

Is a Teacher Necessary?

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2010-11-29

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1824>

Ram: This is from a Yahoo list which was recently started by one of Carol Whitfield's students. Carol Whitfield is a realized soul, a disciple of Swami Dayananda, who lives in Berkeley, California. I have edited the third paragraph a bit to make the meaning more clear.

Durga [Carol Whitfield]: *Namaste*, all. I'm going to jump in here for a moment without having had time to read all of the posts in this thread, but with some of those that I have read there seems to be at least one common theme, which is that one person cannot lead another person to enlightenment.

In my experience, this is not actually the case. Because I am studying within and familiar with the tradition of Advaita Vedanta, I can address this question from the position that tradition and from my own experience.

First of all, if Vedanta is properly taught there is a very clear, precise, time-tested methodology which takes the mind of the student from where he or she (and most people) generally consider themselves to be, a body/mind/sense organ individual, to the direct recognition that "I am non-dual awareness and therefore everything that is." The method uses several logical, experience-based teachings to point out that a person is not the body/mind/sense complex. And with that recognition it is over. That is enlightenment. It isn't an idea. It isn't a concept. It is a clear and direct seeing of what is actually true.

The methodology which Vedanta uses is too complex to try to explain in one post in an e-list, but I do know that it works although it takes, very often, years of dedication and listening to the teachings. But at a certain point, hey, what else have you got to do? What is more important? In my life there is nothing more important.

As for turning out thousands of people who are enlightened, I actually think that Swami Dayananda, my teacher's *guru*, probably does have hundreds of enlightened disciples, whom he's taught over the last 40 years. But then most of them just go on their way and live their lives or some become teachers, but mostly those who have become teachers are *swamis* and live in India, and because this is not an advertising tradition, we wouldn't know about that so much here.

No money is charged for these teachings. It isn't a career path nor it is a name-and-fame path. Consequently there may be some Westerners who really are qualified to teach but don't, because they have to make a living and have ordinary jobs and lives. I've met many such over the course of the last six years, and I think they would like to teach, but they also need to make a living, so they don't.

And not everyone who comes out of the tradition, even if they come out with self-knowledge and have been trained to teach, ends up being an effective teacher. There seems to be a certain kind of talent necessary for that to happen.

Also, because it takes a real dedication and stick-to-it-ness on the part of the student, I wonder how many really would undertake such a study, even if teachers were

available.

It is all very unlike the whole *satsang* and Neo thing. This is very different, and I've found that most people within the tradition of Advaita Vedanta, even Westerners, have never heard of the *satsang* movement or all of these new modern teachers. That kind of blew my mind at first.

As for a tradition being too traditional too study within, I don't find this to be the case. Who you are, what everything and everyone actually is, is not something which belongs to a tradition, but studying within a tradition can help a person to recognize that.

Studying within the tradition of Advaita Vedanta is certainly not for everyone, but for someone like me, who spent years and years in futility, listening to a wide variety of *satsang* and Western Advaita teachers and having very little comprehension of even what the word "*advaita*" actually meant at the end of that time, then coming in contact with a teaching which finally made it all so clear, all that I can say is that I have gratitude to this tradition more profound than a man saved from drowning.

I'll write more about this later on if I have the time, today or if not tomorrow, because there is a way to explain how the teaching tradition works, although I don't think I could directly show you in a forum such as this, but I might be able to give some examples of some of the "methods" Vedanta employs, if anyone is interested.

Some of them are very simple and basic, and I think the most effective one is to notice that while everything changes, including the body-mind which you (meaning your mind) have taken yourself to be, you (who you really are) actually never changes in any way at all (and never has). And that "you" which never changes is indeed the "self," which is why, when recognized, is realized as always having been who you are. But even that very simple method takes a long time to bear fruit, and when it does the game is nearly over.

~ *Pranams* to all, Durga