

No Prison for the Self

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2016-09-17

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2918>

Sundari: The following *satsang* took place over the last year, mostly between myself and Wayne, an inquirer who had been writing to me for over two years before this exchange. Wayne is in prison in Ireland, and he writes letters to us which we transcribe, reply to and mail back to him. We use his real name, as he has no problem with transparency. Only the ego cares what other people think or know about it. He stands tall in the truth he is and his words reveal this. It shows clearly that even though the momentum of past actions will play out in the way it has to, it is always in our best interests with regards to our main purpose for being here, which is to realise the true nature of the self. Whether or not we are able to recognise and assimilate the meaning of our experience is the crucial issue. Although Wayne clearly had a lot of work to do regarding his *vasanas*, prison is and was the ideal place for him to do his *sadhana*. If you take the time to read the progression of emails, you will hear the self clearly speaking, and it is not in a prison of anyone's making. It is the voice of the self speaking, if not always totally free of all doubt, certainly in self-knowledge. Wayne is about to be released, and he is ready to live as the self "in the world," with a clean slate ahead.

(Wayne wrote to me through James' publisher, who forwarded his letter to us.)

November 2015

Wayne: Hello, James, my name is Wayne. I have been a student of Sundari for two years. Since spring 2013 we have been conversing via email. As you can see, James, I am in prison and unable to email. I am hoping that writing to you via your publisher is a way for your wife to receive my letter. Of course you are welcome to read this letter as well. Oh! I love your two books *How to Attain Enlightenment* and *The Essence of Enlightenment*. I have read both copies seven times each, and both of them in my prison cell.

Dear Sundari, my last email I sent to you was in January 2015. I didn't manage to read your reply; I think it was delayed due to your being ill. I wrote about self-realisation in 2013, and the subsequent "firefly" stage lasting right up to a few months ago. In the last email I shared how I was at rock bottom. My abuse of drugs got me placed in prison. No contact with my kids, wife off with another man, loss of freedom, no friends, not even possessions/clothes. I shared how that month in prison over Christmas 2014 the intense loss was a superb opportunity to reveal the truth about objects. Self-realisation really began to take hold then. And with epiphanies at will, and a *sattvic* mind, I felt it was *moksa*. And I intimated as much in the email. It wasn't *moksa*. I still lacked that last bit of knowledge. I was still looking at experiences as some kind of validation. The truth being: I am whole and complete and need no validation, for I know my Self.

When I emailed you, I was out on bail, and I got sentenced to prison on February 19. My behaviour that got me in prison was during the firefly stage. At one point I wished *Isvara* would help me with my "distractions" so I could evolve. So *karma*, being neither positive or negative, gave me what I wanted, just not the in the way I wanted it!

While out on bail, with self-knowledge taking stronger hold than when I had been in jail, I was still in the firefly stage in January. I had four drug overdoses, was in hospital four times, actually overdosing in court and overdosing coming into prison on February 19. So all was really at rock bottom. I had lost everything. And my life was in question. However, *Isvara* was not finished with this *jiva* yet.

With everything taken away from me, I was clear of distractions. Whilst everyone in here shares a cell, I have been blessed with a cell of my own. I have an excellent vegan diet. I have plenty of time for *yoga*, meditation, reading and such. I was brought into prison with James' *How to Attain...* book, and I got the staff to order me *Essence...* via Amazon.com. To date I have read both books seven times each. I love Vedanta. I love self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is me, and I am love. It all works nicely. I have had the opportunity to live as a renunciant in here, with all life centred around inquiry. There is no focusing on Self. Not anymore. I am Self. I don't objectify my Self, as I am it, though I can objectify if I wish. There is no joy or happiness in objects. No love. That is actually my Self, as I know my Self, and *jiva* experiences the joy, happiness and love, I am able to appreciate in a wholesome way. Knowledge is not able to be termed as "rock-solid," as that implies an integration. I am the knowledge. It is me.

I have been in prison three months now, with another four to go. I am loving it. It is such a fight I have been given! The ultimate grace. *Dharma* is my automatic nature. *Karma* is my friend. As all things are a gift. I know who I am, and I know what *Isvara* is, and what it does. For a time, the *guna* stuff kind of bored me because I know who I am and anything the *jiva* feels or experiences is kind of immaterial. However, I am here as a *jiva*, so I may as well understand the *gunas*. But you know, I don't manipulate them. There is no need when you know who you are and what that means. Everything flows, even when others think it isn't. Knowing I am whole and complete, that I am love, albeit ordinary, impacts life, enabling one to be much more wholesome. *Dharma* is natural.

Although drugs are available in here, I have been off drugs three months now. It is a non-issue. Inquiry has revealed that I took drugs out of a feeling of being unloved. I had never understood up until now why I took drugs. James' books, particularly *Essence*, was crucial in this. Since I know who I am, that I am love, the feeling of being unloved from when I was nine years old no longer has relevance. The reason for drugs is gone.

When self-knowledge became firm a couple of months ago, there would still be the beginnings of upset at certain events; however, the knowledge of who I am always exploded in my mind, nullifying any reaction. In time, I felt *vasanas* falling like dominos. I could almost feel them burning up. At some point I assume *moksa* has become self-evident (pun intended, hee, hee). I don't know when; it was impossible to notice. As I have always known who I am and what that means, so how could I, can I, differentiate a time when I didn't? I can only say it is *moksa*; both of James' books explain it to me. And this understanding is textbook.

I can renounce desires at will. There is no fear. I can enjoy desires if I wish, without attachment. I can enjoy objects without attachment. And it is second nature, effortless, to withdraw from objects if I wish. It seems that *Isvara* has plans for my life as a renunciant, and I hope to return in some way to a much healthier role as a father, which I can appreciate.

For so long the goal was enlightenment. And even though every single point of

verification in James' books says it is that, I can honestly say I don't know if I am or not. Nor do I care, really. So this is an understanding, an appreciation, yet it is ordinary, as it is me, what I am. To this effect, it is not spoken about to others. It's kind of embarrassing to come out and say, "Hey, I thought I was stupid for most of my life, but I realise I wasn't," or something daft like that. Because of you and James, I am free.

~ Much love, Wayne

December, 2015

Sundari: Hello, Wayne. I think this is quite the loveliest handwritten letter I have ever received! We are both really touched by it; thank you for writing it. It is an honour to read it. The words have the nobility, gravitas, clarity and simplicity of truth, along with the humility of self-knowledge. The import of the words you use towers over the predicament of the *jiva*, who has found freedom in spite of its circumstances – or more correctly, because of them. It is a powerful testament to self-knowledge and to you for going the distance and taking whatever *Isvara* dealt out to the *jiva* as *prasad*. Wayne had pretty hectic *karma* to deal with and powerful *vasanas* to dissolve, but you never gave up, at least not on who you are.

