

Vedanta Will Not Stick in an Unstable Mind

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/976>

Frederic: Dear Sundari, I wrote this letter to Ramji but after typing this letter I found out from the website that you also are a teacher and reply to emails. If you like to read this, it's okay. If you pass it to your husband, also okay. Thank you.

Frederic: Dear Ramji, when surfing the internet with the keywords "suicide and non-duality" I indirectly found out about your website. I have been reading some of the talks, and I see there are lots of other people who are struggling with this non-dual seeing, so I am not alone in this struggle.

What I wanted you to write about is my lifelong struggle with self-acceptance. Let me begin at the beginning. I had a nice childhood and loving parents, but as a kid I was very sensitive and bullied at school. As a teenager I found my identity in hardcore house music and experimented with soft and hard drugs but not in an excessive way, just exploring.

But inside there was a longing, so at the age of 17 I radically converted to Christianity. The church I attended was pretty dogmatic, where they preached about the Devil and hell. After two years I did not feel okay with this, so I had to have the courage to break with this system, and I did. A depression/crisis followed but I recovered.

After this event I managed to graduate from technical school and I started working. Next I started to read books about empowerment and psychology. I learned a lot about myself, and at the company where I worked my self-esteem got a boost because I finally was good at something. It felt good to be successful. My reading expanded into more spiritual books. I can remember reading a book by Osho and tears flowed from my eyes. From that point I became a true seeker. I guess I was about 21 years old.

At work I got in over my head. I had to manage too many projects and did not know my boundaries, so I crashed into a heavy burn-out. I managed to get on my feet again and worked for one year in the logistics department. During that period I discovered Advaita Vedanta. I read Ramana Maharishi, Nisargadatta and Neo-Advaita teachers. I had no guidance. At work things started to get messy again, and at the age of 24 I crashed once more. This time I was taken to a psychiatric hospital because I was psychotic. I got diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and was put on medication.

They told me to stop working and accept this illness. I paused for a year because of depression but I finally managed to get up again and started with some simple work in a greenhouse. Step by step this slowly grew and I managed to work full-time again. For a period of four years things went pretty well. I still read a lot about non-duality and visited a teacher but this didn't work out for me. After a while I felt this work was not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. So I went looking for something else but I could not find anything. At work things became more stressful and I felt out of place, so I crashed again in 2007 at the age of 28.

It was another psychosis but my parents managed to help me, so I did not have to go to a hospital again. This time I was totally out of energy, the candle was almost out. So I accepted my faith and stopped working and got on disability insurance. Because I had nothing to do and I still had a longing for oneness, I started reading Tony Parsons, Jed McKenna and that kind of rubbish. Later I had a longing to get rid of this longing for oneness, so I decided to sell all my books and stuff. When the books were gone I noticed I still had many thoughts about this subject and could not let it go.

So I crashed again in 2010 with another psychosis. I wanted to commit suicide but did not do it, and together with my family we found a spiritual medium. This man got very angry with me. He told me I had a very strong soul and that I was not accepting myself. First I became angry. I had struggled for years and now someone tells me I was a bad person. But I decided to overcome this confrontation and started to work with this man. I learned a lot about my youth and the bullying at school. He taught me to sense jealousy in other people so I could feel more confident. I told him about non-duality, and he told me that I was not allowed to read that kind of thing, so I put it aside and focused on the sessions. I felt better, but I did not mention I've had a problem with a blocked right nostril since the age of 19, which can be very uncomfortable. I hoped the spiritual medium could help me with this blockage but it did not go away. I asked him how to accept myself, and he just said in a pretty harsh way to just accept it! After a while I felt no more connection with this rude guy, so I stopped seeing him.

I got back on my old track and started reading about non-duality again and again. I read about more "proper" teachers like Adyashanti and watched a lot of YouTube movies. From 2007 until 2012 I was tired almost every day; my body had no energy. But in 2012 at the age of 33 I finally had very small periods of more energy, starting with a period of one week, but I still was very vulnerable. Once in a while I had some nice experiences, but I was not able to hold them. I found out about Adyashanti's book *The End of Your World*, where he tells that after an awakening the lens closes again and there still is a lot of work to do. This gave me some hope, but in the end of 2012 I collapsed again.

This time I was so tired and stuck I did not see any way out, so I wanted to commit suicide again. I drove to a place to do it, but I could not. I called my parents, and we were desperate, but we found a transpersonal therapist. The therapy started in January of this year. We worked through a lot of things, and in May I had an pretty strong non-dual seeing. I saw I was love, but again it did not last for long. My ego came back. In June things started to go downhill again. Now it's August and things aren't going well.

