

# Two Definitions of Self-Realisation

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**Robert:** Hello. I came across your website some time ago. I have read a lot of the testimonials and have a personal experience that I can add for reference if someone is interested. I will also end with a question that maybe you can answer. I will leave it up to you if you post my comment for the benefit of others or not.

I finally became SELF-realized per Carl Jung's process of individuation in the fall of 2012. I spent 12 years going through the process, four years of which I backpacked around the world studying psychology, and can only describe it as being a roller coaster of emotion. It was extremely difficult and overpowering at times, and very exhilarating and life-enriching at other times. I guess the thing that stands out for me now is that after putting in all of the time and effort in order to push myself along through the process I expected to come across a more satisfying existence. It seems the reward for my effort has been to find myself in a world (I live in Canada), where I am the minority, by extreme measures. Now that I have implemented my own evil into my life, I find it very hard not to see it in others. At first I felt an overwhelming urge to help the ignorant ones with their life issues, as seeing the source of their pain has become quite simple for me. But it has since become clear to me that ignorance is very much a favourable choice for most, and they consider my efforts to be an insult. I have learnt to hold back on my attempts as I have found that I can't beat a person's defences with honesty. The hard part has been watching the people I care about needlessly suffer, simply because they have bought into the idea that ignorance truly is bliss, and they have really done that without knowing that they have actually made that choice. Knowing that is truly frustrating.

Nowadays, I find it hard to live in a society that is fundamentally based upon ego ideals. As a result of my transformation I am not an egotistical person, but living in this society I feel the need to involve myself in ego games and to come down to that level just to simply have a normal life. At first I resisted doing that, as getting over ego required me to hate ego and everything about ego for a certain period of time. I certainly found myself to be alienated from my environment as a result of that stance and attitude. I have since relaxed my attitude in that regard, and do have a respect for the role ego plays in our lives as far as my persona goes, but my true feelings are always present just below the surface.

I find it sad to know the things I know, and to have to accept that there is nothing I can directly do about those things. For me, I never got to choose ignorance as a path. I was born into this world with a very strong connection to the unconscious, as I have had premonitory dreams since the earliest age I can remember, four years old. I set out to understand these things in my early twenties, not knowing it would take until my mid-thirties to finally achieve that understanding or knowing what that process would require or lead to, for that matter.

I truly find being SELF released a lonely existence. It's a life I am unsure of. I truly believe SELF-realized people, although being the extreme minority these days, are in fact at the forefront of evolution. And its a cool thing to believe I am a part of that unique group at this time. It's also a wonderful thing to have a genuine faith in life and to know my purpose, even though it causes me some undesirable suffering at times. But being unable to connect with common people is a price I

am unsure I would have agreed to pay had known before I started this journey what was the cost. I can't claim to have a great life, or even a good life... happiness is for me has occurred in the occasional short burst, and the same can be said for sorrow. For me, it just is what it is... I have been forced to accept my existence for what it is. As I stated, I never exactly got to choose my path, it really chose me when I started experiencing those dreams as a child, which simply happened naturally.

I am unsure where things go from here. I am aware of the threats as well as the possibilities for the future of mankind. I would be lying if I didn't confess that I believe things get much worse before they get better. I don't know if things will change much in my lifetime, a big part of me hopes that they don't... but only time will tell. I don't mean to come across as a negative person, as I'm not... but knowing what I know has forced me to accept reality in this fashion. In a nutshell, I find that the best way to describe what it is to be SELF-realized... is to be a realist.

Does this example, explanation of my experience, closely mirror all of the others you have encountered or is there more somewhere/somewhat?

~ Cheers, Robert

**Sundari:** Hello, Robert. Reading your email, it seems pretty clear to me that your understanding of what being self-realised means and what Vedanta teaches are two different things. You had an experience called self-realisation and like all experiences it ended, because it took place in time. Unless the knowledge "I am awareness and not the person I think I am" is extracted from the experience and assimilated, you are not self-realised according to Vedanta's definition. This is the fundamental difference between Vedanta and all other paths. Vedanta says that only knowledge, not experience, will set you free. Freedom is freedom from the person you think you are, not for the person. Because reality is non-dual awareness and you are awareness, you do not need a special experience of the self. You are always experiencing the self.

