Namaste everyone,

My background in Advaita Vedanta is a traditional one and so I admire and am amazed at the authors of the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. I figure why reinvent the wheel. Plus, there is so much wisdom to be directly experienced through these texts.

On the other hand, there are modern-day nondual teachers (in the past 20 years) who approach the teaching from a different angle. Their focus is on, “Who is suffering or seeking?” or that “The world is an illusion” I find it interesting to read on Facebook that one of these teachers has come down with a disease and are suicidal.

Therefore, I appreciate the teachers who lived the teachings and transcended misfortune. The two that come to mind are, Ramana Maharishi (who had rheumatoid arthritis and died of cancer) and Ram Dass (who lived the last 20 years of his life paralyzed from a stroke and in a wheel chair). They transcended the body and its inevitable source of pain.

So, I ask a question. Are you pleased with the application of the teachings during times of stress and strain? Consider the time and effort that has been put into the seeking. Does asking yourself “Who is seeking?” or “There is nothing you can do” bring you peace during times of misfortune? For me that is the litmus test of any teaching.

Another question I ask is, can there can be more than one way to express the teachings? For me and my wife Susan the teachings have expressed itself through feeding the homeless. Each week we feed about 20 homeless and 6-7 families at a school. Susan spends Sunday mornings preparing and organizing the meals and then we deliver them throughout the city in the afternoon. Monday mornings Susan selects and collects the food from a local charity.

Feeding the homeless is not for everyone but service is. Again, the teachers I admire emphasize service. Even in the 12 step programs service is the final step. Being of service is the “last house on the block.”

Prem and OM,

Susan and Todd