

# The Big Ocean of Ever-Present Unconcern

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Chuck:** Dear James, it's time for me to again express my great gratitude for all your work and this wonderful teaching. Two years of listening, reflecting and understanding deeper and deeper have changed my life tremendously. It really feels like taking a stand on a very solid rock. Many old fears have disappeared and a good deal of desires have vanished in the big ocean of ever-present unconcern!! THANK YOU SO MUCH !

The more inquiry I do the more I feel pulled into the dimensionless field of Truth. It's wonderful to experience how everything else becomes unimportant although I still enjoy my daily life. Everything shines even when there are ups and downs. Our Vedanta group still works beautifully. For a long time we have been reading carefully *The Value of Values* by Swami Dayananda. The qualifications really need to be fulfilled! It's also magic how questions can disappear by simply keeping on track. For example, although I understood the idea that the same consciousness shines in everybody, I couldn't explain it to anybody. Then I realized that the question is wrong, because there is nobody else. I, consciousness, have no location. ☺

**James:** That explanation works if you are talking to someone else who understands the all-pervasiveness of consciousness, but a person who doesn't would have to take it on faith. I like the *upadhi* explanation: although electricity is the same everywhere it appears to be different when it flows through different instruments. Flowing through a light bulb it appears as light, through a heater it appears as heat and through a radio it manifests as sound. When it flows through my *vasanas* it appears as me, through your *vasanas* as you. Or it is like life. The aliveness in me isn't different from the aliveness in you. We are both just alive. It looks like it is different because your *guna* configurations are different from mine. When your mind is dull, you seem to be dull, and when I am *rajasic* I seem to be animated, but the differences belong to the equipment, not to the consciousness. Or existence. Is your existence different from mine? So in this way, if you give a few examples, people can understand.

**Chuck:** The Vedanta bus keeps going, and many things are falling in place. The big picture reveals itself more and more clearly.

I have always been a rather structured *jiva*. Some time ago the urge arose to speak about Vedanta and to write things down. Speaking and writing is very helpful to get the mind ordered.

**James:** Speaking and writing is the best *sadhana*. It was my preferred method of cementing self-knowledge. Speaking and writing objectify your knowledge. You can discover contradictions quickly and see ignorance directly.

**Chuck:** I attached a summary about the method of Vedanta – as far as my understanding has developed. Perhaps you find the time to comment on it!

**James:** It's excellent. I read it carefully, Chuck. Sometimes I could see that the knowledge was correct but that the way you expressed it created a doubt. It is not a fault of your understanding. I made a few comments and emphasized some important points with bold type. I'm glad that you are very clear about experience and action. I'm sorry about the delay but it came at a bad time. I was just finishing the *guna* book – it's in the shop – and spent a week in Cape Town doing a seminar.

## **Vedanta, a Summary**

### 1. There is only one SELF:

Everything perceived appears in awareness and is witnessed by awareness, the self: all objects = the world/all things, including my own body, sensual perceptions, thoughts, memories, emotions. It's the Only Reality, ever-present, never changing and limitless. It is non-dual. The apparent reality, the world/universe of duality, is constantly changing, coming and going.

### 2. Ignorance:

The apparent individual/person mistakes the subject for the object, i.e. the actual subject/self is superimposed on an object, the apparent person, the separate self, the ego. The self has limited itself to an individual *jiva*, and apparently forgot or overlooked its true nature.

**James:** I think you mean **the apparent person** thinks the self is an object. The self has apparently become limited and assumed that it is a person, an object.

So here you need to explain *Maya* because the self doesn't limit itself. It looks like it does but *Maya* seemingly limits it. *Maya* is not the same as the self nor is it different from the self. *Sat-asat vilakshanam*.

You also need to point out that only people who have had direct experiences of the self or who have read statements that the self is an object think the self is an object, but that most everybody doesn't know about the self at all. Most think the self is the equipment.

**Chuck:** The false I, the person/ego, takes itself to be the subject, but experiences itself as small, inadequate and incomplete. So it seeks security, pleasure and happiness in other objects like personal ownership, material values, money, fame, relationship, sex, entertainment, distractions, etc. This is called ignorance, based on fear and desire (*tamas* and *rajas*), the cause of all suffering.

**James:** Ignorance is not based on fear and desire. Fear and desire are based on ignorance. Ignorance is the cause, not the effect.

**Chuck:** The (only) purpose of Vedanta is to remove ignorance.

**James:** Yes.

### **Chuck:** 3. Happiness:

The Absolute, our actual nature and One and Only Reality, sees nothing but consciousness. All there is is consciousness. Nothing ever happened. Fullness and completeness. So there is constant bliss. It is the nature of the self.

*Sat chit ananda*. Existence, consciousness, bliss, being, knowing, happiness.

**James:** It is self-revealing, self-experiencing, self-evident fullness.

**Chuck:** The separate self (apparently) experiences suffering and/(because it) seeks permanent happiness in ever-changing, impermanent objects. It can never succeed unless it realizes it's true identity: ever-present consciousness.

The nature of the self (reflected but obscured in a person, name and form) is pure happiness. It's not an exalted feeling. It is without a second thing and without cause.

The apparent person is already That, but doesn't know it. Awareness is never not present. But it's veiled. An open secret.

