

A Teacher Is Useful

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Terry: Hi, James. It really helps strengthen my confidence in my knowledge that I am awareness when you confirm to me that I'm on the right track. It's thrilling to have met a "keen-eyed" teacher, who sees his students as distinct personalities and addresses them accordingly. For the past week I've been reading John Levy's *The Nature of Man According to the Vedanta* and I feel very fortunate to know you whom Levy is surely describing when he says, "That one alone who by nature is eloquent and loving, has realized non-duality and dismissed the body, who therefore has nothing to gain or lose by teaching, yes, only that rare being is able to talk of reality and so guide others."

In the morning I experienced surprisingly strong sexual feelings for my friend Sandy and for her to "get" my understanding of Vedanta. Nothing I tried would dissipate the feeling – it didn't work to stand as or in awareness or to just let awareness shine on my inability to let it shine. I decided to let the feelings be, and invoked my faith in the truth that I am... awareness. The feelings finally passed and I was left with an appreciation of the strength of my residual *vasanas* for "outside" validation and for sexual longing, and of the power of the *gunas*. I was happy to read in *Aparokshanubhuti: 127-128*: "While practicing *samadhi* many unavoidable obstacles occur: lack of inquiry, idleness, desire for sense pleasure, sleep, dullness, distraction, tasting of joy and the sense of blankness. One desiring liberation should patiently remove these obstacles." Damn, y'all do mean "constant practice"!

Yesterday I tried another *karma yoga* experiment. As I meditated, I gave up my desire for the results of my practice of discrimination. As I stopped "trying" to discriminate, my mind quieted even more... evaluative and judgmental thoughts just ceased for a while. Today I continued my reading of John Levy's book and his reasoned explanations of how both the seer and the seen are aspects of the same non-dual consciousness, and how in awareness there is no separation between the mind, the brain and objects. I realized how the drama of everyday reality is completely a narrative made up by my mind ascribing physical qualities of time, space, energy and solidity to sensory stimuli, and then imputing meaning to those qualities, based on fears and desires springing from my causal body. I closed my eyes, still holding the book and my pencil, and experienced a *samadhi* of non-dual bliss for more than an hour. In the middle of it the phone rang. I picked it up, had a conversation, hung up and went right back into the experience of non-dual bliss. What joy!

It is such a blessing to have your guidance and encouragement. I remember once reading advice about imagining the Buddha and a bunch of *dakinis* stacked on one's head while meditating. I'll settle for sitting on a bench watching Canada geese with James.

~ Regards, Terry