

Past The Pointing Finger

by Gary Crowley

“Don’t look at my finger. Look where I’m pointing!” is the ancient cry of the awakened. It is an attempt to remind us that language is incapable of being the actual experiencing toward which it points – the word “water” will never make you wet. Yet, the pointing continues, for one never knows which instance of pointing will allow the seeker to finally “look past his finger” and result in the experiencing of the indescribable.

All teachings that use language are conceptual. Thus, the hidden danger is that the seeker unwittingly measures progress by the accumulation of concepts, rather than by the understanding toward which they point.

Those of you who have read *From Here To Here: Turning Toward Enlightenment* will recognize the following excerpt:

“Sailors understand that a boat’s velocity alone is not an accurate measure of actual progress. The wind may allow them to go very fast in a certain direction, but it may not be the direction they wish to go. Velocity Made Good (VMG) is what matters in sailing. It is the actual progress made toward a destination.

In a similar way, Understanding Made Good (UMG) is what ultimately matters to the spiritual seeker. It is the actual progress made in seeing through the illusion of a separate self...Thus, the true value of any spiritual teaching is measured primarily by the degree to which it liberates us from the illusion of a separate self...”

The question remains, “*What is the clearest way to assess Understanding Made Good (UMG) for each person, at each moment in time, for any spiritual teaching they encounter?*” The answer may lie in a delicate dismantling of the fundamental pointing, “I Am,” the one mutually shared experience of all human beings.

We can all confidently claim, “I Am,” but the “I” of everyday language is different from the “I” in the pointing “I Am.” The common use of “I” is entirely conceptual. It is a static, theoretical concept, a noun that will never be the actual experiencing of life toward which it points.

Even when “I Am” is described as an impersonal experiencing of this-here-now, the word “I” subtly taints this pointing with the dead weight of a concept. “I” is the finger and, as such, will never be the nondual experiencing toward which it points, a verb.

Thus, one scale upon which Understanding Made Good (UMG) could be measured is *the experiencing of less “I” and more “Am.”* Whenever there is less “I” and more “Am” from any teaching, a spark of understanding has occurred. “Am” ignites easily into the active experiencing of this-here-now. It is a signal that the teaching has come alive!

“Am” may be the simplest and most powerful pointing of all. The shining example of this is its famous wordless demonstration. The entirety of the teaching was the holding up of a flower to convey that the experiencing of this-here-now is continually what you are, and forever beyond words.

In the end, Understanding Made Good (UMG) occurs where the scale tips toward “Am,” out past the pointing finger of concepts, where the illusion of separateness disappears. Whatever the concept of a teaching is, it is intended to be forgotten in the experiencing of this-here-now.

For a FREE Chapter of, *From Here To Here: Turning Toward Enlightenment*, please visit <http://www.GaryCrowley.com>.

To read Jerry Katz’s review of the book from Nonduality Highlight #2711, please visit <http://www.nonduality.com/hl2711.htm>