



In the lecture "Advaita Vedanta: Western Expressions", delivered September 18, 2021, Diamond Approach founder and spiritual teacher A. H. Almaas discussed some of the most widely known Vedantic teachings of our times and situated them within their Indian origins. This was the fourth lecture in the 2021 A.H. Almaas Lecture Series, offered by the Ridhwan Foundation, the home of the [Diamond Approach](https://online.diamondapproach.org/advaita-vedanta-that-thou-art-tat-tvam-asi/).

This handout includes quotations utilized by Almaas in the lecture, from and about Vedantic teachings and teachers.

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Shankara

The witness of the world-appearance, by the very fact of being Witness of it, is different from it and not affected by its distinctions...within every psyche there exists a changeless principle of consciousness witnessing the rise and fall of its vicissitudes, and therefore different from it." [p. 63. *Samkara on the Creation*, pub. Shanti Sadan]

"The Supreme Spirit or the Brahman is alone real and the individual Self is only the Supreme Self and no other. Brahman is Supreme Intelligence, devoid of attributes, form, changes or limitations. It is self-luminous and all pervading and is without a second. The empirical world is unreal, an illusion born of ignorance. The jiva (Self) continues in Samsara (earthly life) only as long as it retains attachment due to ignorance or Maya (illusion). If it casts off the veil of Maya through knowledge or Jnana it will realize its identity with the Brahman and get merged into it." [attributed to Shankara]

Jnanadeva

"The finiteness of the individual does not mean that it is a degradation of Reality but it implies that the Reality determines itself in order to realize itself in various forms.... God-realization means understanding how God realizes Himself through one's being and this is the secret of natural devotion." [p. 82. *The Philosophy of Jnanadeva*, Bahirat]

"Plurality in the world is not merely an illusory appearance to be discarded, but is the manifestation of expression of the Absolute playfulness." [p. 95. *The Philosophy of Jnanadeva*, Bahirat]

Ramana Maharshi

"Mind is merely thoughts. It is a form of energy. It manifests itself as objects the world. When the mind sinks within the Self then the Self is realized. When the mind issues out the world appears, and the Self is not realized." [p.82. *Self-Realization*, by Narasimha Swami]

Atmananda and His Lineages

"It begins by starting with one's own experience and tests one's assumptions against the simplicity of this experience in the moment. It examines the world, body and mind, showing through one's experience how they are nothing other than the awareness which is the Self.The direct-path approach is characterized by an uncompromising logical approach to the truth, and in its purest form – namely the teaching of Sri Atmananda – it is most suitable for those of a philosophical bent." [p. 46. *Enlightenment: The Path Through The Jungle*, Dennis Waite]

Mind and Heart

"The idea of two paths became more predominant owing to the carelessness of the custodians of Shankara's teaching. Since they followed the recluse way of life, they were naturally concerned with thoughts of the separateness of the Divine from the world; and, with the continuance of this situation generation after generation, the aspect of knowledge began to dominate Shankara's tradition while the aspect of devotion gradually lost its importance.

The teaching became one-sided and, deprived of its wholeness, eventually lost its universal appeal. It came to be regarded as mayavada, a philosophy of illusion, holding the world to be only illusory and emphasizing the detached way of life.

As the principle of Being began more and more to disappear from view, the paths of devotion and knowledge became more and more separate and finally the link between them was lost. The principle of full development of heart and mind through one process (Transcendental Meditation) was lost.

The integral nature of realization was lost. The true wisdom of fulfillment, which lies in the simultaneous development of heart and mind, was lost. The idea that devotion and knowledge are necessarily separate was the greatest blow to Shankara's teaching." [pp. 13-14, preface, *Bhagavad Gita* commentary. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi]

"They talked in that room the whole night through. Before daybreak, all instruction needed for the whole of the disciple's spiritual career had been imparted by the svamiji and imbibed by the disciple. The instructions covered the path of devotion to the personal God Krishna (as Atma-murti and not as Bhagavata Krishna), and also different paths of yoga like raja-yoga, Shiva-raja-yoga, pranava-yoga, etc. They ended with the path of jnyana (following the direct perception Life sketch method – strict vicara-marga – adopting the separation process, as distinguished from the method of meditation adopting the absorption process). The svamiji shrewdly discovered a lack of enthusiasm on the part of his disciple to take to the paths of devotion and yoga as directed. So the svamiji said gently: 'I appreciate your reluctance to take to the preliminary courses of devotion and yoga, and I admit you are quite right. For mere realization of the ultimate Truth, the last course –namely the jnyana path – is alone necessary. But I want you to be something more, which you will understand only later on. Therefore, please undertake them first. It won't take you long to finish them both.'" [p. 703-704. *Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Shri Atmananda*, Nitya Tripta]

