

# Dream Analysis Is Not a *Sadhana*

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2013-09-17

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/312>

**Reinhardt:** Hello, Sundari. I have a question that relates to James' section on dreams and enlightenment (or attainment or whatever)...

**Sundari:** What exactly are you asking here? James' section on dreams has nothing to do with enlightenment per se, it is simply an inquiry he did as part of his *sadhana* in order to understand the psychology behind dreams. The reason that dreamwork is a good practice is that the *vasanas* play out in the dream state. In the dream state it is very easy to see the ego as an object so that *vasanas* can be understood and rendered non-binding. No one has ever "attained" enlightenment from doing dreamwork, and James was certainly not making that claim when he posted his dreams at the ShiningWorld website.

**Reinhardt:** I don't understand how he could have (sorry, if you're reading this, James, then how could you have had) an "issue" such as the one he/you had, after you became "fully" realised. I read your autobiographical book and was blown away, and I got the sense that you really found the self (sorry for sounding sceptical). But then 20 years later or so an issue surrounding romantic love for another showed you still had (purification) work to do. This totally confuses me...

**Sundari:** James has never claimed to be enlightened. He has simply said that he is the self. No one who is enlightened would ever make that claim because you cannot "get" enlightened; it is not possible. Anyone who makes that claim does not know what enlightenment is, because you cannot gain something you already are. Self-knowledge removes ignorance so that you can realise that your true nature as awareness. You are and always have been enlightened, because you are the light, you just don't know this and like many people in the "spiritual" world you believe that enlightenment is some special experience or rare "state" to be achieved. This is the one of the main reasons that so few seekers become finders. It does not mean that the person is anything other than a person.

James has no issues about "romantic love." The fact that James and I are married has no bearing on anything. *Moksa*, "enlightenment," means that you have negated all the objects as not-self and realised that the joy comes from you, the self, not the object. Which means you longer need or chase anything to complete yourself, because you know that you are already complete. Chasing relationships when you are seeking *moksa* is a contradiction in terms because *moksa* means freedom from dependence on objects. You don't go into a relationship to be free, quite the contrary.

James has had several relationships since he realised the self, none of which had any bearing on who he is. There is no contradiction in having a relationship if you know that it is not going to give you anything you don't already have, meaning that you know that you are whole and complete, non-dual, actionless, unchanging and unlimited awareness. Nothing gives this to you and nothing takes it away, because it is who you are.

However, as a so-called “enlightened” person, meaning someone whose ignorance of their true nature has been removed by self-knowledge, you maintain the personality and conditioning of the *jiva*, or person, but you are free of it. Enlightenment has nothing to do with being a “perfect” person because *moksa* is freedom from the person, not for the person. This does not mean that the person disappears, it just means that the person is not real and you know that you are not the person. “Real” is defined as “that which is always present and never changes.” Awareness, which is your true nature, is the only thing that fits the definition of what is real because it never changes and is always present. The person, or *jiva*, is an object known to you along with all other objects.

**Reinhardt:** I’ll just explain who I am to give you a sense of myself first off. I’m 31 years old now and I started on the “path” officially, I guess, back in 2007 after practising Elysha’s method of finding your true nature behind the eyes, as it were. I suddenly got it... I was walking down the street a couple of days after having temporarily given up his practice out of frustration and I looked up briefly at the clear blue sky and had that realisation that I am everything-but-nothing-at-the-same-time-but-in-no-time kind of thing... it lasted for about two seconds but it left SUCH a deep imprint in me. There was such a release, such a beautiful feeling... it was incredible. I’ll never forget that moment (but nowadays it isn’t such a big deal for me).

**Sundari:** You had an epiphany, an experience of the self, and this is extremely common for many seekers. If you read James’ autobiography you will have understood that he had countless far-out experiences of the self, as well as all kinds of powerful *samadhis*. While this can be helpful to realise that there is more to life than you previously thought, unless you assimilate and understand the knowledge that the experience is meant to deliver attachment to the experience can become a serious impediment.

