

Qualifications for Teaching Vedanta

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/908>

Sam: Peace to you, Sundari. Thank you for the resend.

I want to address your last question to me first. What I meant by carrying on a dialog is just: Can we email back and forth a few times? I get caught up in formality and I forget how stuffy it can sound. My kids always reminded me of this whenever I wrote a letter to them. I'll do my best to write like I talk in everyday life.

Sundari: I was pretty sure that this is what you meant and I am very happy to be of assistance in any way I can be.

Sam: I don't have any inclination to be a Vedanta scholar or to learn Sanskrit. I just want to have a working knowledge of the source texts to have a little background. I love the scriptures and the teachings of Vedanta. They possess a beauty and harmony that truly brings joy to my heart. I agree completely with what you said: "When you know who you are you do not need to read the scriptures any longer. One does so not because one needs to but because it is simply a joy to do so. What could give one more pleasure than reading about yourself?"

Sundari: The scriptures bring joy to your heart because they are about you, the source of beauty, harmony and joy.

Sam: Regarding the teacher thing: I have always been drawn to sharing knowledge with others. I am temperamentally suited for it. Many years ago when I was trying to move up in this company I was working for at the time they had me take a battery of tests to see if I was suited for their high-performance sales team. I wasn't, but what the tests did reveal was that I was best suited for the ministry or for teaching. So that's what I did. I taught Bible studies and ministered to people.

Sundari: It seems pretty clear that teaching is your nature, or *svadharma*, which is very important because teaching Vedanta is unlike any other teaching. It is not about an ego teaching another ego. It is a tradition of passing on the knowledge in friendship (*samkhya bhava*), it is about awareness talking to itself, passing on the torch of self-knowledge to itself. There is only one self so there is only one student and one teacher and they are both *Isvara*. As I said in my last email, in order to teach Vedanta one has to have fully assimilated the distinction between the real and the apparently real, which in finer detail is the identity between awareness, *Isvara* and the *jiva*. If you have not read already done so I suggest that you read the theme of the January 2013 newsletter, which is posted on what it takes to be a Vedanta teacher. You will find it at the ShiningWorld website under "What's New."

Sam: The thing with Vedanta is that the truth revealed in the teachings is so valuable and precious that I don't want to treat it casually the way so many Neos do.

You mentioned that “James has constructed a methodology which has never been done before in Vedanta that carefully and meticulously sets out the teaching from the very beginning to the conclusion in a logical, step-by-step format. While he sticks religiously to the scriptures, he has made Vedanta accessible by putting it in very simple language as well. Follow in his footsteps and you will not go wrong.” Going forward, if I do anymore writing I hope to use James’ methodology, which I was previously lacking. To use a circus analogy, I don’t want to work anymore without a safety net. James and yourself are that safety net, and I would be deeply grateful if you would let me lean on you for guidance from time to time.

Sundari: It is true that James has made an invaluable contribution to Vedanta but remember it is not his teaching and it will never belong to anyone. When one truly has assimilated the knowledge one would not treat Vedanta lightly or carelessly because having non-dual vision means that you know it is all about you.

Sam: You ask, “What do you mean by the phrase ‘found my bearings again.’? Does that mean that Vedanta has set you free – or do you believe that you are already free and simply want to use Vedanta to teach others?” James’ teachings are what set me free but I had not realized how deeply they had affected me. So, sadly, to my discredit I allowed myself to be identified with Neo camp.

Sundari: Who did the teachings affected deeply and to his discredit allowed himself to be identified with the Neo camp? If the knowledge “I am whole and complete, ever-present, unchanging, limitless, non-dual awareness” had been fully assimilated and you had truly understood what that means for you as the apparent person you would not have identified with the Neo camp or turned to inadequate teachers and teachings. You would have understood the value of Vedanta because it would have freed you from identification with the apparent person. You would also have understood what that means for the *jiva* living in the apparent reality. In other words, you would have been clear about the distinction between *sattya* and *mithya*, the real and the apparently real. That you were not clear is not to your discredit, it is simply the result of ignorance, which is tenacious and hardwired.

Self-realisation is the easy part, it is experiential, and unless the doer has been negated and the binding *vasanas* rendered non-binding self-actualisation does not take place. Self-knowledge can be seemingly lost or contaminated by the doer, who survives self-realisation. Considerable work can still be involved to purify the mind of deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour, or binding *vasanas*, as well as *prarabdha karma* – the effects of ignorance – which do not disappear overnight.

Ron: I quit blogging when the light went on again and I realized my mistake. “Finding my bearings again” means that I have renounced my Neo citizenship and their philosophy of “cheap grace.” *Moksa* is not cheap, and I will never treat it as such again. Ever!

Sundari: This is very good, Ron, it shows that you have good discrimination. “Finding your bearings again” simply means that you re-identified with yourself as awareness. The Neos do not have a proper teaching and there is no shortcut to self-knowledge. It is true that *moksa* is not cheap but what does that mean? *Moksa* is not

a commodity, it is not an achievement or something to gain or lose because it is who you are. *Maya*, or ignorance of your true nature, conceals that from you, awareness, apparently under the spell of ignorance. Self-knowledge removes ignorance and reveals your true nature to be awareness and it reveals how to live as an apparent person in the apparent reality, which is what liberation means.

Sam: Lastly, the attachment you sent never came through. When I opened it, it only duplicated the original email. I would love to read them so please resend.

Since I didn't have the attachment I read one of the new *satsangs* at ShiningWorld entitled *Doubt after Enlightenment*. As I read it I saw myself clearly and started to smile, then laugh at myself. The feeling of freedom just took over as I read James' reply. I am free. I know who I am. If I get the chance to share I will but only from the teachings of Vedanta.

Sundari: I have re-attached both documents to this email. One can only laugh when one gets it because it is really all so simple and uncomplicated. 😊 You have the right attitude, Ron, allow teaching to unfold in the light of self-knowledge.

Sam: Thank you for reading this, Sundari, you and James have been a blessing to me.

~ Sincerely, Sam

Sundari: You are most welcome, Sam, thank you for your appreciation. It is not James and I that are your safety net but self-knowledge itself, meaning you. We are you and you are leaning on yourself.

~ *Namaste*, Sundari