

Testimonial

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2017-09-15

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3432>

Nicola: Dear Sundari, first and foremost I would like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to you, Ram and all the teachers on the ShiningWorld site. The service and teaching you provide is incredible, and I am so grateful for all that you do. This letter is mostly just to connect and say thank you.

I am a married, 31-year-old, stay-at-home mum. I have always felt drawn to God and wanted an understanding of life. Around age six or seven (maybe earlier or later, I'm not sure exactly) I realised that I would die regardless of anything that happened in my life, no matter how "good" I was. I have a vague recollection of asking my parents what the meaning of life was then, but was not really given an answer. Around the same time, I found an old *yoga* book of my mother's, so set up a shrine in my room, started meditating and trying to do *yoga*, all very strange for a young girl on a farm in Australia! My family were very tolerant, but I also became aware that people didn't consider it "normal" and it wasn't really the proper thing to do, so I stopped it all at around 11 years old. High school led to excessive drinking to "fit in," which led to deep depression and becoming suicidal. I had my "dark night of the soul" at eighteen when I decided to kill myself, but at that moment a voice said this is not a logical or ethical solution to my troubles. I went through counselling, therapeutic drugs, etc. which really helped. I also started taking party drugs that made me and everything feel like love. This was great until I developed intense anxiety, so I started *yoga* again and realised I could get the same high from *yoga*. I threw myself into *yoga*, stopped drinking and drugging, became vegetarian, started meditating and eventually become a *yoga* teacher. This continued for seven years until when on a *yoga* course our philosophy teacher recommended James' book and website. That was three years ago. I fell pregnant soon after, which has been a great blessing, as life became a lot simpler and I learnt that I have no control of the outcome of my actions (you cannot force a baby to go to sleep!), to surrender, pray, neutralise my likes and dislikes, and basically give everything to *Isvara*. This householder life has been a great practise ground for me to apply Vedanta. My husband of five years has no interest in *yoga* or Vedanta, but is completely supportive, and I share bits and pieces with him occasionally. In the last few years I have read *How to Attain Enlightenment*, *The Essence of Enlightenment* (multiple times, and I am continually rereading both these books), *Tattva Bodh*, *The Yoga of the Three Energies*, *Tiprura Rahasya* and many, many *satsangs*, watched many YouTube videos and am making my way through the *Bhagavad Gita* lectures.

I understand that the above is all just the story of the *jiva* Nicola. I am the unchanging, ever-present awareness, the same awareness that was aware at seven years old as now. This knowledge is not yet totally firm. I still identify with Nicola on and off, but is becoming easier to discriminate and knowledge is getting firmer as I keep studying, applying the teachings and putting it all in *Isvara's* hands.

I also was wondering if you know of any qualified teachers in Australia. I know in your *satsangs* you say you do not need the physical presence of the teacher, but I am also aware that misunderstandings can happen when just reading the teachings (as James has mentioned). It is unlikely that I can travel to you anytime soon, so was wondering if there was anyone in this corner of the world to connect with.

On another note, I am really looking forward to your *guna* book. Since having low iron during pregnancy I started to eat some meat and did feel slightly confused ethically, but your article clarified this for me and put my doubts to rest. I would also like to thank you for the *satsang* article about children in which you gave a beautiful and eloquent description of God that I am planning on teaching my son when he is older.

I hope this letter finds you and Ram well. Please pass on my deepest gratitude to everyone at ShiningWorld.

~ Yours sincerely, Nicola