

Desperate Beginner

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/275>

Denis: Dear Sundari, I am writing to you because I need help. Below is the correspondence between Tan, one of your ShiningWorld teachers, and me. I wrote it in 2009:

Hi, Tan. I want to thank you for your words. The truth rings on every page. I can relate to every page.

I do have a question. When finally the seeking stopped for you, you said that you now live in a state of joy and freedom. I do understand it was nothing that you did for this to happen. I also understand and know that this state... or let's say, enlightenment... is and has always been. My question is, do you feel this is the same for everyone, that when the seeking finally stops then you are finally at peace?

I know there is nothing I can do but to just to be with what is, but still, I feel I am missing my true home and I am not really in my element. I have been in this for over 20 years and like you been to way, way too many teachers and read way too many books. I really just want it all to stop and have peace without the feeling of being homesick anymore.

Now four years later Tan answered my email, and the text is below.

Tan: Dear Denis, if you still have a burning desire for happiness, freedom and peace take a look at Vedanta at *ShiningWorld.com*.

~ With love, Tan

Denis: I then emailed Tan to ask why he was answering me four years later, in August 2013. His answer is below:

Tan: Hi, Denis. I have been going through an email inbox which I have not been using for some time, and I browsed over your email. Your email four years ago was so honest about being fed up with the seeking, and my lack of being able to help you was apparent as well at that time. Here is why I wrote this email:

I am familiar with Jeff and was chatting with him before he got "famous."

He seems to be a nice guy who is slowly trying to create a meaningful teaching as he matures.

But being "enlightened" is (a) actually knowing who you are without a doubt, (b) having a good means for self-realization and (c) being a good teacher. These are three very different distinct things. They do not have to occur all at the same time, as far as I can tell Jeff could be (a) and (c), although I am not sure 100%. I think he lacks (b) and understands that, and will probably try to build something like this up over the years.

Vedanta is a proven means of self-knowledge. It has worked for thousands of

years for millions of people. It does not belong to anybody and has been contributed to by many sages through the millenia. It has worked for me. It does not belong to James Swartz or anybody else. And Vedanta is not really comparable with what many so-called "Advaita teachers" are communicating (Gangaji, Tony Parsons, Karl Renz – the list is endless).

If you still are seeking and want freedom with the same desire that you had years ago – I can only wholeheartedly recommend Vedanta. Your teacher does not have to be James if you do not resonate with him. Vedanta will set you free – not a particular person or teacher.

~ With love, Tan

Denis: So, Sundari, I want so badly for this ignorance to be removed so I can once and for all know totally and completely who I am. I have been suffering with this for many years. Having spent the last 10 years in the Neo-Advaita circles, I am no more closer to the truth of things as when I began my search.

I truly want to begin to studies with your husband James Swartz. Tan also recommends him. So where to begin? I was once a well-off person in a financial sense; however, after my mom became very ill I lost all my life savings. I am now going to be 60 and I work for only a few dollars a day to put food on the table. In other words, I am poor now. I so want to read James' book *How to Attain Enlightenment* but have not even the money to pay for the book. Can you find a way to send me a copy? It will mean much to me. I will pay you back for the book when I get some money together.

Okay, now for the question of where and how can I start to study Vedanta with James. I have wasted so many years. I do not want to die with this yearning on my mind. I want to begin my studies NOW. Please help me. Please find a way to get James' book *How to Attain Enlightenment* to me. I have access to some of James' videos. Please let me start my studies.

~ Much love, Denis

Sundari: Hello, Denis. We have mailed the book to you today. Don't worry about paying us. *Isvara* takes care of our getting and our keeping.

As for studying with James, there is no course because Vedanta is not something you can study. That is because the subject matter is you: removing the ignorance of your true nature as awareness. In order to have your ignorance removed, you need self-inquiry, a valid means of knowledge (Vedanta), a qualified teacher and you to be qualified.

Start by reading James' book very slowly and carefully; put what you think you know or believe aside, open your mind and sign on to the logic at every step. Try not to interpret what you read and do not skip ahead. Corroborate what you read with the e-satsangs at the ShiningWorld website. Every question that anyone could come up with has been asked and answered extensively there. The e-satangs at the ShiningWorld website are a gold mine of pure Vedanta. Watch the videos of James' teaching, go to *YouTube* and watch those as well.

If you get stuck, you can write to me or any of the excellent writers at ShiningWorld.

You have come to the right place; relax and know that you are on the Vedanta bus. Put the heavy luggage of seeking down and let Vedanta (which is another word for self-knowledge) do the work of removing your ignorance. Just keep exposing the mind to it and if it is more important to you than anything else, Vedanta will set you free of the notion that you are the limited identity that goes by the name of Denis.

We are here to serve you in any way we can.

~ *Namaste*, Sundari