

Seeker or Finder

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Hannah: Thank you, sweet lady, for your reply. I've been a "seeker" almost as long as the "apparent" James and can only see videos at the library. My computer is so old (dial-up), like me, and I cannot afford anything better (senior with limited income). However, in spite of those teachers who say there is no "destiny," mine IS to BE "realized," whatever word suits one. I almost used the word "awakened" because it is used so often; however, yes, as you so clearly stated, I am awake but still not permanently... shall I say "in the light/liberated/*moksa*...?"

Sundari: I understand your interest in James and his story; it is very exotic and very dynamic but he is, nonetheless, a regular guy. At least that is what he wants people to think because there is nothing special about being enlightened because awareness is the most ordinary extraordinary thing there is. Without awareness, we would not be writing to each other. Vedanta uses very specific words to teach because in order to teach the truth that is not based on subjective experience, words have to be as accurate as possible. Most people have no clue how to use language correctly, or what the implied meanings of words are, which is why communication is so difficult for so many.

Vedanta is a valid means of self-knowledge called a *sabda pramana*, which means an "oral tradition." It gives direct knowledge of the true and eternal nature of reality, which is that it is a non-duality and not a duality. It does this through words, using irrefutable logic. In spiritual circles this will be generally criticized with the argument that the eternal self, enlightenment, the absolute, *brahman*, the Tao or whatever you want to call awareness, is beyond words and indescribable. Therefore the conclusion is that it is impossible to get direct knowledge and to know your real self through words.

Vedanta scripture agrees on the fact that awareness is not describable by words, because the one trying to describe awareness is the object – the effect – and awareness is the subject – the cause. The effect and the cause exist in different orders or reality: that of the real and the apparently real. The subject, awareness is that which is real, meaning always present and never changing. The object is that which is apparently real, meaning that which is not always present and subject to constant change. The object cannot know the subject because the subject (awareness) is subtler than the object, meaning the person or any object. The means at our disposal to know anything, perception and inference, are not sufficient without self-knowledge to know awareness. In order to gain self-knowledge, the mind has to be prepared, which can be done by developing the qualifications required for self-inquiry, which are very well outlined in James' book and in many e-satsangs on the ShiningWorld website.

Vedanta literally means the knowledge that ends the quest for knowledge, meaning self-knowledge. Because Vedanta is a valid, complete and independent means of knowledge, it is possible to get direct knowledge through the implied meaning of words, when they are used and unfolded correctly through a specific methodology.

Like most people, you have never been taught properly even though you have been a seeker

most of your life. Seekers do not become finders unless the mind is prepared, which means they are qualified and taught a valid means of knowledge by a qualified teacher.

James was taught properly, which is why he “got” *moksa*, and he has been in service to the truth ever since by teaching in the great tradition of Vedanta; he taught me and many others who realised the self through him. He has become one of the most powerful voices for Vedanta in the West because he teaches traditional Vedanta in a very accessible way.

There is no destiny as such because the word “destiny” implies that enlightenment is something special or that you don’t already have; we call these kinds of words “the language of hyperbole” and we avoid them at all costs. It is everyone’s destiny to be enlightened because enlightenment or liberation is already everyone’s true nature. The problem is that ignorance of this fact covers the mind, so most don’t know this and set off to seek what they already have.

Unfortunately, I do not have time to make polite conversations with you because we are extremely busy coaching many serious inquirers whose main aim is to become finders, so they subject the mind totally to self-inquiry with our guidance. I have attached an article I wrote on what this entails for you to read, should you be interested. If you would like to be taught then you need to do some work on your side to understand what Vedanta is.

Vedanta is called a *brahma vidya* which means the science of consciousness. It is an objective and scientific analysis of the true nature of reality – and your experience, based on the facts. Like any other science, it is not personal and it has a methodology – which, if followed with great dedication and commitment, will provide irrefutable knowledge that is *moksa*, if the inquirer is qualified. Vedanta is simply the truth about you. Not your truth or my truth or anyone’s truth: The Truth.

Vedanta is an independent teaching because it is not the philosophy or experience of one person like a prophet or a mystic, as in the Buddha or Jesus. It is called a *sruti* which means “that which is heard.” Vedanta is revealed to the mind of man, not thought up by the mind of man.

Knowledge is Einstein’s discovery of the law of relativity or the law of gravity was there but previously unknown. To discover means to uncover something that the world works according to the laws of physics, not according to Einstein or another researcher. Gravity, relativity and electricity do not care if you believe in them. They operate the same way whether you understand what they are or not. It is the same with awareness. Awareness does not care if you have realised your true nature or not because it is unaffected by knowledge or ignorance. Liberation from ignorance is for the apparent person who lives in the apparent reality. As awareness, you have always been free. This is why *moksa*, or freedom, is discriminating you, awareness from the objects that appear in you, in other words, dis-identifying with Hannah as your primary identity – AND knowing what that means, so that self-knowledge translates into all areas of Hannah’s life. It is freedom from the person and for the person.

Awareness is always here, right in front of our noses and we would not have a nose without it, but because we are blinded by duality, we do not see it.

This is what James teaches or proved. Vedanta is the wisdom of the ages, it has never changed and never will, it is not defined by anything because it is that which defines everything; it is beyond time, space, culture, race or creed.