You gave up fighting *Isvara*, which *Isvara* made sure of by grinding down the *jiva*, bringing it to its knees with increasingly painful results of action, or *karma*. Not until you lost everything and once again got imprisoned did the *jiva* see that it was what it was rebelling against – and so could accept the *jiva*, warts and all, knowing it is not the *jiva* but awareness. No one does anything to us on the *jiva* level; it's all a play to learn what we need to learn. *Isvara* just delivers "our" *karma*, the fruits of past actions, impersonally.

Such great love is the nature of the self that the knowledge kept working for you even in your darkest hours, proving that there is never a moment when you, the light of awareness, are not present. You speak with a powerful voice now, the voice of self-knowledge.

And indeed your circumstances are perfect for the *jiva*. How merciful is *Isvara*! It seems very clear that discrimination is faultless and you neither feel you have to perfect the *jiva* nor are you susceptible to its conditioning anymore. It appears as if the firefly stage is over. It truly sounds like you have understood what the *jiva* conditioning is in light of self-knowledge, i.e. *Isvara* and the *gunas*. There is no shortcut to this if freedom from the *jiva* is what you are after. Doing "the work" of looking objectively at the *jiva* via the *gunas* may be boring, but it has to be done or the *jiva* will still be run by its conditioning, as you found out. *Moksa* is the ability to discriminate *satya* from *mithya* 24/7, no fine print. It is the ability to see everything from the point of view of the self first, then from the point of view of the *jiva* – and never to confuse the two again. This is alone qualifying as non-dual vision. Duality will not conveniently disappear "after" self-realisation. For *moksa* to actualise, duality has to be rendered non-binding, i.e. seen and understood for what is – only apparently real. Only then is it no longer a problem for the *jiva*.

I have attached a cool graphic for you depicting clearly how freedom has nothing to do with our external circumstances – most people think they are free, but actually they are more behind bars than you are in prison!

There is nothing I can add to your words except well done, we are so very happy for

you. Just one word of caution: it is easy to be secure in the knowledge when the *vasanas* that got you in prison are not in play. The real test will come of course when you leave prison and re-enter the world you left behind and are protected from, for now. Of course all worlds are simply thoughts in the mind and they follow us everywhere when we are not free of bondage to objects, but there is a distinct difference to physically transacting with the world and thinking about it. When you are free, you will know for sure if the assimilation of the meaning of your experience is solid. It certainly sounds like it is, although there may still be some work to do.

Much love to you from both of us.

~ Sundari

January 2016

Wayne: Hi, Sundari, it was great to get a letter from you. I don't know why, but I was actually expecting one from you these last few days! I think that some of this letter will be written from the *jiva* perspective, as on that level there are one or two questions remaining. Well, one actually.

Yeah, once I understood *Isvara*, *karma* and the *gunas*, it took the drama out of life. It was plain sailing from then onwards really; because of the hectic *karma* and that it is being seen for what it really is it has given an immense confidence in self-knowledge. Certain *karma* is still ongoing and extremely emotive; well, it would have been even before. I am automatically able to discriminate and be dispassionate, and see the *karma* as a gift, an opportunity. So I am secure in the knowledge. I can weather any storm. And I have to admit there is a certain satisfaction that comes with the knowledge that for the rest of this life, come what may, I will continue to be okay. I understand that this apparent reality has not changed.

What has changed is that *jiva* has become aware that the self was always aware, and that that is my identity. Once that is truly assimilated, nothing here can impact. A question that you could maybe help me with concerns *moksa*. I have scoured every detail of what Ram has taught in the two books concerning it, what it is and what it isn't. In many ways the "checklist" laid out is quite extensive. I used it as a "roadmap" of it all. And the teachings on what it isn't helped me stay the course. I would go back and forth between both books. It was why I sought to understand *Isvara*, *karma* and the *gunas*. By the time I was studying Chapter XIV of *Essence* in depth, a lot of the material from the *Gita* had already solidified of its own accord. What I'm saying is that most of the time it is quite obvious on the *jiva* level that my identity is self. Now and again my mind gets involved in events, then my self-knowledge kicks in and "withdraws my senses" should I need to. But what seems to be the norm is that I look at even that with a kind of detachment, a little curious maybe, certainly non-judgmental. This is when major emotive *karmic* events occur. The rest of the time I am incredibly open, happy, loving and kind.

As Self I don't need confirmation of anything, as there is nothing to confirm or can be confirmed. Since *moksa* is a *jiva* matter, *jiva* has been wondering. I know who I am. I understand *Isvara*, *karma* and the *gunas*. My discrimination and dispassion is solid. My lifestyle and thoughts, emotions have changed radically. I never mention or feel inclined to talk about realisation, *moksa* and me. Ram taught me well in the books how it is no big deal. However, if I was asked, I would honestly say I understand *moksa*. I believe I have actualised. But in your letter I am not sure if you

are of the opinion there is something missing. You seem to confirm self-realisation, and speak about what *moksa* is. I of course trust you; you have been a great teacher. It's just that I can't do any activity, such as meditation, to prepare myself, as my being says I am already actualised. Self tells that there is nothing to do. *Jiva* knows it, so I simply enjoy life as *dharma* and *karma* dictates. I don't mind either way about my name being shown in the testimonial. I am not about to self-promote. As self I am whole and complete, actionless, effortless, limitless, ever free, ever pure, ordinary, non-dual awareness.

~ Much love to you both, Wayne

January 1, 2016

Wayne: Dear Sundari, happy new year to you and Ram! I thought to write to you, after your apt, needed and welcome gift of *Inquiry into Existence*, a very kind gift. I did reply to you when I got it in October. As that was two-and-a-half months ago, I'm wondering maybe some letter has got mislaid. Although I did have one or two questions regarding *moksa*, *vasanas/samskaras*, which I subsequently discovered were answered as I studied the new book! Thank you once again for sending it.

I'm now reading the book for the third time, and each time it is still fresh! Fairly early in the book Ram explains that apparent reality borrows its existence from awareness. That "shouted" out to me, so I began to inquire into that. Pretty soon I realised it was a piece of knowledge still to be assimilated. That in itself taught me *moksa* is not the "end" of the journey with Vedanta. In that there could continue to be a lifetime of understandings to be revealed in Vedanta.

I recall a couple of years ago you had taught me in email that this apparent reality and awareness, though one, are not in the same order of reality. You had shared that, but it was like a seed, waiting to sprout, and Ram's book was the water. What a great team you guys are! From reading and assimilating this, everything began to make complete sense. What I also began to notice is that whenever I had any experience - likes, dislikes, lovers, enjoyment, etc. - that it is not love or that experience of that object. Rather it is the self experiencing itself. Actually, not "the Self." Self is freedom from the need to experience objects, is freedom from this apparent reality.

