

After India Immersion

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Krissy: After three weeks of Vedanta immersion with James here in India, my view on enlightenment, or *moksa*, has changed. I had the impression that all it took is a mental shift, a final click where the last shrieking wheels of doubt finally was lubricated by the oil of knowledge. Neutralization of likes and dislikes has to show up in practice. If it doesn't I am not free yet. I am just as attached as ever to my credit card, car, house and whatever is the minimum survival kit of the modern Western lifestyle. So far Vedanta becomes just a mental game – and only a beginning to reduce my attachments, and practical training of how far outside of my comfort zone I am willing to transport myself before I panic. At the moment – not very far. Here is something to work on, it seems like...

Arlindo: Thank you for your honest sharing, Krissy. You are right, it takes more than a mere intellectual understanding of the irrefutable logic presented by the scriptures. Lots of scholars have extensive theoretical knowledge about it, but that does not necessarily translate into a life free from dependency on people, places, things and circumstances.

Why so? Because the knowledge presented by the scriptures is only as good as one utilizes it to neutralize one's own ignorance-driven thoughts and actions. All self-insulting, self-limiting thoughts based on the ignorance of the true nature of oneself as consciousness rather than the body-mind construct need to be uprooted or destroyed by the constant application of what we have heard and contemplated over the past three weeks.

The entire process begins with listening with an open and, to some extent, qualified mind. Contemplation and reflection must follow secondly. That's how one resolves one's doubts and the apparent contradictions that inevitably surface, and by doing so one develops faith in the scriptures, which is the most fundamental requirement for Vedanta to produce the development of all other qualifications, which in due time will transform one's troubled life, driven by biding desires and fears into a life driven by knowledge and the sense of confidence, satisfaction and love that follows.

The third stage is *nididhyasana*, the constant application of what we have learned as a means to identify, expose and neutralize all ignorance-based thoughts and actions as they surface in the conscious mind. This can be done in the quietness of one's meditation room as well in the midst of our daily activities, which may be a bit more challenging at the beginning. As soon as ignorance surfaces, it needs to be acknowledged and dismissed as "not true." No self-ignorance-based thoughts are to be engaged and reinforced. That's how we burn up *vasanas* and reprogram our causal body.

Very simple! But not that easy, as we know, because all self-limiting thoughts (ignorance or wrong notions) are hardwired in the causal body and they will keep popping up in the conscious mind as compulsive desires and aversions, likes and dislikes, my notions, my story, my interpretation, etc. They will agitate the mind and make it difficult for the *jiva* to remain alert to apply the knowledge on a moment-to-moment basis.

That's why only a few people will enjoy the fruits of self-knowledge, which is a sense of unconditional contentment, love, satisfaction, confidence, freedom and limitlessness for the *jiva*. Knowledge will fully fructify only when the assimilation of one's true fundamental nature as pure awareness is firmly realized and retained to become hard and fast.