

What Does Non-Doership Feel Like?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Martyn: Hi, Ram, my name is Martyn Thompson James and I live in London. I very much hope your day goes well for you, my friend!

I have just bought your book *How to Attain Enlightenment* and I am loving reading your words of wisdom. I have also watched your YouTube interviews and have read your criticisms of Neo-Vedanta on the internet – all of which I have enjoyed, and I guess I have to agree with.

I thoroughly appreciate your point that “knowledge” equating to understanding is an essential part of undoing the ego, or “doer,” in this (non-existent?) journey to the self and I am attempting to take your advice and assimilate this knowledge on my path.

I hope you don't mind me writing to you, but I don't have a teacher (a point which you stressed as being rather important) and I have become a little stuck with Chapter VII, on “Inquiry into Karma and Dharma,” specifically pages 108 and 109. I found the first 100 pages completely fluid and unproblematic – like reading the truth – but I am now at a point where some confusion has set in.

Are you saying that there can be no “doer” because there are so many (five) different factors required to produce *karma*, the ego being only one of these necessary factors, and as the self is (of course) undivided, this therefore cannot be the case?

James: Yes, indeed. If you do inquiry into the person you think is doing, you will find that doing happens when awareness shines on the objects appearing in it. It takes all the factors for anything to happen. There is nothing personal about it. It seems like you are the doer because you take your body-mind to be the self.

If you want to personalize it, you can think of your conditioning as the doer. But when you think about your conditioning you cannot really take responsibility for it, because it happened because you were unconscious. So “society” is actually the doer, the cause of action. But then it is not “your” conditioning. In fact everyone is basically conditioned to desire and fear the same things, so how personal is it?

Martyn: From my own self-enquiry – meditating on who is having these thoughts and who is writing this email – I do understand that chasing my self back in this way reveals there to be no one to be at the other end of the phone, but I am finding it harder to convert knowledge into an understanding that leads me to the same place in terms of “feeling” it.

James: I understand what you are saying, but what exactly do you suppose it “feels” like? There is no “feeler” either, the “feeler” just being an emotional, experiential way of formulating the idea of doership. To be hardcore about it, it feels like knowing. In any case I will try to express it experientially. You, the doer, feels liberated, free of the need to act. Not being the doer does not mean that you are incapable of action, only that you always have the option not to do what your

conditioning demands. Life becomes effortless once you have seen that you are not the doer. It takes care of itself and you are not bothered.

Putting enlightenment in terms of non-doership is a negative way of saying that “I am whole and complete, ordinary, actionless awareness.” So what it actually feels like is bliss, not experiential “feel-good” bliss, but a rock-solid sense of self-confidence, authenticity and satisfaction. To say that you are not a doer is not to say that you are nothing. This is a problem that bedevils many in the spiritual world. It leaves them in a kind of void state, unable to pursue their lives properly. So the next step is to see the upside, the positive result of this knowledge. Being free of the burden of doership is a huge relief. You feel very relaxed, not just because you don’t have to act, but because you understand that you lack nothing, that you cannot lose anything.

Martyn: I’m sure you’re very busy and that you must receive many pesky emails asking you this or that, but if you did have a moment, I would be truly grateful for some advice.

I would also like to say “thank you” for your book – it has helped me hugely and I will push on with my studies regardless.

James: It is my pleasure, Martyn. I am glad that the book is helpful. It is true that I get many emails, but so far I have been able to answer them all, although the lag time increases from month to month. You can read the *satsangs* at my website too, as most of the basic questions are answered there in conversational format. There are many new ones to be found by clicking the link at the bottom of the home page.

~ Love, James

PS: I am doing a weekend seminar at Reigate, Surrey, on November 6 and 7. Check the website for details.