I still am on disability insurance, so I have time and space. Over the past weeks I have thought about suicide once again. If it is up to me, I quit this life and start a new one, but I can't leave my loving parents and friends behind. The therapist I am seeing is pretty clever, but I miss this non-dual wisdom somehow. I trust the therapist and I still want to go on working with him.

I noticed a lot of anger (rage) inside myself and guilt. The therapist tells me these are entities that are in my aura but I think it is my own anger and guilt. Tonight (it now is 4:15 in the morning) I wrote some things down. Let me copy them here so you can understand with what I am struggling.

1. I feel guilt because I cannot accept myself. This is partly true. I can accept myself,

but I cannot accept the angry and hard and cold part.

2. I feel guilt because I feel a lot of rage and anger inside. This is true.

3. I feel guilt because I can be harsh and cold. This is true, I can be harsh and cold. My ego is blown up.

4. I feel guilt because I made a mess of my life and have drawn my parents into it too.

5. I feel hate because I have so much love inside but I can't live it. Partly true, I know I can't live it because of the harsh and cold ego part.

6. I feel hate because I had to fight so damn hard and I still don't feel right.

7. I feel hate because it is unfair.

8. I feel hate towards other people's manners and egos.

What I now do is try to accept the anger and rage. If I see someone who is incorrect, I try not to get angry, and if I do get angry I try to stay friendly. I pray to God to help me control this anger and not fall into rage. But somehow deep inside I know I am God, but it's just a memory. I am alone a lot. I burn candles in front of an image of Anandamayi Ma. Sometimes I feel connected but sometimes I feel nothing. I pray to God, to not get angry with him. But my moods swing. I always feel this anger underneath. It is pretty hard not to explode. I search the internet for information about anger. Today I found a video by Mooji, but I now see it's not helping. I now see the importance of traditional Advaita Vedanta. Sometimes I still have faith, I have learned how to surrender and accept things, and also to observe the cold and harsh ego. But I think it takes time and patience to break this ego down. I will do anything, but some days this courage sinks into my shoes, and then I feel like it's too late. Sometimes I just want to quit, but I am afraid of the next incarnation because I still am not able to accept myself (the harsh and angry part) and because I leave behind my loving and caring parents and friend, and of the *karma* I built up. Somehow I also feel guilty about writing this letter. I think I got too deep into it. Sometimes I think God is angry with me because my ego still is very big. I feel guilt because after all those years and help I still cannot fully accept myself, and because the spiritual medium told me to stay away from this non-duality stuff, but sometimes I know it is just the way it went and I did what I could do. It's a long story. I hope you can give me some advice.

Thank you for reading, Ramji.

~ With love, Frederic

Sundari: Hello, Frederic. Since accepting that fixing Frederic has not worked, let's look at another way to solve this problem. What if you are not actually the person called Frederic and the life that you witness is not actually real? What if you are something else? Non-duality and suicide are contradictions in terms, the epitome of duality.

If you really understand what non-duality means, there would be no possibility of suicide. Non-duality means that awareness is all there is and that you are awareness – not the body-mind, ego, or person, with a story. Awareness is not subject to death,

so who is there to kill? If it were possible to kill yourself, you would have to be there to know it, so what or who is it that dies? The body is just gross matter. The person called Frederic is an inert reflection of awareness, he is not real, "real" being defined as "that which is always present and never changes." As awareness you are unborn and you cannot die, even though the body dies. With non-dual vision you would no longer be suffering, because you would understand that life is a precious gift and you would have no problem with the apparent person and their limited identity nor would you have a problem with anyone else, the world or any object. You would see that as awareness nothing defines you: you define everything because everything arises out of you and is non-different from you, although as awareness you are always free of everything.

Your story is that of one who has suffered much. There is no way to escape suffering when the mind is hypnotized by duality and under the spell of ignorance, thinking that the apparent reality is real and trying to find a solution as the person who thinks he is a doer. Vedanta calls this *samsara*, which is a Sanskrit word that means "whirlpool."

Ask yourself this: Who is it that knows Frederic, his seeking, his anger and rage, his suffering, his "cold and harsh ego," his guilt - his story?

The identification with the person creates *samsara*, or doer-ship, which is the incorrect notion or belief that awareness is a person, someone who has experiences and reacts to them, instead of identifying oneself as awareness, the one who knows the person or doer.

You can't be both awareness and the person if this is really a non-dual reality, which it is. Awareness under the spell of ignorance of its nature as awareness has dreamt up a secondary identity - Frederic - and thinks that it is Frederic. This is why there is so much suffering. Yes, many people in the spiritual world are trying to understand non-duality and failing to do so because they do not have a valid means of knowledge for knowing themselves as awareness.