I appreciate when Ram teaches that he hasn't had a bad day in years. I don't have them either. I may be in prison, but I am free. I may not see my kids at present, but self-knowledge "saves the day" in that they are not "mine"; they belong to *Isvara*, and as awareness I am already complete. However, when I do see them I will be happy, since that is self recognising itself in the form of love. I have no fears, Sundari, for as awareness I have that bedrock confidence that comes from completeness. And as *jiva* I am in love with self. That is, I am in love with myself. Happiness and affection arise/exist in me spontaneously, as it is my nature. Without objects, and funnily enough, on one level it is pleasant, yet on another dispassion is king, and automatic.

I doubt I would have had the break from my *samskaras*, and understood *moksa*, had I not come into prison. What a fight *Isvara* gave me! There was only so much you guys at ShiningWorld were able to do, yet it was enough to lay the foundation, and *Isvara* and Vedanta has done its work, with continued guidance and support from you, Ram, and the others at ShiningWorld.

Thank you so much for everything, both of you. Please stay in touch if you have time.

Warmest wishes and affection to you and Ram.

~ Wayne

Ram: Sundari is traveling, and so I will reply to your letter. Your question is: How can you know who you are and still have *vasanas*? The answer is that who you are is in one dimension of reality and the *vasanas* are in another. So knowing who you are does not remove *vasanas* unless you apply the knowledge to the *vasanas* as they arise. Applying the knowledge means that you know that they are unreal, that acting them out will only perpetuate them. So you renounce them as they arise. In this way they can't cause *karma*.

However, since you realized who you are when you still have *vasana* load, as it seems you do, then you cannot expect them to disappear overnight. If you are hunting and see something moving in the bushes and it seems to be a deer, and you shoot at the very moment that you discover it is a human being, you cannot get back the arrow even though you want to. So some *vasanas* – particularly fear – keep on causing *karma* once you know who you are. It is quite natural. Just knowing who you are is not *moksa*. It is the fifth stage of enlightenment. The sixth stage is the disappearance of the doer.

Many people realize who they are and then ask me, “What am I supposed to do now?” If you know what it means to be the self, you will not ask this question, because the self is not a doer. If you want to be free of doership, then you need to requalify for *moksa*, which means live a simple *dharmic* life of *karma yoga* and self-inquiry. If you are qualified when you realize who you are, then doership dissolves and you get the fruit of *moksa*. *Moksa* is one thing, the fruit of *moksa* is perfect satisfaction, the seventh and final stage.

Sundari has been reading your letters to me, and I am familiar with your situation. Yes, prison is a good place to contemplate short-term, but you can contemplate just as well walking in the woods, so when they finally let you out, you will have to change your environment. When you go back to an environment where negative *vasanas* were formed, they get reactivated. When I went to visit my parents after my India trips, I always experienced myself as I was before I left home. It was okay because I knew it was all *mithya* and I had a lifestyle that did not allow *vasanas* to build up. It is more difficult for someone who has criminal tendencies, but you can do it.

~ Much love, Ram

Sundari (in reply to same email): Great to hear from you again, Wayne! My apologies for the long delay in writing to you; we have been travelling between Europe, South Africa and the US, and your mail arrives at our home in Bend, Oregon. I am so happy to hear of your continued dedication to your *sadhana* and that your life circumstances are serving you so well to work out your *karma*. Way to go, Wayne!

As for your questions about what *moksa* is, I think you have answered them for yourself. *Moksa* is the ability to discriminate you, the self, from the objects that arise

in you, 24/7, no fine print. The doer has finally and fully been negated. There is no time lag to discrimination, and seeing the *jiva* and its world through the lens of the self is the default position and not the other way around. It means you have negated the reality of all objects, gross and subtle, and are totally free of the *jiva* and its conditioning, all binding *vasanas* and sense of doership. From your words and understanding of the teachings, it is clear that self-knowledge is firm and you are established in the self as the Self. Now the knowledge must translate into every aspect of your life, in or out of prison.

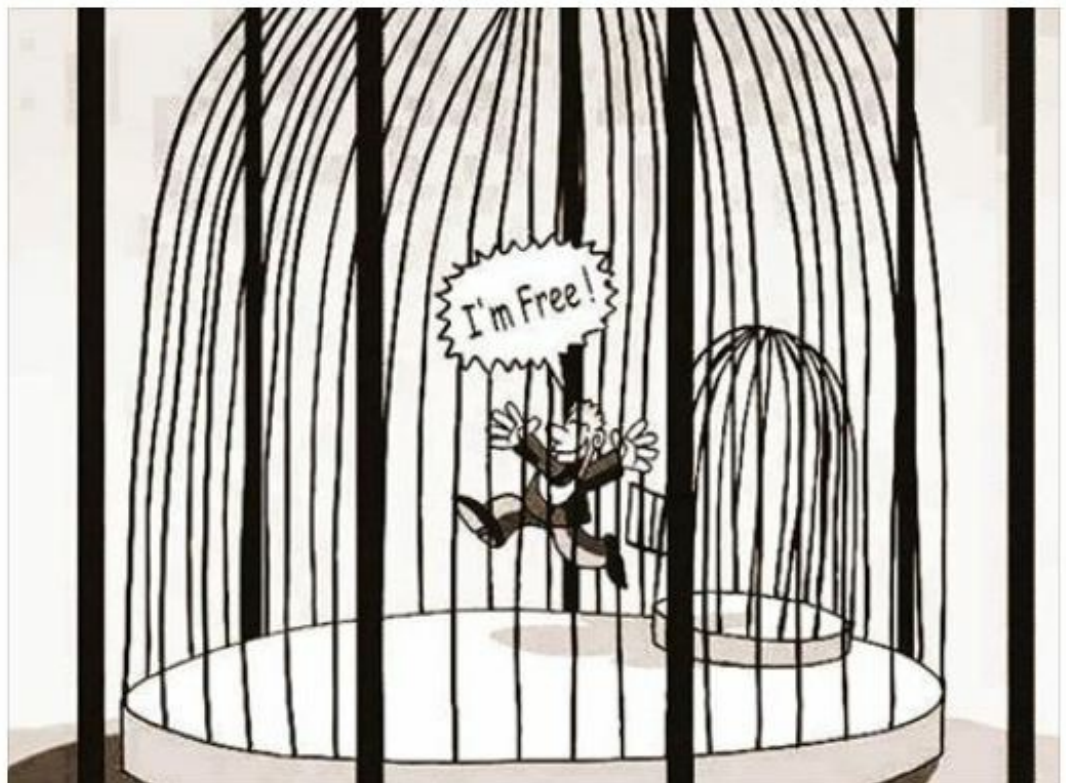
Nididhysana, which is continued inquiry into how the *jiva* reacts to its environment intellectually and emotionally, never ends for the *jiva*. Self-realisation is where the “work” of self-inquiry begins.