Self-realisation manifests in Robert as love and compassion for everyone. That love means understanding that the world is the way it is because of ignorance of the self. Suffering has a purpose, as it spurs people on to inquire into the nature of the self. Instead of getting frustrated that these people can't see what you can see, you need to love them more and not try to change them. Why do you think it is your duty to enlighten the world? What kind of psychology is operating in you that causes you to take up a job that nobody in the history of the human race has ever been able to accomplish? Enlightenment is seeing how perfect the world is in all its imperfection.

Vedanta is not a spiritual path, a philosophy or a religion. It is the time-tested knowledge that underpins all other paths. It is about you, awareness, not you, Robert. It teaches you as the person, who is really the self under the spell of ignorance, what your true nature is by removing your ignorance through self-knowledge so that as the self you can live free of the person you think you are. This means that as the self no longer under the spell of ignorance, Robert, lives without suffering "in the world," knowing that the world is in you. The world appears as an object in you, awareness. If you knew that the world is unreal, you would not be trying so hard to change it.

Vedanta is a valid, complete means of knowledge that offers you the tools with which to undertake self-inquiry into the nature of reality. It unfolds the teachings with a very precise and

time-tested methodology. If you are qualified and your desire for freedom (*moksa*) is strong enough, self-knowledge will set you free.

Self-realisation means that you have discriminated the self, or consciousness/awareness, from the objects appearing in you. You will know without a shadow of a doubt that although all the objects (including the person called Robert with all his thoughts and feelings) are made up of awareness, nonetheless they exist in a different order of reality, called the apparently real. This is because although all objects have an apparent existence, they are not real because they are not always present and they are always changing. Only awareness – you – are always present and never change. You, the self, are like ocean, or water/H<sub>2</sub>O, and the objects are like the waves that arise out of you. The ocean is always free of the wave, but the wave does not exist without water or the ocean.

Having self-knowledge, you will look upon all objects, Robert and all beings, animate or inanimate, as arising out of you, awareness. You would not see anything but yourself because that is all there is; awareness is the one principle. There are not two principles in reality although it seems as if there are. You would therefore clearly not see evil in anything or you would be seeing evil in yourself. You would also not see that there is anything you need to do to make the world a better place, because you are not the doer and because there is nothing wrong with you or the world. I would love to know where you got the mandate to enlighten the world. ☺ Your frustration with the world is a frustration with yourself, so by Vedanta's definition you are not self-realised since you are not happy with yourself. The desire to help is very difficult and many self-proclaimed self-realised people fall into this trap; it is an insidious form of duality that very few come to terms with.

If you were really self-realised, you would see all so called "others" as yourself and would not see the need to push your views onto them. You would know that they are the self under the spell of ignorance and when the time is ripe for them to have the ignorance of their true nature removed, self-knowledge will unfold for them. Vedanta comes to those who are ready and qualified, not before. It is not up to Robert, it is up to *Isvara*, the macrocosmic mind.

To be fully self-realised, self-knowledge has to negate the doer, the one who wants things to be different, and render your binding *vasanas* unbinding. *Vasanas* are deep-rooted tendencies that cause agitation and suffering, e.g. your tendency to want the world to be different. To understand that you are not the doer is to fully assimilate the knowledge that as a person (*jiva*) you have only an apparent existence in an apparent reality.

Who do you think created all the archetypes and the many types of people who make up the world? Who makes things happen? It is definitely not Robert. Only God (*Isvara*) is in control of the world, the apparent reality. No person, self-realised or not, is in charge of the results of his or her actions nor what happens in the world. Even very powerful people like Christ and Buddha did not change the world. It is just the same as always, maybe worse. God/*Isvara* is the giver of the results of the actions. This is a lawful universe, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding; it is a universe that runs on very clear and intelligently-designed principles. Things are unfolding as they should. It is all perfect as it is, all of the time. You are angry and depressed because you fail to appreciate this fact.

You want the world to be different because you want to be different, and it is this desire to be different that is the problem. You have a subconscious belief that something is wrong with

Robert. What you need to see is that the world is just code for “myself.” You are suffering because you are not getting what you want, and you do not see that your wants are an unconscious set-up that keeps your suffering alive.

