

# The Monkey Who Jumped to the Moon

Ram (James Swartz)

2013-04-16

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/889>

## A Tale of Epiphanies, Transcendental Meditation, Levitations, Frustrations and Ending the Quest at Doro

Sleep is dangerous. It triggered a long and trying quest for enlightenment, including many hardships – of which climbing an 800-metre mountain in Switzerland was only a small fraction. Please be warned. Listen...

### Early Epiphanies

It all began innocently in 1968. One evening, as a 15-year-old boy, I was going to bed. I was cuddling under my soft eiderdown quilt. Mmmmmm, sleeeeeeeeeep was on its way. But suddenly I was totally peaceful and still awake, like sleeping without sleeping. A bit odd, I thought. Then “real” sleep caught up with me and I blacked out. It happened many times and I began to dangerously think that I needed more of this experience.

I went to my school library and borrowed a few books on sleep psychology, and sure enough, experiments show that specific brain wave patterns could produce alpha brain waves, those that manifest between the waking, dreaming and deep sleeping states. I discovered that there was an expensive machine from America that could put me in this state, but it was not possible as I had no money. Then I read that there was a *yogic* state called *samadhi*, so I got books by Swami Narayananda and Jiddu Krishnamurti who seemed to know about *samadhi*.

I stated out with the *swami*. He recommended concentration, self-discipline and living a clean life, controlling the mind. He was a hard-ass but I believed he was right. I tried my best but after a year or so I gave up and turned my attention to Jiddu Krishnamurti, the father of Neo-Advaita. His teachings of doing nothing and being spontaneous were a relief from those of the hard-ass *swami*. I tried my best to do be spontaneous but only got more tense. I had become less spontaneous trying to be spontaneous! Oops!

Both these attempts failed but then came TM (Transcendental Meditation).

### TM

I do not remember much of the introductory lecture but I learned that the goal of TM meditation – the transcendental state of alert restfulness – was nothing new. It was natural and could be experienced within the gap between waking and dreaming. But the gap could be expanded systematically once the technique was spontaneous.

I took my bike and rushed off to the TM centre where I experienced a wonderfully calm, quiet, clear and soothing state. I was told that it could be made permanent. Meditating could be compared to dipping a piece of cloth in a bath of colour, taking it up, letting it dry and repeating the process. Eventually the colour would stick and one would have the calm happiness of the transcendental state all the time. Wow!!!

I was told it would take four to eight years, and I believed it.

I set up a routine to meditate twice a day, and in the summer of 1972 I went to Norway for an 18-day meditation course. When I returned everything was so clear that even the dirty old railway station in Copenhagen was glowing. It was convincing. It made me want to share it with other people, to teach it.

Becoming a TM teacher did not take long. I took the “Advanced Teacher Training” and “Governor Training” in Switzerland, and in 1976 was amazingly entitled “Governor of the Age of Enlightenment” by the *guru*, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who did his best to elevate all of us. At some point in 1977 he even taught us how to levitate – to cancel gravity and lift the body by the mind only, or more specifically, by forgetting/offering a specific thought into *Brahman* while maintaining the transcendental state of mind.

The technique is called *samjama* by Patanjali in *Yoga Sutras*. You can look it up, it is no secret, and I can tell you: it works!

### **Levitation and Transcendental Bliss**

The first time, when I innocently followed Maharishi’s instructions, I ended up sitting three metres from where I started! Success!! I had proven to myself and to anyone that I was completely, totally and utterly FREE – even from the laws of nature!

In the following days I tried to repeat the flying and did so with limited success. I was not able to be completely innocent again, so I could not completely lift off but mattresses were laid out in the hotel hall and I jumped around like a baby bird trying to fly. It still gave a great sense of freedom and it felt very, very good.

To top things off I got lots of witnessing experiences, and whenever I meditated I was filled with light and bliss inside and on the outside I became radiant. My peers respected me and even the girls were attracted to me. I could probably have had any one I wanted but I did not notice them much. To me girls were not as interesting as flying and I thought they were not worth the attachment.

One day, however, a beautiful, *sattvic* young woman caught my attention and we got married. We meditated together and taught TM to people. We adored each other and the whole world smiled at us. Everything was fine but as the years passed one doubt began to gain momentum:

### **Why Did the Transcendental State Never Stick?**

After ten years I became a little better at maintaining the blissful state but I could not make it permanent. It was very frustrating.

And I was not the only one to feel frustrated. Others had even less progress and worldwide millions dropped their practice out of anger and frustrations TM’s false promises. The *guru* clearly had some explaining to do.

In order to explain our “lack of progress” (failure would have been a more appropriate term) Maharishi invented the term “collective consciousness,” meaning the average mental state of people around us. The theory was that we were all affected by the depressingly low mental state of our families, colleges, society and

the world population. This low collective consciousness surrounding us was what was holding us back.

It sounded right, and I believe any spiritual person would agree that society really is insane, that it is going full steam ahead in the wrong direction and that, yes, it does hold back anyone who tries to get ahead. As an example I remember one of my best students, a lady, who one day informed me that she had stopped her practice. Not because she did not like it but because her husband could not handle her being happy!