"The very day the svamiji left him, Shri Krishna Menon started an intense practice of his spiritual exercises, beginning with the path of devotion, in strict conformity with the instructions given to him. He rose steadily in the line of devotion till he took up Radha-hridayabhavana (meditation on the heart of Radha), the highest exercise of personal devotion to the ishta-deva. Thus he went through all the thrilling and intoxicating experiences of selfless love, culminating in its own samadhi. A few more months of intense yogic practices took Shri Krishna Menon to the highest experiences in the line of yoga. Long and deep nirvikalpa samadhi he enjoyed often

and at will. But it failed to satisfy him, because it was time limited and caused as a result of intense effort. According to him, Truth is uncaused, permanent and self-luminous. Therefore, he had to seek for the ultimate Truth by other means. Then he took to regular jnyana-sadhana with great ease and fortitude, and visualized the ultimate Truth in a very short time.

...The period of his spiritual practices, covering all the three paths, did not last for more than four years (till about 1923). All necessary instructions were clearly and regularly imparted to him by his Guru, appearing before him in lively vision during his sadhana. He was Life given the spiritual name Atmananda by his own Guru, and he has been known by that name ever since." [p. 705-706. *Notes on Spiritual Discourses of Atmananda*, Nitya Triptal]

Experience and Awakening

"The mind needs to be prepared in many ways to be able to receive and recognize the truth." [p. 105, *Enlightenment: The Path Through The Jungle*, Dennis Waite]

"The use of unsubstantiated absolute statements from the latter stages, when talking to the beginning student, is more likely to confuse than help." [p. 50. *Enlightenment: The Path Through The Jungle*, Dennis Waite]

David: You used to give experiences to a lot of people. Why did you do it if you knew that the effect would not be permanent?

Papaji: I did it to get rid of the leeches who were sticking to me, never allowing me to rest or be by myself. It was a very good way of getting rid of all these leeches in a polite way. I knew that in doing this I was giving lollipops to the ignorant and innocent, but this is what these people wanted. When I tried to give \$100 bills to them, they rejected them. They thought that they were just pieces of paper. So I gave them lollipops instead.

David: Many of the people you gave lollipops to left Lucknow thinking that they were enlightened. Does the fact that they accepted the lollipop and left indicate that they were not worthy to receive the \$100 bills?

Papaji: If one is not a holy person, one is not worthy to receive the real teaching. Many people think that they have attained the final state of full and complete liberation. They have fooled themselves, and they have fooled many other people but they have not fooled me. A person in this state is like a fake coin. It may look like the real thing. It can be passed around and used by ignorant people who use it to

buy things with. People who have it in their pocket can boast of having a genuine coin, but it is not real. But it has no value. When it is finally discovered to be a fake, the person who is circulating it, claiming that it is real, is subject to the penalties of the law. In the spiritual world, the law of karma catches up and deals with all people who are trafficking in fake experiences. I have never passed on the truth to those whom I could see were fake coins. These people may look like gold and they may glitter like gold, but they have no real value. There are many people who can put on a show and fool other people into believing they are enlightened.[3]

David: Many people have heard you say, 'I have not given my final teachings to anyone'. What are these final teachings, and why are you not giving them out?"

Papaji: Nobody is worthy to receive them. Because it has been my experience that everybody has proved to be arrogant and egotistic... " [p.362, *Nothing Ever Happened*, vol. 3, David Godman, 1998.]

Satsangs

"Traditionally, seekers expected a long and dedicated (though eventually rewarding) journey, which might involve studying with a guru for many years. These days, people want the answers now, not when their mind is prepared genuinely to understand them. Accordingly, teaching styles have developed to try to cater for this demand – attempting to convey the essential truth in a two-hour satsang or a weekend intensive." [p. 116. *Enlightenment: The Path Through The Jungle*, by Dennis Waite]

Finite and Infinite

"It is this admixture of mind ... (mind) and Pure Consciousness that is called jiva. This is the false self. It is this Jiva that experiences self-ignorance and..... It is this jiva that strives for knowledge. Ultimately, it is this jiva that gets the Realization." [p. 32. *Enlightenment: The Path Through The Jungle*. Dennis Waite]