Swami Chinmayananda, James' *guru*, said: “You have gone through ten *Upanishads*. Wonderful. How many *Upanishads* have gone through you? Hence the conversion of intellectual knowledge into emotional strength is called *nididhysana*.”

Self-actualisation, living the knowledge as a free *jiva*, is quite another matter from self-realisation, which is the experiential realisation of awareness. James says slow and steady wins the race. What often happens with very intelligent minds capable of grasping things quickly is that the ego co-opts the knowledge, believing unconsciously that it is somehow “special,” which keeps the mind very stuck and limited. We call this

WAKE UP FROM AWAKENING

Isvara's creation is a dream creation. It is there as long as you are in it but it disappears when you wake up. Experiential awakening is subject to a cruel irony. You merely awaken in another dream. Liberation is much more than waking up. The 'you' that waked up never slept. It is not an awakening at all. It is simply self knowledge. [ShiningWorld](#)



enlightenment sickness, and it is common. The ego can survive *moksa*, and when this happens it is always a case of ignorance in some form still present in the mind, usually in the form of deeply-rooted and unconscious patterns of behaviour (*samskaras* or *pratibandikas*). A mind that “gets it” very quickly may not have mastered all the qualifications for *moksa* to obtain permanently in the mind. A humble mind dedicated to self-inquiry, that carefully and steadfastly plods along, diligently subjecting the mind to the scripture and practising *nididhysana*, often “gets there” sooner. Of course there is nowhere to get to, because you are already there and self-inquiry is not a journey.

Moksa, or non-dual vision, is complete and permanent understanding of how the field of existence operates – the forces that create it: the *gunas* (and how they govern the creation of all *vasanas*), and the natural laws that run it: *samanya dharma* (big picture), *visesa dharma* (how the individual relates to the big picture (*Isvara*)), and *svadharma* (inborn nature and tendencies of individual). A *jivanmukta*, or free person, by definition will have resolved all its conditioning through contemplation, assimilation of the knowledge and transformation of its habitual patterns (*vasanas/samskaras/pratibandikas*, i.e. its conditioning) through self-knowledge. This is the essence of *nididhysana*.

However, the fine print on the enlightenment certificate that many miss is that there really is no “post-” *moksa* stage for the *jiva*, even though as awareness you are *moksa* and not the *jiva*. As Vedantins we never stop “working” on the *jiva* even though we do not censure it or expect it to change. We unfailingly follow *dharma*, personal and universal, without question, but not because we want to improve the *jiva*, but only because we want to enjoy the priceless benefits of a peaceful mind.

While it is true is that once self-knowledge has obtained in the mind there is a definite “shift” in how one sees life and relates to objects, it is also true that the *nididhysana* stage never really ends for the *jiva*, because it is always changing and interacting with the field of existence, which is also always changing. The price of freedom for the *jiva* is eternal vigilance. Macrocosmic ignorance does not end when personal ignorance (*avidya*) ends, and the *jiva* is always limited by *maya* (although no longer conditioned by it), even though its essence is known to be limitless awareness. If this were not true, the *jiva* would become *Isvara* “after” *moksa* – which clearly and irrefutably is not the case.

A common myth in the enlightenment game is that enlightenment is another object to obtain, and when it is, the *jiva* will be different, better. It may or may not be. It will still have its *Isvara*-given character and tendencies; it will still be a pain in the ass to itself and others sometimes. It will still suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, feeling joy, pain, loss, grief as well as the constant bliss of self-knowledge. The *jiva* is still there, with its particular nature, even when you know it is *mithya*. It must be dismissed as such to be free of it.

When *moksa* has obtained in the mind one may and usually does feel experiential bliss regularly, but one does not depend on it, because you know you are the bliss. The bliss of knowledge does not feel like anything. Experiential bliss is an object known to you and you are always blissful, whether or not experiential bliss is present. In fact you could be sick, in pain, half-dead, broke, jobless or stuck in a situation you do not enjoy (like in prison) but cannot change – and be totally blissful because who you are is not influenced by what is or is not going on in your environment. You feel blissful regardless of what is going on in the mind.

The subjective reality never ends for the *jivanmukta*, who can and often does still project its subjective reality (*pratibasika*) onto *Isvara*. It will always have its particular way of relating to *Isvara* which will be unique to its *Isvara*-given *vasana* filters. The difference will be that a *jivanmukta* knows immediately when it is projecting, instantly dissolves the projection in the knowledge, and so is instantly free of it. Thus it does not create any new *karma*. It keeps its *karma* like a little dog on a very short leash, right in front of it. No *karmic* drag, ever. No unfinished business or drama. Every moment of every day is complete. Nothing is carried over, not even from moment to moment. There is never another person involved in its interactions and transactions in the world of objects/experience. The *jivanmukta*

knows in the moment that it is transacting only with itself because there is no "other." There is only awareness.

There is ZERO tolerance for self-aggrandizement of any kind if *moksa* is what one is after. As soon as the ego takes credit the doer is back and so is limitation and bondage. Once the mind is purified of duality humility is its natural response to everything in its environment (*Isvara*) because it understands there is only itself, awareness. It no longer sees "otherness" as awareness, even though it observes the *jiva* still apparently experiencing it. Duality is understood and appreciated for what it is - enjoyed even. But as it is not expected to deliver something it is incapable of doing, i.e. happiness, duality is never a problem for the *jivanmukta*. This takes so much pressure off for the *jiva* because there is no need to make it conform to some silly "spiritual" ideal. It is just known and loved for what it is: a reflection of the self in a mirror, which is also the self.

As the *jiva* is a product of the *gunas*, belongs to and is always subject to *Isvara*, the *jiva* is never going to be perfect. But as awareness you are free of the *jiva* and you know it arises from and depends on you and not the other way around. Then life makes sense and it is possible to see beauty all the time, even when things are not pretty.

Face whatever *Isvara* sends your way with the fearless heart and mind of the self, and you will not go wrong.

~ Much love and light, Sundari

February 2016

Wayne: Dear James and Sundari, thank you for the letter, James. I had sent one just a couple of days before, but I will reply to this one nevertheless.