## **Cocoons of Sattva**

Maharishi's explanation was entirely logical and so was his solution, which was that meditators should group together to form what he called "*siddha*-lands," or "cocoons of *sattva*." Within these cocoons the transcendental state would stick and then we would really fly, he promised.

Stupidly, I believed Maharishi again and went ahead: I bought some undeveloped land, inspired meditators to buy a lot, build houses and form a community. It all went fine until one day everybody got mad at me because I sold the last parcel to someone they did not like. And to top it off my wife and I wanted to build our house a little bit different from the rest, which made them even more mad. It all ended up in heavy arguments and eventually a lawsuit. So much for our *sattvic* cocoon.

## **Post-Cocoon Life**

My wife continued to meditate but we left the TM movement and shortly after she gave birth to our beautiful daughter. I started a business as financial tax advisor. By 1987 I had given up on giving people spiritual freedom but found a way to make people tax-free in the highest-taxed country in the world. As you can imagine, I was well-paid!

But I also got into a lot of trouble because often my clients did not follow instructions, the tax authorities would attack them and I would feel partially responsible. Before I knew it I was up to my neck in *samsaric* preoccupations and the blissful state of mind was increasingly difficult to maintain. Actually, the process of gaining the state in meditation and then losing it immediately was really frustrating. I grew increasingly angry with my stupid clients and with aggressive tax collectors who did not trust people with their own money.

So even though I had left his movement I still agreed with Maharishi that I was indeed surrounded by *tamasic* and *rajasic* idiots. It did not occur to me that I was the biggest idiot.

I got to thinking about why the cocoons of *sattva* failed and realized that the people were not *sattvic* to begin with, so I got the idea to use the internet to distribute a form to test for *sattva* and then build a worldwide network of *sattvic* people that would prepare tons of people for enlightenment. But it was very hard to do. With a friend and other committed people we tried to do it but lost almost everything. I lost most of my clients, my business capital, my house, my horse and my wife.

This was when James Swartz came along and called me a foolish do-gooder! James has little patience with people who think they are going to save the world. I got

angry with him and gave him bad vibes but he took no offence, and my confidence that there was a solution to my problem grew. James clearly wanted nothing but good for me and besides, have you ever learned anything from anyone who agreed with you? I took James to be my friend and in September 2012 I joined him for a retreat at Doro in the Tichino Alps.

## **Doro**

Doro is a small group of old houses high in the Alps. You have to climb straight up for two hours. I lost my way but eventually found it and it proved to be worth my trouble. The group was wonderful. The twenty-two participants were *sattvic*, polite and intelligent. And James was at his very best. James teaches Vedanta and was very easy to understand. The challenge was to use the basic impersonal teachings to uproot one's personal visions of insanity. I had to do it twice.

## **First, Insanity Removed**

James said we can choose to identify with the needy, limited mind-ego-intellect or with the real self, pure consciousness. He made the choice crystal clear, and I could not sleep that night as I thought about it. I went out and sat down under the clear starry sky and I thought, "James is right. For too long I have taken myself to be a small person. I have been like a monkey who believes the moon is a giant mango. Mangoes are pure bliss for monkeys. I jumped up at the moonlike blissful state and fell back down again and again. Because the task was impossible. A mental state can never become permanent. I should be happy as a little monkey, not trying to do the impossible. I should not confuse myself with my little self."

It was all very clear but one doubt remained. In the back of my mind I had always thought enlightenment to be a logically associated with the witnessing experience. I thought that the self witnessing the objects appearing in it would be the experiential consequence of discrimination but that did not happen. Actually, nothing happened at all. Liberation is only self-knowledge, knowing the difference between the witness and the objects.

## **Second, Insanity Removed**

The next morning I could not wait to ask James the crucial question: "Are you sure? Is there really no experience of enlightenment?" and he replied, "No, none." "Not even witnessing?" "No." I believed him and that was it, job done.

After Doro I promised James to edit the sound files from Doro and I thought I would have listened to them many times over. I used to have great hunger for Vedanta but now the quest seems to have ended and lots of other stuff seems more interesting. I have not forgotten about making the *sattvic* network just as I have not forgotten about editing the sound files. I owe it both to myself, to James and to anyone who seeks a bit of sanity in this world of insanity, because Vedanta can set you free.

**James:** Actually, this person could use a bit more Vedanta. He should know the reason why witnessing is not enlightenment but he had such faith in the teacher that he was able to let the experiential doubt go without even understanding why. In any case, being a happy monkey is as good as it gets insofar as the self is always happy.

It should be noted that the idea that a little monkey can jump to the moon is perhaps the most common enlightenment myth. Charlatans like Maharishi made tremendous fortunes and gained great fame and power exploiting gullible spiritual seekers' desire to experience something that is beyond experience. You can only get what you already have by understanding what it is. When you understand that you are the non-experiencing witness the little monkey in you will become a happy monkey.