

The Fantasy of Extraordinary Awareness

Ram (James Swartz)

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Jeff: Hi, James. Thanks to your pointer, I know what my next non-dual task is: finding out where the language in the many emails I sent to you does not square with the truth. This language represents my unconscious thinking patterns. For instance, I wrote: "There is still a doer doing the accepting. This may imply that as long as this doer is still there, one can not reach liberation, and I know that this is not true."

Only identification with it matters. This is the language I picked up from the Neos.

Recently, I had a difficult time at my job and then had to deal with the usual voice inside: "Why do I have to do this? Don't you just hate this shit? I do not want to work long hours and waste my energy and attention on this. I want to get away from it all." Identification with this voice does not feel very pleasant at all. This time there was so much space around these problems and this voice. I was it, but it did not bother me very much. Holy shit, I may actually start loving my whiny self! Unheard of. Actually, this job is a blessing in disguise. It kept me grounded and my life structured while going through all this Jewish neurosis and heavy drinking. Luckily, I have my father's work ethic. I kept showing up for work regardless of severity of hangovers.

James: Seeing the upside along with the downside is discrimination. Maybe you are starting to grow up.

Jeff: Suddenly I found out that my blood pressure goes through roof after being normal for years. I saw my doctor right away and got some pills for it. Regardless of whether it is a physiological or mental condition, I suspect it is just *Isvara's* way way of pointing out to me that I am due for some serious lifestyle change. I overeat, indulge in sweets, smoke, don't get enough exercise, watch too much Netflix and YouTube. The problem is that there is a lot identification with these activities, binding consciousness to them. It is going to take a lot of discrimination to dissolve it even a little.

After I left the kibbutz, I just hung onto life in quiet desperation. I was very suspicious of spirituality outside organized religion and did not have any spiritual knowledge. The teacher who started opening things for me was Wayne Dyer. At first glance, he would be considered a spiritual materialist, but he also presents very deep spiritual truths that start resonating independently with our true nature. There is an incredible wisdom in his teaching, unlimited wisdom of our true *guru, Isvara*, working through him.

I remember entering a spiritual bookstore for the first time and looking at these rows after rows of bookcases, thinking, "God, I have no clue what to look for," and he led me through it all so perfectly. One book led to another and another and another. Stopping drinking by the end of 2007 coincided with picking up a first non-dual book, *The Power of Now*. Vedanta is without any doubt a top-dog among spiritual teachings, but my experience shows me to fully appreciate roles played by all other members of the spiritual pack. Everybody plays an important role.

I see enlightenment like a catch-22. One needs to get qualified and do his *karma yoga* to lift awareness a little bit above one's patterns to start discriminating and one has to have enough spiritual awareness to even comprehend the importance of qualifications and *karma yoga*. It is like pushing a box into a tight spot. One has to push it very slowly and evenly to avoid jamming. My experience teaches me that asking for and opening to the guidance of *Isvara* is of absolute and fundamental importance.

James: Amen.

Jeff: I would not have any idea even where to begin and how to proceed without her Grace. Thank you so very much, *Isvara*. Since, as you said in a newsletter, *Isvara* likes to be worshiped, then I have a lot of worshiping to do.

It is hard for me to find words to express my gratitude to you for helping me to put all these memories to rest. For years I knew that I need to share them with someone and I did not know how. *Isvara* led me to you. From my perspective, you truly are one of her angels. I pray for all the best for you and your wife.

I wrote I fully understand that you did your share of answering people's emails and do not expect any, and I stick to my words. But just in case you feel a desire to point something to me, please know that any suggestions you may have will be more than appreciated.

Now I continue working on my *karma* for as long as *Isvara* deems it necessary, and work on lifestyle changes, continue reading and meditating on your books. I think I am ready to start downloading your video teachings. Until now I kept watching and rewatching your YouTube material. I need to keep discriminating. Perhaps you would not mind if I send you an occasional email? I hope you continue doing the retreats in Oregon. I would love to attend this coming year. It is only a short drive from Vancouver [Washington state].

James: Hi, Jeff, season's greetings! I don't think you need any advice. It seems to me that you know exactly what needs to be done. It sounds like there is a bit of *tamas* in your words, meaning that it seems that there is some part of you that is not completely enthusiastic about cleaning up your lifestyle, etc. But that is to be expected for a culturally-identified, quasi-alcoholic, somewhat self-pitying individual of a certain age. 😊 Yes, you should watch the videos religiously, maybe an hour a day, perhaps a half an hour to start and a half an hour of reading *The Essence of Enlightenment*. When you get to the end, read it again. I know you won't do it, but I recommend a media fast. If you do, cut down gradually and invest the time in your practice. Do everything in the *karma yoga* spirit. Love Jeff as he is. Put up an altar. Light a candle for the deity and burn an incense stick. Sit in front of it in meditation for fifteen minutes. Pray for the discipline to get your *sadhana* program off the ground. And when the "I am Jewish" thought comes up, change it into "I am whole and complete, ever-present, actionless, non-dual awareness." Finally, my new book *The Yoga of Love* is at the website. Read it. Thanks for the donations. They really help.

~ Love, James