

Authentic Enlightenment Sickness

Ram (James Swartz)

2013-04-16

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/197>

Harry: Hi, James. I appreciate your reply. I hope you are well in whichever part of the world you currently abide. Just to update briefly, about six months have passed since I last messaged you, and I've been focused on standing as awareness – using self-inquiry to free myself from the remaining fear *vasanas*. Things are shifting. You're right, it takes time, but I can feel previously calcified blockages are starting to break down. I know if I stay with it one day the last drop of fear will dry up completely. I know myself as limitless, non-dual, whole, complete awareness but do not have the confidence in all situations. The knowledge is shakeable, brittle.

James: Slow and steady wins the race. Hang in there. Spiritual life is evolutionary, not revolutionary.

Harry: James, a few years I was involved with an American *guru* named XXX. Have you heard of her? I actually took *sannyas* vows and considered her my *guru* for about three years although I eventually left because something didn't feel right. Since I left many others have left her and some report she is overly authoritative. She certainly is direct and has that *Kali* energy – she considers herself a crazy-wisdom *guru*. I'm a little confused about whether she is authentic or not.

James: I watched enough of her video to see that she has an authentic case of enlightenment sickness. The egoism, the vanity, the pride is hard to miss.

Harry: I'm open to the possibility that my ego got its wrists slapped by her and couldn't stand the heat, but at the same time she didn't have very clear teachings in particular, and I guess I've always wondered if she has unresolved power issues.

James: I would say she has unresolved everything. She has some *shakti* and a lot of false confidence and precious little else that I could see. And it is not her business to bust your ego. If she was a proper teacher she would give you the tools to work on yourself.

Harry: Anyway, if you care peruse the videos and comment on whether you think she is an authentic (self-realized) *guru* I'd be most grateful of your opinion. I suppose the other possibility is that she is enlightened by doesn't have the means to teach adequately.

James: We don't really care if anyone is enlightened, Harry. In fact there are actually no enlightened people. Everyone is just the self. She definitely doesn't have a teaching. She is just talking about the self, using her (interpreted) experience as a teaching. I thought the crazy-wisdom thing had lost its cache but evidently it hasn't. It is always an excuse for people with aggressive egos to justify *adharmic* behavior

with fancy words. And ego busting? This is such a stupid idea it barely deserves mention. The buster convinces individuals with low self-esteem that his or her ego is not doing the busting – or that it is entitled to bust because he or she is enlightened. To be honest, Harry, I was immediately turned off by this person. I am not surprised that she has problems with her students. *Gurus* like this give enlightenment a bad name.

Harry: Many of her students were declared enlightened by her but subsequently fell from grace and became “unenlightened.” Is this a common occurrence?

James: Yes, indeed.

Harry: Perhaps the mark of a great teacher is quality and not quantity of students, by which I mean the amount of students that are truly convinced to their core in their identity as awareness. I wonder, is that something a teacher can ever be certain of?

James: Yes. But you are right. It is a quality issue. It is a *dharma* issue, not an enlightenment issue. Enlightenment is not a special status.

Harry: By the same token, I’m aware that you are very busy and may not be able to reply for a while, if at all. I just wanted to thank you again for the hard drive. I’m slowly getting through the videos and have nearly finished your book. It has cleared up so many subtle confusions that I wasn’t even aware I carried – the main one being the experience/identity confusion, which is a real fly trap for spiritual seekers. All this time I thought enlightenment was just around the corner, that I just needed a real good hit of *shakti* from a teacher. 😊

James: You get the essence of the spiritual path if you understand the knowledge/experience distinction, Harry. And your first paragraph shows that you are doing the work and it is bearing fruit. Steady as she goes.

Harry: I do consider you my teacher, James, even though I may never meet you. I feel very privileged to have come across the potent teachings of Vedanta in this lifetime. This is such a blessing and I want to honor it by remaining firm and steadfast on my path.

James: I am doing seminars in Europe now, and my wife and I have moved to Spain, so I will be around. I hope our paths cross in the not too distant future.

~ All the best, James