



DEDICATED TO THE DISSEMINATION OF NON-DUAL WISDOM

Fall made its presence felt since we got back from Trout Lake. We have been chopping wood and preparing the house for our first winter in the US. It is Ramji's first winter in the US since...forever! He has followed the sun most of his life and is adept at escaping winter chills. He is now in Europe having just started his teaching schedule there. I am in Dubai with my daughter before heading on to South Africa. James and I will be back in Bend before the end of November in time for a (hopefully) white Christmas.



Trout Lake August 2015

Trout Lake 2015 turned out to be the best seminar we have ever held there. In spite of nearby fires that created a doubt about whether or not we would be smoked out, Ramji said *Isvara* wouldn't let us down, and indeed this was the case. The fires kept

holiday-makers away and a harmonious group of fifty + enjoyed the beautiful scenery and sublime teachings sans smoke under a lovely cathedral of trees.

Ramji was in top form as usual and had everyone riveted (and laughing) from morning to night. Several people told us that they were in *samadhi* for the whole five days he unfolded the exquisite teachings on love.



What's New

Non-dual Relationships



While we were in India earlier this year we were interviewed on what constitutes a non-dual relationship and how to achieve one...or not! The interview covers all the points that people raise about the issue and is beautifully filmed by Tom Kheln from Germany. We highly recommend it since relationships are an important topic for everyone. We cannot imagine that another

interview like it exists. Here is a link to the trailer on ShiningWorld.

<http://www.shiningworld.com/site/index.php> It is in the upper right hand corner of the home page in the News and Updates section. It has proved to be very popular. Don't miss it!

Subscription Service and Reduced Video Prices

It is naïve to expect that the amazing inspiration that blazes brightly when you initially hear the practical, systematic and complete teachings of Vedanta will last forever. If you really understand the value of Vedanta you know that you need to stoke the fire of inquiry with constant practice until the discrimination between the apparent and the real, the self and the objects that present themselves to it, become second nature. The daily practice of self-inquiry is the only way that stubborn worldly tendencies can be removed, making the bliss of the self a constant experience. Many have no doubt that they are limitless non-dual existence/awareness but don't enjoy the experiential fruit... complete satisfaction...on a moment-to-moment basis. Self realization, the knowledge "I am limitless", needs to be actualized. Knowing the self is one thing; living AS the self in this world is quite another.

It seems that no good deed goes unpunished. ShiningWorld has made so many videos available on YouTube that sales of videos in the shop, which is an important source of revenue, have dried up considerably. Not to worry, Vedanta has never been about money, although we need it to continue our work. The YouTube videos provide good introductory access to the teachings but since *systematic exposure to the texts is necessary for complete assimilation* it is vital that serious inquirers listen to them regularly...daily is best. To that end we have set up a Media Center through which you can, for \$150, take out a yearly subscription to the complete ShiningWorld video archives and stream the teachings down to your computer from the cloud. This service makes many hundreds of hours of quality teaching available for \$12.50 per month!!! New series will be added regularly. Here is the link: <http://shiningworld.com/site/members/>

At the same time, if your internet connection is not particularly robust or you just prefer to keep copies on your hard drive we have reduced the prices of the basic sets...the Vedanta Full Set, the Bhagavad Gita, Vivekachoodamani, Panchadasi, etc. by approximately 50%.

Vedanta is a sparkling diamond, each facet reflecting light. As the ShiningWorld community evolves and as James responds to its growth, he presents the teachings from many different angles and in many different ways. The archives reflect this fact and are an invaluable source of inspiration and wisdom. To subscribe click this link:

Better Late than Never...100 Hours of Vedanta's Most Sophisticated Text



But well worth the wait... As most of you know, in January of this year James taught Panchadasi in India for three weeks. After many trials and tribulations it is now ready as a download from the ShiningWorld shop. This is an amazing teaching and not likely to be repeated in the foreseeable future. Here is the link for the video and MP3 download: <http://shiningworld.com/site/shop/>

For those of you who attended the seminar in Sante Fe...or anyone, particularly newbies...the videos (13 hours) are now in the shop for \$25 dollars.

Big Batch of New Satsangs

James uploaded 120 pages of interesting satsangs this month. Don't miss them. One he recommends is **"I am Experience Free"** and **"Experiences are Things"** by Arlindo. There is a particularly otherworldly satsang for those of you who like supernatural things called, **Isvara's Vision**. And finally, a case of enlightenment sickness rears its head in **'The Renunciate Sage.'** My satsangs have also been posted. It is interesting that *Isvara* wants us to focus on certain topics as ShiningWorld moves forward. For me the main theme these last two months has been on the practice of *Nididhysana*, which never ends for the *jiva* as long as it is interacting with the field of existence.

And, Not to be Missed...

