

SHININGWORLD

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2018

HELLO, EVERYONE!

from Sundari



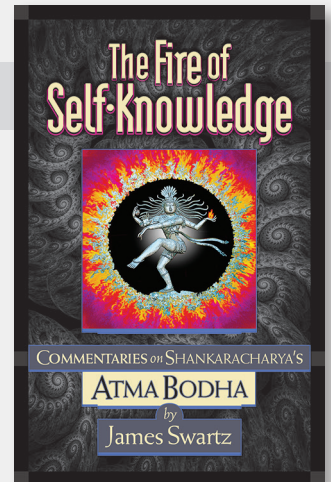
James and Sundari in Spain.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

IT'S TOO LATE to wish you a kind, generous, peaceful new year, but we will do it anyway. A lot has happened since our last newsletter, so you can count on this one to be packed with news, events, new books, translations and interesting articles. ☸

THE FIRE OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

SHININGWORLD PRESENTS a beautifully illustrated version of James' commentaries on *Atma Bodha* [*Self-Knowledge*], written in the eighth century by a great sage, Adi Shankacharya. It clarifies the fundamental ideas revealed in the *Upanishads*, the source texts of Vedanta. It is meant to be studied before an inquirer delves into the *Upanishads* proper because it teaches the whole system of Vedanta in a straightforward manner, avoiding elaborate arguments. It presents many apt illustrated metaphors drawn from our everyday experience to aid us in meditation ([bookshop link](#) | [paperback link](#)). ☸



The Fire of Self-Knowledge: Commentaries on Shankara's Atma Bodha by James.



VEDANTA IN CODE

FIRST, SHININGWORLD is happy to announce a free feature-length video, *The Symbols of the Self*, professionally filmed by Thomas Keln in Tiruvannamalai,

1.

South India, at the foot of the holy mountain Arunachala, with James unfolding the Vedantic meaning of India's most important devotional practices and deities. It is offered for free, but donations are welcome, both to Thomas, who put many hours into the film, and to us, who paid for some of the costs. To donate to Thomas, please see the link in the video. Click that link, and then click on the graphic on the upper right of the [ShiningWorld home page](#). 🌐

SOCIAL MEDIA



HERE'S A NOTICE from Stan about the state of play of ShiningWorld's social media presence:

“Hi, friends. James asked me to write a few lines about ShiningWorld's social media. Thus far, the forum on *ShiningWorld.com* has been the ‘official’ social media presence, along with two popular but ‘unofficial’ sites: James’ personal Facebook page and Friends of James Swartz.

“A full overhaul of our social media presence was required because we trusted the goodwill of those who visited the sites. Along with sincere inquirers, there were ego-trippers, angel-promoters, *guru* wannabes, peddlers of duality; and nasty trolls, who personally attacked James without the slightest knowledge of Vedanta.

“So James asked us to remove the sites and open a new one. To this end, my good friend Wayne Harrison, who has much experience with social media, and I set up and moderate a new site with better controls. All applicants are carefully vetted, and I'm happy to say that the group is completely ‘clean’ and full of eager, focused and friendly participants. Wayne worked tirelessly to make this possible.

“The group adamantly decided to keep the posts strictly focused on only James’ teaching of Vedanta. Although we have the greatest respect for the teachings of Swami Dayananda, Swami Chinmaya and Swami Paramarthanda, we recommend that you visit their sites if the Sanskrit and Hindu orientation is attractive to you. James’ teachings are no way in conflict with these teachers. Vedanta is Vedanta. Chinmaya and Dayananda were his teachers, and Swami Paramarthanda is a *guru* brother. James, however, has done the teaching tradition a great service by minimizing the use of Sanskrit and teaching in a style that is native to Western people. Vedanta is knowledge and, with the exception of a few concepts for which there are no English equivalents, works very well in English, if the testimonials on ShiningWorld are any indication.

“Although the forum garnered many views, the level of participation was poor, so it will be shut down. So now the official social media site is the Facebook group called Advaita Vedanta with James Swartz and ShiningWorld ([link](#)). All are most welcome to join us there.” ~ **Stan Kubliki** 🌐

THE 5/10/15 RULE: ANTIDOTE TO ENLIGHTENMENT SICKNESS

THE TOPIC OF enlightenment sickness has predictably reared its head recently, prompting James to write an important *satsang* on Vedanta's 5/10/15 rule. If you're feeling pretty enlightened lately and eager to save the world, you should benefit from this article.