Vedanta teaches that you cannot do anything to get enlightened because the doer is the problem; no action taken by a limited entity can produce a limitless result, which is what liberation, or *moksa*, is. One can only have ignorance removed by self-knowledge by exposing the mind to self-inquiry.

However, Vedanta is a complete teaching in that it is both a path of action: self-inquiry, and a path of knowledge. Although self-inquiry is an action, it is not the action itself that provides the results because only self-knowledge removes ignorance, not the one doing the self-inquiry. And the result that self-inquiry produces is a limitless result, because it produces freedom from the limitation of identification with the doer, the seeker, the person identified with being a person – which is *moksa*.

Hannah: I do appreciate that James can appeal to the Western mind... AND... he PROVES that one need not be an ascetic and follow all those Eastern rules... he became realized in spite of all of them... and was on his way before meeting his teachers... destiny again?

Sundari: You are fascinated with the story, Hannah; you are missing the point, see above. What James proves has nothing to do with Eastern tradition per se. He proves that enlightenment is ordinary, it is everyone's true nature but the knowledge of that is only available to those whose minds are prepared and qualified. Vedanta may be based on Eastern tradition and originated in India, but Vedanta (self-knowledge) is universal Truth with a capital "T" and it is found everywhere because it is the Truth behind all truth. Awareness does not have a nationality and does not belong to anyone.

Hannah: Does anyone really know?... there still is much mystery that surrounds the issue...as for suffering... I do understand...

Sundari: Yes, there definitely are those who know – and they are the people whose ignorance of their true nature has been removed by self-knowledge. We have no confusion about anything because we know the difference between ignorance and knowledge. If you want to succeed in freeing the mind from confusion, you will need to forget about all that it has picked up and learned so far because most teachings out there are based in ignorance – which is taken to be knowledge. This is why the qualifications are so important if self-knowledge is truly what you are seeking because self-knowledge will not stick in a mind that is confused or looking for spiritual candy – which is what experiential enlightenment is. All experience is the desire to find completion through an object – whatever that is. Experience is an object known to you – because an object is anything other than you, awareness. If you know something, it is not you.

There is no mystery surrounding truth, it is the most obvious thing – staring everyone in the face – but because everyone is looking for experience and not knowledge, it is missed. We call it The Royal Secret: in plain sight but most cannot see it.

Hannah: That thinking ego/profane non-being is the source...

Sundari: Awareness is not thinking, the ego, non-being or anything else. It is the knower of the ego, non-being (whatever that is) and the one who thinks, etc. The ego and the thinker are objects known to awareness; as with all objects, they are made up of awareness, arise out of awareness and dissolve back into awareness. All objects have a dependent existence on awareness – but awareness is always free of the objects. Like the ocean and the wave are dependent on water to exist, but water is always free of the ocean and the wave.

Hannah: ...but ego death... supposedly the only death... isn't pleasant...

Sundari: There is no need for the ego to die; it simply needs to be understood for what it is through self-knowledge. This means that your conditioning or what programmes are running the Hannah-person are brought into the light of self-knowledge and dissolved in it. The ego is not the problem. Identification with the ego is the problem. The ego is not real, it is simply a fear thought.

Hannah: And even though all genuine teachers say there is no death... and some glimpses may indicate that is true... is that really proof? Jesus said it... but where is Jesus... LOL... I know... that is the mind/ego asking.

Sundari: Death of what? Yes it is the ego speaking, the one identified with being Hannah. The body dies but are you your body? Does your body know you? NO, the body is inert; it does not know you; it is known to you. It seems to be alive because consciousness or awareness pervades every atom. Remove consciousness and the body is six-foot under. It is no more than a counter across which experience is transacted, value neutral. All objects can be thus negated – except for awareness – which is the only constant and cannot be negated. As for wanting proof – if you had to cease to exist when the body dies you would have to be there to know that you ceased to exist, not so? Otherwise, how could you prove that you ceased to exist? Awareness is there to observe the apparent death of the body.

So no, there is no such thing as proof that you do or do not die. When you understand the true nature of reality you do not need proof because your understanding is based on the irrefutable logic of awareness. When ignorance of your true nature has been removed by self-knowledge, you have the unshakeable knowledge that you are unborn and you never die.

Hannah: Only the Library of Congress would lend James' book... so I shall see which one will get *How to Achieve Enlightenment* for me... it is interesting to see which authors are valued... by seeing which libraries REFUSE to lend... seems books by certain authors are not lent... Ramana-related... too many have been stolen!!! Once I had to stay in the library to read a book that came from another state! What is fascinating to me is to see that a library in Kentucky will have valuable books on enlightenment... yet universities near me do not! Go figure. ☺

Sundari: If you are interested in liberation and not in reading interesting stories about it, I advise you to go to our website *ShiningWorld.com* and read the e-satsang pages. There are thousands of pages of high-voltage Vedanta available for free, written in the form of questions and answers which cover every topic and then some.

Hannah: We are having another blinding snow storm today... no matter... James will keep me company all day.

~ Much love, Hannah

PS: I wish I had total recall so I could quote some of James' descriptions to a few friends... laughing is important to me... physical pain is my constant companion... and laughter is the best medicine.

Thanks again for our kindness.

Sundari: I wish you well, Hannah, and I am glad for you that you have found some solace in James' book.

~ With love, Sundari