James, if you don't mind, I'm going to refer to your book *Inquiry into Existence* and your letter you just sent. At the start of your reply, my question is posed: "How can you know who you are and still have vastness?" And you answered it perfectly. I don't think I had worded things accurately. Your reply initially is about self-realisation, the fifth stage, and *asana*.

During the summer, I had written to you guys, and you (James) replied, saying that it's probably safe to say that I am at the stage of *moksa*. Of course you can only go by limited information at any given time, I understand that. I got released, went back to the same place, and for ten days my *vasanas* reactivated. In my October letter, what I meant to ask was, can someone who has *moksa* still be impacted by uncomfortable vastness?

As I read further into *Inquiry into Existence*, I could see it does say, in verse 257 on page 154, that enlightened people can seem to be dissatisfied and occasionally fall under *vasanas*. That a "newly-minted" enlightened person may be dissatisfied as he continues to act in harmony with his programming, which I did do, for ten days.

In your latest reply, you advise in the fifth stage (self-realisation) people often ask, "What am I supposed to do now?" It's not something that I feel, at all. I don't do anything. I don't need to do anything. I am whole and complete. There is nothing to do, as there is nothing that can improve on me. However, if I choose to think of this, I know that everything that can be done has been done.

When I read the top section of page 102, I am reading about myself. There is no effort to understand it, as it is me. If I ask myself if I am enlightened, if this is *moksa*? Of course it is. I feel silly even pondering the possibility of the opposite in this letter. Hee, hee.

Perhaps my doubt arises from whether I am understanding the teachings accurately. Maybe Vedanta and any remnants of assimilation can/cannot be separated from *moksa*? I mean, is it required to understand all aspects of Vedanta before *moksa* can be said to have happened? I satisfy all the requirements in your three mainstream books, and I still learn and study Vedanta, as it is always new, fresh, yet familiar. As it is knowledge about me – self-knowledge – I love Vedanta, as I love myself.

So it may be the case I am enlightened/ *moksa*, yet still not fully enjoying the fruits of it, due to remnant uncomfortable *vasanas*? That being said, I am certain I enjoy the fruits more: solid confidence, dispassion, contentment, openness. Perhaps the fruits are a “work in progress”?

Sundari, my case might be heard in the spring. I’ll know better then when I will get out. Much love and thanks to you both.

March 2016

Sundari: Hello, Wayne. We are very happy to hear from you, as always, and all the more so that *jiva* Wayne is obviously at peace with what *Isvara* has brought to him. Prison cannot be an easy place to be, but on the other hand, it does have the potential to remove worldly distractions if one surrenders to it, which clearly you have. What is important now is living the knowledge, especially when you are released. I replied to the questions (actually they are not really questions but statements) in this email in my previous reply to you. The test of *moksa* is, as you have found out, whether or not you enjoy the fruits consistently – freedom from the *jiva* and peace of mind no matter what is or is not happening in the *mithya* world, solid confidence, automatic discrimination between self and not-self, no *karma*. The bliss of knowledge, which is not a feeling but known to be you. No sense of doership, ever.

You have come a long way, from what we hear from you in your letters. So many *samsaris*, although not incarcerated, might as well be due to their *vasana* loads. I don’t know if you ever read Viktor Frankl’s book *Man’s Search for Meaning*. In it he chronicles his experiences as an Auschwitz concentration camp inmate during World War II, describing his psychotherapeutic method, which involved identifying a purpose to feel positive about, and then immersing the mind in imagining that outcome. Frankl identified three psychological reactions experienced by all inmates to one degree or another: (1) shock during the initial admission phase, (2) apathy after becoming accustomed to prison existence, in which the inmate values only that which helps himself and his friends survive, and (3) reactions of depersonalisation, moral deformity, bitterness and disillusionment if he survives and is liberated. If only Frankl had had self-knowledge, he would have known that there is a fourth option: *karma yoga* and self-inquiry into his true nature as the self, freedom from limitation.

Frankl concluded that the meaning of life is found in every moment of living, that life never ceases to have meaning, even in suffering and death. One time in group therapy session during a mass fast inflicted on the camp’s inmates trying to protect

an anonymous fellow inmate from fatal retribution by authorities, Frankl offered the thought that for everyone in a dire condition there is someone looking down, a friend, family member or even God, who would expect not to be disappointed. We know that there the self is always present, observing. And *Isvara* responds to us according to our needs, unflinchingly. And we know the true meaning of life is to realise the self, no other.

Frankl concluded from his experiences that a prisoner's psychological reactions are not solely the result of the conditions of his life, but also from the freedom of choice he always has even in severe suffering. The inner grasp a prisoner has on his spiritual self depends on having a hope in the future, and that once a prisoner loses that hope, he is doomed. Ultimately, Frankl realised that although he was the one in prison, he had more freedom than the prison wardens because nobody had the power to imprison his mind. We know that only ignorance does that - and we know that the only "free" will we have is to surrender to *Isvara*.

It seems you too have come to the same place, even though Frankl did not know what it really was. It is where all beings long to be, whether they know it or not: home in the self. Your outward reality has little bearing on where the body is, because nothing touches you there or anywhere. You observe Wayne adjusting to his environment, doing what he has to do, making the best of his life, as you would if Wayne was "free," out of prison.

Good for you, Wayne! I have enclosed a copy of James' latest book for you - *The Yoga of Love*. I think it might be his best so far. You are ready for this now, finishing up the *jiva's* stuff, turning it all to devotion to you, the self. When you are released, you will be ready to make contact with the world as a whole being, come what may.

In part the reason we did not reply sooner is that there is not a whole lot more to say to you. Self-actualisation is where you are, and it is usually the tough part. It can take years, depending on how long *prarabdha karma* plays out. Even though *moksa* obtains, *nididhysana* continues for the *jiva*, as I said before. In fact it never stops.

The other issue you raise with regards to not needing to study Vedanta, but nonetheless never ceasing to enjoy subjecting the mind to the scripture, is also typical of a seeker turned finder. There is nothing more satisfying to the mind than resting in the self, so reading scripture and enjoying it continues "after" *moksa*. The ultimate stage of freedom is freedom from the one who inquires. As you know, the whole point of self-inquiry is to understand the mind and the environment it is in in the light of self-knowledge so as to negate the doer. So while the "inquirer" stage is essential, it is not by studying Vedanta that self-knowledge obtains in the mind. It is by negating the doer/inquirer that self-knowledge obtains in a purified mind.

Thanks for your good wishes, we are both very well. We are in the US for a few months before heading back to Europe. We plan to have a base in Portugal soon to cater to the growing European *sangha*. By the way, would you be interested in being involved with helping Stan run the forum one day when you get out? We started a forum at the ShiningWorld website last year, and Stan Kublicki runs it for us, with help from Georg in Germany. We want to promote and grow it. It is a great platform for inquirers to chat to each other about matters Vedanta. Stan moderates it for us.

