

Hello everyone!

We receive many emails on the topic of relationships. All relationships are...or should be...about love: adding value to the lives of those with whom we come in contact daily. To give you an idea where you stand on the love issue, James wrote the following:

The Five Stages of Devotion

Love makes the world go around. Our efforts to attain objects are based on the desire to please the self. We want to please ourselves because we love ourselves. Because reality is non-dual, knowledge and love are one, but there is a persistent and uninformed notion in the spiritual world that knowledge has nothing to do with love. However, just as time and space are two different ways to measure the distance of one object from another, knowledge and love are just two interconnected ways of measuring one's distance from one's self. This summary of Chapter 12 on Devotion in Bhagavad Gita unfolds the five stages of love that culminate in liberation.

Stage 1: Praying for Stuff - *Sakama Bhakti*



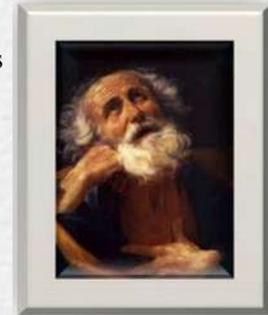
Karma Yoga is love. It converts a worldly life into a spiritual life. I practice it because I love a quiet mind. I love a quiet mind because discrimination... which is tantamount to freedom...only works when the mind is reasonably clear. Discrimination reveals the ever-free love that I am. Freedom is unconditional self love.

It is a struggle to take my angers and disappointments as a gift from God because my devotion is selfish; I want only want worldly things. Like a child, the devotee begs and whines, "I need a new X." Or, if he or she is business minded, "I will chant your holy name one thousand times if you see to it that my son passes his English exam." This kind of devotion is not sophisticated or particularly noble but it's OK because it reveals a rudimentary desire to relate to God and it builds self-esteem. We have to start somewhere. But devotion for God's stuff does not remove anxiety and depression. At least there is a rudimentary understanding that God...the field of existence...is responsible for delivering objects and an attempt to accept God's will. The way out of this stage is to pray for the well-being of others.

vIn this stage, if the person is seeking God...whatever that means to him...he may mechanically repeat his favorite name of God without understanding who he is talking to. Or, because he is *tamasic* and prone to fantasy he may believe that one circumambulation of the holy mountain, Arunchala, on a full moon night or one million repetitions of a special mantra is sufficient for *moksa*. This kind of devotion is often encouraged in the Puranas. In fact it is touted as the highest form of devotion in the last verse of Chapter 12 just to encourage beginners.

Stage 2: Breeding Ground for Saints – *Nishkama Bhakti*

In this stage desire for worldly things is **not** allowed, only prayer for the courage and strength to take both positive and negative results as a gift from *Ishvara* i.e. the law of karma. The devotee is not aiming for a particular experience. There is desire but the desire is for peace of mind. This stage purifies likes and dislikes because one goes with what *Ishvara*, one's situation, demands, not what one wants. The devotee stops treating God as a problem solver, takes his karma like a man, and stops blaming God for his bad karma.



'Selfless' Service

Obviously from the non-dual perspective any service given is the self giving service to itself, but in the second stage, the extroverted devotee is trying to purify selfishness, so he asks God to help others, not himself. **This stage breeds saints.** Serving the world is as good as serving God because the world is God. It is not an easy stage because the devotee is praying for the strength to resist worldly desires. In the first stage you may have realized that desiring objects isn't healthy but you are still attached to them. At the same time you know that to see God your heart must be pure. Devotees in this stage staff monasteries, churches and temples and do a rudimentary form of *karma yoga* without understanding the nuances of its logic. Since the karma they do accrues to the accounts of others, they don't accumulate *vasanas*...except the *vasana* for service, which can bind like any other *vasana*. Most large spiritual and religious organizations are built on the backs of this kind of devotee. They believe that when all their *karmas* are burned up by action, enlightenment will ensue. On the kitchen wall of a very wealthy ashram I observed this sign, "One hour of dishwashing burns one lifetime of karma!" They do not understand that action won't burn ignorance and that *moksa* is burning the doer in the fire of self knowledge.

Stage 3: My Personal Deity - *Istha Devata Abyasa*



Inner Work - Meditation

The *karma yoga* stages convert an extroverted mind into an introverted mind. In the meditation phase there is a gradual reduction of worldly physical activity and an increase of mental activity. Because one's thoughts are now going to a symbol of the self and symbols invoke their referents and the self is unconditional love (*parama prema*), the devotee experiences love without reference to objects and events. In this stage the devotee bonds with *Ishvara* and nourishes his relationship with *Ishvara*. He no longer depends on relationships for love...family and friends...but draws on *Ishvara* for emotional support. This stage removes fear.