The reason for this is that it is knowledge, not experience, that will set you free of limitation and bondage, which is brought about by identification with the body-mind, the person called Reinhardt.

Experiences never last and they always change. It was only after James got very fed up with his spiritual experiences that he found his teacher. You are already experiencing awareness 24/7, so you do not need any particular or “special” experience to know that you are awareness. Is it not obvious that you are aware? It is not an experience problem that you have, you have a knowledge problem, because you are ignorant of your true nature.

What invariably happens when one does not understand this is that you go off chasing the next experience, longing to get that “high” back, just like you did. This is the biggest problem with the spiritual world and what creates misunderstandings and disappointments. This is because the self is not an experience, it cannot be “attained” and it does not feel like anything. It is simply the knowledge that you are limitless, non-dual awareness. No action that Reinhardt can take is capable of giving him freedom from Reinhardt. All action is limited and cannot produce a limitless result, apart from self-inquiry. By exposing the mind to the scripture, self-inquiry results in self-knowledge, which is limitless.

Vedanta means “the quest that ends the quest for knowledge” and it is not going to

give you anything other than understanding. In fact its main objective is to remove something from you: the ignorance of your true nature.

**Reinhardt:** So after a year or so of having these glimpses they started to wane and I had this nervous breakdown one night after feeling lost, hurt, confused about what I should do with my life, which confused me because I thought I knew the secret of life – that I was the Totality, so why there was confusion and pain was really bothersome for me. So finally that night in 2009, after completing a graduate degree I felt no connection to, I “snapped,” as it were, and finally got to that stage where I was able to observe the workings of my mind from a non-judgmental, detached position.

**Sundari:** Dispassion developed after the mind “snapped,” which is why you were able to watch it from a detached position. This is a very positive sign and one of the most fundamental prerequisites for self-inquiry. Suffering is beneficial in that it breaks down the identification with the subtle body. As I said above, these experiences always end, and when they do the person you have always thought yourself to be, i.e. Reinhardt, with all his conditioning (*vasanas*/programmes), is back in full force. This is why you need knowledge to set you free of the person, not experience.

In order to be free of the person, the “doer,” you need to understand “his” conditioning, what it is and where it originates from, meaning that you need to understand how *Isvara*, or the *dharma* field, operates. If you do not those *vasanas* will still bind and the doer will not be relieved, so suffering will continue.

**Reinhardt:** Skipping ahead now... I basically follow Burt Harding’s teachings but I still sometimes fear I may not get all the answers from Burt and that I might be missing out on something that is offered by other teachers, so I read or listen to others’ teachings and implement what they say.

**Sundari:** I don’t know Burt Harding or what he teaches. What I can say to you is that if fear that is driving your inquiry, it is not good. It seems you are shopping around for a “feel-good” experience. If your seeking is all about experience, it is a futile quest.

Most of the teachings available today are not a complete, valid means of knowledge. There may be some knowledge here and there, but most modern teachings are usually only the truth according to someone’s interpretation of their own experiences. For the most part, they serve only to confuse and compound self-ignorance.

**Reinhardt:** Still, it’s what enlightenment means... I thought that in the process of doing self-enquiry all of the subconscious issues would be burnt up. But I guess not then – is this wrong, to assume that there’s no work left after one has awakened?

**Sundari:** The self is never awakened because it never slept; it is unborn and never dies. Having an experience of the self does not negate the doer or remove the binding *vasanas*. Self-realisation is the easy part.

Once you know and experience the self, the work begins. If freedom is what you really really want more than anything else – and you are willing to work for it – then you need to forget everything you have so far heard or been taught.

Unless you come to Vedanta with an open mind, free of all that it thinks it knows, Vedanta will not work. You need a beginner's mind. Vedanta is the knowledge that underpins all other paths, and one of the very first qualifications for self-inquiry is faith in the scripture. This is not blind faith, it is faith pending the outcome of your self-inquiry.

