

# If I Want Help, I Will Ask

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Ruth:** Dear James, from your writing I understand that liberation is just a “technical switch.” It is a matter of switching from the point of view of my body-mind looking to consciousness as an object to being consciousness aware of my body-mind appearing in consciousness. Maybe you don’t believe me, but I am able to make this switch. I just do not have faith in it.

**James:** I don’t believe you. It is not something you can do. It is something that happens when you know who you are.

**Ruth:** You said to “fake it till you make it.” The inquiry is not “believing this” but in abiding and contemplating the self until you know it is true that you are consciousness. You said that it is my identification with Ruth that prevents me from making this switch, after which I should throw my knowledge away.

**James:** The belief that you are Ruth will drop away without effort when you understand without doubt that you are ordinary awareness.

**Ruth:** If I could throw this knowledge away, as the doer, I would have done this already. I know the identifications are not reliable. Still, when I remove them myself it does not help, only adding to identifications, and that is why all the writing is indeed meant to outsmart myself!

**James:** In this case the writer is the doer. As I said above, identification with the doer drops away without effort when you understand your true nature. It is not something the doer does. The doer remains but it understands that it is not the doer, that the *gunas* are the doer. From that point on action just happens.

**Ruth:** After I wrote you I felt that something was wrong. I was strongly longing for your appreciation and I felt myself being a child looking for approval from the father.

**James:** When you approve of yourself you will not seek approval from others.

**Ruth:** This was why I was drawn to a book by a Christian priest, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. He stated something that I never heard before from a Christian. When put it in my own words, Christians are identifying all the time with one or both of the sons. One son that clearly did something wrong and returns to the father, after realizing the pursuit of happiness is of no help. The other one being all the time near the father, but seeing this as moral duty, identification with “doing right,” which prevents him surrendering to the love of the father, in which is freedom. Now the issue is not being all the time one of the sons as child, but to learn to become one

with the father, to become grown-up, and stay home.

**James:** I like this analysis. I agree with your conclusion.

**Ruth:** And this is the meaning of the story of Christ, making people believe this is possible and also the necessary goal: to become the one that is always there, the one that receives everybody and everything as child in unconditional love.

**James:** Yes.

**Ruth:** In one of your emails you also stated that Christianity is a dualistic religion, and it came only close to non-duality in the words of Jesus: "I and the Father are one." In my own words, since the father cannot do else than receive, because the father does not need to reach out, because he is everything... when he does reach out he identifies with the child needing the father, and this need will not be fulfilled... till the child realizes it is its destiny to be one with the father and receives the limited child as being the father, letting it "come home."

**James:** This is a rather silly psychological projection on consciousness. You have it about half right. "Receiving" and "reaching out" imply doership, and consciousness is not a doer, but I get the general idea.

**Ruth:** When I "switch" to being consciousness, Ruth appearing in it, I know this to be true. But I also know that the words do not describe the action of receiving, which is happening, the meeting of consciousness with itself through the objects.

**James:** If you could switch, you would switch and never switch again. You "unswitch" because you do not know what it means to be the self. In fact the switching and unswitching happens and your ego is taking credit for the switch. It should also take credit for the unswitch. The words, the idea, the knowledge brings about the switch. Doing is not involved.

**Ruth:** It is the meeting, the stream, the inner movement and the joy, the story of coming home which seems to be absent in this description of truth.

**James:** It is only a "seeming" absence.

**Ruth:** I told you I had difficulty abiding with "being consciousness, my body-mind as consciousness appearing in it." The first difficulty was that everything turned out to be meaningless.

**James:** That is because you interpreted it incorrectly. If you understood the nature of consciousness, you would not draw this conclusion. You could have just as easily seen it as freedom. But the ego was identifying with what it was about to lose rather

than what it would gain.

**Ruth:** The second was my mind almost “exploding,” which seemed like going into a psychotic state.

**James:** What drama!

**Ruth:** Then I found out that I could not permit myself to accept this to be true, because I felt small and God or consciousness seemed big. So this is when I realized: if God is the small even when he is big, then I must be big even when I am small.

I knew this really to be true, me as awareness not going in or out of the experience, but receiving every object, as body-mind, action, experience, etc. as itself, awareness, on one line, one level, while the unconditional love remained, as an ocean which appears as waves in the objects (thoughts, body, actions, etc.).