James has once again been invited to speak on Buddha At the Gas Pump (or BATGAP as it is fondly known). The interview will take place on **NOVEMBER 7th at 10 AM USA Central Time**. To watch the live stream interview, please click this link on that day/time: <https://batgap.com/future-interviews/upcoming-interviews/>

Feedback on the Essay on Food in the Last Issue

The satsang on food and the big picture in the last newsletter was a fairly radical departure from the normal topics discussed in Vedanta, even though we frequently get questioned about it. Much of the information covered comes from my book on the *gunas* as they relate to lifestyle. Although I expected a more negative response because food is such an emotional issue, surprisingly, I received a deluge of positive replies from people who expressed gratitude for the Big Picture clarity and the accuracy of its scientific facts. On the recommendation of several people, I have refined and reformatted the article, rechecked the facts and made some additions and adjustments. Most important, I make it clear that this inquiry is first and foremost an objective evaluation of the natural laws that operate in the field of existence with regards to the need to maintain a healthy body—and I explain more clearly what these laws are. It is definitely not a prescription for or prohibition against a particular diet. This leads to the second issue; how the individual interprets and relates to the laws that operate in the field. The morality and health issues relating to the main points are discussed objectively in light of the Vedantic big picture—and as sub issues of the main premise.

Even though I stated very clearly that the content of the article was not based on my opinions and not prescriptive, some vegans took it that way. It is a pity, but we were not surprised. One person who identified herself as a vegan felt that it was a sad state of affairs when Vedanta is linked to a dogmatic point of view. But, had she identified with the self instead of her preferred eating style, the article would not have been upsetting.

I was also asked where in the scripture this knowledge is found. Of course, it is not in Vedanta scripture. Vedanta presupposes that if you are qualified for self inquiry, you are knowledgeable *and* dispassionate concerning the laws that run the dharmafield. A mature person lives by these laws at all times because even though he or she does not identify with the body, the body is subject to these laws. An unhealthy or poorly functioning body makes life most unpleasant and self inquiry very difficult.

One person, a fruitarian, felt that the article lacked compassion. A vegan friend of ours told me the only part he liked was the idea that Vedanta is not a big parent telling one what to do! ☺. Another good friend felt that there was too much emphasis on the body and not enough about the essence of the body, the self.

My response to these statements is: (1) whether we like it or not, the body belongs to *Isvara* and is conditioned by the natural laws that run the dharmafield—*which are*

prescriptive for a jiva that wants to be happy. If you enjoy suffering, then flout them at will. And (2) as awareness, any discussion about the apparent reality is superfluous; but it behooves *jivas* who live in it to understand and obey these laws. I was also asked to make the article more understandable for non-Vedantins, so I replaced most of the Sanskrit terms.

I am adding the link to the revised article for the benefit of those who gained so much from it and also hope that those who were offended will read it again with more dispassion and understanding. Here is the link:

http://shiningworld.com/site/files/pdfs/publications/articles/Vedanta_and_the_Politics_and_Morality_of_Food.pdf

Upcoming Seminar

Atlanta: Upon his return from Europe in November James will teach a two day seminar in Atlanta, Georgia from the 6th – 8th of November 2015

Text: Introduction to Self Inquiry—The Big Picture

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The following summation of Vedanta was written by one of James' brilliant friends who has asked to remain anonymous.

Of Cakes, Bones and Vedanta

Into this house we're born Into this world we're thrown

Like a dog without a bone

An actor out on loan

These lines, from a song by the 1960s rock group, 'The Doors', are as accurate and pithy a summation of the human condition as you are likely to find: Its often cruelly arbitrary nature; our endless, almost pathological search for satisfaction and fulfillment; the oppressive sense of alienation from ourselves and others; our almost automatic

addiction to role-playing in so many situations; and the constant, enervating sense of artificiality, falsity, limitation and mortality from which there is no escape. And like the said hungry dog, we are, collectively, so often savage and barbarous in an infinity of ways.

Vedanta says, yes, that's the way it (apparently) is in this world. In fact, Vedanta more or less assumes that we have experienced these existential truths to a harrowing, virtually traumatic degree, or we would not develop a sustained interest in what could, superficially, be seen as an esoteric and rarefied teaching. Actually, the polar opposite is the truth: Vedanta is practical, pragmatic, to a relentless, almost ruthless degree. It says that when we know directly, automatically and consistently, the reality of our nature, and of the apparent world, and the difference between the two, this changes the rules of the existential 'game'. Fundamentally. Permanently. Effortlessly. This knowledge is freedom/contentment/happiness/satisfaction/peace/and all the other good stuff. And it ain't gonna run away, because it is our nature, our essence, and is therefore that which cannot depart from us. If it can depart, it is not our nature; it is something subsidiary, inferior to it.

The method Vedanta teaches is self-inquiry, or, if you wish, Self-inquiry. It aims to show us directly, through logic, reflection, contemplation, through the practice and assimilation of self-knowledge/Self-knowledge, that we are ever-free, full, pure, peaceful, plain and simple awareness. Our intellect is the pivotal tool in this process, because any and every type of knowledge is processed in the intellect. But this assuredly does not mean that direct self-knowledge is in any way cold, abstract, theoretical, formulaic. A knowledge which confers complete satisfaction, and existential peace, and unquenchable, quiet joy, and which is ineffably beautiful, could not be intellectual in any of the usual senses of the word. In fact, when this realization is self-sustaining, it means that 'head' and 'heart' generally get on very well with each other, and any 'disputes' between them are settled speedily and amicably. A 'side-effect' of this realization is, perhaps paradoxically, an internally assertive sense of humour, a keen and on-going delight in the auspicious, harmless absurdity of our 'personal' egos and 'stories'. We get to have our cake (firm knowledge of our identity as the self) and eat it (enjoy a mind/ego which feels secure and contented as a result of this understanding), with the icing on top (sweet freedom from the psychological and spiritual slavery of an ever-changing samsara, because we know we are essentially untouched by it).

