

A Teacher in ze Fleshly Realm?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/110>

Dick: I'm reading and rereading your response, gleaning all I can from it. Two quick follow-up questions (I had to resist asking twenty!). You wrote: "To get the knowledge you need to be taught. Even reading books on Vedanta will not set you free unless you are highly qualified, assuming they are actually Vedanta and not some guru's or intellectual's interpretation of Vedanta – which most of them are – it does not work because your ignorance will cause you to misunderstand."

I take this to mean that one needs a living teacher who is a true master of Vedanta, that no matter how good the books you read, the intentions you have, your intelligence/intuition, you will misunderstand and this misunderstanding will prevent you from realizing the truth that Vedanta offers.

1. Is my interpretation correct?

James: In general, yes, but not entirely. There is always fine print. The truth that Vedanta offers is just you. What prevents you from realizing you? You are you. You are with you 24/7 and you want to know you. See the problem. The one who is reading the books thinks the truth is something other than his or her own self, the one observing the reader. And even if he or she understands it intellectually, the tendency to think of oneself as Dick persists. So usually the steady application of self-knowledge to the mind for a considerable period is required. If the understanding is very clear you can do this on your own but if it isn't – if various qualifications are not properly in place, discrimination and dispassion, for example, you can easily get stuck. Self-ignorance is very subtle, tricky and persistent. The most intractable problem being the belief that enlightenment is experiential.

Vedanta is a particular method called "superimposition and negation" that needs to be worked on someone who realizes that they can't figure it out on their own. Having said that, occasionally a person has such a strong desire to know and is so highly-qualified that he or she can actually realize who he or she is through a scripture, an epiphany or a conversation or series of occasional conversations with a realized person. Since I wrote the book three years ago and have been offering the videos (plus the website), perhaps fifteen people whom I have never met, had a few email *satsangs* with, a Skype chat or attended a seminar or two have told me that Vedanta finished their seeking – not to mention those who know me personally and have been into the teaching for considerably longer. I am about to post the *satsangs* of two of three more in December.

Dick: 2. Where could I find such a teacher? Could I do it online, study at home and receive guidance from a teacher via email? (Would you recommend the Chinmaya Foundation Advaita course?) Or must the communication occur in ze fleshly realm, face to face?

James: I suggest you get my *Gita* hard drive. It has 110 hours of teaching for \$200. It is almost as good as face to face. My wife, who is a realized person, said that the videos were instrumental in her realization. She watched them over and over and over, rewinding and replaying teachings that she didn't understand until she got it. I will be in the States for three months this summer teaching; you can attend one if you like. You can email me or we can Skype if you want. The Chinmaya course is good but it is quite technical and is as much about Vedanta as it is about *moksa*. It certainly can't hurt. Although Vedanta and *moksa* are synonymous, it is easy to get side tracked into the means of knowledge because it is such an amazing teaching – unless you have contact with a realized teacher who has command of the means of knowledge and can keep you on track. You seem quite keen. Tell me about your seeking and I will see if maybe I can help you. I think the videos would be very helpful.

~ James