

# The Language of Hyperbole

Ram (James Swartz)

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**David:** Dear James, I can settle into the obvious awareness that is me in meditation now and be there. It is clearly not my body, mind, ego, etc., so I assume negating-inquiry is not needed there, but what to do from here?

**James:** Inquiry definitely continues, but you know you are not “doing” it. It is simply a way of living that becomes natural. What else is there?

However, let’s look at your statements. If you can “settle into awareness” it means that you see awareness in experiential terms. The awareness that equals liberation is the awareness – you – that observes the “settling into.” It is the same awareness that reveals anger when you are not in meditation, for example.

Secondly, you say you can “be there.” But you are there before you can “be there” or you would not know that you had moved from where you were before to “there.”

**David:** Should I be patient and absorb myself in that awareness with no other intention? Or is there an inquiry I should apply?

**James:** Inquire into your language: Which I is talking? How can you absorb yourself in awareness when you are awareness? Who needs to be patient with no intention?

**David:** I feel that I am thinking magically to relate this awareness to the ultimate self that is everything, though I believe it as a fact that it is, having read your teachings. But a voice says, “So what? Obviously, I’m awareness, but how is this the ultimate self that is everything?”

**James:** Again, look at your language. Knowing you are the self requires no “magic thinking.” It is simply removing the ignorance of your true nature as whole and complete. This is one of the big stumbling blocks for inquirers and puts self-realization “out of reach” when it is just simply who you are. Awareness is the substrate of everything and pervades everything. All objects exist in you, awareness, though you are always free of them. “You” cannot step out of awareness, because it is you.

What has happened is that you have unwittingly become a victim of the language of hyperbole that pervades spiritual literature. The key word that misleads you is “ultimate” self. It implies that there is an ordinary self that is somehow to be eclipsed by an “ultimate” self. But scripture is clear that there is only one self. So the self that you are is already the “ultimate” self. Words like “ultimate” and “absolute” intimidate. They squash the seeker and make *moksa* seem out of reach. This is why I make a big point of using the word “ordinary” in conjunction with awareness. Awareness is just the knower of anything. As you write the word “ultimate” and imagine that there is some awareness other than yours, the

“ultimate” awareness observes you writing the world “ultimate.”

**David:** I will patiently work on staying in that awareness until I hear from you. However, I wouldn't be surprised if I read the answer when I pick up your texts this evening. That has been happening a lot. 😊

**James:** I suggest that you do not “stay” in that awareness but ask who is “staying in” that awareness. You can't “stay in” awareness, because awareness is everything that is. You can only realize you ARE awareness. The best practice is to look for awareness when you are staying in it and when you are not. It is just the knower of David and his various states of experience. Meditation is good for steadying the mind, but it should be accompanied by inquiry. Ask who is mediating and why. Meditation is the nature of the self, so there is nothing to do when you realize that you are the knower. No action can take place without a knower of the action. The knower is always present and it is you. *Yoga* is excellent for creating a state of mind called meditation, but it is not suitable for *moksa*, because *moksa* is not a state of mind, a *samadhi*.

I suggest you review the second chapter of *How to Attain Enlightenment* and go to the website and read the book *Experience and Knowledge*. It is listed on the Publications page at the top of the list on the left. *Vedanta sadhana* is going to be difficult for you because of your *yoga* background. *Yoga* gets you ready for Vedanta, but the experiential notion of *moksa* – the mediation notion – can be a big stumbling block. I am not saying to abandon mediation – not at all. You should keep it up. But look for the knower of the silence when you are in it. And look for the knower when you are out of it in your ordinary states of mind. Nothing happens without a knower. The nature of the knower is *moksa*.

~ *Om* and *prem*, James