

Got to Make the Knowledge Firm

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2014-06-25

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/92>

Sundari: Good to hear from you, and we are happy for you that you have found Vedanta and ShiningWorld. I have replied in point form below:

Christopher: I have watched James' videos online on and off with little consistency for a while now. At first I made little progress, but recently by the grace of God a new set of videos was introduced to me, and through active listening and a desperate desire to know, my mind began to feel still and quiet. I experienced bliss in the causal body.

Sundari: Indeed, it is very good grace to find ShiningWorld and James. For self-knowledge to remove ignorance, an entrenched tyrant in the mind and hard-wired, you need an extremely committed, consistent and diligent spiritual practice. Unless the desire for freedom is more important to you than anything else, self-knowledge will not stick in the mind. This is one of the most important qualifications for Vedanta.

This entails subjecting the mind (through self-inquiry) to the scripture, or Vedanta. We recommend people who are new to Vedanta to start off by reading James' book *How to Attain Enlightenment*. It is a provocative title because enlightenment is not something we can attain, because it is what we are. We can only have the ignorance obscuring our true nature removed by self-knowledge.

Christopher: Unfortunately, I wanted it to be permanent and it faded away. I got somewhat attached to the videos.

Sundari: Firstly, *sattva* is the natural state of the mind, when *rajas* and *tamas* are in balance. You cannot become more *sattvic* but you can definitely have *sattva* covered by ignorance, *rajas* and *tamas* out of balance with *sattva*. Unfortunately, unless the mind is prepared and qualified as I said above, the peace will end because self-knowledge will not stick; the conditioning or binding *vasanas* (ignorance) will soon be back when the peaceful experience ends. This is why *moksa* or liberation is defined as the ability to permanently discriminate awareness from the objects that appear in it: Which means that you have rendered the binding *vasanas* non-binding and negate the sense of doership. This is where the "work" of self-inquiry comes in: Understanding "your" conditioning in the light of self-knowledge and NOT in the light of what you think is the truth.

Secondly, the peace of mind you experienced is just that, an experience and, because all experiences take place in time, they will end. Unless the knowledge that the experience was meant to deliver – i.e. "I am whole and complete, non-dual, actionless, unchanging awareness" – was fully assimilated because the mind is purified of binding *vasanas*, once the experience is back you are once again faced with the same problem: Identification with the doer and all that binds him to the pursuit of object fulfillment, i.e. the *vasanas*. The bottom line in Vedanta is that it is

only knowledge and not experience that sets you free. If you are still attached to the idea of experience as a way to “get” enlightened, the mind is not qualified for self-knowledge.

Christopher: Soon after I noticed myself becoming vain (James says this is the downside to a *sattvic* mind). I would put on a smile and I wanted people to feel a certain energy when they were around me. I thought I was special. Thinking back now, it’s actually pretty hilarious.

Sundari: Yes, it is quite funny that the ego thinks it is superior for the mind being something that is its natural state, but the ego likes to think it is superior for the strangest reasons!

Christopher: But I’ve been having ups and downs lately. Any time I feel upset I try to analyze the feeling, I watched *Wolf of Wall Street* yesterday and noticed all the sad people chasing objects. It depressed my mind. I didn’t want to end up like that. I analyzed my apparent depression on the spot only to notice that it didn’t feel apparent at all. It felt as real as anything else and I still identified with it.

Sundari: Who is it that is having ups and downs, who analyzes the feeling, who get’s re-identified with the objects, in this case the one who having the ups and downs? Removing ignorance from the mind, the dis-identification with the hypnosis of duality is the hardest thing the mind will ever do. As stated, ignorance is extremely tenacious and highly resistant, which is why you need full dedication to self-inquiry to remove it and for awareness to become your primary identity instead of Christopher.

To answer in short the question I posed above: There are three *jivas*:

1. There is the *jiva* who thinks it is a person with a name, a history and an address. This *jiva* is often called the doer or the human being, the one identified with objects. An object is anything other than you, awareness.

2. There is the *jiva* who knows about awareness, but it does not know what it means to be awareness. This *jiva* has indirect knowledge and is often called a self-realized *jiva*. This *jiva* has had an experience of being awareness but has not actualised self-knowledge, so the knowledge is not firm and ignorance returns. This is the one who re-identifies with objects because the *vasanas* are still binding, as you have experienced.

3. And finally, there is the *jiva* who has permanent direct knowledge because he/she knows

that their true identity *is* awareness and they know what it means to be awareness – while still apparently manifesting as a *jiva* or individual. This means that self-knowledge translates fully into *all* aspects of the person’s life. This is the *jivanmukta*, the self no longer under the spell of ignorance or the self-actualised *jiva*.

Duality does not disappear when you know that it is just a superimposition onto non-duality, like the mirage on the desert floor, even though you know it is a mirage and you can still see it, but you don’t take it to be real. Duality of ignorance is only a

problem when you don't know what it is, taking ignorance to be knowledge.

To repeat: The self-actualised person has permanently discriminated what is real (that which is always present and never-changing = awareness) from what is only apparently real (that which is *not* always present and always changing = all objects) *AND* has rendered all the binding *vasanas* non-binding as well as negated the doer (the person who thinks he is a person, i.e. Christopher).

Christopher: I was unable to resolve my feeling on the spot. However, very recently I realized the feeling originated from the thought that I would become sad and miserable my whole life chasing objects. It's a lesson from God and I am grateful. But why does it take a whole day come to this realization? Sometimes when I feel upset I can resolve the issue right there and then. But other times it can take a few days. Why is this?

Sundari: Again, it is helpful to investigate who is speaking when you use the word "I" – from which perspective are you asking this question? Making it part of your spiritual practice to press "pause" every time you catch yourself saying the word "I" and go through the three questions above on the three types of *jivas*.

You are correct in saying that all misery comes from object-identification, the pointless quest to find wholeness through objects when you are already whole but don't know it. Self-knowledge flickers on and off because you have work to do to render the binding *vasanas* non-binding and to negate the doer. I strongly suggest that if you have not done so, start at the beginning with James' book, read as many of the e-satsangs that we post on the website as possible (every question you could think of has been asked and answered in every conceivable way), watch as many of the DVDs as possible: There are many free videos available on our website and at *YouTube*. If you can afford it I highly recommend the *Full Vedanta Set* available at *ShiningWorld*. The more you put into your self-inquiry, the more you will get out of it. If your desire for freedom from bondage to objects is middling, you will get middling results. If it is all-consuming, the chances are you will free yourself.

You also need to examine your values and your lifestyle in the light of self knowledge. Everything in our lives needs to serve the truth, not the other way around. The choices we make regarding lifestyle determine not only how and what we eat, but how and where we live and with whom we associate. They also determine how we earn a living, handle money, love and engage in relationships, sex, exercise, how we entertain ourselves, and our attitude to the environment that nurtures and supports us and all life, as well as what we do as a devotional practice, and personal cleanliness.

And very importantly, you need to be properly taught though; trying to do it on your own will produce frustrating results because you will interpret the knowledge through the filters of the mind, your conditioning. You need to have the teachings unfolded for you by a qualified teacher, such as James or any of the endorsed teachers on *Shining World*. You need to do your part as well as suggested above.

Write to us when you get stuck and we are very happy to help you with your self-inquiry as long as you are dedicated to it.

~ *Namaste*, Sundari