

Dropped Like a Hot Potato

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Seeker: Dear James, the methodology of Vedanta pleasantly shocked me so much when I came across you (and the existing scriptures going back to the *Vedas*). I have been in the Neo-Advaita world and all I was ever told was that there was no methodology (because methodology implies the existence of a person! Argh!). My former teacher writes and speaks very clearly about the non-conceptual awareness that we are, and he never allows one to get into a story about fixing things in the appearance, but when backed into a corner, he would regularly say, “Just get real clear about who you are,” which would prompt me to say, “HOW? Get real clear how?,” to which he had no answer but repeated what he already said. I was extremely frustrated. In one of my last emails to him I said, “They didn’t write the *Upanishads* for nothing.” After that he dropped me like a hot potato.

James: The Neo teachers understand only half of the truth. They know what awareness is but they have no teachings that make it possible for someone to patiently work his or her way out of the dream. They grew up in an incestuous quasi-spiritual world inspired by expert *gurus* who misunderstood or were actually ignorant of their own tradition. They do not understand that talking about the self does not reveal the self. It is for want of a methodology that this teacher tells you to get “real clear.” You should have asked him, “Who is telling me to get clear?” ☺ He has no idea how to bring clarity to your mind. It is the duty of a teacher to provide a coherent road map to enlightenment. I am not at all surprised that he dropped you. I hear this kind of story all the time. I should not criticize Neo-Advaita, because they are definitely responsible for a burgeoning interest in traditional Vedanta. My book is now in its second printing although it is out less than a year, and my schedule of events stretches to the end of next year. In any case, no harm done (except frustration). It is all good.

~ Love, James