Assuming you have understood and developed most of the qualifications necessary for self-inquiry, there are basically three stages to self-inquiry:

1. *Sravana* – Listening, or hearing the scripture. This requires that you leave everything you previously believed or thought you knew temporarily on the shelf. You can have your beliefs back if self-knowledge does not work for you. But for now leave them on the shelf. This is very important; if you keep comparing Vedanta to all your beliefs and opinions and try to make it comply with them, forget about self-inquiry. Vedanta is a radical teaching, it is counterintuitive; expect it to challenge everything you thought you knew.

2. *Manana* – Reasoning, contemplation. This is thinking about what the scripture is saying, examining the unexamined logic of your own experience. At this point you look at your beliefs and opinions in the light of what the scripture says, NOT the other way around.

3. *Nididhyasana* – Applying the knowledge to your life, taking a stand in awareness as awareness. Self-actualisation.

**Reinhardt:** Isn't life meant to be easy and beautiful? If there are still issues, then doesn't one still suffer?... which is exactly what is not supposed to happen after awakening??

**Sundari:** Self-realisation is not a magic pill for the ego. If the conditioning that runs the person, as well as the principles that make up the *dharma* field, have not been understood and negated in the light of self-knowledge, suffering continues before, during and after self-realisation. In other words, if the mind has not been exposed to a valid means of knowledge through dedicated self-inquiry, which is where “the work” comes in, ignorance of your true nature will not be removed. The “awakening” experience ends and the person with all their stuff remains.

Nothing is “supposed to happen.” Things will not magically be different, wonderful and perfect. You will not be a person without problems. You will, however, be able to handle your problems efficiently when you know who you are.

Unless self-actualisation follows self-realisation, you will most likely “lose” your “self-realisation,” because the knowledge is not firm and not backed by self-knowledge nor is it backed by a means of knowledge to help you understand, assimilate and actualise self-knowledge.

If you are looking for an easy and beautiful life “in the world” as the person called Reinhardt with his conditioning, suffering is inevitable. For *moksa* stick to *karma yoga* until such time as your life becomes peaceful and the qualifications for it

develop.

**Reinhardt:** If there is no self, why then do dreamwork? You couldn't be that detached from the body-mind if it was necessary to justify the need for dreamwork...

**Sundari:** You have weird ideas about dreamwork, Reinhardt. I am not sure how you picked them up. As I said above, dreamwork is a simple and effective way to understand the ego and how it functions, because in the dream state the *vasanas* are still active. This means it is a very good way to purify the mind in the waking state because you get to observe "Shadow" content, which is normally not available for observation in the waking state. Dreamwork can be a useful aid to self-inquiry, but it is not essential.

**Reinhardt:** So what then motivates me to want to do self-enquiry? Shouldn't I really be looking to rid myself of issues that will prevent me from truly enjoying life??

**Sundari:** The only reason for doing self-inquiry is to be free of the doer, the person called Reinhardt, the one who suffers, because he is run by his conditioning and his identification with the body-mind. In order to develop the qualifications for *moksa*, you will need to first understand what Reinhardt's "issues" are, as I have repeatedly said above, but you need to understand them in the light of self-knowledge in order to be free of the issues and the person. This is the only way to enjoy life: to be free of the person.

**Reinhardt:** Maybe I don't understand what enlightenment is then... or if I do, then I think attainment shouldn't be emphasized, or at least clarified, because you'd think that if you're the Ocean, how could there be any more conflict...?

**Sundari:** Yes, attainment should not be emphasized. It is not enough to know that you are the Ocean. You need to know what it means to make that claim. Being the "ocean" means that you know that your true nature is H<sub>2</sub>O, or water, and that the ocean and wave arise out of you. However, as H<sub>2</sub>O you are always free of both the ocean and the wave. This means that freedom (*moksa*) comes from discriminating the self (awareness) from the objects that arise IN awareness. You are awareness.

If you want me to teach you, you will have to do the groundwork first, Reinhardt. Vedanta comes to those who are ready. I have no interest in convincing you that Vedanta works because I do not see you as anything other than awareness, whatever you think or believe or what "path" you follow. There is nothing wrong with any other spiritual path, and if you are attached to another way, go ahead. But then, like I said above, self-inquiry will be difficult, if not impossible.