

# Going to India Will Not Change Anything

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**Tim:** Hi, Sundari. I have been working with Isaiah for the past six months but I have a question I wanted to ask you or James, mainly because of y'all's personal experience with India. Recently (the past two weeks) I have found my dedication to Vedanta waning. Actually, the dedication is always there but the ability to focus on it vis-a-vis the mundane has been wavering. I have read *How to Attain Enlightenment* twice, watched the self-inquiry and Berlin videos and I am halfway through the *Vivekachoodamani* series.

I have read two thirds of the *satsangs* on the website and many other articles and have had around eight different *satsangs* with Isaiah.

Just yesterday I read James' autobiography. Upon completion I felt many of my recent worldly pursuits and binding desires were pointless. There are a number of things inspiring from the book but things that really stood out were: (a) how the self opens and closes the doors on your path to lead you in the right direction; (b) the numerous accounts of non-dual experiences; (c) the accounts of reincarnation, feeling connected to spiritual places from a previous life, etc; (d) the description of the teachers he met, their "inspiring field" (for lack of a better term), and the divine love one could feel emanating from them or from their rituals.

All of these things spoke to me very powerfully in a way the Vedanta logic has not recently. At the same time I have no doubts that the whole point is removal of ignorance and proper assimilation of knowledge. James and Isaiah and others have said in *satsangs*, etc. that what's really required for *moksa* is the qualifications and a calm, simple life dedicated to self-inquiry. Self-inquiry at home. This is the assumption I use while working on *atma/anatma viveka* myself. Yet after reading *Mystic by Default* a large desire to experience non-duality, see spiritual powers and be immersed in Vedic culture quickly arose. I was wary of it being a *rajasic* event, and it certainly could be, the whole story is chock-full of *shakti*, passion and non-duality that it's certain to get my experience-seeking sense organs hungering for celestial delights. Yet upon further reflection it seemed to indicate that a vital part of my "equipment" had been neglected in the search - the emotions.

During and after reading the book I was moved to need to experience the self, explore a bit more romantically and in general just sacrifice to *Isvara*, of course in a spritual, sensually overpowering journey to India. Much of this is fanciful, no doubt (I am sure mundane India is far less romantic than many of James' descriptions), but I really believe the pursuit awakened the emotions and the *bhakti* and has helped focus the mind somewhat on *moksa* vis-a-vis *samsaric* pursuits. So now I am considering taking off to India for a time to visit the good and the bad temples and let the self teach me as it may, perhaps by giving me food poisoning for a fortnight on a stale foam mattress in a grimy guesthouse. The obvious pitfall seems to be that I would become an experience junkie, yet I am fully aware that experience is transient, cannot satisfy and trying to create happiness from it is not the point. At the same time it is blisteringly clear that poignant, beautiful, spiritual experiences are great fuel for the fire of *mumukshutva*. Moreover, yesterday I reflected though that since a very young age I have defaulted to repressing difficult emotions while relying on stolidity and logic to deal with matters of the heart, so reading this novel

awakened a reassertion of the heart's rightful place in the intellect-mind-ego triumvirate. In a spiritual sense this seems difficult to do in my present location in Tamas, Texas where ignorance abounds and *satsang* is non-existent. In the short term I decided to visit y'all in Berlin this summer; otherwise, any advice? This could just be ignorance looking for ways to project new solutions to a problem it can't solve; at the same time, I feel I need to give the pursuit more feeling, create more meaning, revel in its beauty to really see it through.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Tim

**Sundari:** Hey, Tim. Going to India is not going to change anything, you know that - but why not?

You sound bored and it seems like you can just take off, so go and do it as *karma yoga*. Take the good with the bad, get some dysentery, get some spiritual experience. What does not kill you will make you stronger. 😊

India does have its own magic with all the *bhakti* and devotion - it is a pretty amazing place, but it can also be pretty awful and in your face, nothing hidden - which is a teaching in itself!

We look forward to seeing you in Berlin.

~ Love, Sundari