

No Easy Way

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Tony: *Namaste*, Ramji! I posted an email to you a couple of weeks ago and didn't received an answer from you. Maybe it got lost on the way or maybe you haven't had time due to your teaching and travelling. I didn't formulate any question either, just blabbering out my exaggerated enthusiasm around the teaching of Vedanta that I got the chance to study in India with you and Swami Dayananda.

I felt that I got some kind of confirmation from you in Tiruvannamalai, and even though we didn't speak much I felt that to be a very precious and appreciative moment filled with earnestness and truth from both of us.

You probably meet and write and speak to so many students, but I feel neglected because I put a lot of my innermost gratitude to you and your teachings in the email and feel that there can't really be anything wrong with that one self recognising another.

Ramji: I remember you, Tony, and I had written you, but it somehow found its way into the drafts folder. As you know, I re-sent it when I got this one. I think you have it by now. Yes, it is true that I meet many people and I try to respond to them all, but you need to understand that the list of people who want teaching is quite big and growing every day, so you just have to wait until your email gets to the top of the queue. My wife Sundari is helping, but we cannot keep up.

I appreciate your *bhakti*. It is clear that you are very sincere, and I am happy that Vedanta is working for you. Stick with it. I will try to help you as best I can.

Tony: I am aware of the *guru*-hopping trend that I know you don't want to partake in, and think that you are a true servant of the *dharma* with no hypocritical mind or ego agenda. Maybe that's what I recognised in your teaching and that made me think and slowly realise that this enlightenment is for real.

Ramji: You are very lucky to have realized this, Tony. Many people do not really believe they are capable of it. They see great masters and they think enlightenment is for special people and it takes away their confidence. But the greats were just ordinary people at some point and they built up their selves brick by brick over many years by doing what was right spiritually. If you are determined and work hard you will prevail.

Tony: And there is no escapism involved from the life as it is. I am well-informed about the father-projection on the *guru* that is common, and I don't think my anxiety about you not reading my email is coming from that, but there is ego clinging for sure: an outer authority should confirm my spiritual achievement; I want to pass the *moksa* test. I want to be qualified to study. With which authority can this confirmation be made? By the inner authority of course that is me, myself and I!!! To try to fool myself is trying to fool the Buddha, and I can't fool the Buddha, because the

Buddha, or awareness, is me.

Ramji: Good for you, Tony! That is the truth.

Tony: I felt that was very true and logical and heartfelt in India, but now in Sweden I'm back in some of the habitual tendencies again. The *samsaric* world lingers like a song you are unable to get out of your head, and division, comparison, affirmation and a sense of smallness come back like old friends you feel you don't have anything in common with, but still they are there telling stories about who I am.

Ramji: There is no easy way. You have to stand up to these tendencies over and over with a life of self-discipline and surrender of the results. There are many ups and downs.

Tony: In Tiru this silent affirmation was enough to understand there is more to life than this yo-yo or pendulum between the *samsaric* opposites, and a big weight lifted off the seeker's chest. I felt that most of this spiritual life is about undoing and disidentification with the spiritual achiever and the *dukhi*, the sufferer.

Ramji: Yes. It is about undoing and disidentification.

Tony: But is it that easy that this knowledge about the true nature of myself is a constant protecting shield against all desires and attractions, sorrows and disappointments?

Ramji: If you are mature and dispassionate it is.

Tony: Can I turn this quality of disenchantment or dispassion on like searchlight when facing this in my everyday life or and is it a skill that works on with the indirect means as *sattvic* living, meditation, *yoga*, etc., like building a spiritual muscle until it strong enough to uproot these tendencies, or is this the *yogi's* path?

Ramji: If you are mature you will be dispassionate all the time. If you think you are turning it on and off you haven't understood what dispassion is. If you have it, you will never turn it off. It is the saving grace of seekers.

But in answer to your question, yes, you should be a *yogi*: live a simple, *sattvic* life and take the *karma yoga* attitude toward everything. At the same time practice discrimination so your dispassion will grow.

Tony: I mean that's what the Buddhists are trying to do all the time, watching the ephemeral dream of *samsara* and learning to let go. Does the way and the goal co-exist or is *moksa* getting rid of exclusiveness and hierarchic thinking of spirituality and thereby extinguishing the seeker...

making him see that he is the sought, as Nisargadatta wrote.

Ramji: *Moksa* is your nature. You are free. It is not something you can achieve by letting go of something. However, you need to let go of the results of your actions and unspiritual ideas so that you are able to see. So the Buddhists are okay with the *sadhana* bit, but they are not clear about the *moksa* bit. You can be clear that you are what you are seeking AND do the work. It is not an either/or. It is a both/and. People are lazy. They get self-knowledge and they want to declare themselves enlightened. But you are only enlightened when your binding *vasanas* are rendered non-binding and your sense of doership is canceled. Our definition is very strict.

Tony: And with this notion of nothing to really seek or do, are you not just deluding yourself and trying to transcend all the stuff from the subtle body? Maybe this is the Neo-Advaita approach, I don't know.

Ramji: Most people have this view. You have to work out your stuff. *Moksa* is freedom from your stuff and freedom from the one who has stuff.

Tony: I don't have the proper language to really tell others what I am studying and practising, but I have a strong confidence and *shraddha* in what was unfolded and explained to me in Tiru and Rishikesh that makes me feel that I have a firm foundation in something that includes me and also transcends me as the one I have tried so hard to preserve and improve and adjust to the narrow views of society.

Ramji: It seems to me that this is true for you. *Shraddha* is perhaps the most important quality.

Tony: I feel am on my way home and I feel that life is full... *puraha*... with possibilities to evolve and contribute. I have always felt that I have to choose a religious path and not dig many narrow holes looking for water.

Ramji: Yes, a religious path is the best. It is better than a secular path if you have the right idea of God because it puts God on your side.

Tony: But I appreciate Jesus' and Buddha's and Ramana's and Lao Tzu's wisdom, and feel that the *ishta devata* is not so important anymore.

Ramji: This is good. It shows maturity.

Tony: It is what they are pointing towards that is important, maybe their example as symbols for awakening and truth. Is that a problem?

Ramji: No. See them as symbols.

Tony: Do you think I should study other traditions together with Vedanta?

Ramji: Definitely not. If you want Vedanta you should stick with it and not confuse yourself with Buddhism. If you want Buddhism you should stick with it. But understand that the topic of Vedanta is just you. It is not some kind of experiential state of *nirvana*.

Tony: Should I stop doing my Buddhist meditation just because the Buddha didn't have the teaching of God or *atma*? So many questions.

Ramji: No. Do the Buddhist meditation, but don't read the Buddhist stuff. It will just confuse you. They are not clear on the nature of *moksa*. And there are so many Buddhist teachings. It has become just a religion. There is only one Vedanta and it has not changed since forever. It is always the same. And it is complete means of self-knowledge. And we are not afraid to show you what *moksa* is in detail and discuss it from every angle so that once you get to work you have a distinct understanding of truth and not some vague idea of some kind of mystical state that will supposedly happen years down the road.

Tony: I am sorry. I am eager to know, but still need confirmation or some feedback on what I do know or maybe some superfluous feeling.

Just write "hello" if you like just to know you have received it. I loved your teaching at Tiru and am planning to come back and attend next year if my economy allows it. I am reading your book and it is very helpful to me, answering a lot of questions too. May you be peaceful, whole and happy.

Ramji: Hello. ☺ You have to be patient, Tony. I can't immediately reply to everyone. I can't just write a third-rate *satsang*. I have to take my time and do it right. You are doing fine. You are on the path. You will prevail.

~ Love, Ramji