Life is grand and we remain *Isvara's* devoted servants. ☺

Much love to you, Wayne. May the Force (you) always be with you.

~ Sundari

June 2016

Wayne: Hello, Sundari, it was great to hear from you once more and the gift of James' latest book is really appreciated and timely. Through your letter your guidance has proven to be so useful. It was always good that you hadn't written sooner. I assumed you were busy, and if not, I was still pretty much content. Yeah, prison does have its challenges; however, *Isvara* has blessed me with many privileges. For instance, I am a trustee, and as such I am unlocked most of every day. I am responsible for the basic needs of up to sixty other people. I also have a single cell, quite a luxury in here. My lifestyle is that of service to others, that is, service to *Isvara*, which is my Self, and by virtue of my single cell, lots of opportunity for inquiry. I have a really good life in here, and have found the last nine months among the most rewarding of my whole life. Of course the crowning glory is self-actualisation, which neither holds glory nor is special. It's not something I make a big deal about. I'd be loath to be so pretentious, so I never speak of it. You guys have taught me well, hee, hee!

There is no indication yet as to how long I will be in here. And I am still expecting my trail in the autumn. I am not really interested at the moment per se, it is all up to *Isvara*; besides, I am already free. I know that I feel that. I live that. That's why it is immaterial to me.

Your guidance on *nididhysana* was very important for me. To be honest, although I knew I was at the stage of self-actualisation, I was aware that there are a few niggling things letting me know there is no post-*moksa* stage, which is crucial because I started to kind of wonder if had I done something inaccurately.

I have gone right off meditating. I can't see the point. I mean, why look inside when I am actually everything that is? *The Yoga of Love* teaching is that everything in this reality is *Isvara*, that is, bliss is the only important thing I need to focus on. What I'm trying to say is that self-knowledge provides all I need to do. Meditation no longer inspires me. Maybe that doesn't make sense, hee, hee. I used to mediate to rest in the self, which was cool. But since I know I am the self, I don't need to do any activity to rest in my Self.

Yes, definitely it would be an honour and a privilege to help Stan run the forum when I get out. ShiningWorld has done so much for me, and I am deeply honoured and will to help out in any way. I know you guys probably think it's small thing, but for me to be involved with ShiningWorld in any way is very moving.

You signed off by saying you enclosed a small gift, a symbol of the self, though there was nothing in my parcel. But, Sundari, you already gave me a gift, a huge one. You have patiently guided me, in only a few years, after twenty previous years of pointed searching. You guided me to *moksa*. It's the best gift one human can do, to help guide another to that. Thank you so much. You guys mean the world to me.

~ Love, Wayne

June 2016

Sundari: Hello, Wayne, thank you for your letter and beautiful card; it made Ramji

and me very happy for you, a shining light that no thoughts, body, walls or bars can imprison. Your freedom is our reward, the only reward the self is interested in – and it is everyone’s right.

I am so glad that you got Ramji’s new book and it is just what you need – fitting. *The Yoga of Love* is really the *Bhagavad Gita* minus the story that goes with it, and it is about the how the self-actualised jiva lives. May it guide and serve you for the rest of your days. I can understand that you no longer need to meditate; that is very common once self-knowledge is firm. You no longer need to meditate because you are meditation, nothing gives that to you and nothing takes it away. However, although you no longer need it, it is very enjoyable to sip the nectar of the self in meditation.

Thank you for being willing to help with ShiningWorld, we look forward to welcoming you on board as part of our team!

I am sad that the gift I enclosed did not get to you – I guess the prison people took it. It was a beautiful glass pendant with an *Om* embossed on it. I sent it as a gift for you or for your sister, who loves you and helps you.

I am leaving the US this Thursday, June 30, heading for South Africa, then meeting James back in Europe in the fall. He is leaving Bend in early September, so I am not sure if we will be here to receive your reply should you write again. We will be away until next year, probably May. If you want to write to me, you can write to my South Africa address, but I will only be there until the end of August/September.

We are always here for you as your friends and in the self.

~ With much love from both of us, Sundari

South Africa, July 2016

Introduction to Vedānta (Tattvabodha) – Swami Paramarthananda

7.5.3. Nididhyāsanam – Contemplation / Assimilation, transformation of emotions

Then comes the process of Nididhyāsanam which is the process of internalisation or assimilation of this knowledge and the removal of my habitual behaviour. This also involves solving emotional problems in the light of Jnānam. Ultimately even though Samsara is a problem of ignorance, the ignorance is appearing or expressing in the form of emotional turmoil alone. Basic problem may be Ajnānam but I am facing this problem in the form of Rāga Dvesha Kāma Krodhaha Lobha Moha Mada Mātsarya and Bhayam. [like, dislike, lust, anger, greed, delusion, illusion, envy, fear]. Unless the emotional problems are solved, I have not assimilated the knowledge totally.

The present behaviour I have developed very gradually, it is a habit, a conditioning that I have – this I have to de-condition myself. This process is called Nididhyāsanam or assimilation. Only when the habitual behaviour goes away, do I get the full benefit of this knowledge. We have been Samsārī, petty, ignorant, bitter people and that personality has influenced our responses, our goals. Everything has been governed by our idea about ourselves. How you behave depends on how you look at yourself.

Wayne: Hello, Sundari. Thank you for your letter and your South Africa address. If it is

okay, I will write to you while you are there, simply because I may have one or two questions about *The Yoga of Love*, and you say you will be travelling until the new year.

I have had some excellent legal news today (which unfortunately I can't elaborate on), which may mean that I will be released in a few months. I will know more as the coming weeks progress. I have begun to get the feeling that I won't be in prison for much longer, though I regard it dispassionately and leave it up to *Isvara*.

Ramji's *The Yoga of Love* is excellent, and I am nearing the end of my second reading of it. I read a small portion every day. In fact my morning ritual consists of *yoga*, meditation, reading of poetry (one poem per day) and always something of Ramji's. Lately it has been *The Yoga of Love*.

Before I read it, I had no interest in religion. I mean, Vedanta provided all that was required. I'd go as far as to say I had a healthy, benign disdain – no, disinterest – in religion. But Ramji does talk of formal dualistic devotion, quite a bit. I was kind of confused with that. However, the teaching that all is *Isvara*, all is love, helps reconcile any issues. And as he teaches, all desire and experience of all objects is simply love of the self, one way or another. So, I reasoned, religion is just another way of love. I can appreciate all religion. In fact I don't feel inclined to deliberately enact any dualistic devotion. Whichever way I see or experience something, I immediately see it is self and as such it is joy of self. I experience as self. That's as far as any object/dualistic devotion goes. It's non-dual devotion that I am interested in. That I am. My question is, am I right in this approach? That I don't need dualistic devotion, provided I know and live as the self, non-dually devoted to self?

