

# The Broken Road Home

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

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**Steve:** Hello, Ramji and Sundari.

I have read *The Essence of Enlightenment* twice (and taken many notes!). I just finished reading *Inquiry into Existence* and *The Yoga of Love*. I continue to read many Advaita teachings: *Upadesa Sahasri*, *Vivekacudamani*, *Aparoksanubhuti*, *Avadhuta Gita*, *Astavakra Samhita*, etc.).

I do realize that I am, we all are, everything is, *Brahman*. I cannot even begin to express (to you both) how grateful I am that *Isvara* has led me to your valid and noble administration of the truth. You both are truly gifted!

**Sundari:** Hello, Steve, lovely to hear from you again, and such a beautiful email, my goodness. It made me quite emotional. So many brave and beautiful souls *Isvara* sends our way. How much you suffered to get to this point. I am honoured to hear your story, it is powerful. Have you considered writing it up, sharing your journey? There are countless “spiritual” books and autobiographies available, but not many by genuine Vedantins. And you really do have a story to tell! I am so happy for you that you can do so with such dispassion, knowing that it is a story and its purpose has been fulfilled, that of bringing you to Vedanta. Home. To yourself.

**Steve:** Even though I realize that I am existence/awareness, I am sometimes finding difficulty in escaping the identification with strong *gunas*. I am hoping that your next teaching on the *gunas* will be available soon.

**Sundari:** Indeed, this is where all the “work” of self-inquiry takes place. Traditionally, inquirers would take about five years in the *sravana* stage (listening/hearing), at least five more in the second stage of self-inquiry, *manana* (contemplation), and up to 15 in the last stage, *nididhysana* (transformation of emotional/mental *samskaras* into devotion for the self), which is why it is so essential to understand what the *gunas* are and how they function. I have attached the new *guna* book download as a gift to you.

**Steve:** This *jiva* that *Isvara* has blessed me with (like so many), has been bombarded with trials upon trials.

I was abandoned by my parents when I was twelve. I jumped from place to place in Detroit, Michigan, and worked wherever I could to be able to eat.

Upon reaching the age of fifteen, the opportunity arrived to meet with my mother in Louisiana. I hitch-hiked to Louisiana to meet her (several stories I could tell you about that excursion)... but I digress.

She and her “boyfriend” were staying in a very tiny, two-room apartment, in an ill-reputable section of town (to say the least). One night, not long after arriving, her

boyfriend asked me a couple of intriguing questions. The first question was, "Steve, have you ever read the Bible?"

I replied, "No, I can't say that I have."

To which he responded, "Well, you should. It is a very good book." Then he asked me, "Steve, have you ever eaten an onion sandwich?"

"No," I said. "Can't say that I have ever done that either."

Two days later, they were gone. There was a note on the door, which read: "We had to leave... The rent has been paid up for one month."

Well, a couple of days went by... and after coming out of my shock, mostly due to hunger, the realization arrived that I was now alone, in a place unknown to me and with no money or anyone to talk to.

I was very hungry. After rummaging around, (guess what?) I stumbled across a half of a loaf of bread and an onion. Let me tell you, that onion sandwich was the best-tasting sandwich that I have ever eaten.

There was a Bible left on a chair in the room. I read it while I ate. And that is how I got started in life.

I have been threatened by weapons, befriended in ghettos, contemplated in "spiritual" centers, traveled with carnies, etc., etc. (the stories I could tell).