Vedanta is a three-stage process. You have to go through all three stages if you want to be radiantly happy. If you skip a step or only partially assimilate its knowledge, *Isvara* will send you back to the previous level until you work it out. The three steps are hearing (*sravana*), reasoning (*manana*) and Self-actualizing, or assimilating (*nididhyasana*).

Stage 1 involves several steps which roughly conform to the chapters in *The Essence of Enlightenment*. The first step of Stage 1 is assimilating the knowledge that life is a zero-sum duality. It involves the realization that nothing you can do in this world will solve the problem of suffering.

When the full impact of this realization hits, disillusionment is inevitable, a "dark night of the soul" that may last a year or two. It is particularly difficult if you are prone to epiphanies, glimpses of the reality beyond the world, because they give you hope and dash it at the same time. The second step of the first stage involves another particularly galling fact: enlightenment – liberation from the world – is not a special kind of experience. Until you understand that it isn't, you are basically condemned to the same



The Bad Meinberg, Germany, seminar was well-attended.

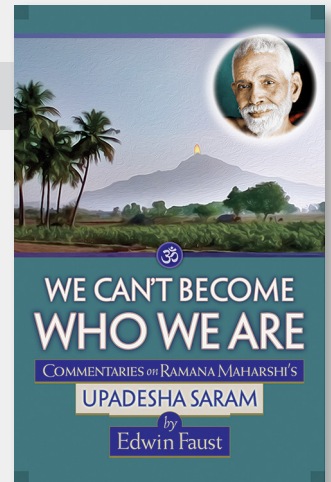
frustrating merry-go-round that you experienced at Stage 1. Your experience of the Self, which you imagine is out of time, comes and goes because it is not out of time at all.

This realization also produces disillusionment and frustration. The rare realization that happens in the third step of Stage 1 involves accepting the idea that you have an ignorance problem, not an experience problem, and the fourth step of Stage 1 involves accepting a valid means of knowledge, i.e. Vedanta. Each step is increasingly more difficult than the preceding step. Consequently a burning desire for freedom and a lot of good *karma* is required to work your way through the steps of understanding. To help you, we present the three stages in the form of the 5/10/15 rule (to learn the rule, [click this link](#)). ☸

ANOTHER GREAT NEW BOOK!

A BOOK OF commentaries by ShiningWorld contributor Edwin Faust, *We Can't Become Who We Are*, on one of Ramana's famous Vedanta texts, *Upadesa Saram (The Essence of the Teaching)*, in 30 verses presents the teaching on *karma*, the insentient principle, and *Ishvara*, the sentient creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. Without knowledge of *Ishvara*, the likelihood of liberation is virtually nil. It should be of special interest to Western seekers whose knowledge of Ramana is limited to the idea that Self-inquiry is sitting in silence and asking, "Who am I?" (link to [We Can't Become Who We Are](#)).

Ed has written several excellent Vedantic commentaries and articles for ShiningWorld, among them: *The Vision of Non-Duality (Sat Darshanam)* and *The Crest Jewel of Discrimination* by Shankaracharya (*Vivekachoodamani*). Here is a link to his latest article, [The World Will Never Make Us Happy](#). ☸



We Can't Become Who We Are: Commentaries on Ramana Maharshi's Upadesa Saram by Edwin Faust.

SATSANGS (500+ new pages)



IF YOU THINK we have been slacking off since the last newsletter in September, you would be wrong. James just posted 130 pages, and I posted nearly 400. James' favourites are *The Most Difficult Teaching*; *I Am Pure Love*; *Practical Nididhyasana: What Does Self-Luminous Mean?* (an 11-page, high-level inquiry into the statement "the Self knows Itself by Itself"); *Does the Self Need a Person to Validate It?*; *How Ishvara Plays Its Cards*; and *The Process of Vedanta*, an overview of Vedanta *sadhana* (practice) (link to [the satsang section](#)). ☸

TEACHING IS NOT A CAREER!



SHININGWORLD HAS BECOME a successful voice for non-dual Vedanta because it is a powerful tool for transforming one's life in harmony with the Truth. We appreciate the need of those who have received this precious teaching to communicate it to others and want to lend support, assuming they don't mix Vedanta with other liberation, quasi-liberation or dualistic teachings: Christianity, Buddhism, Neo-Advaita, Yoga, etc.

