

SHININGWORLD

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2017

HELLO, EVERYONE

from Sundari

Tiruvannamalai, India, 2017.



DHARMA AND ADHARMA

THIS NEWSLETTER IS a precursor to our usual newsletter, which will follow shortly with news of the teaching in India and of forthcoming events.

Some of you may be aware of an ongoing tabloid-style smear campaign by someone intent on ruining James' reputation. Our reputation does not require defending. In fact we said nothing for many months, hoping this campaign would stop. We are now breaking our silence, not because these allegations have merit – quite the opposite – but because they highlight an important spiritual principle, *dharma* and *adharma*. Please read what James has to say below. ☸

~ Sundari

BELIEF IS TOO EASY

SOME OF YOU may have heard of the scurrilous attacks on my integrity coming from the bowels of the internet, to wit that 40 years ago I hypnotized, drugged and raped a 14-year-old girl. The first thought you will have is, are they true? And the easiest way to dismiss the doubt is to believe that they are or aren't true.

But belief is not knowledge, although it is often thought to be knowledge. Recent events witnessed by competent observers can provide evidence from which knowledge can be inferred. But when 40 years separates the present from the putative event and there are no independent observers or forensic evidence, how can one arrive at the truth? With great difficulty, if at all. Such situations are popularly referred to as “he said, she said” events and produce no valid knowledge. Individuals are still trying to figure out if President Kennedy was assassinated 50 years ago by a single gunman acting alone or if the assassination was part of a larger conspiracy. Another example: thousands are still trying to ferret out the “truth” of the 9/11 attacks.



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Sundari and James.

OPINIONS ARE NOT NECESSARILY BAD

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Experience is the result of a conscious being interacting with other conscious beings or with inert objects. In the event that one feels the need to have an opinion in the absence of facts, the only way to develop a reasonable opinion is to keep an open mind and investigate the character of the principals. As far as Vedanta goes, there is nothing inherently “wrong” with opinions, but they need to be known as mere opinions. Thinking that your beliefs are the truth is dangerous because they may coincide with the truth or they may not. Are the people who believe an unverifiable statement right or are the people who don't right? There is no way to tell. This is what scripture refers to as the inscrutability of *Maya*.

So all I can do is tell you what I know and help you think about this situation in a reasonable way. I don't need your “support,” although I welcome it.

THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE NOT TRUE

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I know this statement is not true. I have known that someone was spreading malicious rumors about me for about seven months, when Rick Archer from the website *Buddha at the Gas Pump* (BATGAP)

removed a recent interview with me. Rick is a good guy who provides a forum for views on enlightenment, and it seems that it was easier to wash his hands of me than to question the source of this lie. It was not a principled stand, but investigation is not BATGAP's brief, so it is understandable. To be honest, it didn't bother me. If you are a public figure, you need to be extremely dispassionate because not everyone is going to like you.

ALLOWING WRONGDOERS TO DO WRONG IS WRONG

So I took the high road and hoped that this person would tire and move on. However, he seems to be highly motivated to destroy my reputation, so my thinking has changed. Allowing wrongdoers to do wrong is wrong. It increases *adharma* in the world, so I decided, like my spiritual namesake Sri Ram, to get out my well-stocked arsenal and do battle with this person. The situation has not been resolved yet, but I am confident that this cloud has a silver lining.

CONFLICT IS NOT NECESSARILY BAD

Nobody likes conflict except people who like conflict. In the spiritual world conflict is eschewed as “duality” – and it is – but that does not mean that conflict is not necessary or bad. In fact the *Bhagavad Gita* says that a person with a *rajasic* temperament should not avoid conflict, because it is built into his or her *svadharma*. In any case, I don't care for it at all. I have a predominance of *sattva*. However, when like Arjuna it is important to stand up and fight, one should enjoy it. So if you think I'm feeling bad because somebody hates me, you would be wrong. Don't feel sorry for me. I see this situation as an opportunity to bring knowledge of the *dharma* to people and will do my best in the spirit of *karma yoga*.

THE PREPONDERANCE OF THE EVIDENCE

When it is not possible to determine guilt or innocence – assuming you are not able to accept uncertainty – the law, which is based on *dharma*, provides us with an interesting concept: the preponderance of the evidence. In this case there is actually no evidence and I categorically deny the accuser's statement, so how can you remove your doubt? Of course the quickest way to remove it is to see it as a *mithya* problem and dismiss it as unreal. But in the event that you are not at that level of inquiry, you can make a reasonable determination based on what you do know.

