

# Just Love

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Marlon:** Hi, Ram. Vedanta, it seems to me, is just an attitude adjustment. We cannot verify the *mandala* of existence laid out by Vedanta so we essentially have to take it on faith, which perhaps isn't a problem for mature people as it sounds correct. "Mature" meaning those willing to abandon all learned perspectives to date. To empty the cup, as referred to in Zen, I guess. Having faith that this is the way things are then turns your focus to awareness and in some way at some point one gains "hard and fast knowledge" that one is indeed awareness. It seems like it is just a brainwashing of sorts, and if it is so what if it brings peace?

**Ram:** It may seem like brainwashing but it isn't. If you actually examine your own experience carefully you will see that it tallies with Vedanta's *mandala* of existence. But if you are too caught up in your interpretation of your experience and you can't see that reality is non-dual and that life is consciously structured by a benign force then you have to take it on faith - until you can see it.

**Marlon:** After watching the Q&A of today's Spain talk (10/23) my summary of Vedanta was "take it easy." As awareness there is nothing that has to be done or not done, whatever you do is all right as far as awareness is concerned, which it isn't. You, meaning the *jiva*, may take corrective actions to try to bring healing or peace to your situation. Actions informed by the filter of Vedanta, since awareness is actionless and not a "you," are okay whether you leave your *jiva* in the gutter or raise it on a pedestal since all is *Isvara*. So if I try to fix or heal my *jiva*, are those actions also being driven by *Isvara* as well? I would say yes.

**Ram:** This is correct.

**Marlon:** There is clear knowing that awareness in full measure is present no matter the experience but I still get dragged into the mud by deeply entrenched psychological *vasanas*.

**Ram:** If you know that "you" get dragged into the *vasana* mud are you actually dragged into it? Vedanta says you are the one that knows, not what is known.

**Marlon:** Is my ability to "release" these perspectives up to *Isvara* in the form of Vedanta actually appearing in my awareness?

**Ram:** No, it is up to you. You need to see that these perspectives are not healthy and no longer indulge the thoughts around them. If you wait for *Isvara* to sort it out you will wait forever because *Isvara* doesn't see them as you do.

**Marlon:** Is my tenacity in listening to the ideas also *Isvara*? Again, I would have to say yes. My understanding is anything experienced is *Iswara*.

**Ram:** That is correct.

**Marlon:** In any case, I'd have to say it hasn't brought me peace thus far. Obviously, I still switch back and forth between being a *jiva* that needs to "do" something and awareness that is okay with whatever. Mostly the former.

**Ram:** If you see the switching, you can only be awareness. You are the one that knows the *jiva's* problems and is okay with them. The *jiva* orientation - which seems to be a kind of self-pity, if I may be so bold - is very difficult to relinquish. There is obviously some kind of pay-off to feeling limited.

**Marlon:** Which brings me to the topic of worship. I still have a big hang-up around this. If it's all awareness, why should awareness worshiping awareness be required except as an expression that is coming through the *jiva* that understands it's not real? In other words, worship is for the *jiva*, not awareness. Religious expression just hasn't ever been an interest for me, preferring to contemplate rather than prostrate. Of course I have heard you and Sundari repeatedly tell in the email *satsangs* that it's important to have a spiritual practice, or *sadhana*, and I am trying to hear it as coming from *Isvara* and not dismiss it based on what I already "know" but thus far not being able to take that on. Any commentary would be greatly appreciated. Blessings and much appreciation for all you do.

**Ram:** I think the solution to your problem is worship. The fact that you have a hang-up with worship suggests this. It is no wonder that the *jiva* resists. Your *jiva* has a love problem. You don't love yourself because you think you are fucked up in some way. So you have to start by loving something or someone apart from your problem. Contemplation is good. Prostration is good. You will prostrate if you have contemplated properly. You will be grateful to *Isvara* and the love will flow. You love spirituality but you don't seem to love yourself. Convert the love into self-love. Never mind what self to love. Just love. It seems you have hit a dead end with the contemplation. Your understanding is good. But there is an emotional issue that needs to be corrected. I wouldn't go to a shrink, however. I would just start loving. Love is its own reward. It will heal you. We do *puja* three times a day. It is good.

~ Love, Ram