### 4. Knowledge and action:

Freedom is only achieved by knowledge about one's true nature and identity as ever-present, limitless awareness. This knowledge has nothing to do with the capacity of the brain: with knowing of objects, things or facts. Whatever I do will never put an end to ignorance. Doing will not reach the goal. All deeds done by a "doer" are limited. Limited actions cannot produce limitless results. They begin and have an end. Freedom, the self, however, is limitless (*anantam*).

Things experienced come and go, they only borrow existence in time and space. Existence itself is eternal. Experience cannot lead to enlightenment, because it's just another object in *mithya* seen and witnessed by awareness.

Limitlessness, *anantam*, means unlimited in time (always), in space (everywhere) and in all objects (not a second object, whereas the self is not = non-dual).

Practice (*sadhana*) can turn the mind inward and prepare a *sattvic* state:

- Living a *dharmic* life.
  - *Karma yoga*.
  - Fulfilling the qualifications!! (*viveka, vairagya, samadisatkasampatti, mumuksutvam*).
  - Self-inquiry
  - Meditation, in the way it is written of in the scriptures (dwelling in the self).
- These are the premises for the truth to be seen. These preparations have to be done in the apparent reality, the duality.

Liberation, however, is not the direct result of these actions. Liberation/enlightenment is not an event. And it's not another state!

Knowledge alone sets the apparent person free.

As soon as ignorance is gone, liberation **is experienced**.

Awareness/consciousness/self was always there.

There is nothing so close as the self. Always! (There is no gap or distance between the screen and the movie. It's seamless.) It's not a state, it's a fact (like: fire is hot). You are That. *Tat Tvam Asi*.

5. The method of Vedanta:

Vedanta is not a religion/philosophy or even a goal by itself. It's basically a two-step method.

1. The clear discrimination (*viveka*) between me, the subject/awareness/self/*brahman* and everything else, the objects. I am One, these are many (*dr̥g dr̥stya viveka*).

Here we still seemingly have duality. It's a necessary step to see who I actually am.

2. The clear knowledge that all things (the whole subtle body, the gross body and all other things, i.e. the whole universe, **is only an appearance IN me**. Even more, they are made OUT OF ME. All objects are there because I see them. All objects are false, i.e. only appear as real, as they have no existence on their own. They come and go. Awareness is eternal, omnipresent and does not change. It's the only Reality.

The Eternal Subject cannot be known, because it's not an object, perceived by the mind (the mind is an object known by the subject/self).

By teaching Vedanta the teacher/*guru* descends to the student's level, pretending that there is something to achieve or to become.

The means of knowledge are the scriptures, the *Upanishads*.

By the method of negation (the other methods?), *neti neti* (in Latin: *via negativa*), the truth is revealed. There is only the self, awareness.

**James:** Affirmation is another method, taking a stand in awareness. Elimination of non-essential variables is *neti neti*.

**Chuck:** The method of Vedanta is a deliberate superimposition (of the truth that all there is is consciousness) for the purpose of teaching, leading to the negation of everything that seems to be not the self. Nobody was ignorant and nobody woke up. All there is is consciousness, the only ever-present Reality. The self never can be absent.

**James:** Yes. We have to superimpose the idea of the self on the *jiva* because the *jiva* doesn't know what it is. Then we have to expose the unexamined logic of the *jiva's* experience in the form of the teachings, which destroys the superimposition and reveals the self to have been always immediately experienced. It is the ever-experienced I.

**Chuck:** Thank you very much for your precise and helpful answers. This text I sent to you is a collection of insights based on what I read and listened to. It was not

written in two hours. I'm not sure if I could give a talk about it by heart. It's amazing how many levels of deeper and deeper understanding there are (i.e. how many layers of veiling power there obviously are).

When I reread the beginning of my email it sounds pretty bright and perhaps a little too happy. I have to admit that there also many phases where I don't find effective access to knowledge. These phases dominate. Sleep disturbance is another issue. Then it's not that I know and not that I don't know, a gray zone. So I don't enjoy the fruits of knowledge at all!! ☐

What stays as a solid rock, however, is my security about Vedanta and the truth and my way!! The basics are never questioned. I always know that suffering is exclusively made out of ignorance!

Subsequently the *jiva* asks, what can I do?

Intensify *karma yoga*?

Read or listen to more teachings?

Simplify life even more?

More and regular meditation?

Look back into my personal history?

Or simply wait and trust?

Maybe we could have a little talk about these issues when I see you in two weeks. I'm looking very much forward to seeing and hearing you!

**James:** I don't think intensifying your efforts will make a difference. Results come when they come. Maybe your desire for Chuck to be more enlightened is causing agitation. Remember, Chuck is just an object known to you. What happens to him doesn't happen to you. As I read this email it was clear to me that the self was writing it. See how objective you are about Chuck, how well you know his situation. Yes, take it easy. Don't wait. There is nothing to wait for. Just concentrate on enjoying your life exactly as it is and do your inquiry consistently and patiently. The results are always up to *Isvara* and they come in their own time.

**Chuck:** Thank you so much, James, for your encouragement. It works! Reading your email, I could right away see and feel the truth in it. Effort had always been my survival tool. So more or less it's being used automatically to reach any goal.

But I see very clearly that reality can never be a goal as such, as it is already here and never was absent. By definition! But I obviously needed to hear it from "outside," which in this case means right from inside.

However, somehow it feels like walking on a razor's edge: to "do" the effortless effort. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't.

But anyway, I'm happy having expressed some kind of an apparent helplessness and suffering. It's a relief. It's surrender and bowing to God, Life and Love. What could be better?

~ Much love, Chuck