

# The Fullness and the Emptiness

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**Mary:** When I heard your health is not so optimum at the moment I thought, no more procrastinating: write! You are in my thought and heart, and I wish you rest and healing for your body so it can bounce back again.

**Ramji:** Ah, yes – the *guru* is mortal, got to get my *moksa* now! I remember the feeling well. My *guru* had a bad physical heart, and the knowledge that he might croak any day certainly fanned the flames of my desire for freedom. I am feeling fine now that I have a stent. This is a beautiful letter. I made a few comments here and there.

**Mary:** I really want to thank you for the great resource of your website and the *YouTube* videos. They have kept me on course in a great way. My favourite *YouTube* video is *Do It and Suffer*. I like the straightforwardness and the humour. I have not found many people with whom I can talk Vedanta. This video helps to clear things for a few close friends who asked what I am up to.

Such a long time and many things have passed since I wrote to you in March. I meant to write sooner of course, especially after you responded to my last mail. I was elated and so grateful. Not only with the response but simply because you responded. It felt like you can really be a teacher for me and I can share things with you. In my mind I already have many times, and this has been useful by itself. I am aware that you are very busy and I do not want to ask questions if there is a chance I can work it out myself by sitting quietly and following the enquiry. You have given me the method. I also know that my mind can get fuzzy, and sometimes it is good to bounce things back and forth as to not to fall into more illusions.

Coming back from India, I thought I pretty well “got it.” I felt like a cloth that had been steeped many times in a dye bath. I was dripping on the washing line and not sure what colour I would eventually become when drying. I see now that the knowledge is not yet firm in me. The sun has bleached me a little in the last months. My relationship broke down, and I was busier than I really wanted to, and now I feel it would be good to get back into the energy for a bit and have another dip in the dye, so would like to join you in Malaga this October, if I may. I will write to Sundari.

**Ramji:** Please come, Mary. The more you expose your mind to Vedanta the faster you grow spiritually as the knowledge firms up.

**Mary:** Relationships are pretty good mirrors, aren't they? Even if it does not feel like that, I know the other is just a thought in me, awareness, but this is exactly what made me confused. I was in a relationship with someone who was a Buddhist monk in the Zen tradition years ago. When in your *satsangs* I often thought, “This is what Carl (my partner) is doing or living.” My expectation was that we could connect in awareness when I returned and he would understand what had happened for me in India.

**Ramji:** Relationships with this kind of expectation are good mirrors if they reveal your illusions. You cannot “connect in awareness” because you are already connected in awareness. He is awareness and you are awareness, and all that is required is to realize that it is the awareness that you love and not the person. You make a big problem when you think dualistically. You have four factors to manage instead of two: you have you and your awareness and your partner and his awareness instead of just you and awareness.

Relationships may be mirrors but Vedanta is the best mirror because it continually reveals your self. Your relationship is always only with yourself even if there is an apparent other person in your environment. For relationships to succeed they should be conducted with the *karma yoga* understanding. Furthermore, people who do not understand non-duality, as is the case with most Buddhists, do not make good relationship material for those of us with non-dual vision because Buddhism is essentially *yoga*, which is a dualistic approach to life. The operative word in your statement is “connect.” It is an action word that indicates the desire for a particular kind of experience, i.e. the “relationship” experience.

**Mary:** When I came back to Manchester I felt a bit between the worlds. I could not settle back in. I was disinterested in most things. It was not necessarily bad but I needed some connection with people that matter to me. I needed that because when my beloved husband died, now fifteen years ago, I found myself in this world, which appeared to be a film. This was detachment to such an extent that this *maya* world seemed hell. I never want to get back to that state. I lost all sense and knowledge of who I was. My understanding from Vedanta is that I am whole and complete. This *maya* world is a reflection of awareness, and whilst in itself not whole and complete, it reflects wholeness. I am not trying to detach myself and walk in a film, I am just seeing this world for what it is in the knowledge that reality is whole and complete, non-dual awareness.

**Ramji:** Good for you. This is the correct understanding. You have a problem with *maya* if you think that it is supposed to fulfill you. It can't because it is not real. It just reflects the wholeness and beauty of you.

**Mary:** Now, being with Carl I hit the opposite of where I was coming from. He got more and more into emptiness, and I kept focusing on fullness. Now, maybe on some level this is the same. I know that the Buddhists understand about emptying the mind, which leads to a *sattvic* lifestyle but this does not necessarily make the leap to “I am awareness,” which to me includes everything as part of the whole.

**Ramji:** Buddhists know all about the emptiness but they miss the most important factor: the knower of the “emptiness.” All they have to do is turn the mind back and look to the knower, and the emptiness becomes a fullness. Buddhism is good to get a *sattvic* lifestyle but it tends to encourage false *viragya*, dispassion. See the duality and ignorance in their thinking!

**Mary:** My trigger here is that I know I can do with a quieter and less full lifestyle, and am improving in that department. I offer it up to *Isvara*, and in the meantime nourish the idea of more simplicity and trust the *karma* will work its way out in time. However... withdrawing from the world

does not seem necessary, and I question its desirability.

**Ramji:** You cannot withdraw from the world. The world is only a thought in your mind. As long as you think you are “in” the world you will suffer. The world is “in” you, meaning a “thought-object” in awareness. As an object you can treat it any way you like. You should see it as yourself and love it as it is. You should act in it knowing that you are not of it.

**Mary:** The emptiness I see has a flavour of denial in it, an unwillingness to engage, an indifference. Seeing the world for what it is and not getting caught up in but living it as it presents itself seems to me more truthful.

**Ramji:** Yes, this is correct. The Buddhists stubbornly cling to the ego-self as if it is the only self, as if enlightenment was some kind of experience for that limited self. So they are forced to blame the world for their problems. This is why they try to detach from it. The world is not a problem when you understand its nature.

**Mary:** I am practising dropping the stories about the world and events but I value discussion, questions and communication, with and without words. Michael and I exchanged several text messages, he signing off with “love and emptiness” and me with “love in fullness.” This sums it up for me. I aim to live love in the fullness, meaning the Oneness. “Love” I see here as being the bridge between awareness and form. Is my thinking right?

**Ramji:** Your thinking is absolutely correct!

**Mary:** I am reminded of the name of your website and really see how wonderfully accurate it is: ShiningWorld! When I know I am awareness and live from that place everything in this world is shining! How marvellous! I get glimpses of that now and then and that is where I want to be. And I know I already am.

**Ramji:** Yes, indeed. You shine and the world shines after you.

**Mary:** I have a second train of thought I would like to pass by you. I understand that it is helpful if I do not lose myself into any thing. I need to recognise when I identify with some-thing and remember who I really am: the self. Is the *jiva* identifying with the self instead of the objects here?

**Ramji:** Yes. This is self-inquiry.

**Mary:** It seems so. It is the *jiva* that needs to remember and have the knowledge, yes? Can I, my *jiva*, expect to gradually remember more and more, to apply the knowledge and identify with the self till it knows itself to be the self, and furthermore, to shift completely into the self and live from that perspective?

**Ramji:** Yes, indeed. We call it “firm” knowledge. Every time you catch it thinking that something is missing or that it is incomplete, assert the opposite: “I am whole and complete. I need nothing. I am free.” Slowly that thought of lack and smallness disappears.

**Mary:** My gratitude for reading all this and possibly shedding some light on my thinking is already with you (and whoever you decide to pass this on to, which I can understand too).

~ With love, Mary