

# No Need for the Presence of the Teacher

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**Steve:** I earnestly seek to be free of illusion/suffering, and will read more on your site in order to be guided in the right direction. Unfortunately, I am unable to acquire the help of a qualified teacher (in person), but your website is an invaluable resource of teachings.

I am “new” to Vedantic understanding, and any advice is truly appreciated.

I just want to say thank you again, from the “bottom of my heart”... You have truly provided me inspiration, and helped to clarify, for me, the teachings.

Your genuineness, dedication and kindness in taking the time to write back to me is definitely “heartfelt.”

~ With sincere thankfulness and gratitude, Steve

**Sundari:** I am happy to be of service to you, Steve, and to pass on this invaluable knowledge. I have updated the requirements for inquirers on our website, as I see it had been removed for some reason by our IT manager.

It helps to be “in the presence” of the teacher but it is not a prerequisite for *moksa*. The qualifications for *moksa* are a prerequisite though. As I made clear, Vedanta has a very specific methodology which will work to remove ignorance if the mind is qualified and a qualified teacher wields it for you. Although not all the qualifications need to be present, they need to be understood and developed. So both qualifications and a qualified teacher are not negotiable, assuming *moksa* is the aim. It does not hurt to repeat that there is a very good reason Vedanta stresses the importance the qualifications and of a qualified teacher: Ignorance, or the non-apprehension of the true nature of reality as non-dual, is hardwired and very tenacious.

As the mind is conditioned to think a certain way and non-duality is counter-intuitive unless the mind is guided in its exposure to Vedanta, it will interpret Vedanta according to its conditioning, or *vasanas*, and self-knowledge will not obtain. There are apparent contradictions within the teachings which are not real contradictions and need to be resolved by a qualified teacher. Teachings and teachers abound who teach according to their methods and experience but this is always misleading, flawed and limited. Unless a teaching is independent of the teacher, it will be contaminated by his or her beliefs, opinions and experiences, no matter how lofty or “enlightened” they claim to be.

Although it is beneficial to be in the presence of a qualified teacher, there is no real boundary between you and the *guru*, because a *guru* literally means “one who dispels the darkness” and in doing so, reveals that the self is the only *guru*, because this is a non-dual reality. You do not need to lean on a genuine Vedanta teacher, and if you do, we are not doing our job. We are just mouthpieces for *Isvara*, for the Truth. It is not our truth or based on our experience, although it confirms both. We do not want disciples or followers, because we do not teach the ego, we teach the self.

Whether we are physically with you or connecting via technology, the knowledge is wielded in the same way by us because we are qualified teachers of Vedanta. We see you as the self, as non-different. Vedanta is a teaching tradition based on friendship and equality. If the mind is prepared and qualified and you are firmly dedicated to self-inquiry, self-knowledge will do “the work” of removing ignorance. We are all here to help you with any questions that arise, but we cannot remove your ignorance. Only *Isvara* can do so. James and I have taught thousands of people around the world and helped many find *moksa*, most of whom we never meet.

BUT – we cannot do “the work” of self-inquiry for you, nobody can. It takes a burning desire for freedom to commit to self-inquiry. As James is fond of saying, Vedanta is the court of last appeal for those fortunate souls whose *karma* prepares them for *moksa*, freedom. And there is one more factor to consider, grace. It is only by the grace of *Isvara* that anything happens – and grace is earned.

When you need us, we are here for you, but we are extremely busy and it is essential that you first do some groundwork to establish an understanding of the teachings so that you know the right questions to ask. And all questions are answered by the teachings, in due course, if you are doing self-inquiry properly. Make use of the enormous resources on the website. Even though it is essential that Vedanta is properly taught and that you follow the methodology meticulously, it is not our place to explain every aspect of the teachings to you, and it is not beneficial to you if we do. Self-inquiry requires that you do the work and we assist you when you genuinely cannot find the answer to questions that arise on your own.

~ Love, Sundari