

# The Truth Is Very Simple

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Vijay:** Dear Ram, it is only recently that I have discovered your website and have been reading the *satsangs*, blogs and articles daily with great interest. What you say makes perfect sense. The Vedantic knowledge practiced for centuries peels away all layers of obscurity and reveals the truth of who and what we are: limitless awareness.

My story is not exceptional. Seeing what has guided me through the decades, I can acknowledge the truth of Vedanta, as it has been working on me and in me all my life. It is not necessary to explicitly study it.

When the person does not understand the self, he or she does not know that it is making decisions anyway, zooming in and on some things rather than others, distilling and lifting out the meaning and wisdom of certain words. Only in hindsight when it has ceased to believe that it is a person does it see that one's life makes perfect sense.

What I actually want to say is that the self influences everything, attracting only those things that are necessary to come to the final Understanding, even if one is not officially studying Vedanta.

Since I was quite young there were numerous experiences during which I disappeared when I was in nature and the sky became suddenly vast. In late puberty these experiences disappeared, but reappeared at the age of twenty-one.

Sometimes when I was walking in the forest there was the experience that nobody was walking. Or when I was sitting on a moving bus I experienced the bus moving in me. The vastness, it was always there.

I never talked about it with anyone and assumed that others had similar experiences. At the same time I pursued spiritual practices according to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Now I can see the huge obstacles they have created by coming up with all kinds of concepts: "supramental," "descent of the Overmind," etc., etc., saying all the time how difficult it is.

But somehow at that time it made perfect sense and somehow there was the ability to distill out things needed to make the mind/body ready: for instance, by practicing *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga* and offering all one's actions to *Bhagavan*. Or, for example, I took the idea from Aurobindo's writing that I am not the body, the vital, the mind, and I repeated it over and over for years, especially when the *vasanas* were making the emotions active. All this helped to loosen the knots of identification with the person.

The strange thing is that all these years there has been an attraction to read the books of J. Krishnamurti, U.G. Krishnamurti, Ramesh Balsekar and Nisargadatta. Mostly it was just a curiosity, as there never was a real desire for awakening or enlightenment.

Especially over the last years there was often a lot peace, happiness without reason and contentment, so there was no suffering to send me seeking for solace. Also, it was because my mind was pretty *tamasic* and would not make an effort to understand the abstract concepts of

Advaita.

The penny never dropped. I did not realize that the oneness experiences I had were pointing to what the scripture was talking about. It was also due to the concept that enlightenment only happens to special holy people, and I knew how ordinary and unholy I was, so it never crossed my mind.

About six years ago there was an urge to sharpen the mind and to get out of this lazy attitude. So there was the inclination towards more thinking, reading difficult books, Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, among others, mental computer games, learning accounts, etc. to get this lazy fellow going. I did not know why. It was just an urge.

And then there was a year away from the *ashram* in my native place in the Himalayan foothills, a full year without the overbearing influence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's teaching. At the same time I discovered the internet and all kinds of non-duality websites, and then somehow it slowly dawned on me that whatever these people, who were not holy or special, were talking about was known by them.

I saw that during those periods of my life when the person was not there that this was what these teachers were pointing to. Of course one does not believe this at first. One thinks that it cannot be so simple, so obvious. My mind could not accept this, so I went to a local *mahatma* and he confirmed that this is so.

Since then there is an unfolding, a seeing, that constantly again and again confirms that the person has no reality, The Truth, the self, is featureless, limitless.

My question to you: Is there a place in your two-month course in Tiruvannamalai this year or otherwise next year to catch up on knowledge which has been lacking and might still be impeding the full unfolding? Does this make sense?

~ With lots of appreciation for your passion to share, Vijay

**James:** Dear Vijay, thank you for sharing your story. You may not think of yourself as holy, but it is with a "wholly" eye that you understand the truth. I enjoyed it very much. It is an important document that reveals the truth in a very powerful, straightforward way.

It was particularly interesting to me because I know Aurobindo's teaching – I spent many, many months over the years in the old days in *ashram* guest houses near the beach reading Aurobindo. The criticism you make is right on. You can see the truth shining there, but it is obscured by so many big concepts, so much pretentious spiritual drama and messianic world-saving. And when it is mixed up with the Mother's occultish tendencies, it is not very helpful. The truth is very simple. One small text by Shankara, *Drk-Drksa Viveka, The Discrimination between the Seer and the Seen*, is worth more than all of Aurobindo and the Mother put together – if you are ready. This is not to say, as you mention, that there is not some value his teachings because of the *karma yoga* attitude and the *bhakti*, as it sets the stage for understanding. But you come away thinking how extraordinary and heroic and romantic the quest is – when it is actually quite ordinary. I think Aurobindo had a rather serious case of enlightenment sickness, that he thought he had realized the truth when in fact he was the truth. The person, the experiencing entity, didn't go away with his epiphany. It always amused me when he spoke arrogantly of "my *yoga*" as if he

invented a new *yoga*. There were a few ideas that made a contribution, but basically he was outside the tradition. It is often the case that *yogis* have big egos. They believe they have attained something special when in fact they do not realize that what they think they have attained they have had all along. He had some epiphanies and out of that he made up a huge story. I do not know how attached to the *ashram* you are and I do not want to offend you but, to be honest, if there was something truly spiritual there, the *ashram* would have a completely different attitude. It would be welcoming and open and loving instead of conceited cultish and officious.

The short answer to your question is yes. You are at the end of your spiritual journey.

In effect there is nothing more that you need to do except let things unfold. However, you can hasten the end by hearing the Vedanta. It is clear and direct and resolves even the subtlest doubts. Vedanta only becomes known to you when you are truly ready for freedom. It comes to you. It seems the self prompted you to write and me to answer in the affirmative, so you are welcome.

~ *Om* and *prem*, James