

Who Is the Giver? and Why You Should Give

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Mami: When I'm teaching meditation I speak little bit about Vedanta. My *swami* in India told me to start teaching Vedanta. I don't know if I'm understanding well or not, but I appreciate very much his suggestion. I'll keep making an effort to study it and see the truth. Also, I'm going to do a charity meditation event in three months on the full-moon day, then I'll use it for Indian children who need support when I go this October to India.

The first day of the event is coming soon! Now, no hesitation to perform charity although I was not sure for a long time, so I was asking questions about "helping the world" (maybe the word was wrong, maybe I should have said "*seva*") of you. I've heard Sri Ravi Shankar saying, "Reduce 'more and more' your needs so you can have 'more and more' for social service." So I was relieved because I was thinking I should reduce "more and more" for everything.

Thanks for your suggestion to learn art. I'm still searching which area of art will fit me... music or painting or singing... the art, something meditative, something to invoke the truth... I don't know much of this area, don't know how to start... where to find which fits me... if you have any suggestion, please tell me...

Nothing exists except Love, everything is modification of Love even if it doesn't look like it, knowing the Truth is seeing Love in everything, and I'm the Love...

I understand Vedanta like that at this moment (Is it correct? If any mistakes, please correct me... thank you). When people ask me to teach Vedanta, I want to teach Love, to be an expert on Love.

Neti, neti, negating everything except the self, I couldn't continue... (I feel as if dead, dry, cold, inert) but negating everything except Love (seeing in everything the essence is Love) is easier for me, and I feel happier, feel shining and loving to everything and everybody. Also, I feel people understand more... If it's wrong to think in this way, please teach me...

Please tell Ramji I love him, and convey the message of how I am when he is well. And tell him to please take enough rest and recover soon.

Sundari: I am happy to hear that you sound more settled and involved in your world in a positive way. We teach Vedanta best by living the truth of who we are, not necessarily by "helping people." If *Isvara* sends you the people who need to hear what you have to share, you will know it. There is no need to look for this, and it is better if one does not. Teaching must be your *svadharma* to be an effective teacher, especially for Vedanta. Most people are not cut out for teaching, and just because you study Vedanta does not mean that you should teach it. If you find that it is natural for you to share what you know, then let it unfold. At the same time you should not be afraid to express what you know.

There are many well-meaning people who feel the need to make changes in the world, and this is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is not necessarily a good thing either. Remember that, firstly, as the self you do not see anything wrong with the world, so it does not need fixing. And

secondly, it is not up to any one person to effect change in the world, it is up to *Isvara*, if *Isvara* wants it. Do whatever you do out of love and service, not out of a feeling of duty or obligation or to “help” anyone. It may not look like it, but *Isvara* is always taking care of all the needs of the total.

It is good to reduce what we think we need to live. Most people in the West have only gratuitous needs, what I call “luxury” needs. In this way Ravi Shankar is right. To give more is good too, but as with everything, the intention or motivation for the giving is what matters. Ravi Shankar is also wrong though; we should reduce the need for everything, including the need to “make a difference.” We discussed this at length in previous emails. Your nature is love, as you correctly say, so just be who you are, see the self shining in everyone and everything and let things flow naturally. People who come in contact with you will feel the love you are, and this will help them see their own light and love.

~ And all my love to you, Sundari

Mami: Dear Sundari, thank you for your reply. I do charity, but not because of obligation or “fixing” the world. For example, if you like somebody you may feel sometimes you feel like giving them a gift and enjoy the feeling of love with your friend. Just like that I enjoy giving gifts to society, to feel love in the relationship. Since childhood this has been my nature.

I’d like to ask one thing: James was saying we should give back to the society, or do *seva*. What did he mean at that time?

Teaching Vedanta: I don’t know if it’s my *svadharma* or not, but some of my *yoga* students want to know and my Indian *swami* of the Chinmaya Mission also asked me, so I’m speaking of it in my *yoga* class. I still don’t realise the truth, and don’t know if I’m a qualified teacher, but am responding to the call from them. That’s how that came about.

Thank you for your love. Have a nice day.

Sundari: Hello, Mami. With regards to the statement you refer to, like I have said to you before about other points you have brought up with reference to things James has said: you have to take things in the context of what he was saying at the time. Vedanta is full of apparent contradictions that all resolve in the light of self-knowledge. In the bigger picture, Vedanta neither encourages nor discourages doing good by any means, be it charity or anything else. If you can give without agenda, not because you want something back, but because it is your nature to do so, that is what true giving is all about, just like the flower gives of its beauty whether there is someone there to see it or not. The flower is not invested in its beauty and is unaware of giving its beauty. It gives because it cannot not give. The radiance of *Isvara* shines through the flower and it reflects the beauty of its true nature, awareness. Awareness is not invested in the flower, and shines through it because it cannot do otherwise, it is its nature to do so. Without awareness, there is no flower and no beauty. But awareness is free of the flower and its beauty. Love, or awareness, shines and illuminates all, regardless of the flower and its beauty, regardless of giving or not giving.

It is a question of motivation and intention. Ask yourself these questions and answer them truthfully: Do you give because you are looking for a meaning to your life? Do you give because you are you looking for recognition, because you need something or someone to validate you? Who is it that needs to give, who needs meaning and recognition? Do you see the recipients of

your giving as lacking because you are lacking? Or do you give because you see all as you, as awareness, and you shine your light because it is simply your nature do so?

Do you give because you feel guilty, because you have so much? Do you give because you cannot not give...?

There is no wrong or right here, it is a question of what produces limitlessness and what does not. With regards to sharing your knowledge – if people come to you who need to hear what you have to say, and you have something to say to them, that is *Isvara*. Do what brings true peace of mind, what reflects the truth about you as awareness, not what makes the *jiva* feel better about itself – or better than “others.”

~ Love, Sundari