**James:** Okay.

**Ruth:** I thought you would appreciate and understand my attitude of “searching as thinking and contemplating” because identifying with the experience is a “disease” which keeps me searching and uncertain. The “certainty” is the being of consciousness without experience. Always saying “this is just an experience” prevents from really being consciousness which is unconditional love. This denial of experience is an even bigger disease, as you point out in your critical attitude towards Neo-Advaita.

**James:** It only prevents it if it is not true. Nothing prevents you from being consciousness, because you are always consciousness. To realize this fact you may need to separate you, consciousness, from the experiencing entity and its experiences as it appears in you.

**Ruth:** I visited a man who was also “into Vedanta.” In the conversation he was talking all the time, and clearly took a role as “master” towards me. When I asked him, “When a child starts to beat another child because of a toy, as a parent you teach the child to behave otherwise. But you believe consciousness to sustain every action, and not to have a moral preference. It is my experience that being consciousness bears fruit in so called ‘moral action’ because I do not identify with having the toy, and so I become ‘functional,’ and this is consciousness, expressing itself in a perfect way, when I do not need and I know to be consciousness.”

**James:** He obviously did not know who he is if he is “into Vedanta.”

**Ruth:** “Yeah, all stories,” he said. Then he went on and on about his experiences of dreams and happenings. Then I asked him, is that not a story? He said, “Yes, in reality there is nothing to tell and that is incredible and I only am. It is terrible,” he said, “I remove always all illusions,” and he felt sorry for me. That is where the

conversation stopped, but he kindly offered me to come to him if there was a question left. This experience clearly confirmed me in my conviction that the storyline should not be excluded, and taking (in my opinion) wrongfully a position as a “master” must have a lot to do with leaving the storyline out. Now after receiving your answer, I realize that my motivation for sharing this process was to be understood as Ruth, in this case “the one that does not accept the leaving out of the storyline, because I cannot accept this as the whole truth and I wanted to prove to you this non-acceptance to be right.”

**James:** Even if you are accepted, that is not the end of it. When a new doubt about who you are comes up, you will try to be accepted again. It never ends.

It is important that you understand that I am not a therapist, Ruth. I meet hundreds of people every year, maybe more, so I cannot take personal interest in them, although I have a number of close friends whose lives I know. My job is to help people see the self beyond the self, to help them get free of the tyranny of the person. If you investigate Ruth, you will not find anything substantial. She is an idea in you, in awareness, and not much more. Ruth is the story and you are the one who reads the story.

**Ruth:** When I abide in consciousness, however, I do not need to be confirmed in this storyline of me (I realized this, then that, and then and then...) and the search is over!

**James:** Yes.

**Ruth:** It is also impossible for “me as storyline” to be understood, because every human being bears other identifications and every storyline of removal of identifications is different and can only truly be understood if there was another Ruth, and this cannot be, because every object is unique.

**James:** Correct.

**Ruth:** The only thing that can be understood, and what you are pointing to in your answer, is what is always the same: me being consciousness. Letting the attention go to the storyline is therefore not the right action, the right “place to meet,” and the only meeting point (home) is in truth, which is being, consciousness, and receiving every different storyline as expression of consciousness. When I really accept to be consciousness, including my non-acceptance of leaving out the storyline (not thinking I need your permission to do so, identifying with the position of a child), I realize that only being consciousness can accept every storyline as a movement to be recognized to be itself.

**James:** Correct.

**Ruth:** I thought my attitude as not-knowing, the child, could prevent me from hypocrisy (wrongfully identifying myself as master), and in that way I could “protect”

this important aspect of reality, which is the appreciation of diversity, the storyline, the joy, the love, the meeting, the freedom, the contact, the communication. Maybe this intuition is preventing a lot of people from detaching from experience.

**James:** Yes. There is nothing to prevent or protect.

**Ruth:** I felt also, which is maybe stupid, that I helped you by pointing this out, so you could teach other persons better! I really like to be a good student!

**James:** How silly. If I want to be taught something by you or anyone else I will submit a written request in triplicate notarized by a government official.

