

Be My Teacher

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/212>

Mandy: Dear James, I have never had a teacher and would now really like to have you as my teacher. It sort of feels like there should be a formal request or something, so – please, will you be my teacher?

James: You need to tell me what it means to you when you think of me as your teacher. What obligations does it entail on my part? I am not for it or against it. I am just curious what it means to you. It seems you are benefiting from the teachings now, and since they are not my teachings but are Vedanta, it is probably best to think of Vedanta as your teacher. However, since you can't really "learn" Vedanta on your own, you need a teacher. So I will be your teacher unless there are a lot of requirements on my side. I am a very informal, lazy *guru* and I do not like to have any particular duties, but I am happy to reply to your emails. So keep up with your *sadhana* (spiritual practice) of reading and listening – be sure to get my book *How to Attain Enlightenment* and read it carefully and slowly, signing on to the logic at every stage – and you will be fine.

Mandy: I am coming to India to attend your retreats and would like to prepare myself by systematically reading through everything at the website and listening to all the audio stuff – and have come across the term "*sadhana*" and I don't really understand it. I have googled it, but lots of definitions just add to my confusion.

I have been practising Buddhist mindfulness for about twenty-five years and have a strong sense of the witness and realise that the self is not simply the witness.

James: Actually, the self is the non-experiencing witness, the one that knows Mandy, the experiencing witness. I have found that most of the Buddhists that come to me are pretty confused about the self and enlightenment. It's okay.

Mandy: I've also had the *vritti* thought thing (it was labelled by my mind as, "I am God," afterwards) along with lots of other stuff – but no context to put it in, so just dismissed it as simply another spiritual experience. So that is where I am at the moment.

~ Lots of love, Mandy

James: Okay. It will all become clear after you read my book and come to the India talks.