Vedanta is a pathless path. It is not in the same category as religions, philosophies and modern spiritual teachings. All roads may point to Rome, but not all take you there. Vedanta is a unique, time-tested means of Self-knowledge that reveals the non-dual nature of reality and culminates in non-dual love. So we do not support individuals who feel inclined to adulterate these pristine teachings.

At the same time, we realize there are certain expenses associated with the dissemination of the teachings, hence the idea of "donations." Donations fall under the category of *visesa dharma*, situational ethics, so there is room for problems. They are *adharmic* or *dharmic*, depending on the state of mind of both the giver and the receiver. Only the giver knows if the donation is unconditional, and only the receiver knows if the gift is used for its intended purpose.

It is proper for a teacher who has given value to use your donation to support himself or herself, although ***financial insecurity often tests a teacher's integrity, as do other factors, desire for recognition and power, for instance.***

As one of the senior lineage-holders in the Vedanta *sampradaya*, it is my duty, along with my wife Sundari, to avoid even the appearance of impropriety, so we expect people who teach in the name of ShiningWorld to show proper respect to the tradition and stick to the spirit and letter of the rules.

Vedanta should never be thought of as a career. It is a sacrifice, a freely given contribution. Apart from the teachings themselves, ShiningWorld is successful because we have not monetized the teaching. I have occasionally solicited donations for particular publishing projects, but never for personal financial reasons, as I have a small inheritance and friends who contribute to our living expenses. ShiningWorld is an idea, not a business, although I pay taxes on donations and the sale of books and videos.

[Here is a link to a video](#) that beautifully expresses the spirit of the teaching.

We will continue to encourage and assist people who want to teach, who have assimilated the teachings and have the right attitude, but we will not promote anyone henceforth who does not have an independent means of support. It is very difficult to teach Vedanta in the West, because materialism has infected every institution in society. People often tell us that we are fools for teaching on a donation basis. But this is a sacred teaching, and it is not right to allow it to be contaminated by even the appearance of worldliness. 🌐



TEACHING IN SPAIN

IN JANUARY, WE left South Africa for Spain, where we held a two-week seminar at Suryalilla, a beautiful yoga retreat centre in Andalucia, owned and peerlessly run by **Vidya Heisel**. Thank you, Vidya. We thoroughly enjoyed our stay with you and look forward our return in January next year (**2019 Spain seminar link**)! We hope to rent a home near Suryalilla next January for three months and offer *satsang*, *Isvara* willing.



Vidya Heisel.

For those of you who are wondering, it seems like our dream of establishing a base in Spain or Portugal is getting closer and closer. We will spend six weeks in the fall viewing properties! 🌟



Sundari, James and Megan Vejer in Spain.

UPCOMING EVENTS



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

ISVARA HAS ESTABLISHED a strong *sangha* in Cape Town, where Ramji taught a packed seminar last October. South Africa has much to offer, and Cape Town is one of the most renowned and beautiful cities in the world. We invite you to join us.

Contact Megan, a great organizer who is endowed with a sterling sense of humour, to register for a ten-day intensive in October. She found an excellent venue for the seminar in Kalk Bay, a trendy yet old-world fishing village. Incidentally, the whales will be breaching within a hundred metres of the venue!

To register, **click this link**. 🌟

CARBONDALE, COLORADO, USA

SHININGWORLD PROUDLY presents a donation-based course with James teaching the essence of Vedanta in three monthly modules (*Karma*; Love; Knowledge) at True Nature Healing Center in Carbondale, in the shadow of Mt. Sopris. For those who want to immerse themselves in this excellent teaching in a spectacular Rocky Mountain environment, [click this link](#). If you are unable to physically take part in this extraordinary opportunity, the teachings will be LiveStreamed and archived on the Web. 🌐



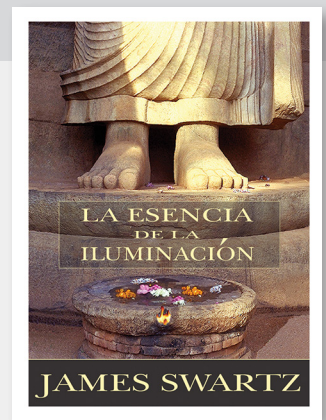
Beautiful Mount Sopris, Carbondale, Colorado, USA.

