



Two Types of Dualistic Devotion

Dispassion is perhaps the most essential qualification for liberation, at least at the beginning of one's inquiry. It arises out of an appreciation of the fact that life is a zero-sum game; for every upside there is a downside. The fact that the happiness we get from objects is always mixed with sorrow makes us critical of the world. It is good to understand this defect but it is childish to develop a sense of negativity about it, find fault with everything and believe that one can only be happy when the world is a better place. Maturity and an expanded intellect are required to neutralize this impurity and gain sublime intellectual joy. It is spiritually counterproductive to hate anyone or want to possess anything.

Both informal and formal dualistic devotion address this issue. Informal devotion brings emotional joy and formal devotion causes intellectual joy and a mature expanded mind.

There is a tendency in the Vedanta world to look down on dualistic devotion...personifying the self and striking up a personal relationship... because so many devotees are sappy and demanding...'Save me from this, Bhagavan! Give me that, Bhagavan!'...and prone to magical thinking (a devotee once told me his doctor could tell who was enlightened by reading the pulse!), but it has its place in the grand scheme of enlightenment.

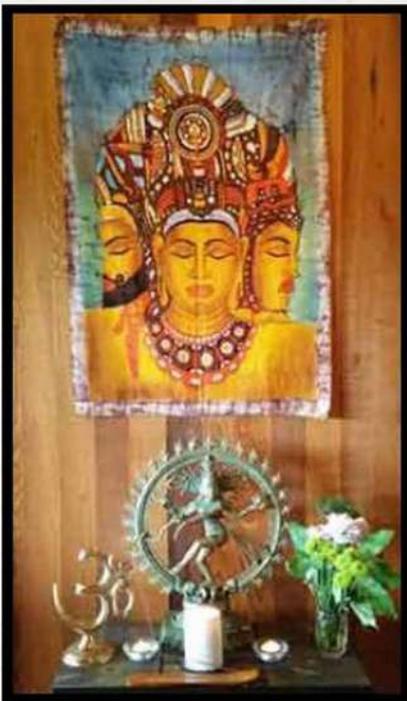
An informal devotee does not follow the strict rules for worship given in the scriptures but expresses love for God in his or her own way—at times even violating scriptural rules. The traditional practice of *karma yoga* and *upasana yoga*...meditation on deities...is formal devotion.

The informal devotee relates to God as a person...either as a child, a parent or a lover...and forms an emotional bond with the Lord. He or she projects sentiency on



the chosen deity...Krishna or Shiva; Jesus is good too!...and treats the Lord as a person. These devotees wake the Lord up in the morning and put Him/Her to sleep at night. They confide, cuddle and scold, feed and clothe the deity and derive emotional contentment and great pleasure from the relationship.

A formal devotee worships God by the daily practice of *karma yoga*, which involves worship of one's chosen deity, one's ancestors, the teacher and the scripture, giving social service and caring for the environment. God is not considered to be a person but is a symbol of everything, a 'universal person' as it were.



We worship Ganesh, Shiva and Krishna. When we apply the sandal paste to Shiva's third eye, which comes from a tree that grows out of the earth, we remind ourselves that God is not the small image in front of us but is every material object. When we say God is space...*akashatmane pushpam pujayami*...we are acknowledging the fact that God is everywhere and that there is no need to go on pilgrimage to a temple or walk around a holy mountain on full moon night. When we light the candle we see the self as the eternal fire principle. Fire gives light, a fitting symbol of pure consciousness, which illumines everything, and produces heat, the love that holds everything together. So we don't complain when it is hot and humid, for instance, for that would be to disrespect the Lord. And from the teachings about how the elements evolve out of

consciousness, we know that water comes from fire and so we offer a drop of water as a symbol of all the water on earth. To worship the air we wave an incense stick in front of the deity, which shows our appreciation of the fragrant air which, like water, we depend on for our lives and we are grateful.

Formal devotion expands the mind by cultivating appreciation of the fact that all the principles that govern the universe rebound to the glory of God alone. When the sun rises, it is God arising. When it rains, God rains tears of joy. When the breeze comes it is God caressing our faces. This kind of worship requires a mature and expansive

mind. We worship this way and we worship informally too. We caress, kiss and scold our deities to keep our emotions happy. In this way all our emotions are directed to the Lord.

Worship of Human Beings

Most of the deities in Vedic spiritual culture have human or human-like forms to remind us that we are actually forms of the Divine. When we gathered under the great tree in our back yard for last week's seminar and shared our happiness with the teachings we are worshipping each other as the Self.



Home on the range...Ramji and Sundari with some of the group who attended the Bend Seminar.



DAVE

LUMA

MARK

Hello everyone,

Isvara finally brought us together at our base camp in Bend after almost three months separation. I managed to arrive a couple of days before the seminar began, jetlagged and none-too-well, but I hit the deck running and with beautiful Luma's assistance helped James and Dave finalize preparations for the first event here. Everyone enjoyed our lovely home and the beautiful surroundings. James took the whole four days unfolding the first five chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. He was in top form as usual. There was much laughter, sharing and blissfulness ☺

What's New

Events:

James and I will be in Tiruvannamalai from the 25/6th December 2015. We will be teaching Tattva Bodh together from the 28th Dec – 2nd Jan 2016 as an introduction to Panchadasi, which is a more advanced text. We highly recommend that those of you who are new to Vedanta make a concerted attempt to attend prior to the teaching on Panchadasi. Teaching schedule will be released closer to the time.

Trout Lake:

We are happy to announce that Ramji will teach a new text, Narada Bhakti Sutras, the definitive Vedantic text on self knowledge, love and devotion for the first time. Don't miss it!

Next Seminar: [Santa Fe, New Mexico: 11th – 14th, June 2015](#)

Organisers: Spencer and Paddy McDonald

Email: psmckean@me.com

Text: Self-Inquiry, The Big Picture; if possible, please read The Essence of Enlightenment or How to Attain Enlightenment to prepare yourself.

Webinars

The last chapter of Essence of Enlightenment, The Enlightened Person, has been **rescheduled for the 7th June**. See website for details.

Taking a break...

This is the last webinar we will hold for a month or two; we will inform you all of the next one well in advance so you can download the questions and formulate your answers. We both need a rest from the incessant activity generated by the success of ShiningWorld. Apart from that, we will institute a new Q&A format based on a different topic or topics taken from the best satsangs posted on the web by ShiningWorld teachers. James and I will teach together a few times and we will invite other ShiningWorld teachers to participate should they so desire.

Website: Thanks to Dan, Vishnudeva and Mike the new website is up and running. In our humble opinion it is the best non-dual website on the planet. It has garnered many rave reviews. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Publications:

Due to the generosity of our readers we will shortly have hard copies of **Inquiry into Existence**. Anyone who donated who has not sent their physical address to James (swartz.jb@gmail.com) should do so soon so we can send you complimentary copies. It is also available in ebook form on the website.

Videos – An Apology

Due to family karma Tom, our camera man from India, has been unable to complete the videos of the Tiru teachings on Panchadasi in January. Christian Eberle will finish them presently. We will let you know when they are ready. We apologise to the many disappointed inquirers who have been waiting so patiently for them.

Satsangs

All new satsangs are posted on the website. Check them out!

