

# Advanced Ignorance

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**Joe:** I feel like a pretty “advanced” spiritual seeker. I’ve meditated all my life and read A LOT of spiritual things.

**Daniel:** Let’s go from advanced spiritual seeker to no-seeker.

The “advanced spiritual seeker” is actually just a notion, an object appearing in you, ordinary awareness. Understanding that you are awareness, the knower of Joe and his story of advanced seeking, is liberation. Liberation is not FOR Joe but rather FROM Joe. Contemplate this.

You, awareness, are the subject. Anything other than you is an object. The subject is always free from the object it perceives. In other words, you cannot be what you see. Like the computer screen in front of you, Joe and his seeking story is only another of the myriad objects appearing within the scope of your being, the limitless awareness that is your true nature.

**Joe:** I find that Vedanta is what will lead me to freedom.

**Daniel:** You’re correct, Vedanta is the granddaddy of all teachings and the final closer to end the game of hide-and-seek.

**Joe:** I’ve got a couple of questions. A *mahavakya* that really put me to rest is *Tat Tvam Asi*, “You are That.” If I’m correct, it means that the *jiva* is awareness.

**Daniel:** Reality is non-dual, there is nothing other than you, awareness. Though the *jiva* is awareness, awareness is free of the *jiva*. It’s like the wave and the ocean. The wave (object) depends on the ocean (subject), but the ocean (subject) is free of the wave (object). Therefore if the *jiva* is awareness, would this statement then not mean that awareness is actually just speaking to awareness?

*Tat tvam asi*, when understood, is a direct affirmation that “I am limitless awareness.” According to Vedanta, *tat tvam asi* means “That (i.e. awareness) thou art.”

**Joe:** There really is no way to move “outside” of the *jiva*, is there? I can only work with what I have.

**Daniel:** That’s right. The *jiva* will always be limited in his/her actions. Limited actions = limited results. And because limitation feels unnatural, we suffer. The only solution to end this sense of limitation is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is the understanding and affirmation of your limitless

nature, awareness.

“I can only work with what I have”: that’s a great point, Joe. We call this following your relative nature, or *svadharma*. Only when we accept the “little self” and its nature – warts and all – can we then attain freedom. It’s through the “little self” whereby liberation is attained.

**Joe:** Before, not so long ago, I always tried to get to the self in one way or another, which I believe is not possible.

**Daniel:** You are already the self. The only thing to “get” is self-knowledge which will remove self-ignorance (limiting thoughts) and thus reveal your already-free nature.

**Joe:** Then I read another *mahavakya*. It says: “The Self is *Brahman* (*Ayam Atma Brahman*),” which basically means the same, doesn’t it? The *jiva* (which I am) is *Brahman*. It sounds so simple.

**Daniel:** Brahman is the term used to indicate pure, limitless, attributeless, universal, absolute awareness. Yes, the self is *brahman*.

The *jiva* depends on *brahman*, but *brahman* remains free of the *jiva*.

**Joe:** Then, the last, “*Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*).” Now, if this means that I (*jiva*) am *Brahman*... then there really isn’t that much to know anymore, is there?

**Daniel:** The “I” refers to the limitless self, not the limited *jiva*.

**Joe:** James said that this is from the standpoint of the Absolute that awareness says, “I am awareness.” I believe this is not so.

**Daniel:** James is correct. This is a non-dual reality. There is nothing other than you, awareness. Awareness “wakes up” to itself.

**Joe:** I think that what this *mahavakya* points to is that I, the individual, am *Brahman* (awareness) ... Knowing this, knowing that I am *Brahman* (awareness), is this what is called Self-realization?

**Daniel:** Discovering both our oneness with everything and our freedom from everything is liberation. Knowing that one is awareness is a good start and can be called self-realisation. Self-realisation is not *moksa* though. “Self-realisation” is an experiential term and means that one has understood that one’s true nature is awareness. However, self-realisation is an experience. It is therefore not real in the light of Vedanta’s definition of what constitutes reality as that which is always present and never changes, meaning you can “lose” your self-realisation if the knowledge

“I am awareness” is not firm.

To be self-actualised means (1) that one has fully discriminated the self from the objects appearing in it (the *dharma* field, one’s conditioning), (2) that that knowledge has (a) rendered the *vasanas* (likes and dislikes) non-binding and (b) destroyed one’s sense of doership.

**Joe:** I’ve searched very intensely for the past three years. I’ve always had a burning desire for liberation... I just want my quest finished and done with! Ha, ha.

**Daniel:** There is nothing more beautiful than having a burning desire for liberation (*mumukshutva*). You are very blessed to have hopped onto the Vedanta bus. I am very happy for you, Joe.

Continue to expose your mind to the teachings of Vedanta and the game of hide-and-seek will be squashed sooner than you know!

I recommend that you get a copy of James’ book *How to Attain Enlightenment*. It covers the A to Zs and delivers the teaching in an easy-to-read, non-bull format.

You’re welcome to write to me anytime.