

Information Is Not Knowledge

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Daniel: This post demonstrates how important it is to get terminology straight. I had quoted James at my website, which had caused confusion to reader, Doug.

“If your eyes are open, you have no choice but to see what is in front of you. If you listen to Vedanta with an open mind, self-knowledge takes place. No effort is required. Effort may be required to get your mind to the point where it can suspend its beliefs and opinions for while and let self-knowledge sink in, but once it is open, the knowledge will remove your ignorance about who you are. In other words, knowledge, not the doer/ego, does the work. If the ego/doer does the work, it can claim to be enlightened. But it cannot make such a claim, because knowledge does the work.” ~ James Swartz

Doug: If knowledge is information, wisdom is the understanding and application of that knowledge.

Daniel: Information is not knowledge. Information changes and can be debated. Knowledge can neither be negated nor debated, it's something you can always count on. Knowledge does not change and is beyond experience.

I'd say wisdom arises when we spiritually grow up. “Spiritual maturity” is accepting that there is no solution in *samsara*, the world of changing objects. Wisdom is going directly to the source of happiness, “back” to yourself, awareness. This is achieved through the application of a complete teaching, Vedanta being the means.

Though I don't see Ramana Maharshi as a qualified teacher of Vedanta, I do, however, think that this quote of his fits well to our conversation: “Desirelessness is wisdom. The two are not different, they are the same. Desirelessness is refraining from turning the mind towards any object. Not seeking what is other than Self is detachment; not leaving the Self is wisdom.”

Doug: Insight is the awareness of the underlying essence of a truth.

Daniel: I know what you are trying to say, but I'd rephrase it. The insight is not that awareness is the underlying essence of truth, but rather that the underlying essence of truth, and everything else, appears within you, awareness. The truth is that this is a non-dual reality and that you, awareness, are everything that is.

Doug: Sadly, we can gain a lifetime of knowledge yet never see the wisdom in it. We can be wise, but still miss the deeper meaning.

Daniel: If self-knowledge is gained and the mind remains open and continues to contemplate the teachings, there's no other choice but for ignorance to be eradicated. This is the nature of knowledge.

“The fire of certainty, which is the result of knowing oneself as immaculate Awareness, burns down the entire forest of ignorance. The eradication of ignorance and the dawning of happiness are one event.” ~ *Astavakra Gita*

James' books *How to Attain Enlightenment* and *The Essence of Enlightenment* clarify our conversation in detail. I'd suggest that you check them out. Thanks for the little post exchange! ☺