

All a Dream

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Celine: Hello, dear Sundari.

We have not met yet and in fact I, as well as my husband, only met James as recently as the Trout Lake seminar this past August. Praise be and thanks to a few old friends, “my own Self of deeper knowing” (and not giving up on awakening although having been with and somewhat “disenchanted” with three; may I call them “corrupted” and well-known “*gurus*” in the long-ago past) and last but not above all not least... in fact with the most thanks... to James, who can “sock it home” so, so, so big-time! Endless thanks to him and his commitment to knowing/understanding, surrendering to and sharing tirelessly these precious ultimate teachings of Vedanta. And of course thanks to you too, Sundari... for “taking good care” of him!!

Anyways, introductions aside, I was wanting to share or ask a *satsang* question on the ShiningWorld site. Is this the appropriate way or place? Not sure if I should wait now to hear back from you first or just go ahead and share it with you?? Since I’m kind of on a roll I’ll go ahead and then you can see what you think or let me know if that’s okay?

So... this night I had a dream. The dream included usual aspects of “life”... “my” so-called life, “things,” occurrences, happenings, people, etc. which is all nothing new and pretty common to “dreams.” It also incorporated fears and desires... strongly, so as well as being one of those dreams that “appear” very “real.” There were strong emotions, like will, anger, anxiety and worry, and again, nothing new as far as “those kind of emotions” go regarding “my/our” lives and the stuff we go through and experience day to day.

What stood out markedly though when I woke up was that it had “only been a dream” and then the clear knowing of that instantly transferred to my now so-called “awake state” and then... knowing and recognizing without a doubt, this “awake state” to be the dream as well... no different than the “sleeping dream.”

To make a pun... that really “woke” me up! I’d not experienced anything like it yet as far as blatantly and unmistakably being absolutely clear that this is all really, really a “waking dream.” All the “happening,” the emotions, the desires, the fears, the experiences, the “stuff,” the “Hitlers, the Trumps and the Cohens” all included. All that... all of it “objects” appearing within the dream.

Sundari: Nice to meet you, Celine, and I am very happy for you that *Isvara* has finally put you on the right “path” in finding Vedanta and James; both are the result of grace.

Dreamwork, or decoding the symbolic meaning of dreams, is a simple and effective way to understand the ego and how it functions because in the dream state the *vasanas* are still active. This means it is a very good way to purify the mind in the waking state because you get to observe “Shadow content,” which is normally not available for observation in the waking state. Dreamwork can be a useful aid to self-inquiry, but it is not essential.

Your realisation is correct: everything the *jiva* experiences, whether awake or dreaming, is all a

dream. None of it is real – “real” being defined by “that which is always present and unchanging,” a definition that fits only you – the knower of the dream – non-experiencing awareness. The dream state has two aspects: waking dream and sleep dream. It is called the *pratibasika* state, the subjective state of reality. It is all the *jiva*’s creation (*jiva sristi*). Both the waking state and the dream state is an individual *jiva*’s interpretation of reality. In the dream state (whether the *jiva* is awake or asleep) *vasanas* influence how reality is interpreted by the *jiva*. *Isvara* provides the raw material for the interpretation, but not the interpretation itself. Ultimately it is all *Isvara*, but to get to that understanding (which is tantamount to *moksa*) the *jiva* must understand its oneness with *Isvara* and its difference from *Isvara* so that it can be free of both itself and *Isvara*.

Celine: Of course this is attributable and directly in line with the Vedanta teachings that for me have been lit up through James. He told me when we said goodbye at Trout Lake to “keep going, study the teachings,” etc. I am guilty: I have hardly read or studied anything since then but the thoughts always return to them nevertheless, so the fire is burning. It seems though that as mighty and possibly helpful as my “waking up this morning” was, it must be followed with due diligence to knowing “the dreamer” with the same clarity and conviction as having recognized “the dream.”

Sundari: Due diligence is necessary, Celine, no getting away from that. If you don’t do the work, the fruits of self-knowledge will be itty bitty. We have very clear instructions on the home page of what your *sadhana* needs to be if freedom from limitation is truly your main aim. We cannot do the work for you and we can only help you if you do the work. A burning desire for *moksa* is a prerequisite, along with all the other qualifications. Please make sure you understand them all.

Celine: Lest that occurs, wouldn’t everything just be chocked up to yet another experience only, just another blissed-out but fleeting high, which I’m seeing more and more that’s what happened in my dealings with my former three “teachers”?

Sundari: Yes, it is just another experience, albeit one that delivers self-knowledge. All experiences are like decaying time capsules; they are meant to deliver knowledge, but if the mind is not qualified and liberation is not its primary focus, assimilation of the knowledge will be temporary. All experiences happen in time, so are limited and cannot and will not free the mind of dependence on objects (ignorance of your true nature as awareness). Only self-knowledge has that power – and for it to obtain in the mind, dedicated and consistent exposure to the teachings with a qualified teacher is essential, along with the application of the teachings to your life.

Celine: I guess mine is really more of a statement than a question, but while I’ve “got you here” and on a bit of a different note, can you speak about or recommend a reading or audio that will help clarify what “*Isvara*” is? Or maybe this question is in line with the topic of “the dreamer”??

Sundari: There are many teachings on the topic of the three states and the *jiva-Isvara* teaching. Understanding the identity between the *jiva* and *Isvara* is where all the teaching of Vedanta takes place. This teaching is covered in all the main texts, primarily the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Vivekachudamani* and more so, *Panchadasi*, *Inquiry into Existence*. The latter is the most advanced text in Vedanta.

I could give you a long teaching on the three states and on *jiva-Isvara* here, but I suggest, seeing it does not sound like you have a *sadhana* or any clear or consistent practice, that you start at the beginning. Follow the instructions on the home page of our website. There is no point jumping ahead if you have not fully grasped the basics. There is a very definite methodology and progression to the teachings for good reason. An excellent place for you to start would be to sign on to the 12-month teaching course offered for free on our website, based on James' book *The Essence of Enlightenment*. Each chapter is a lesson, and we give the relevant questions and answers.

Celine: I have quite a resistance to the term "God" (*Isvara*?) and find it very challenging to even just use that word or name. By knowing "the dreamer," does one know "*Isvara*"? That seems to be the only way I can relate at this point. Can you give guidance on the topic?

Sundari: I have attached a *satsang* I just wrote on the God issue for you to read.

Celine: Thank you so, so much for your response! I am astounded by the speed with which you answered me and at the depth of your insight and sharing. The words "thank you and how grateful I am" don't do it justice. I am on my second time reading your piece on the topic of *Isvara*/God, and I must tell you that a shift has occurred with myself because of it, the likes of which is unlike I've known before. Because of it, everything makes perfect sense and almost instantly many things in Andrew (my near-blind husband) and my life changed drastically. I have no time to write now or explain any details except for the fact that one of those changes included being able to afford coming to the Tiruvannamalai retreat in January now!! We just booked the tickets. We might be a day or so later but... hooray! Most hooray for having more understanding and knowing of *Isvara*... thanks to you!

I look forward to meeting you... we are all blessed.

~ Love, Celine

Sundari: I am glad I could help, Celine, and we look forward to seeing you in Tiru.

~ Love, Sundari