**Ruth:** I thought, if it is true that I am consciousness, then also my process of accepting this must be meaningful and helpful to me and other people!

**James:** I do not understand what this “helping people” business is all about, Ruth. I am very suspicious of this kind of thinking. There usually is some kind of psychological dysfunction behind it. Help happens without effort when you know who you are. Until then it is just the doer attempting to fulfill a psychological need.

**Ruth:** I think this is not so stupid, because when I started to read your book I read “a pair of dolphins guide a confused whale caught in a maze of delta waterways to the freedom of the open ocean.”

**James:** Yes, but they were not “doing” it. It is just their nature at that time. They are not swimming around looking for whales in distress. They do not feel that it is a virtuous thing to do.

**Ruth:** But I had just finished a poem about me being the dolphin (playful appearance) and also the whale (the subconsciousness, in the depth of the sea), not wanting to choose, because I am both. It brought me to tears, because I experienced your book as guiding me to open waters.

And it is consciousness in you and the movement of it writing these words and it is also consciousness in me making me recognize this and helping me. So if you, as consciousness, can guide me, then why can I, as consciousness, not guide you? This is not about you and me, but about the relationship between all people.

**James:** Jesus, Ruth! You are so vain. People need to want guidance for your efforts to bear fruit. I don't want to learn anything. Vedanta is “the knowledge that ends the quest for knowledge.” I know everything that needs to be known by me. As the *Bhagavad Gita* says, “Let not the wise unsettle the minds of the ignorant with their wisdom.” I like my ignorance. I am completely happy with it. When I get fed up with it I will write you a humble letter requesting your “help” and I will bow down in gratitude should you deign to shower your blessings on me.

**Ruth:** I hope you see this not as arrogance but a genuine intention of working along with everything and everybody for truth to be known, feeling responsible for that, the object Ruth knowing much less than the object James, but still working together and this movement of consciousness is “one.”

**James:** I do see it as arrogance, masquerading as a kind of romantic idea, sorry to say. My thought is, “Get a life!” I call this “soap-opera thinking” because it is the mentality of the actors in soap operas. More misery is inflicted on human beings by the “helping” mentality than any other. I find it totally unspiritual, a perversion of a natural unconscious power. For me this is the most unappealing of Ruth’s stories. Dolphins do not make a philosophy about it. It happens and when it doesn’t it is fine.

**Ruth:** But the answer is very clear: I cannot be of any help to you or anybody, because I identify with the child (the body-mind) that needs to be confirmed and is limited, and wants to be confirmed to be right by doing right and help others by helping itself or helping itself by helping others.

**James:** Now you are making sense. And you cannot be of help, because the problem of my identity is no longer an issue for me.

**Ruth:** As consciousness, nothing can be added to you or anybody or help you or anybody, because you are already it.

**James:** Correct.

**Ruth:** Not even a million storylines can make a difference to that knowledge, and the only thing you do is tell people that the storyline is consciousness appearing as object, so they do not need you or a *guru* as master, and they realize they are already free.

**James:** Correct again. I am not a helper. It is my nature as an artist and a teacher to express myself, assuming anyone wants to listen to me. But I am not looking for opportunities to enlighten the world. I just go about my business and in the course of it people come into my life and ask questions. I just respond according to my nature.

**Ruth:** Now realizing this, I see that taking the “role” of child (that tries to do the right thing) has appeared to me as the only way of being in relationship to others. At the same time, this limitation and lack of freedom felt like dishonesty, and a strategy, repeating the happening of being fulfilled and nurtured by God, and by God through other human beings, as a kind of experiential ritual, a sacrifice, which is not needed.

This attitude is not only not working to prevent me from being a hypocrite, it is making me a hypocrite!!!

**James:** Yes. It is a need to be loved. Most helpers are stuck in an infantile state. They have learned that people pay attention to them when the “help,” so it becomes their dominant story.

**Ruth:** Now, I imagine you responding to all these pages just with a plain “you are right.”

**James:** By and large, yes, but not exactly. There are a couple of points that you are not clear about, particularly the bit about the “switch.”

**Ruth:** Then there is nothing left for me then “being the master” myself, receiving myself as a child (object) that recognizes itself to be the master, and receiving every object as appearing in me, the master.

