Existence is not.

Jesus of Nazareth was clearly a liberated and enlightened Individual for much of his adult life, and yet he wound up being nailed to a cross, a situation which I must assume was for him an unwanted experience and one which involved at least a temporary divergence of his Individuality from his More Fundamental Individuality, which he referred to as his Father.

So do not seek some state of being in which you will be forever happy and never having to make a choice, because there is no such state, as such a state is a rainbow that is forever out of reach, because it is an illusion. Instead, seek a state where you understand what your choices are, and then choose wisely. And if on occasion you don't choose wisely it's not a big deal, because every moment comes with a present, which may be why it's called the present, because in each moment we are presented with the opportunity to choose anew, and to choose differently, if we so choose, how we will be in relation to our More Fundamental Individuality, which choice determines whether we will, in that moment, converge or diverge from that Individuality, and also determines whether the experiences we are creating and apprehending in that moment possess the quality of wantedness or unwantedness, respectively.