

Is ShiningWorld Greedy?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2826>

Kay: Hi. I have just come across your site after buying *The Essence of Enlightenment* and visting Arunachala earlier this year. The materials really resonate with me.

I was looking forward to starting the course, but am surprised and disappointed that you charge \$25 dollars to download a video! Charging for books I understand; there are physical printing costs, etc. But why make money out of folk trying to find the truth? Ramana didn't charge anyone. I get so sad when I see Mooji and the like generating a whole industry around this stuff, and now you. I'm fully aware this is likely my ego talking and none of it matters, as it's all an illusion, but still, even in my dream world it still grates.

Sorry for the negative tone. Your site seems to come from a good place, which makes it all the more disappointing.

James: Dear Kay, in the last fifteen years I've not received one complaint about the cost of the videos. If you knew the value of Vedanta, you wouldn't have this issue. Second, I'm not Ramana. He was a *sanyassi* and an Indian *mahatma*. Those people are looked after by the culture. I'm an American and have no spiritual trust fund behind me. Just what do you think I am going to use to pay the rent and buy food? Also, the website is chock-full of all the writing you need, and there are over one hundred YouTube videos, plus there are two free videos on YouTube of the *Self-Inquiry* seminars that have received over one hundred thousand hits. In general you get one hour of excellent systematic Vedanta teaching for \$2 if you buy from the shop. Buy an Adyashanti or Gangaji video for \$15 and get a load of quasi non-dual white bread. My wife and I work tirelessly bringing this knowledge to the people. We write *satsangs* for hours a day and are not paid for it. Check the website. There are thousands of pages of free *satsangs* on every conceivable topic. I don't charge for my seminars, and only accept donations. In addition, it is the duty of a student of Vedanta to look after the teacher in whatever way is possible, not necessarily with money, however. We don't own a home, so we are forced to rely on the largess of others. With all due respect, Kay, but I think you are the one with money issues. That you have been led to Vedanta is definitely God's grace because there is no teaching that compares to it. So please don't take this rap on the knuckles the wrong way. Look at your own projections, buckle down and commit yourself to the teaching. It will set you free.

~ Much love, James

Kay: Dear James, thanks very much for your reply to my hastily written and clumsy message. You are of course right: it is me projecting my own money issues. In fact, after I fired off that message (late at night), I looked more closely at your site and saw that the price was for a whole course of sessions, not just one video. You might be underselling your stuff! You don't need to explain or justify your work or policy. I can see that you have put a lot of effort into it for relatively little or no return. I should have sent a follow-up message, but I wasn't expecting either of them to be read, so I didn't bother. Sorry for that.

Your direct style of approach and language appeals a lot to me. I properly discovered Vedanta after a random trip to Tiruvannamalai earlier this year to visit a friend. Although I have read a lot on Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. (years in fact), I have struggled with putting it into practice, not because I don't believe in it, but because I could not find a method that "works" for me. I am just starting *The Essence of Enlightenment* and I can already see this is a different kind of book. In fact it's not like any other book I have read in this area. I like it a lot. It will be interesting if it can help me finally get through the gateless gate.

Consider my knuckles well and truly rapped. I will try to commit to the teachings.

~ With love, Kay

James: Thanks for the lovely email, Kay! It shows class. Investigate Vedanta; you won't be disappointed.

~ Love, James