

Don't Believe What You Think

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/305>

Peter: Hey, Ram, I was just looking at the website to find that it's been updated (nice) and that you're doing a teaching in India at the end of the year. I would very much like to come for the duration. Since we last spoke I have got a job cleaning boats, which will hopefully last all summer, and will enable me to put some money aside. I have also made a friend who has a house in Tiruvannamalai, which might be useful.

I've been wanting to write to you but I haven't really had anything much to say recently. I been having flashes of understanding – blink and you'll miss them – but my ego doesn't think I've made any progress.

But I remind myself that I am awareness and not subject to progress, and that the seed has been planted and my understanding is ripening. I know that this is the case; some of the more improbable teachings of Vedanta (from the body-mind's point of view) are beginning to make sense. "That the world is there because I see it," for instance.

My thinking tries to tell me that I should apply myself more – to meditation, etc. I disregard it because I know it's just thinking and I'm happy. There is some sitting-down meditation in my life, but a lot more *karma yoga*.

But I just continue to apply the thought "I am awareness" or "I am" or sometimes "I am that in which everything lives and breathes and has its being." This happens much more quickly and naturally these days. I find I am able to disregard thoughts/feelings quite quickly. For example, "I am angry... hang on a minute... no, I'm not. I am aware of a feeling of anger. I am awareness. Anger is just there." Is this good enough practice for self-inquiry?

I hope you are well, and I would dearly love to come to India in December and have you teach me every day.

~ Love, Peter

James: Hi, Peter. Save your shekels and come to India! It seems that you are right on-track. There is nothing dramatic about self-inquiry. It is evolutionary, not revolutionary. Apparent progress is measured in millimeters, not miles. Little by little your confidence in yourself as awareness chips away at the *vasana* accretions, and the sense of doership slowly fades. Keep at it – not that there is any other option – and take it easy.

~ Love, Ram