

Vedanta in Rishikesh (February 13, 2009)

Exactly one year ago I made my first trip to Rishikesh. This weekend I returned for my fifth visit but instead of my usual itinerary I had a very different Rishikesh experience at the famous Ananda Spa. Friends had urged me to visit Ananda while I'm holding a residential permit in India and can qualify for the Spa's special residential rates. While I'm slightly ashamed of myself for splurging on a weekend and not practicing mindful consumption Ananda itself is beautiful and I had a much needed rejuvenating weekend.

The highlight of my brief stay at Ananda was undoubtedly the time I spent talking with one of Swami Parthasarathy's senior students. At Ananda a Vedanta class is held twice daily. I had low expectations for the class but was pleasantly surprised and was able to engage in some of the most mind blowing discussions I've had since my dear mentor, Ramuji passed away in June of 2007.

Three years ago my uncle gave me a copy of Swami Parthasarathy's "Vedanta Treatise." It's funny how things come full circle. I wasn't quite ready for the book back then but now I'm ripe and can't wait to closely read it. What follows are some of my notes from my discussions with Swamiji's disciple, Ronan (he's Irish-Australian and been living in India for close to 8 years.)

"As you think so you become."

Misunderstandings mimic knowledge

Subject vs. object

We are awareness...

Have possessions but don't be possessive

Indiscriminate thoughts, different reactions to the same stimuli

False value

Appetite in order to be here

Intellect can re-educate the mind

INTELLECTUAL CONVICTION

Inspiration has a short term value

Subject vs. Object

You vs. World

Inner personality vs. Circumstance

Focus on your experience
Free will
Thoughts my mind produces

You can only strengthen intellectual conviction by asking questions

Refinement of articulation

Subtle intellect

Milton poem...

By definition an introvert is not dependent on contact but an extrovert is

In Vedanta God is consciousness

You cannot use two unknowns

Moksha is liberation from identification of limited equipment (physical, emotional etc.)

Turiya – pure consciousness

In Samsara the subject and object are conjoined

We have some degree of free will in the waking state which is why it seems more real to us

Krishna and Gopis story (you are where your thoughts are)

Unconscious = deep sleep
Subconscious = dream
Conscious = waking

In deep sleep the “I” is unmanifest

Turiya, bliss

Rid the ego that is producing desires for the waking world

Be in the world but not of it

I need to RE-READ: Bertrand Russell, (Unpopular essays, conquest of happiness, marriage and morals), Francis Bacon, Nietzsche, Aristotle, Socrates, J. Krishnamurti, Plato, Thomas More, John Stuart Mill, Marx and Engels, Thomas