There is much on offer under the banner of Advaita and many so-called teachers of non-duality. Ignorance of oneself as awareness is persistent and hardwired; it is not obvious that your true nature is awareness, because you believe what you have been told about yourself: that there is something wrong with you. It is a sad story. Almost everything we are is taught reinforced by everyone and everything in the apparent dualistic world we live in. The world is wrong. Reality is non-dual, not a duality. That you are non-dual awareness is the most difficult fact to accept. When you accept it, you live free of the person called Frederic. You are fortunate to have found James, as he is one of the few genuine and qualified teachers in the great tradition of Vedanta.

In order to gain non-dual vision of yourself you have quit thinking about your miserable self and to commit to self-inquiry, dedicating yourself to it for as long as it takes. The teachings are clearly explained in James' book *How to Attain Enlightenment* and in his videos. Self-inquiry means exposing the mind to self-knowledge (Vedanta) in order to train it to discriminate the real (awareness) from the apparently real - all objects (Frederic, his thoughts and feelings and his life are objects) - so as to negate Frederic, the doer, and render the binding *vasanas* (patterns of behaviour, or conditioning) non-binding.

Vedanta's scriptures are the oldest scriptures on the planet. They are a vetted and

valid means of self-knowledge. They are not the opinion or teaching of any one person or persons, so they can be trusted. Vedanta's basic message is that you are fine the way you are because your true nature is non-dual awareness and that you are not the doer, or ego.

Vedanta is an independent and valid means of knowledge revealed by awareness to the apparent individual (awareness under the spell of ignorance) from the beginning of "time." Vedanta, or self-knowledge, does not come from the mind of man, it was revealed to the mind of man by awareness. Vedanta is designed to remove your ignorance of your true nature as awareness. Without this means of knowledge it is not possible to realise the self (achieve non-dual vision) because the self is not an object of perception. The self, awareness, is beyond the means at our disposal for knowing anything, because awareness is that which makes the knowing of anything possible. It is like the reflection in the mirror trying to understand that which is casting the reflection. How can it? The reflection in the mirror is not real and is not aware. How would you be aware of Frederic and "his" ego without awareness? Frederic and his ego are objects known to you, awareness.

Never fear, you are beautiful as you are, warts and all, because who you are has nothing to do with who you think you are. The apparent person, or ego, does not have to be fixed or busted, just understood and loved for what it is, the self under the spell of ignorance, identified with objects and the person with a name and a story, thinking it is a doer and trying to find a solution where there isn't one: in the apparent reality. You cannot solve any problem at the level of the problem, meaning that you cannot take Frederick to be real and expect to find a solution.

You have to accept that your experience has shown you that nothing you have found so far has worked to set you free and end suffering, even the good experiences or epiphanies. Vedanta is not a belief system, it is simply the truth about who you are, which is whole and complete, non-dual, ever-present, unchanging, unborn awareness. You just don't know this because you have a knowledge problem, not an experience problem.

Although Vedanta is not a path or a teaching, in that it is non-dual knowledge, it offers teachings that work as tools to rid the mind of duality. With the dedicated application of these teachings to the mind, the mind will be purified and prepared for self-knowledge to take place. However, if there is great agitation and fragmentation in the mind such as you describe, Vedanta will not stick. It is best to first to stabilize the mind through some kind of appropriate psychological therapy. This is why Vedanta requires very specific qualifications to be present in order for self-knowledge to take place.

It is not my place to advise you as to who would be best to seek counselling from but in my opinion it is best to steer away from "spiritual mediums." If this person you are seeing is advising you to stay away from non-duality, one has to inquire why. Why would they get so angry with you for trying to understand non-duality, which is your true nature? A true and qualified teacher would not get angry with you for any reason and most definitely not for that reason. If this person knew what non-duality really is, they might advise very differently. In fact that may be good advice until the mind is more stable, but it is most likely that this person has no idea what non-duality is – or who he really is. So how can this person help you to discriminate what is real and aware, that which never changes and is always present (the self) from that which is only apparently real and apparently aware, that which is not always present and is always changing (the apparent person, or doer, called Frederic)? How

can someone who does not recognise the light show you the way out of your own darkness?

I would recommend that you put all seeking and self-inquiry on hold for now and find a professional and reputable talk therapist if you have not done so yet. It sounds like the transpersonal therapist you saw helped you find a better perspective.

Psychiatrists are not trained in this way, they pretty much diagnose and medicate, as you have already discovered. Find a therapist who is dispassionate yet caring, who is not going to focus on what is wrong with Frederic, but someone who will help you gain a better perspective on Frederic so that you can begin to see what is right with him. Once you have dropped the burden of self-judgment and the mind is clearer, you can make a decision if you want to pursue self-inquiry.

If at any time in the future you would like to pursue non-dual vision and undertake self-inquiry into the nature of self again, I would be very happy to be of assistance to you in any way I can.

~ *Om tat sat*, Sundari