The goal of spiritual life is to see God, the self, in everything, but non-dual vision...which amounts to non-dual love...requires a very subtle mind. At this stage the devotee's mind is not expansive enough to gain that vision so he or she worships a specific symbol of God that stands for the total, an *ishta devata*.

It is OK to do this because every object is actually non-separate from the total, although it seems to be. Chapter 10 of the Gita presents a list of particularly exceptional, beautiful and which are easy to worship: the magnificent animals, the preternatural human beauty objects that elevate one's and contemplate on them type of worship implies, personal taste so likes and



dislikes are still operating. Mental and physical actions and their results are dedicated to one's personal deity...Jesus, Mother Mary, Krishna, Shiva, angels etc.

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Stage 4: Worship of Everything - *Visvat Swarupa*

Removing Likes and Dislikes

This, the penultimate stage, further expands and purifies the mind. It removes likes and dislikes: jealousy, hatred, possessiveness, etc. There is still duality...relationship...in this stage but the 'person' to whom one relates is the conscious being that is everything.

Seeing the divinity in particular objects that excite one's love for God is well and good, but seeing the divine in all objects is the goal. In this stage the devotee must drill down into *every*

object appearing in his consciousness until he can see consciousness...his own innermost self... shining there. Chapter 11 of the Gita presents the self in its creative aspect as a cosmic universal person, someone that is both wonderful and terrifying, the idea being that the devotee should love the ugly, angry, fearful parts of his or her self and accept the evil in the world as an inevitable consequence of self ignorance. The holy parts of one's self are easy to love but the dark parts are less so. As long as differences exist in the devotee's mind, love is conditional.

Emotional Impact of the 'Vision' of the Total

The purpose of this vision is to instill a sense of reverence and love for everything because everything is nothing but the self of the devotee. Seeing objects in this way removes one's likes and dislikes. The vision of everything as one's self gives rise to wonderment in the devotee; how can a thing and its opposite be just one thing, my self? It also generates fear in the devotee because it involves the acceptance of the inevitable losses...the death of love objects such as the body and one's family...that are part and parcel of the fabric of life. It is complete when the devotee overcomes his fears and happily accepts the inevitable demise of all objects, particularly one's body and loved ones.



At this stage the devotee sees every action as worship of the Lord and does not care about the results of actions because his sole purpose is to arrive at stage 5.

Stage 5: The Fruit of Devotion – Non-duality



Jnana Yoga is Non-Dual Love

In this stage the devotee realizes that *Isvara* and *Jiva* enjoy the same identity, which destroys the relationship between the individual and the world. You are me and I am you. Everything is me. I am love.

Enlightened devotees are free from mental and emotional events created by desire. They have no desire for objects because they are full. They can fulfill the desires of others because they are non-binding. They are here to serve. They are emotionally tolerant and do not disapprove of those who do not conform their values. They are free of possessiveness because they understand that everything belongs to *Isvara*. They are completely secure because they know there is no security in objects. They are not fooled by *Maya*'s beauty, variety and novelty. They are free from arrogance, pride, superiority, and competitiveness. They get along with everyone and everyone gets along with them because they have fragrant compassionate personalities. Everything they do contributes to life.

News

James enjoyed the seminar in Princeton...thanks Christine!...before heading off to Portland en route to Bend. He also enjoyed satsanging with old friends in Portland, the oldest group in ShiningWorld history. After a year of travel he is finally at our sanctuary in Bend, minus his dear wife A I am still in South Africa taking care of some financial business and will join him as soon as *Isvara* allows, probably in a couple of weeks.

The last month we have been busy revising and improving ShiningWorld. With the expansion and growing popularity of the website, James' new book, *Inquiry into Existence* (see the shop), the introduction of a bi-monthly webinar programme, etc. James has finally (more or less) faced the fact that the days of simply letting things unfold are over. Our aim has always been to do our best to pass on this great knowledge in the clearest way possible to those ready to hear it. As ShiningWorld grows we are committed to making things more professional, which involves a great deal more work for James and his minions ☺. Although fame is the last thing he wants...although he enjoys it...he has accepted the inevitable. We can't say NO to *Isvara*! With Vishnudeva, Dan, Christian and others, things are becoming streamlined and James has stepped up to the plate too.

We are refining the filming and recordings of the seminars and webinars so that we can offer better quality videos and audio in the shop. From now on, shortly after each webinar takes place we will offer audio and video for free on the website and You-tube. As videotaping has its challenges and we cannot afford a professional camera team to travel with us we have to rely on volunteers. If James is coming to your town and you wish to help with the setup let us know.