But then I notice in me another longing: to hear something friendly. It has been such a fucking lonely trip, never agreeing with anybody, never talking the same language, always being different!!!

**James:** Yes. Self-centered know-it-alls and do-gooders are particularly isolated.

**Ruth:** If I just, only for once, could agree totally!

**James:** You are only disagreeing with yourself. There are no others. They are only in your mind. See the doer here, wanting herself to be different.

**Ruth:** Yes, it is time to come home and to be home and to be grown-up. How come you talk so friendly with others and not to me?

**James:** We call it tough love. You are very intelligent and aggressive. You will eat me up if I give you the opportunity. It is self-protection. 😊

**Ruth:** Then I read your email again and I see that you are pointing to being grown-up, and that being friendly would only reinforce my conviction to be limited, so you are friendly in pointing this clearly out to me.

**James:** Correct. It is all about maturity. You are not a child. You are an adult. Pretending that you are a child is unbecoming and awkward.

**Ruth:** Now here is the point “if I want to quit seeking,” and I realize I as a child do not want to. The child can never stop seeking. Only being consciousness can receive and welcome the child as the body-mind wanting to be consciousness, and then it is no longer child.

**James:** Yes.

**Ruth:** But then my biggest fear becomes true: once you know it, nobody can confirm this, and I am alone.

**James:** You are always alone. There is only one of us.

**Ruth:** Because every person is a storyline, returning to consciousness and expressing consciousness, and consciousness is one, so there is no other measuring point left. And maybe this biggest fear is the biggest grace and freedom. I am self-supporting, self-fulfilling, everlasting love.

**James:** Now you are talking!

**Ruth:** But then I realize every language – religious, psychological or scientific – should point to this truth. How can I rest and be love as long as this does not manifest in apparent reality? But it will never manifest if I do not stay home and be love and receive everything as me. All the seeking only adds to the confusion and reinforces the limited and changing appearances, as if they are true a measuring point – on their own. I have to be the master. There is no other way!

**James:** I think I know what you mean. You mean Ruth needs to grow up. You as consciousness are already the master of everything that exists.

**Ruth:** But me as the master is bursting out in the object Ruth in poems and images and stories, and playfulness and (at least now) certainly not in saying, “I am consciousness and Ruth is the object appearing in it.”

**James:** Thank God for that.

**Ruth:** I mean, as master I can switch between all languages, be an irritating mosquito and a comforting mother and a critical observer and confuse people who think they do know, and make the one who thinks he is stupid feel like a king. I can do all that because it is all true, and there is just one meeting place I know to be in which everything appears. Still, all this playfulness is serious because it refers to an absolute meaning and love, it is constituted by it, it shines through the forms and it is it.

**James:** You are such a narcissist.

**Ruth:** In other words, I just have to be me!

**James:** Yes, indeed. There is nothing wrong with anything. You are only not you

when you are unclear about your nature as consciousness.

**Ruth:** At the same time I as the master is quiet and powerful, not being distracted by the play it performs, being one with the ground of being, and untouched.

**James:** Pardon me while I vomit. God, Ruth, you are so fucking romantic.

**Ruth:** Still, I have to ask you if this is right. If you would say, “No, it isn’t, I do not believe you.” But still I have to because you see other things in the object Ruth than I do, because you know much more.

**James:** I just know who I am and what James likes and dislikes.

**Ruth:** So when you would say that this or that is wrong... I would not believe you or believe that I am “not good” or limited, but I would receive it as relative knowledge... because I am consciousness, and that is what consciousness does, always receiving, never protecting itself from the relative but welcoming it as itself... and this would only add to my understanding... so being unlimited... even if this is “impossible”... only grows! This means that there is still a point in talking... and this has always been the point in talking and sharing and meeting and interacting... namely, for consciousness to recognize itself to be also the relative, again and again, so nothing will be left alone, all the children can come home, and it will always be that way, and grow, and this is the real movement, and the real story, and we are all part of it!

But... do you realize what just happened? Literally, everything I always wanted and I always longed for has just become true!

**James:** I do not read minds, but I am happy for you. Let’s see how long it stays true.

**Ruth:** THANK YOU!

~ Loving greetings, Ruth

**James:** You overestimate my influence, but you are most welcome, Ruth.