As a self-realised, free person you will still have likes and dislikes, or wants, but they will not be binding. You will not know everything but you will understand that because there is only one self, the essence of everything is you, awareness. There is only one person appearing as many. Reality is non-dual, and non-comprehension of this is what causes all the suffering. This does not mean that duality disappears once you have negated it; it continues but it is known for what it is: a superimposition on reality, like the mirage on the desert floor. One still sees it even though it is known not to be real.

As a self-realised person who has negated the doer, you will no longer have existential suffering because you will not want things to be different and you will know that you are not in control of anything, not even “your” own thoughts and feelings. However, as you want a peaceful mind and to live without agitation and suffering, you will follow *dharma* because that is what gives you peace of mind. So you will monitor your thoughts and feelings very carefully in the light of self-knowledge and take actions that are in harmony with your nature and with *Isvara*.

What you really need is to rekindle your desire for self-knowledge. You would not be reading the material at ShingingWorld if this was not the case. You have accepted the idea of self-realisation according to your study of Jung. Jung’s idea of individuation is not the realisation of the natural separation of the self from objects that Vedanta reveals. Jung takes the apparent person to be the self and wants him or her to individuate, i.e. stand on his or her own two feet. Separating yourself from other people, like family and friends, is a qualification for self-realisation but it is not self-realisation. Self-realisation is individuating awareness from Robert.

Jung did not have a teaching. People tried to make a teaching out of his research, but he did not know the self at all. All Jung really knew was that there was a causal body – which he got from Freud – and that it had a huge impact on the human psyche, which is true. Jungian psychology is not actually a path. There is a well-known Vedanta teacher, Carol Whitfield, who successfully moved from Jungian psychology to Vedanta and who teaches in the Bay area of San Francisco. I recommend that you send this email to her and see what she has to say. You will find her contact details if you google her name.

Understanding that your true nature is awareness, or the self, is the easy part. To actualise that in the apparent reality is where the “work” comes in. To do this, one has to understand what the apparent reality is and what the components are that make up the environment, meaning the *dharma* field, which includes you as the apparent person, or individual.

You may have individuated according to Jung, but the next step is to integrate yourself back into the world in a harmonious way once you have individuated yourself from Robert.

Vedanta is not just about realising who you are. It is about understanding what that means and how to use the tools that it offers to work on yourself. This knowledge should be taught or you can almost be certain that the knowledge will be interpreted by the *vasanas*, your conditioning, which is not helpful. The ego will convince you that you can do it alone, that you have got it.

Jung only had a partial understanding of *Isvara*, the archetypes, and he certainly did not understand how his idea of the self, which he saw as an archetype, relates to awareness. If you

have come to Vedanta and to ShiningWorld absolutely certain that you know it all and to corroborate your own views, you have come to the right place for the “wrong” reasons. We cannot corroborate your views because they are not in harmony with the teachings, but we can show you where ignorance of your true nature still exists so that you can be free of Robert and put an end to Robert’s suffering.

Your life will not miraculously change when you know who you are, but whatever it is will be fine with you because you will know that you are the knower of Robert’s life and there is nothing wrong with Robert, his life or the world. You will make certain changes to lifestyle and attitude if they are necessary for peace of mind, but not because you find fault with Robert or the world. The idea that the world should be different is not a helpful attitude and I think it is a huge impediment to your happiness. If you can see through it, you will be well on your way to self-realisation.

When you know who you are you will love Robert unconditionally. You will know that you are the fullness who knows that all objects are empty, they are simply inert reflections of you. Only you, the self, awareness, are always full. You are the source of the fullness, the joy.

If you would like to engage in a discussion about this, I would be very happy to offer my service. However, I insist that you read James’ book *How to Attain Enlightenment* very slowly and carefully first. Start at the beginning, sign on with the logic and don’t skip ahead. Put what you think you know aside for the time being and see if Vedanta makes sense to you. You need to come to Vedanta with an open mind. You will not find a better teaching nor will you find a better teacher than James. The e-*satsangs* at the website offer a wealth of knowledge on every topic you could think of. It is also extremely beneficial to watch as many of the video teachings as you can.

~ *Namaste*, Sundari