

Self-Knowledge Creates Compassion

Ram (James Swartz)

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Seeker: Hi, James. For my fortieth birthday I decided to treat myself by going on a Zen meditation retreat. I figured since I have nothing to do I might as well have fun, and since I enjoy meditation it might be useful to go and study with different teachers.

I had one interesting experience that I thought I would share. One day when I was meditating it felt like the shell surrounding me had finally dissolved. There was no separation between me (awareness) and the outside world. I was connected to the whole world around me. There was no inner or outer, no spiritual or worldly life. There was just Existence.

I have also become very sensitive to the suffering of others, but I am also more compassionate because I am so sensitive to people's suffering. I also realized that you can't get one without the other. I also realized that it is impossible to arrange the circumstances of your life to avoid pain and suffering. Just realizing this truth was freeing for me personally.

James: Nice experiential confirmation of non-duality! Seems the knowledge is doing the work – non-dual love is *moksa*. Good for you. I'll have a new book out, *The Yoga of Love*. It's at the website. I think you will enjoy it.

~ Love, James