

Enlightenment Is Very Simple

Ram (James Swartz)

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Seeker: Dear James, thank you for your message, which was an unexpected and delightful surprise. I was actually going to send you a short message today anyway to thank you directly for writing your wonderful book *How to Attain Enlightenment*. I have recently finished reading it for the second time in as many months, and it's been an absolutely delightful journey of discovery and insight. I have been quite passionate about spirituality and enlightenment since the mid-seventies and have read literally hundreds of books on these subjects. Your book is easily one of the very best and most illuminating I have ever come across. I have also during the last few months spent a great deal of time exploring your website. I've read through a lot of what you have published there and I am also in the process of listening to the audio recordings that you so kindly have made available. I think I understand everything that you are saying, at least at this moment there isn't anything that I can think of to ask you about, which is okay, I suppose.

James: Yes, indeed. Because everything is the self you are only "unenlightened" if you have questions.

Seeker: If I remember correctly, you have defined enlightenment as "the hard and fast knowledge that you are pure, non-dual, limitless, ordinary awareness." Although I have known this for about four years now I never thought of it in such simple and clear terms before. It is actually only after reading your book and exploring your further teachings on Vedanta that I can say that the knowledge of what I am is firmly embedded, as it were.

James: Enlightenment (a bad word actually, because of its experiential connotations) is very simple. Many people who know who they are still have doubts because they have picked up the notion that enlightenment is some kind of serendipitous Black Swan event.

Seeker: On the level of experience there is now, most of the time, a sense of emptiness which paradoxically also feels like fullness. It's not a negative emptiness, or experience, in other words, but something that's rather peaceful and gentle. Well, I don't really know how to describe it but I do realize that it is ultimately not important anyway as it is only an experience and all experiences come and go, or maybe I could say that all experiences appear and disappear within what I am: awareness/consciousness.

James: Yes, it is an experience but an experience that is a close companion to the knowledge "I am awareness." It is a "full emptiness," the experience/knowledge that whatever substance the world of empty object enjoys is informed by the fullness of awareness.

Seeker: I am grateful that you have managed to put such a profound teaching into a form which is so accessible and easy to understand. I do hope that I will one day have the opportunity, privilege and pleasure of listening to you in person, so I will keep an eye on your schedule. Thank you again so much for your brilliant book and for your teaching. It is a precious gift to the world.

James: Appreciation is always appreciated. Vedanta is easy to understand if it is taught properly. The self is straightforward. The *jiva* with its joys and sorrows is easy to understand. Only *Isvara*, the link between them, is difficult to grasp. But with a clear teaching and a bit of contemplation it all makes sense. Also, on behalf of those yet to discover Vedanta, thanks for the excellent review.

~ Love, James