

# A Clear and Great Understanding

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Mark:** THANKS, RAM. I loved the *satsang* with Sandy!

A CLEAR AND GREAT UNDERSTANDING has come.

I liked the idea of focusing on the self, but I wonder if the ego “I” can really focus on the SELF. It makes sense on one hand because one has to start somewhere, but right now even the sentence I am writing is melting away in nothing. It has no substance. So self focusing on the SELF is a contradiction of terms. If there is a “me” focusing, the trick is to see that the Self is always expressing as everything, everywhere. WOW! There is no separation, it is only because we think and speak in a dualistic way that the SELF appears as subject and object. There is no difference between the two. There is just a floating, a happening, unfolding as subjectivity and objectivity, as you always point out. This subtle process is just an appearance, like shadows. It is in communication where awareness is experienced easily as dual. One starts thinking and feeling as if one were an “I” opposite another “I.” This is where one starts believing oneself to be a separate being who wants something from the “other” or fears “rejection” from the other. My best teacher of this is my relationship with my wife. But it is only an appearance in awareness. I can see that awareness cannot be lost, since awareness is what the true nature of who I am. Then really what is happening is a kind of remembering or seeing one’s true nature again. Both knowing or not knowing ultimately makes no difference, even when there are *karmic* consequences. If there are consequences, not knowing seems to have *karmic* results, while knowing/being is *karma*-free. It really “feels” like I am aware of the ultimate split of mind, the knowing and the unknowing.

I am on the go till Sunday with the family. We go to the water park, the zoo and the dolphin park for the kids. I will remember you there and I am so delighted to have you in my mind/heart. When do you come here!!!!?

~ Love, Mark

**Ram:** Dear Mark, hey, great letter! When do I come there? I am always there as the awareness in you that illumines the world.

About your clear and great understanding: it is really important to “see” it like this as a vivid experiential knowing, a realization, or as you say, “a clear and great understanding.” There is really not much I can add because like all true insights it is perfect in itself. I took the liberty to tidy up the language and hope that you don’t mind that I send it on to others who would benefit from it. I will give you a different name to protect your “privacy.”

There are just two comments I will make. The first, which I’m sure you understand, is that for “focus” to happen there has to be a focuser. And of course that is a dualistic state, as you say. This is Vedanta’s quarrel with the experience-based *sadhanas* like *yoga* and *bhakti*. If you know who you are you will not be “focusing” on anything. The self, awareness, is like a special optical

lens that has no depth-of-field problem. Everything is in focus all the time, both what is near and what is far. So by “focusing” on the self – or anything, for that matter – one is just reinforcing one’s sense of limitation. One is maintaining the fiction that one is separate from everything.

The second comment has to do with your statement “Both knowing or not knowing ultimately make no difference, even when there are *karmic* consequences. If there are consequences, not knowing seems to have *karmic* results while knowing/being is *karma*-free. It really ‘feels’ like I am aware of the ultimate split of mind, the knowing and the unknowing.”

This idea is absolutely true. It could fit right into any *Upanishad*. We might shorten it a bit and I will present it to the Congress of Saints and Sages for consideration for inclusion in the revised edition of the *Vedas* for the next cosmic cycle. The trick to writing scripture is making it cryptic so it is hard to understand in one go. That way you provide employment for *gurus* – and God knows, in Kali Yuga there are many underemployed *gurus*, like Sri Ramji. So the revised *mahavakya* by Sri Sri Markji Maharaj of the Shankaracharya *parampara* (lineage) would read: “Not knowing has *karmic* results. Knowing is *karma*-free.” If you will initialize this and send it back right away. I will have it etched in stone and will hand-carry it to the next galactic meeting of the congress.

~ Your humble disciple and adoring devotee, Sri Ramji

**Mark:** Dear Ramji, Mark’s “Great and Clear Understanding” and your reply came right out of my heart. Indeed it did. Thank you for putting this insight into words!

It clarifies the source of the problem I have with the dualistic language of the spiritual quest where “one starts thinking and feeling as if one were an ‘I’ opposite another ‘I.’”

This is the point where one starts believing that one is a small self and this small self has to do something to “get into the ‘big’ Self” (or the “Now”), as if the big Self were there waiting for the small self to arrive.

My favourite joke at the moment is the serious effort that a lot of people seem to be putting into the idea of getting into the “here and now”! They seem to want to finally get into this “here and now,” yet when you ask them whether or not they have ever been anywhere else, they cannot reply.

It seems to me that this all comes down to the idea (1) that I am a flawed, limited, little body-mind thing. If this is how I see myself then anything I do reinforces the idea that I have to do something to become better, more important, nicer... or (2) I am whole and complete awareness in which knowledge and ignorance appears, an idea that does not feed the need to be a doer and is beyond *karma*...

It’s so nice and clear how you wrote it: “The self is always expressing as everything, everywhere.” WOW!!!

~ Love, Mark