TRANSLATIONS

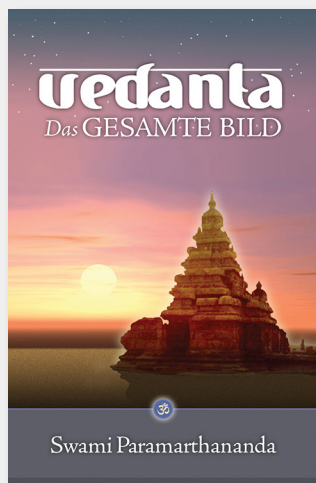
WE ARE HAPPY to announce a translation of *The Essence of Enlightenment* by Shams Martínez. Please tell your Spanish-speaking friends ([link](#)).

LA ESENCIA DE LA ILUMINACIÓN

“Este libro best-seller escrito por el autor y maestro espiritual, James Swartz, explica Vedanta, la antigua ciencia de la indagación sobre el Ser que libera a la persona del sufrimiento, con un estilo ameno y fácil de entender.” 🌐



La esencia de la iluminación by James, translated by Shams Martínez.



Vedanta: Das Gesamte Bild by Swami Paramarthananda, translated by Dagmar Bruns.

VEDANTA: DAS GESAMTE BILD

THIS EXCELLENT BOOK edited by Rory MacKay and James, and produced by ShiningWorld, now translated into German by Dagmar Bruns, is based on talks by Swami Paramarthanada. It is a straightforward outline of the essential teachings of Vedanta ([link](#)).

“Dieses hervorragende Buch von James Swartz basiert auf Vorträgen von Swami Paramarthanada. Es ist ein direkter Überblick über die wesentlichen Lehren des Vedanta.” 🌐

GESPRÄCHE ÜBER DIE WIRKLICHKEIT: VEDANTA EINFÜHRUNG UND SATSANGS von Tan Kalyaciolgu

WIR SUCHEN DAS Glück, weil wir uns inneren Frieden, Freude und Freiheit in unserem Leben wünschen. Wir wünschen uns frei zu sein von der Erfahrung unvollkommen, unfähig, ungeliebt oder auf irgendeine Weise begrenzt und ge-



Tan Kalyaciolgu.

fangen zu sein. "Ein uralter Schlüssel zum Ende der Suche nach Glück ist „Vedanta“. Es ist ein seit über 3.000 Jahren erfolgreicher Weg der Selbstbefreiung. In **diesem Buch** findest Du eine kurze Einführung zu authentischem Vedanta und zahlreiche Satsangs mit Antworten auf Fragen von Suchenden auf dem Weg zur Befreiung. Mit einem Vorwort von James Swartz. ☸



Gespräche über die Wirklichkeit:
Vedanta Einführung und
Satsangs von Tan Kalyaciolgu.

GERMAN SEMINARS



Seminar with Tan Kalyaciolgu

- Munich, in German ([link](#)). May 4 to 6: **Essence of Enlightenment, Vedanta Fundamentals.** ☸

Seminar with Vedamurti Olaf Schönert

- Bad Meinberg, in German ([link](#)).

June 10 to 17: **Vedanta Course Instructor Training**

THIS COURSE IS based on the German translation of James' book *The Essence of Enlightenment* along with a PowerPoint presentation. It is an interactive course during which the participants teach each other in small groups and get feedback on their ability to communicate the teachings in a logical way. A great way to learn! ☸



James, Sundari and Vedamurti.

FRENCH AND NORWEGIAN SPEAKERS!



James, Ganesh and Sundari in Spain.

WE HAVE A lovely friend and fellow Vedantin, Ganesh (seen with us at left in Spain), who speaks French and Norwegian. He would be happy to *satsang* with those of you who speak either language.

Email: ganesh.shiningworld@gmail.com ☸

MY BOOKS ARE COMING ALONG!

I AM BUSY on my books, *The Yoga of Relationships*, which will be available within a month, and *The Yoga of Enlightened Lifestyles*, available this coming autumn. As I am new to expository writing, I have had a lot to learn. It is one thing to write *satsangs*, quite another to write a scripture-based book. I don't believe a detailed, scripture-based lifestyle book has ever been written, although many how-to books on relationships and lifestyle are available. My two books look at the material and psycho-spiritual factors involved in living a truly peaceful and happy life. ☸



Sundari and James.

☸ **OM AND PREM** ☸