My last question is that I understand that *nididhysana* is required post-*moksa*. Does this mean *vasanas/samskaras* can remain post-*moksa*? I say this because I still have *vasanas/samskaras*, albeit they are being eradicated, the ones that I don't want. They aren't an issue. I am supremely self-confident. They are not me, so even if any remain, it is no big deal. It's just a question I am asking.

I am going to chase up the pendant again. I still might be able to get it back. I can see why you said it is a gift, a symbol of the self. When I read it was an “*Om*” pendant, immediately I thought, I am “*Om*.”

I am so pleased and proud you have asked me to be part the ShiningWorld team! I have told my family how great it is to be invited to be involved with such respectable organisation. Thanks to you both!



Sundari: Hello, Wayne, as always, great to hear from you again! I am glad you used my South Africa address, as I will only be back in the US next spring. I hope you to get back the pendant I sent you, but if not, no worries. As you say, as the self you are the only symbol. However, it is part of devotion to the self to have something that symbolizes it, for you, which can be anything really. We have an altar at home with our favourite symbols, and do our *pujas* there every day, even though we know that there is nothing to pray for, as there is only the self. The purpose of prayer is not to supplicate the self; it is to revel in it by disarming the ego, who likes to think it can go it alone. Prayer, like gratitude, is a gift

given to us by *Isvara* for the peace of mind of the *jiva*. *Isvara* does not need our prayers or gratitude, but without them our lives are diminished because both make us feel good.

I am so happy to hear the news about your imminent (possible) release. I pray that *Isvara* makes this happen – and that you have resolved the *karma* that got you in there in the first place. What has so impressed us is how you have used this time in prison to further your self-inquiry, and it has clearly born fruit. I hear more and more every time you write to me how clear your mind is. As we have said before, your great test will be in applying this clarity and discrimination “back in the world,” so to speak – knowing of course that the world is in you!

Regarding devotional practice, I understand your mixed feelings about it. The teaching on *bhakti* can be confusing, especially for people like us who have long gone past the first stage of dualistic devotion. Your take on it is basically correct, but I have laid out a short version of what James teaches in *The Yoga of Love*. I hope it helps:

The tradition says there are two kinds of *bhakti*, or devotional practice, and it is compulsory for *moksa* to go through all of them, except stage one of the first kind. I have broken down the two stages to four stages for ease of assimilation. The first stage is *dvaita*, or dualistic *bhakti*, and it has three parts to it. The fourth stage is *advaita* – *jnanum*, or knowledge, non-dual *bhakti*. All three stages are stepping stones for the next stage, with the fourth stage being the end of the line, i.e. *moksa*.

1. *Dvaita* (dualistic) *bhakti* –

(Note: Stage 1 and 2 corresponds to Chapters I to VI of the *Bhagavad Gita*.)

Stage 1: (This stage is not essential, but it is a stepping stone to stage 2.) Many people who undertake self-inquiry have a lot of negativity towards the idea of the

religious God and hate the idea of God and religion, which is understandable because of the damage that most rigid, dogmatic religions have caused, institutional religion being so often very narrow-minded. However, we cannot throw out the baby with the bath water. It is essential that we understand the importance of worship as an integral part not only of self-inquiry and negating the ego, but also for the edification of the *jiva*, “before” or “after” *moksa*.

This is informal or undisciplined worship, it is totally subjective and emotional, “heart” based. It is where all religions originate, where most *samsaris* worship a personal deity or God, seeing it as a HE usually, a big daddy who takes care of them and listens to their problems. It is worshiping God as a person. It is childlike or childish devotion. It’s about supplicating God in order to get results, getting what you want and avoiding what you don’t want. This is where all religious fanaticism and dogmatism originate; it leads to sectarianism and fundamentalism. It makes people feel self-righteous, that they have “God on their side” and can act out whatever they believe “in His name,” that they are “better than” and their way is the only way. It gives rise to all religious wars. It also makes ordinary people feel safe, providing guidelines that help sort out relationship and life issues. This is for people totally identified with being people and the world of objects.

Stage 2: This part is compulsory for self-inquiry if *moksa* is the aim.

This stage is emotional and intellectual. Here you start to practise *karma yoga* – surrendering the results of actions to *Isvara* with an attitude of consecration and gratitude because you have realised that the results of actions are not up to you. This is to help neutralize the idea of doership.

You also practise the five *pancha yagna* (sacrifices or activities):

1. Worship of your deity however you see it (any symbol will do because they all point to the self).
2. Worship of your parents or ancestors.
3. Worship of your teacher and teaching.
4. Worship of society and people in general.
5. Worship of the environment (i.e. *Isvara*/Field of Existence).

Stage 3: *Upasana* (meditation), also compulsory for *moksa*.

(Note: This stage corresponds to Chapters VII to XII of the *Bhagavad Gita*.)

This is where worship of *Isvara*/God is objective: purely impersonal or intellectual. Knowledge of *Isvara* and the creation start to crystallize. There is still duality and you see *Isvara* in special forms (like icons or beauty), but gradually, as knowledge becomes firm, this progresses into seeing and worshiping *Isvara* in all forms, including the “good and the bad.” Non-dual vision cannot be firm until we can see, accept and love all things, “the good and the bad,” equally. This is a steep curve for the *jiva*.

Important note: All three stages of *dvaita bhakti* involve free will and the *jiva*, or individual, which is why these stages are called dualistic worship. The purpose of these stages of worship, or *bhakti*, is that these practices reduce subjectivity and

neutralize *vasanas* – likes and dislikes – as well negate the doer. It takes care of the childish ego.

Stage 4: *Advaita*, or non-dual *bhakti: jnanum*, self-knowledge

(Note: Corresponds to Chapters XIII to XVIII of the *Bhagavad Gita*.)

This is the final stage of *bhakti*; it is *advaita* – non-dual *jnanum*, or self-knowledge. It is non-personal, beyond subjectivity and objectivity, i.e. *moksa*. This is non-dual vision where you see everything as the self first, and second as the *jiva*, never confusing the two again. You still live as the *jiva*, and so follow *dharma*, your own and universal *dharma*, which requires following the rules of the field of existence, or *Isvara*, automatically. And you continue with *dvaita bhakti* except it is no longer dualistic in that you know that everything is you, awareness – i.e. you have permanently discriminated between *satya* and *mithya*.