We are also in the final stages of finalizing our new website (See Vishnu's News below) thanks to the awesome work of Dan and Mike in California. You are in for a treat as it a winner! These two brilliant IT specialists have put much love and creativity into a beautiful and super functional website. We can't wait to share this with you, but we want to test the site and make sure everything is working properly before we launch it. There is a huge amount of work involved in moving all the files over from the old sites, not to mention finding and sorting out the glitches. We cannot thank Dan and Mike enough. It's not too long to go now!

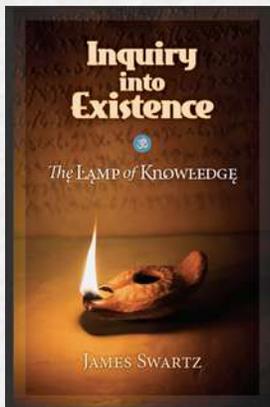
In the Spirit of Community, a Forum....

We told everyone last year that we wanted to introduce a forum and it is now a feature in the new site. Forum dharma...polite netiquette...will be overseen by our good friend, Stan Kublicki. There will be a FAQ explaining the rules. We request that you adhere to the practice of speech discipline, **vak tapas**, at all times. Opinions are fine, as long as they are well informed and presented in a pleasing and helpful manner, but think twice before you post.

We are also thinking of an open webinar day, maybe once a week, where one of the ShiningWorld teachers will be available for general questions and answers. Let us have your views and suggestions about this.

What's New in ShiningWorld

Publications:



The long awaited edit of Panchadas, Inquiry into Existence by James, is available on the ShiningWorld website here:

[http://shop.shiningworld.com/index.php?](http://shop.shiningworld.com/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=129)

[route=product/product&product_id=129](http://shop.shiningworld.com/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=129) **Don't miss this Book!!!**

James is very proud of it. There is nothing like it in the Vedanta *sampradaya*.

An Appeal

Although Inquiry into Existence (Panchadas with commentaries by James) has been out only a short time many have asked for a printed version. It is really a book that should be read in the traditional manner. It is possible to have 120 copies printed for \$1000. If anyone would like to cover the expense or part of it, please email me (swartz.jb@gmail.com). If you donate \$100 or more ShiningWorld will send you two free copies.

Mp3 and Videos:

Webinar Teachings: See website for mp3 recordings and videos of the last teaching webinars, or click here: http://www.shiningworld.com/top/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=125&Itemid=128

New Satsangs

See website for all new uploads from the ShiningWorld team.

Next Webinar:

Bend, Oregon on **May 3rd** 2015

All are welcome!

For details please contact Sundari: Sundari.shiningworld@gmail.com.

Subject: Values, plus questions.

Date: **Sunday, May 3rd**

Time: **10 AM** (Pacific Daylight Time: GMT -7)

Place: 55457 Big River Drive, Bend, Oregon 97707



ShiningWorld Sunriver

US Teaching Schedule

We are hosting the first seminar in our home in Bend/Sunriver the 21st to the 24th of May. Come and join us in this beautiful setting, listen to these great teachings as the peaceful Deschutes flows by. We have limited seating and there are a number of registrants already so let us know if you want to attend. The area abounds with all manner of accommodations from humble tent camping to vacations rentals...homes that sleep four or five for approximately \$100 a day, to spendy luxury homes. The following link to the Fall River Guard Station has a cabin with kitchenette that sleeps five at \$90 a day.

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/recrea/deschutes/recreation/recrea/?>

[recid=49933&actid=101](http://www.fs.usda.gov/recrea/deschutes/recreation/recrea/?recid=49933&actid=101) The way forward is to google "Bend, Sun River, La Pine camping and cabins. Check the State campsites on any of the many lovely lakes in the Cascade Mountains around Sun River etc. If anyone would like to share accommodation, please contact Christian Douglas: cdouglas@jnj.com

Bend, Oregon: 21st – 24th May

Contact: Sundari

Email: Sundari.shiningworld@gmail.com

Venue: 55457 Big River Drive, Sun River, Bend, Oregon.

Accommodation: See above

Text: Bhagavad Gita

Teaching schedule: See website

Santé Fe, New Mexico: 11th – 14th June



Contact: Spencer and Paddy McDonald

Email: psmcckean@me.com

Call: Spencer cell: [808-639-6420](tel:808-639-6420), Paddy cell: [808-639-6466](tel:808-639-6466)

Landline: [505-780-8790](tel:505-780-8790)

Venue: Scher Center: Address, phone number and

a map with directions can be found here: <http://www.healingwithoutlimits.com/>

Please note that the center should NOT be contacted concerning details about our seminar. We are only renting their space and they will have no information about our seminar.

