

# Ain't No Cheese Down That Tunnel

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Max:** Dear Ram, a couple of nights ago I went to see one of the well-known Neo-Advaita *satsang* teachers. He spends two weeks a year here giving *satsang*. When I sat with him two years ago I would spend just about all of my evenings and weekends with him for the two weeks trying to understand and experience his space. I knew there was something there but I didn't know what.

This time my *satsang* with him was very different. I realized that he approaches self from a quieting of the mind. His teaching is about having one's mind become quicker and quicker at recognizing when one is "off" and then it kind of naturally or spontaneously (I guess by grace) starts to have more connection with space, self, etc. Well, the space in the room was very nice and mellow and definitely what I would call "present" but it sure seems like a hard way to do things.

All during the *satsang* I kept recalling the simple peace of awareness itself and had to really work at figuring out how one gets to the realization that one is this by way of what he was expounding. In the end I was left with the experience of self through his teaching rather than the knowledge of self as being what I am. So I don't need to go back to see him any more. Ain't no cheese down that tunnel. ☺

I see why you don't go to any more teachers. What's the point? Self doesn't come from teachers. It naturally appears when one realizes that nothing else exists.

Thanks for all of your teachings. Take care.

~ Love, Max

**Ram:** Dear Max, well, here is an experiential confirmation of my pet issue, experience and knowledge. This is the typical *yogic* approach. You remain a doer and you get "connected" (*yoga* means "connection") and you feel good. But as you so clearly state, how do you get from peace to the realization that "I am awareness" by this method?

The mistake is that instead of dismissing *maya* and the doer and the belief in action from the beginning you are told to accept *maya* (experience) and the doer and develop a technique that gives a bit of temporary peace. This is what Vedanta calls indirect knowledge. You temporarily experience an effect of the self, i.e. peace, which you have to keep trying to "get back" as the *vasanas* rip off your attention. Check my home page for my recent article entitled *What Is Neo-Advaita?* for more on this topic.

Direct knowledge is the knowledge "I am awareness" which comes, as you say, when you realize that nothing but awareness exists, i.e. you dismiss experience and the doer. This of course requires a valid means of knowledge – which Yoga isn't. If you could see this so clearly it certainly makes me understand that you are The Cheese.

~ Ramji