I QUIT TEACHING THE DAY I DIE

In this case, what do you know? You know that someone who refuses to identify himself and seems to be masquerading as the “victim,” who also refuses to present his “evidence” to a public prosecutor, makes a statement, the veracity of which is impossible to determine since it was unwitnessed and supposedly happened 40 years ago. This is a fact. A reasonable inference to draw is that this person is uninterested in the truth. It is also reasonable to conclude that he is solely interested in shaming me into giving up teaching Vedanta. I have a statement from him offering this alternative in exchange for his silence. Is it reasonable to conclude that he is interested in truth and justice? Finally, ask yourself why the alleged “victim” waited 40 years to come forward with her accusations, if in fact she is real. To determine the truth of her statements, we need to know if she exists and, if so, who she actually is.

SHOULD YOU BELIEVE MY DENIALS?

Common sense also tells us that my denial is not useful, because I will deny it if I didn't do it and I will deny it if I did. So where does that leave us? First, see if I have ever been charged and convicted of sex crimes in a court of law. I can confidently state that I haven't. Second, canvass the hundreds of women in the Vedanta *sanga* to determine whether or not any of them have been hypnotized, drugged and raped by me. Third, consider the fact that I am seventy-six years old and married to an extremely beautiful – inside and out – discriminating woman who obviously loves me. And there are public documents and witnesses that will testify to the fact that at the time of the alleged event I was married to an extremely beautiful woman, a runner-up in the Miss California beauty pageant no less. And finally, look at my life's work, my books, videos and particularly the *satsangs* on the website which chronicle my interaction with people over many years. Does it seem reasonable that an evil person could have created such a significant body of spiritual work?

NO MAN TO MAN TALKS

Am I worried about this situation? Absolutely not. Am I irritated? Yes, a little. I think my accuser is a cowardly person with a malicious mind. What am I going to do about it? I have already offered twice to speak with him man to man with the idea of helping him come to terms with his mind. I pleaded with him to speak with me before I publish this newsletter (see under the subheading “Final Plea” below). Unsurprisingly, he is unwilling to engage in a dialogue. We are continually monitoring and replying to his posts. He is slippery, but sooner or later we will find out who he is, at which time I feel that it is my duty to take him to court. I have the will and the resources to pursue a legal solution. An

important principle is at stake. I would naturally prefer that he apologize and stop slandering me, but it seems he is quite invested in his lie. If he hasn't the character to apologize, I would be happy if he stopped posting his accusations on the internet.

What can you do to help? The non-dual spiritual world is pretty big but everyone is connected, so if anybody knows who this is, please contact me via this address: inquiries.shiningworld@gmail.com. I think he is American and that he frequents or has frequented Tiruvannamalai. He may be a devotee of Osho, Tony Parsons or Papaji. Usually people like this seek recognition and brag about their exploits. My guess is that he fancies himself as some sort of modern-day Jack the Giant Killer and would die of happiness if he could destroy me. Fortunately, I am indestructible.

~ James

FINAL PLEA

Dear Traveler:

My intention in writing to you was to bring an honorable end to your public, false, unwarranted and unconscious attacks.

While you do me no harm, your ongoing motivation to destroy my reputation potentially harms others, and requires a more direct intervention.

Initially my correspondence invited you to meet and dialogue about the source of your disturbance, or upset, that gives rise to these false innuendoes.

As we both know your narrative and contrived identity are both a lie, I invited you to meet to get to the real issue: you refused and then escalated your false, unwarranted and unconscious attacks on various Web blogs.

Therefore this note is my latest and final invitation to reconcile. Persistent *adharmic* behavior – behaviors that violate universal values, such as “do no harm” – must be challenged because otherwise wrongdoing proliferates.

Here's what I seek: in exchange for a sincere, unambiguous public apology that clears my name of these false charges wholly and completely, I will discontinue the investigation now underway to identify and bring criminal charges to you.

Also, I will publish your threats to a worldwide audience through the ShiningWorld newsletter. I have nothing to fear, nothing to lose and everything to gain by bringing this darkness into the Light.

In fact, as evidence, despite your attempts to sabotage upcoming ShiningWorld programs, all organizers remain undeterred and committed to help deliver this important wisdom to others. No programs are canceled.

I trust there will be similar support from the community when they read the forthcoming newsletter, which represents thousands of mature people who respect me and love the contribution that ShiningWorld makes to their lives.

In fact that support has already emerged. Many have offered their professional counsel and logistical support on several fronts. For example, planning is almost complete to launch a legal challenge. And other initiatives to identify you and reconcile this matter are in the final stages.

To be clear, this is not a threat; instead, it is a course of action supported by *dharma*. I am offering an honorable, win-win way forward prior to deploying these resources.

Please see a draft of the ShiningWorld newsletter attached. It responds directly and constructively to your threats and offers a means to contemplate and practice self-knowledge beyond mere beliefs.

Ironically, you perhaps have given us all a silver lining – a “teachable moment” – that is, to help us discern and move from unconscious thoughts and feelings to reality.

I invite you to consider that the smart way forward is to write an unambiguous public apology, honestly reveal your motivations and clear a way forward to contribute constructively to your life and the lives of others. ☸

~ James