

Dreamwork

Ram (James Swartz)

2014-09-14

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/314>

Christina: Dear James, maybe you remember me: I was one of Premananda's followers, and we met a few times in Tiruvannamalai. I have left Premananda and the community about five years ago. For two years I was trying to live a normal life but it didn't work out. My self dropped me into a deep crisis to let me see that my existence can't get on without taking the self the first priority. This crisis emphasized my dependency on outer authorities.

James: I am not surprised you left Premananda. Even though I love the guy, he has no business "teaching" anything. I finally told him so, and haven't seen him for years.

Christina: Just within this crisis I met the dreamwork. Not the usual dreamwork which seeks for solutions and absolutions, but a dreamwork that seeks for freeing the self, exhuming the natural being which we are. I am working with my dreams now for two-and-a-half years; since one year I am also painting my self.

James: So what has the dreamwork done to free you?

Christina: All the people I am friends with which have dealt with *satsang* before rejecting dreams as illusions. They don't understand that it needs mind to overcome mind; they are afraid of their dreams and they are afraid to question the illusion of the being. Therefore, I would be glad to have some answers to some questions. What was your impulse to listen to your dreams?

James: It was just curiosity. I wasn't looking for anything. I was already happy and free.

Christina: All the *satsang*, all the Advaita Vedanta I listened to told me to reject dreams as an illusion.

James: That is true if you are looking for liberation because liberation is discriminating between the real - awareness - and the apparently real, which means dreams, thoughts, feelings, ideas, beliefs, opinions, etc. But if you are trying to purify your mind, dreamwork can be valuable.

Christina: I came to dreamwork by chance or by fate, after I couldn't get further with Premananda. How and why did you start to observe your dreams?

James: I just had some interesting dreams when I was living alone in the mountains

and I had nothing to do, so I started to study them. As I said above, I already knew who I was.

Christina: Would you call the dreamwork necessary for inner growth, or is it a personal thing?

James: No. It can be helpful as an aid to *sadhana* because it brings unconscious content into consciousness, but it is definitely not necessary. All the ideas that come up in dreams are based on waking-state reality. If you don't solve your life problems, your dreams will reflect that. But you do not need dreams to tell you what you should be doing in life. For someone seeking liberation, the lifestyle is clear.

Christina: What is your personal experience/learning with dreamwork regarding Advaita Vedanta?

James: I got nothing from it that I didn't get from Vedanta – you really can't compare dreamwork with Vedanta – but it cleared some Shadow content and rounded out my understanding of *Isvara*, the unconscious mind, in an unusual way.

Christina: The reason I am writing to you is the following: I feel that my self requests me to do something meaningful with my life. I have a few ideas, and all of them get corrupted by my conditioning. Sometimes I just stay quiet until self is overcoming. Sometimes I just feel the urgent drive of my ego to do something with my life.

James: I think you would be better served by doing whatever you are doing in the *karma yoga* spirit. In this way, your actions in the world will remove your unhealthy conditioning. When it has been removed to some degree, it will reveal your *svadharma* – your relative nature – and you will be led to meaningful work.

Christina: Spiritual people especially are pretty skeptical of dreamwork. What is your argument about dreamwork for “spiritual” people?

James: Dreamwork is a very slow, indirect way of solving psychological problems. However, if it makes you happy, then you should do it.

Christina: What parallel do you see in dreamwork and in Advaita Vedanta?

James: It depends on what you mean but Advaita Vedanta. But basically there is no connection, particularly in the way that you probably understand it. If you got your ideas about Advaita from Premananda or from others in the Neo-Advaita world, you will undoubtedly be confused. I think what you mean by Advaita Vedanta is Neo-Advaita. It is a seriously flawed approach to non-duality.

Having said that, if you are attracted to dreamwork and you know how to interpret

the dream language – and you are committed to following what the dream teaches – it may be beneficial, as dreams are a way that *Ishvara* communicates with the person.

But the big problem is how to interpret the meaning of the dream. To do it properly, you would need a dreamworker who is a free being. If you don't know who you are either as a person or as awareness, it is virtually impossible to make sense out of the dreams because your conditioning will cause you to misunderstand the meaning of the dream.

And finally, dreams do not proscribe a *sadhana*, a way of life that leads to liberation; they merely reflect what you are at any moment. When you have cleared some of your negative stuff and if the dreams start to reveal the mind of *Ishvara*, God, then they can become valuable spiritually, but that level of dreamwork is very rare and you would need a guide to interpret the dreams. And then you need the will to put the suggested changes into practice.

It is better to clear your subconscious with *karma yoga*. You probably don't understand what *karma yoga* is if you were with Premananda. He definitely misuses it. If you want to know more, you should get my book *How to Attain Enlightenment* and read it very slowly from beginning to end. It will give you a proper blueprint for enlightenment.

~ Love, James