One way of approaching self-inquiry is to look at its underlying 'mechanics'; it can be helpful to formulate, so to speak, its most essential features. This does not mean that the practice of self-inquiry is mechanical. Rather, it may require a nuanced, subtle and

flexible approach, because, as the saying goes, 'circumstances alter cases'. The following three short, simple, basic points are extracted almost word-for-word from a satsang by James on the website. When applied appropriately, intelligently, they can be of incalculable benefit, a pearl beyond price. (The italics are mine.)

Self-inquiry is:

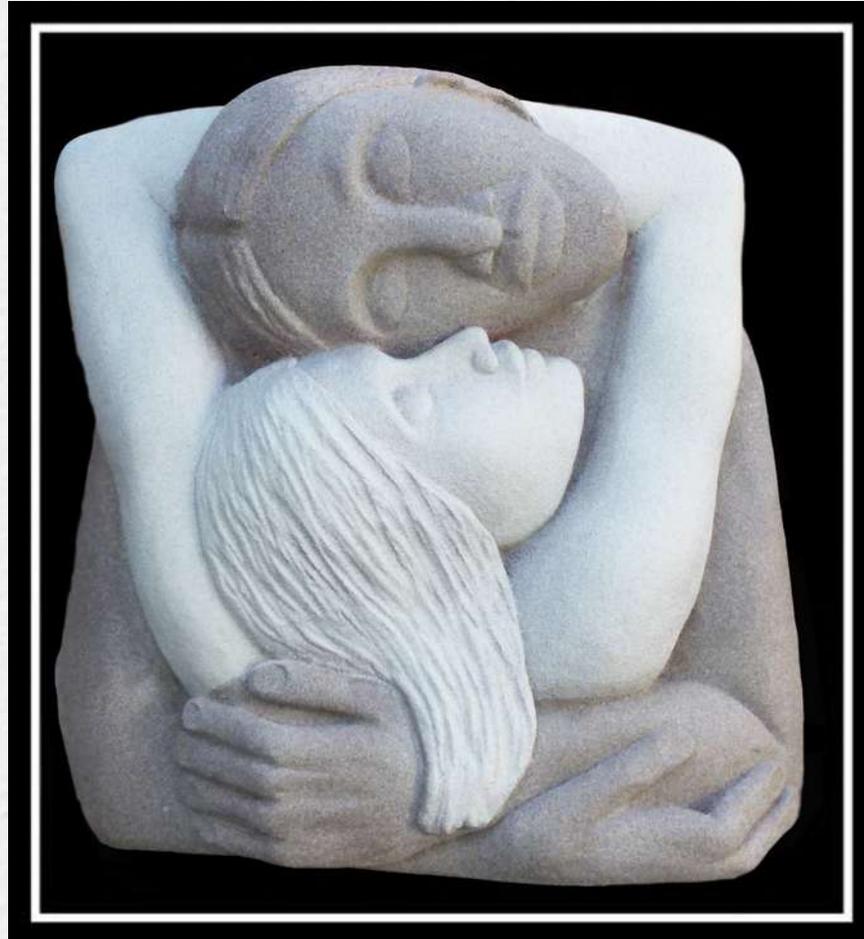
- 1. The *consistent* application of a *questioning* attitude to everything the mind presents.**
- 2. The *consistent* practice of *discrimination* between the self and its many forms;**
- 3. The *consistent affirmation* of one's non-dual identity in light of the mind's conviction that the self is limited, inadequate and incomplete.**

To anyone reasonably familiar with Vedanta, there is nothing at all earth-shattering or 'advanced' about this formulation, to put it mildly. Yet, it distills the method of Vedanta with a simple accuracy and a certain elegance. Simply put, it is a reliable, effective means for true, lasting freedom. If practiced properly, it removes the existential weight from our shoulders. It works. Of course, it assumes we are trying to live in accordance with dharma and are developing a karma-yoga attitude to the results of our actions. One could almost say that it would be become virtually impossible to be attached to objects/results, and to not live ethically, if we apply with integrity the above three principles.

When the mind no longer needs to affirm its identity, it ceases doing so, as the verbalised knowledge has served its purpose and we are established firmly, directly and ineffably in the self as the self. (If the knowledge is needed at anytime, it is directly available to the intellect.) Then the practice of discrimination can become almost automatic, since it is now a truism. So we won't feel 'like a dog without a bone' (though one is allowed an occasional, disgruntled growl). And being, apparently, 'an actor out on loan' will probably be a source of frequent, exquisite amusement.

And you won't run out of cake. Or icing.

Two as One
A Sculpture by Sundari



**Much Love,
Ram and Sundari**