

Classic Non-Dual Experience

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Sarah: Dear James, I am sorry for not following your advice to read all your *satsangs* first. I have done nothing but read Advaita Vedanta texts, listened to Vedanta teachers speak and record *bhajans* and *mantras* for the last two months or so, including your texts. There is no particular question I have, but want to communicate the content of this experience which occurred many years ago on my 27th birthday and invite you to make comments.

A few biographical markers may be a good idea, only so that the contextual frame becomes more firmly outlined for clarity. Okay. So I left this teacher-lover-father of our children in Sweden and went to America after having lived with him for the past six years. What attracted me to him in the first place was his spiritual charisma, the feeling that he would be able to teach me a lot in every way and help me in my development. As time passed I wished I had not made this decision.

One night my suffering was so strong that all I wanted to do was to turn to stone. There was great mental anguish and emotional turmoil and I thought that I had never made a right decision all my life. Now it was too late for my development. God had spat me out of his mouth because I had failed to follow the spiritual path. So now there was nothing for me to do but give up, stop thinking about my spirituality and just live as if I was already dead until I would mercifully die when it was time.

This was the frame of mind I was in when my 34th birthday came along and I had invited a few friends over. Nobody knew how I really felt because they wouldn't understand anyway. As far as I was concerned there was no cure for this state except to become totally dispassionate about everything.

So they came. We sat in my bedroom, talking, and somebody had brought some grass. This guy said, "Since it is your birthday, you can have the first toke, it is very pure." So I said okay, got the joint, took a mouthful, closing my eyes. As I blew out the smoke, I opened my eyes.

But something totally unexpected happened. As the eyes opened, there was everything looking through my eyes, not me. I was gone. I have been stoned a few times before that, but this time it was different. Suddenly, in an instant, literally, it was as if I had vanished, together with everything that had ever been the cause of my problems. All the problems had vanished. I realised God had not spat me out of his mouth because I had missed the path but there never had been a time when I had not been on the path. I realised that indeed there was no path, that it had all been in my mind, a veritable nightmare that lasted all my life. Although everything around me had not changed, there was a change in perspective, and a change in WHO WAS SEEING. It was just the room and a few people talking. They seemed not to notice the change.

To describe the change: it was only the seeing, nothing else. The seeing seeing things, not me. I had never been there. What would normally have been interpreted as objects was really like a cinema screen, where individual objects are all linked together through the surface of the screen. There was no separation anywhere. At the same time, there was tremendous surprise, like, "Oh, so this is how it really is.

How could I have been so deluded?" But then the feeling of "I" was replaced by this impersonal seeing only, no person doing anything. And I realised that there is nobody. THERE IS NOBODY. And THERE IS NO "OUT THERE." As if the whole time I had been living, only to realize that what I had called life was nothing but a film, performed for nobody, performed by nobody, with nobody watching.

This is the best description I can give of it. It all takes place without anybody doing anything, like the moon shines without wondering whether people are there to watch it or not, and the flowers look lovely without anybody there to appreciate them.

So whether or not anybody is there, it goes on, and all that happened was that it came through the eyes, a totally impersonal experience. The night this occurred there was a deep humming sound from nowhere which went on indefinitely. The whole experience lasted three days. I read scriptures by the Buddha, Krishnamurti, Taoist writings, and for the first time there was deep understanding of the things said. Out of infinity, truth. Truth writing for Truth.

Dear James, I could have related this story to you when you came over here to Stockholm, but I did not wish to; it's a very personal (or rather, no, it's impersonal, but never mind) thing. It would be good if you could send me your comments on this. I shall continue reading your texts and translations; thank you for the work!

Sundari: Hello, Sarah, I am replying for James, as he is sick, although he has read it and given it the thumbs-up.

This a classic non-dual experience, backed by scripture. As with all experiences, it only has value inasmuch as the knowledge gained from it was assimilated by you. What is your understanding of this and what have you gained from it? Have you realised this impersonal consciousness as your true nature? Have you seen that the emptiness is also full, that although consciousness is impersonal, non-dual, partless and without qualities, it is also the fullness of everything?

~ Love, Sundari