

Epiphany-Fixated

Ram (James Swartz)

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Marilyn: Dear James! Last time with the hi-and-bye letter I left you in the happy certainty that my understanding would develop by itself while staying in the “I am” was already sufficient, and I did not have the idea of wanting to be enlightened, or know more; it was just a matter of letting grace work, so what I felt to be already complete would confirm itself more and more.

James: Understanding won't develop on its own. You have to consciously cultivate it. That is what Vedanta is all about. You seem not to be interested in Vedanta but going it on your own. That is fine, but you will find it very frustrating. You would be greatly helped by a proper means of self-knowledge. Grace is very fickle.

Marilyn: Then while looking at video *satsangs*, it happened that I finally did not believe thoughts to be true.

James: Some are true and some aren't. Do you think that when you know who you are all the thoughts will be equal? I understand that you are describing an epiphany, but this is only an experience which will leave you with some kind of understanding and probably some misunderstandings as well. It will just become another thought – which you will not believe to be true.

Marilyn: And together with that, it was like a veil was lifted and I could look through my thoughts, not at them, and behind I saw a very bright light shining on my forehead, through my forehead.

James: Let's hope the veil stays lifted, but sad to say it won't unless self-knowledge is firm – which it isn't. See your perspective. You are looking at the light. Who is looking at it? Marilyn remains as an observer, looking at the bright light. She still occupies the *samsaric* standpoint when in fact she is already and always beyond her thoughts. She is the light. The hard and fast knowledge “I am the light” will set you free of the limited Marilyn-perspective. You are beyond your thoughts. No thought could exist without you recognizing it. You cannot look at them, through them or ignore them at all, because they have no reality at all. It's only subtle matter floating in your light.

Marilyn: I realized all my life, the vividness of the images which made me believe them to have any reality and life of their own, was coming from that light.

James: This is correct. Images are dead without you. You are the light which illumines them. You can choose to go for them or not. It doesn't matter, because they have no reality at all. YOU are the reality which enlightens them and you choose how much reality you want give them. Play

with the thoughts that come up in your mind. See the world as hollow and insubstantial, including Marilyn who is looking at the light. This experience is like a sand castle. Soon time will flood over it and it will be gone and you will be back in your body waiting for “grace” to give you another experience.

Marilyn: In being in the “I am,” as an upright stream, the top of my head was all the time transparent, like grace coming through that, with tiny little pinpoints, which I considered to be the Holy Spirit, and that has been going on for two years now, is very common and a lot of people mention that.

James: The mistake here is the idea that you can “be” in the “I am.” You are the “I am.” See your point of view. It is very limiting. It turns your self, the “I am,” into an object.

As far as the experience itself goes, don’t pay too much attention to it. It is just energy rewiring your three bodies. Ignorance holds back our full energetic potential. Truth removes blockages and the energy can float free through your nervous system. All kinds of epiphanies can occur during this process. The Holy Spirit is you, not the light you saw. The light and other epiphanies are just energetic components seen by you.

Marilyn: There is also light in that, but very different, not like a spotlight but more like a soft rain.

I realized this spotlight-light was also the one I saw with my first enlightenment experience.

Being in agony at that time, everything was dark and this spotlight was then experienced as incredible huge, just cutting the darkness open, leaving me like a shiny newborn baby, not even being able to talk for a few days, filled with love.

James: Yes. You are the light which illumines even the most frightening dark situations. Your experience is a symbol. The shiny newborn baby filled with love is a symbol for the self. A baby feels one with everything. It has no notion of individuality and is free of fear and desire (hunger and pain are bodily functions and no fears and desires), because it feels whole and complete, embedded in the lap of the divine Totality. It is a beautiful symbol, but: it is ONLY a symbol. You are beyond any experience. You are the one in which the experience took place.

Again, notice the perspective. You were filled with love. But the truth is that you are love. You do the filling. Are you still “filled” with that love? This kind of experiential love is good but it comes and goes. It is not real.

Marilyn: My prayer has always been to repeat this, not as an experience, but the “normal” version, as something that is available for everyone and also rationally explainable.

James: An experience cannot be repeated. And if it can, it will be unrepeated. And you, the real you – the light of awareness – cannot be repeated either, because you were never born.

Marilyn: Now I realized that the space, the all-pervading awareness, the seeing which I am, is not looking at things but through them, being so to say “in love” with the seeable spotlight (consciousness), and that in between that is the transparent relationship, the love, the emptiness which is pouring down this love in my body, in the “I am,” which is positioned, so to say, between those two.

James: To say that you are all-pervading means that you pervade everything. To say that you look at or through things is not correct. You ARE everything that exists. You are “at” and “through.” You are not in love with consciousness, you are love, meaning consciousness. You are the emptiness and the fullness, and you see both of them. There is no emptiness without you. In fact there is no emptiness, because it is always filled with you.

Marilyn: I recognize this in Papaji saying that it is about two mirrors reflecting each other, and emptiness between in which the world appears.

James: Because reality is non-dual there is one mirror, appearing as two. It may seem that “between” the mirrors is emptiness, but there is no emptiness, because emptiness is nothing but awareness, the one that sees and fills the emptiness. Emptiness is just a concept. It does not refer to anything real. The mirrors, the space between them and the apparent emptiness are pervaded by awareness, you, the self.

Marilyn: Now everything is more clear to me than it ever has been. Enlightenment is enlightenment of the mind, and if the thoughts are nothing, the person does not exist, etc., etc. I could go on and on how in this understanding everything fits and has its own place, and how everything is working so beautifully together!

James: Yes, enlightenment is for the mind. When you realize your true nature you won't believe any thought appearing in your mind. Thoughts are only subtle matter, made out of you floating in and through you. They are you seen by you.

It seems you are quite in love with this experience. And indeed it a lovely vision, but you need more than a few nice epiphanies to set yourself free. You need a means of self-knowledge, a way of evaluating what you experience so that it does not leave you as an experiencer.

Marilyn: I would like to ask you to comment on this, and also if you know any sources that confirm this spotlight-seeing, and if it is referred to in Vedanta. It is not very google-able!

James: I have commented on it extensively, as you can see. Epiphanies like this can be as unhelpful as they are helpful. I am not trying to rain on your experiential parade, Marilyn, but Vedanta is about understanding, not experiencing. You seem to be very much caught up in your spiritual experiences and what they mean. In truth they have the same meaning as eating a plate of schnitzel. They come and they go. Your understanding of who you are needs work. This is why you need a means of self-knowledge.

I don't think I can help you as long as you want to go it on your own. Vedanta is a way of seeing that destroys the Marilyn-perspective. It has nothing to say about her experiences. They are irrelevant. Vedanta is a method of inquiry that requires that you surrender your limited perspective and just listen to the teachings. You need to be taught. You are individualistic and want to learn it on your own from your experiences. But it will never work, because what you don't know will cause you to interpret what you experience incorrectly.

Vedanta puts you in the driver's seat, but only after you have heard the teaching as it is meant to be heard, not as interpreted by you. Then you reflect on what you experience and see if it fits with the vision of non-duality. If it does, you accept it. If not, you discard it. In this way you work yourself out of ignorance.

~ Much love, James