

Mind Needs a Goal

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/31>

Daniel: Dear James, thank you, and I can't tell you how grateful I am that you responded to my letter. I am so pleased that you took the time to think about and answer my question, knowing that you must be constantly evaluating and making decisions about where and how to put your valuable time to good use.

James: We liked your letter, Daniel, and I thought you were a soul worth saving. 😊

Daniel: My first exposure to "the knowledge" left me quite isolated in terms of the circle I moved in, which was predominantly traditional dualistic Catholicism. I made the unfortunate mistake also at the "first blush of enlightenment" to spout it about to a couple of family and friends, and their impression that I am some sort of crazy flake hasn't left them yet.

James: As Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*, "Let not the wise unsettle the minds of the ignorant [with their wisdom]."

Daniel: I've since moved on from the Catholic group I was involved with. I couldn't accord what had become known to me with the group's own particular style and approach to spirituality, but I couldn't deny either what had appeared to me as totally self-apparent and obvious.

James: Seems you learned your lesson. People only listen when they are ready to listen, and religious types especially are attached to their beliefs.

Daniel: I will definitely follow your advice to improve my qualification and keep up the study of Vedanta. You are right, even though I did receive the knowledge "I am God" in a surprising and unexpected way, I haven't been able to assimilate that and have also had the expectation (often none too subtle) that there is a BIG experience to come along with it.

James: You and everyone else on the "spiritual" path. There may be big experiences, but they go the way of all things. The experience you had was the big experience.

Daniel: So imagine my disappointment (and resultant anxiety) after six years of waiting! I also struggled mightily with the "brute fact" of my existence, which appeared simultaneously with a sort of incredulity at its possibility at all. It sounds neurotic, but I'm basically saying the existence has appeared as something fundamentally painful, but now I'm beginning to intuit that it has, in fact, been my ignorance of my true nature that has been the source of that suffering.

James: Yes. Well-expressed, Daniel. Beliefs, opinions, desires and fears obstruct the fact that your nature is bliss.

Daniel: Actually, it is becoming clearer that I, the self, am completely free of any such suffering, and it is only my confusion and confounding this I with the existentialist *jiva* that is the root of the problem (too much Dostoevsky, perhaps!).

I have also realised, since writing to you first, and in continuing to listen to the Berlin talks, that I need a goal for the mind to engage in and to be occupied by; even though this goal is only provisional and my real goal is to have all obstacles removed that are impeding my having a hard and fast realisation of what is the truth.

James: This is perhaps one of the most important realizations a human being can have. It is true if you aren't enlightened – and if you are. If the mind is not given good work, it will eat you up.

Daniel: So thanks again, James. I'll go over the first two chapters of your new book and read *How to Attain Enlightenment* in full. I'll keep listening to the talks and watch *YouTube* videos too. That should keep me out of trouble for a while.

James: I asked my wife to mention the videos too, Daniel. I don't know if she did, but there is an offering on the website of 110 hours of video for \$200 that is very helpful. You go through them systematically, starting with the *Self Inquiry* series.

Some people find the videos better than live teaching because they can rewind and listen again if something is not clear.

I don't want to *guru* you too much, but your use of the word "realisation" bears scrutiny. It is undoubtedly related to the notion of experiential enlightenment. We use "knowledge." Granted, it is not as sexy and full of promise as realization but it is more accurate, although realization can certainly mean knowledge. The experience you had was, in fact, the self giving itself knowledge in the form of Daniel. Had Daniel been taught properly, he would have recognized the importance of experience, and that small experience would have been the big experience he was looking for.

~ Love, James