

A Small Piece of the Puzzle

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Bob: Dear James, I have been interested in spirituality from a relatively young age (around 13, 14) and have read about and practiced many different kinds of things for the last 20 years, including Buddhism, Taoism, the more esoteric versions of Christianity, *yoga*, different kinds of meditations, Qigong, Neo-Vedanta, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Ramana, etc. Since April, 2012, I have been reading your books. I've read most of the ShiningWorld website, I've heard almost the whole Vedanta audio set except *Panchadasi*, I've been to a *satsang* once (*Aparokshanubhuti*) and followed webinars twice (*Bhagavad Gita* and *Vivekachoodamani*). I do feel I have a firm grasp of the teachings thanks to your generosity and my own effort. Vedanta is now for a good year and a half the only thing I am really interested in.

Most people around me would say it is far more than an interest... ha, ha! Every single day I am reading, thinking and listening about Vedanta, mainly through your website, but also Dennis Waite's. I also have all his books. It is such a passion, it is the most important thing in my life. And I do have a nice family, girlfriend, friends, job, etc. but self-realisation is simply the most important thing.

So now my question: Although I do feel I have a firm grasp of the teaching, understand it, live it and am a well-balanced person with a carefree happy life I do feel there is a small piece of the puzzle missing. Can you please help me? Your help will be greatly appreciated. And in the end I know I have all the qualifications and have absolute faith in Vedanta. I just want to make sure I am not deluding myself.

James: Why do you think you might be deluding yourself?

Bob: Because I see many people are deluding themselves in the spiritual world and also in the (Neo) Vedanta world but not seeing it themselves. Constantly saying "I am awareness" or "all is one" but not following *dharma* and going crazy when something really small happens. And then I think, am I also like this? I know that I am not but still, how can I know I am not deluding myself?

James: There may be a piece of the puzzle missing, but is there anything missing in you? If you tell me what you don't understand maybe I can help you. Vedanta is just saying that you are whole and complete, that nothing is missing. What do you feel is missing?

Bob: Vedanta is so powerful. It completely consumes me and the me in me. 😊 I am not sure what I am missing or if I am really missing something. I deeply know there is nothing missing in me. Perhaps I am still searching for some kind of experience that completely ends the search. But then I know experiences come and go and won't end the search. Experiences are just that, experiences.

In the end I think it has something to do with not feeling 100% confident that I am awareness. I know it and feel it almost all of the time but the confidence is not 100%

yet. I feel I also need the confidence as a protective layer (not sure how to phrase this) against the sceptics but in the end I am not really caring about scepticism. It is a little bit mixed. I am thinking out loud now but I think it also has something to do with wanting to be so confident that I can convince the sceptics or at least to help them also to understand Vedanta a little bit and probably also to be so confident that I trust in my own knowledge no matter what others say.

James: You are not deluded, Bob. You just have a confidence problem. It is clear from what you say in the paragraph above that you are looking at yourself through the eyes of others. This is a sign of insecurity. The only opinion that should matter to you is the opinion of Vedanta. If Vedanta confirms your view, game over. Forget other people. Forget enlightening others. Just live the fullness that you are and if someone asks why you are so happy tell them that it is because you know who you are and leave it at that. If they want to argue tell them to fuck off. If they are humble and courteous tell them it is because you are awareness, and when then ask how you know tell them about Vedanta. At any point if they question your knowledge tell them that you have no doubt about it, that they wouldn't understand, that they are not ready to understand, and keep it to yourself. It sounds to me as if your *jiva* is too eager to please others. Never argue or try to convince anyone. The greatest show of confidence is silence. Look knowingly at them, maybe with a touch of condescending pity, and keep your mouth shut. It does not matter if anybody else knows. This knowledge is for you.

If someone else is to be blessed with it *Isvara* will bless them. You are not *Isvara*. You are awareness. From your point of view everyone is you already.

Bob: You hit the nail on the head, James! Vedanta confirms my view and that is all that matters. And suddenly my doubts are completely gone. And it would be even not completely accurate to say the doubt is gone because you told me not to doubt, but the doubt is simply gone (by the grace of *Isvara*). And now there is simply a tear and a smile. From the bottom of my heart, thank you. Thank God for Vedanta. What need is there to say more? Thank you very much for your help and time again.

James: *Jai Isvara!* You are blessed, Bob.

Bob: I do feel blessed! Surely, if you have the qualifications and do the work enlightenment is very possible.

The scriptures are true. To me the burning desire (*mumukshutva*) is what really was driving me. But now the search is over by the grace of *Isvara*. And Ramji, it is time to really get deeper and deeper into Vedanta. 😊

Thank you, Ramji!