As for your question about remaining *vasanas/samskaras* – it is true that we will not be free until we can negate the *jiva's* psychological/emotional baggage. Most of us still have a great deal of *nididhysana* to do on the *jiva's* stuff, even “after” self-realisation. As we have discussed previously (James replied to you about this too), self-actualisation is the hard part. The *jiva* is a product of the *gunas*, belongs to and is always subject to *Isvara*. Therefore the *jiva* is never going to be perfect. We all have what I call a “*jiva* overlay,” which is our *Isvara*-given character. What is important is we know it is not real and do not identify with it, ever. If you want to be free, there is no fine print to this. You cannot be the self and the *jiva* or a little bit of both. The *jiva* has to go – but that does not mean it disappears. *Isvara's* creation belongs to *Isvara* and it stays in the apparent reality.

Self-knowledge does not make the *jiva* immune to the *gunas*. It is sometimes very difficult to make sense of the world and how the *gunas* play out. It is so amazing how relentless the *jiva's* stuff is; the *gunas* never let up – there is no “off button.” That is the fine print on the enlightenment certificate! It can be rather sobering to note that knowledge of the *gunas* does not make them go away, and the effects can be very unpleasant at times. Even with self-knowledge, they can blindside one quite easily. It is well to remember though, no matter what surfaces, it is all *Isvara*; the *jiva* and its “stuff” is not unique. Every single *vasana* is universal and not personal. As Nisargadatta says so eloquently, to be a person is to be asleep! Well, as the self, we are wide awake, but that does not mean that *Isvara* cannot get at the *jiva* and drag it down at times, until all self-knowledge has fully and firmly negated all binding *vasanas*. Until then, the work of self-actualisation (*nididhysana*) continues as we clean up the sewer of the unconscious and the hold the causal body has on the *jiva*. Thank God that the life raft of the knowledge is never too far away. Prayer and devotion are a great help in such situations. Life is not easy in the world – any world within this world. It takes courage, as it can be heartbreaking, as you know only too well. The unavoidable and painful disintegration of the ego self to integrate the Self as the default standard bearer for the mind is not an easy process to endure.

Do not worry about negating all *vasanas* – it is not possible or necessary. If we want freedom from and for the *jiva*, we only need worry about the ones that are truly binding and keep us stuck in drama, *karma* and suffering. We all know what these patterns are, and if we don't, *Isvara* can be relied upon without fail to help dredge them up from the sewer of the unconscious! As awareness, you are free of the *jiva* and you know it arises from and depends on you, and not the other way around. Then life makes sense and it is possible to see beauty all the time, even when things

are not pretty.

Taking a stand in awareness as awareness means taking a stand in our fullness, not in smallness. As long as I try to turn the “other” into “my” husband/wife/son/daughter, etc. and try to work things out with him or her on that level, I am keeping the concept of duality, smallness, limitation, alive. The *jiva* can never compete with the self, obviously. So the *jiva* overcomes its smallness by living as the self and consciously doing battle with the “voice of diminishment,” as I call the bleating whine of our small self, as it arises. It does not try to defend that voice. To do so only gives the “small self” life. And arise it does! It is difficult at first because you feel like a fraud, that you are trying to be something you are not. However, if we are hooked by the turbulent thoughts and emotional patterns inherent in being a *jiva*, even in seemingly small day-to-day issues, we will never be free of them. The ever-changing and limited idea of who you are trying to keep alive as the person is just a memory, a guilt-inspired thought. For the most part, it is a toxic program. I say get rid of it; pay it no heed!

Even though I realised the self years ago, my problem for a while was thinking that, as the *jiva* never disappeared, it had to be catered to, as it is. This may be true – the *jiva* will remain as *Isvara* made it, for the most part – even with *moksa*, and we must love it unconditionally. Nevertheless, *satya* and *mithya* is duality if you think the *jiva* is as real as the self. Taking a stand as the self means the *jiva* is as good as non-existent. You are the self. You are not The Self and the *jiva*. So when *jiva* appears, dismiss it. What a tremendous relief this is. It really is true that *nididhysana* never ends for the *jiva*. Self-actualisation is not for the faint of heart, that is for sure! Facing the small, less-than-fabulous part of the psyche *Isvara* equipped us with is not easy. It requires a great deal of courage to face the world as the *jiva*, and it takes even more courage to face the demons that awaits us in the causal body, so as to free ourselves of the *jiva*. When we do, we see the demons for what they are, just paper dragons, not real at all.

Here is a beautiful poem that captures so perfectly what the *jiva* has to face and endure to win freedom from the clutches of the causal body, there being no off button and *Isvara* being relentless with the crushing push and pull of the *gunas*, the unavoidable and painful disintegration of the ego-self to integrate the Self as the default standard bearer for the mind.

It is written by Colleen-Joy Page, Enlightened Apple Tree, a friend of ours in Johannesburg, South Africa, who faithfully serves and shares the teachings. It evokes and reveals the courage it takes the *jiva* to live, let alone live free of its conditioning:

Take a Stand

A writing on being human and willing to be awake...

The place no one wants to visit. The place no one wants to look. The darkest terror, that threatens to capsize the fragile mind and its theatre kingdom. The terror of insignificance wrapped in becoming nothing.

“Don’t take my crown,” cries the ego, as the slaughter of light lays waste the clinging.

Mothers to babes. Rich men to gold. Vanity to her curves, her pleasure trap of sex.

She is not always pretty, enlightenment. She is a ghost-maker. A throne-taker. A joker laughing in a hall of mirrors. And she will end you. I say let her. Let her throw back the veils of my heart, and tear the nails from their clinging to the vapours of life's hollow promise.

You, who threaten me – you thief. You who hijack my nights with your Hollywood productions of hell in my head. Life, do your worst. Crush my heart with your grief-boot. Tear my guts open with your fear-razor. But know this, you cannot touch the real me.

This that knows itself in the eyes of all the beloved eyes, the touch of all skins, this that sings itself awake, for this love is a medicine that I will pay for.

Throw open these doors and let the storms rage on.

Take all you want from this little life, from the little child who lives in the echoes of this story.

I am willing. I am willing to bleed, to cry my eyes dry. To hurt. To live. I am willing to live. To live as this truth. To be both untouchable and crushable. To be mortal and boundless eternal truth.

Your price is steep. I am willing to pay.

I send you much love and many blessings, as always. May life reach out to you and give you a fresh start in a new chapter of life.

~ Much love and light, Sundari

PS: Wayne sent James and me a beautiful thank-you card from prison. In it he said:

To Sundari, my teacher, who set me free. There are no words to describe the love and thanks I have for you.

To James, the way you have carefully and skillfully explained Vedanta's teaching in a Western way that one can assimilate is fantastic. Thank you for ShiningWorld.

~ Love, Wayne



To Ram & Sankar, with love. Kati