Possible lodging ideas for out of town attendees:

<http://oldsantafeinn.com> Great value and close to town.

<http://santafesilversaddlemotel.com>

<http://elreyinnsantafe.com> Closest to venue.

Tripadvisor.com is a great resource.

Teaching schedule: See Website.

Text: To Be Announced

Berkeley, California: 17th – 19th July



Contact: Erin and Vance Selover

Email: info@ashtangayogaberkeley.com

Call: [510.301.6747](tel:510.301.6747)

Venue: Ashtanga Yoga Berkeley, 933 Parker Street, Studio 38
Berkeley, CA 94710

<http://www.ashtangayogaberkeley.com/event/vedanta-weekend-retreat/>

Text: Aparoksanubhuti

Teaching schedule: See website.

Trout Lake, Oregon: 23rd – 28th August Campout



Contact: Sundari

Email: Sundari.shiningworld@gmail.com

Venue: Mt. Adams Guler Trout Lake County Park,

18 Park Road Trout Lake, WA 98650. [Click here for a PDF Map](#)

Teaching Schedule: See website.

Text: To Be Announced

Vishnu's News



Website Update

As mentioned above, the new website is nearing completion. Along with the new Forum, there are several other additions such as: an improved Satsang Database, a revised Publications page, an expanded gallery, a Vedanta Beginners Course and a Vedanta Advanced Course.

Satsang Database: The new database will have a built-in reader that will allow you to adjust text size for easier reading and it will have navigational buttons that will allow you to browse forwards and backwards through the list of satsangs, as well as a button that will bring up a satsang at random. We will also be bringing back the ability to read and save the satsangs in pdf format.

Publications Page: Owing to a communication problem with our former web designer, the Publications page on our current site has been in disarray for quite some time, with certain texts missing and the others being poorly organized and hard to find. However, we have corrected this problem on the new site; all of the texts are reinstated and easy to find.

Vedanta Courses: The biggest additions to the new site are the Beginners Course and the Advanced Course. Both courses lay out a carefully considered order in which to study Vedantic texts. The Beginners Course focuses on introductory material and is intended to give a strong foundational understanding of Vedanta. The Advanced Course focuses entirely on scripture, from basic scriptures like Tattva Bodha, to advanced scriptures such as Panchadasi. Neither course requires you to sign-up, there is no fee, and you can undertake their study on your own time. Each course is completely **self-guided**, but should you have questions, our teachers are available to help.

Website Pictures

A new slideshow and gallery has been added to the new site. So if you have pictures from a ShiningWorld seminar you attended, please send them in as we would love to post them on the site. The photos do not necessarily have to have James and Sundari in them. We want to see you too! Make sure the photos are un-edited and in full resolution.

Moving

I'm happy to say that my wife and I will be packing up and leaving Arkansas in July, a dream we have long waited to realize. We'll be heading through the Southwestern US on our way to stay a while with my sister in Los Angeles, and then we'll head north to Bend, Oregon in order to be nearer to James and Sundari. I look forward to the opportunity to work more closely with them both, and I feel confident it will improve our ability to faithfully transmit the wisdom of Vedanta to those who want to hear it.

-Vishnudeva

The Tenth Woman – Maya in Action



A missing woman on vacation in Iceland managed to unwittingly join a search party looking for herself.

[Toronto Sun](#) reports that a tourist group traveling by bus to the volcanic Eldgja canyon made a pit stop near the canyon park. The woman in question went inside to freshen up and change her clothes at the rest stop, and when she came back “her busmates didn’t recognize her.”

Word spread among the group of a missing passenger, and the woman didn't recognize the description of herself. Next thing you know, a 50-person search party was canvassing the area, and the coast guard was mobilizing to deploy a search party of its own. About 3am, some genius in the group finally figured out that the missing woman was actually in the search party, albeit in different clothes, and the search was called off.

No word on what kind of wardrobe was involved in this woman's "freshening up." But her sense of self-image must be way out of whack to join a search party until 3am without even suspecting for a minute that the woman in the description bore some resemblance to herself.

Wake Up From Awakening



Isvara's creation is a dream creation. It is there as long as you think you are in it, but it disappears when you wake up. Experiential awakening is subject to a cruel irony. You merely awaken in another dream. Liberation is much more than waking up. The 'you' that waked up never slept. It is not an awakening at all. It is simply the knowledge that I am the awareness that never slept.

