

A Jivanmukta

Ram (James Swartz)

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Maja: Dear James and Sundari, thanks for the January newsletter, where I can read about your new home in Spain and that you are well and continuing to teach Vedanta. I just want to connect with you and tell you a little about myself.

Since my aha moment, February 2010 in Tiruvannamalai, I have continued to read and listen to Vedanta teachings. From the very beginning I had actually no doubts, only a few points that were not totally clear and some misunderstandings that later became corrected. Many times I thought of writing to you but didn't, because the answers came from within when I remembered a particular teaching or because I found the answers in an e-*satsang* or a video. I thank Vedanta and you from my heart for having transformed this *jiva* to an *jivanmukta*. And this leads to the first question in this email: When I know who I am and know that I am free, is it okay to tell other Vedanta students? I did that only once in a conversation in the Facebook group (that doesn't exist anymore) and I regret it, as one response was that usually those who are liberated don't mention it. So what is your advice in this case?

Usually in my daily life I don't talk about Vedanta at all, my family and most of my friends never ask me what I have been doing in India and in retreats in Europe. I know that they are not interested, but I have a few friends who like Vedanta and follow your teachings.

After almost nine years of Vedanta teachings I feel satisfied, not longing for more and yet keeping an eye on the ShiningWorld website and wanting to stay in contact with you. James, you have said that Vedanta is a throwaway tool. This describes how it feels like for me right now. It is like coming home to myself, being totally content, needing nothing and yet living in a flow that brings me everything, and I am enjoying what I am receiving as a *jiva* here. I live an ordinary, peaceful and happy life, with good relationships with family and friends. What I, in an earlier email to you, called "silent jubilation inwardly" is there all the time. I am speaking as a *jiva* here, it is my *jiva* that has benefitted from liberation. At the same time I know that whatever happens or doesn't happen, I am only experiencing me, awareness.

I have been wondering about the 5/10/15 years' process to fully intergrate Vedanta. I didn't hear about it until some years ago; in the beginning I thought it was normal to understand and actualize the teachings after listening to you for a while because Vedanta is so convincing, who can argue against it? But from e-*satsangs* I learned that Self-actualization is the toughest and most important part. As nothing has felt tough for me, I am asking myself: In which part of the process I am now? Do I delude myself or neglect something? Sundari, reading your answers describing the fruits of *nididhyasana* in the *satsang Self-Actualization: The Tough Part*, my whole system says yes; this is true for me. Reading this sentence: "Every moment of every day is complete," I am filled with gratitude and think it cannot be otherwise.

And, on the other hand, this contentment every moment and thinking that I have no binding *vasanas* to deal with makes me lazy and not vigilant to how ignorance can creep in through the back door. Especially when I read the *satsang Isvara Is Not the Boss* (Sundari 2014-12-10), my relationship with *Isvara* is questioned. For years, after meeting Vedanta and James, I have regarded *Isvara* as the giver of everything.

I am certain that the *jiva* is only a tool for *Isvara*, that *Isvara* provides the programming and is running every moment of the *jiva's* life. All impulses and thoughts come from *Isvara* and all actions are done by *Isvara* (God), so actually there is no *jiva*, only *Isvara* expressing itself through this body-mind complex. James often says: "If people could help it, they would not be as they are." This insight takes away all blaming of myself and others, and gives me understanding and love for others, as they are also just instruments for *Isvara*.

This attitude to *Isvara* and life probably comes from my childhood. I was born in Finland in 1938, very close to the border with the Soviet Union. In 1939 the war broke out, when the Soviet Union attacked Finland. We came as refugees to another part of the country, where my father died from a serious illness and my mother was left with two kids, I was two years old and my brother seven months. We remained refugees for many years. I was sent to Sweden in 1944; a total of 70,000 children were sent away to escape the war and poverty at that time.

My mother was a deeply religious woman, she really relied on God, and I think she spoke to me a lot about God, but I don't remember at all. But my foster parents in Sweden told me later that I, at the age of six, when I had learnt to speak Swedish, said that my life rests in God's hands. And I remember that I, as a very religious teenager, a deeply devoted Christian, had that belief. Further on in life I regarded myself as an atheist for many years, but in crisis I turned to God.

After decades of spiritual search I still feel that my life rests in God's hands. But now I question if it is in harmony with what you teach. Sundari, I read: "You can say 'NO' to *Isvara*," and see that you mean *Isvara's* programming. But how can I understand that, when for me everything is awareness/*Isvara* in function, even the (apparent) *jiva's* programming and actions? You often point out that *Isvara* is not a big daddy responding to *jivas'* desires and fears. I don't think of *Isvara* in that way, rather as a field, an intelligence, the totality that the *jiva* is part of and can relate to in devotion and gratitude. I as awareness am observing this (apparent) *jiva* living this (apparent) life as a tool for *Isvara*.

Thus far in my writing to you I reread the newsletter from September 2016 in which you, Sundari, tell about your life. It is so beautifully and humbly written and very touching. You also write about being totally free of the *jiva*. It gives me the feeling that I have misunderstood *nididhyasana*, what it requires from me. How to become free of the *jiva* in my case, when I see the *jiva* as an instrument for *Isvara* as I described above? As awareness I am always free of the object/*jiva*, but duality doesn't disappear when I know I am awareness. The *jiva* remains the way it was created and can be loved and laughed at, not taken seriously as before Self-realization. Please correct me if I have misunderstood.

I wish both of you all the best for this new year 2019. I hope to see you again somewhere in Europe. Thank you for being my teachers and friends.

~ Love and gratitude, Maja

James: Hi, Maja, I love your letters. I'll make my reply to your question very simple. Seeing the *jiva* as an instrument is freedom from the *jiva*, assuming the *vasanas* are non-binding, which they are in your case. Ramana makes the statement that surrender to *Isvara* and direct Self-knowledge are the same because if your knowledge that you are existence/awareness is firm you automatically leave your life

in *Isvara's* hands. But leaving your life in *Isvara's* hands is not necessarily *moksa*, because there may be the idea that you are a person apart from *Isvara*.

You are a fully Self-actualized person. Laziness born of knowledge is enlightened laziness. If you are lazy, that is fine. I am very lazy, but that pesky *Isvara* makes my body and mind jump around like a grasshopper. But I love crime dramas and *tamasic* food too. The *Gita* says that a Self-actualized person is okay with any *guna*. You need to remember that we write *satsangs* for people who are at different levels, so a particular *satsang* does not apply to every inquirer.

Yes, you should teach others when the situation presents itself, but never expect a person to know that you are free. It's like the police asking a robber if he stole a diamond. He will say no if he did and no if he didn't. People who don't know have no way of knowing. If you are, they will feel it, and if they don't, they aren't ready to be taught. Just watch for their ignorance – it is not hard to spot – and ask them questions that make them think about what they are saying. If they are sympathetic, gently point out the illogicality of their thinking. Once they don't feel threatened and see that you know something important, they will seek your company. If you teach properly they will think they are learning, not that they are being taught.

Anyway, I take the dust of your lotus feet.

I am, as always, your own Self.