

Relationships and Enlightenment

Hello again James

Thank you very much for your insightful response to this often very confusing issue. On the contrary mate, what you said to me is exactly what I wanted to hear. The illusion of the romantic relationship is something that is so ingrained right across human society and culture that it is as Andrew Cohen calls it the "Holy Cow of a modern society who believe in little outside of what they can see or hear."

People are so identified with it, that it is not uncommon for "spiritual aspirants" to go to holy men with the type of requests not unlike the one from your story.

I think when I went to discuss this with my teacher and he was approaching it at the same angle. Hence the reason he told me that if I want to be in a relationship or to be with a woman, to not forcibly stop myself - albeit with the caveat "but remember that you are complete as you are". And he seemed to be even encouraging me by saying "it makes the livingness more enjoyable". This really confused me, it was definitely NOT what I wanted to hear.

James: All due respect to your teacher but this just his opinion...probably he gets along with his wife/girlfriend/whatever. Or he has a romantic notion. It may make living more enjoyable. It may not. There is an upside and downside to everything. Probably, it is not wise to ask gurus about things like relationships. It is my experience that they are on about the same level as the general population as far as relationships go. If you are really serious about liberation, it seems to me that a relationship with all its attachments and desires is not the way to go. Anyway, that is not the reason a person goes into one anyway. You go into them for love, I suppose. Now whether a relationship can deliver the kind of love you want is anybody's guess. Some do, and some don't. About the only way you can find out is to get in a few and make up your mind for yourself. I never had a bad one but I am not a big fan of them either. Basically it is a *samsaric* solution to a problem that can be solved in another way, i.e. finding out who you are. This puts the relationship idea in a reasonable perspective.

Randy: In fact I even said to him, "Why can't you just tell me to forget about it??!", to which he replied "if I was to tell you that, do you think you would be able to do it?". And as we discussed it further, I began to realise that what he was really trying to say was that it really didn't matter either way. There is no entity there that has any control over it anyway - what is going to happen is what is going to happen. So that goes back to your own assessment of not making a big deal about it.

James: Well, it does matter one way or the other if you are in *Maya*. If you aren't, then your teacher is right, if this is what he meant. If you don't know who you are then my comments above apply. If you are an advanced inquirer you can deal with it by self inquiry. That is to say, you can think it through, see that the upside cancels the downside, drop it and put your mind on the self. If you are a beginner and the desire is very strong, then you should do it but do it in the karma yoga spirit. In this way it can become a *sadhana*. The short hard cruel answer is that if you are very clear that you want *moksa* you won't give the relationship idea the time of day. It is just a distraction.

Randy: And like you also said in your response - do not go to enlightened people with questions pertaining to this illusion. Their job is to help you get out of this illusion, not make you even more stuck to it by giving you things that you want and taking away that which you don't want. Nisargadatta puts it beautifully when he says "you are living in a dream, but the problem is that you love some aspects of it and hate others. Either love it all or hate it all!"

James: That's an interesting quote. Of course it never happens. People are in love with their likes and dislikes.

Randy: This entire manifestation is projection of the psyche. A chair is only a chair because we assign a label to it and provide it with a function - something to sit on. Merely a concept. What it is in truth cannot be defined - As Bob would say "intelligence energy patterning and shaping itself". Last week I went to see Metallica in concert. I love Hard Rock / Heavy Metal - but what is it really other than sound? And even sound is only another concept. It's just all part of the oneness.

James: It is awareness objectified by the ears.

Randy: But the romantic relationship is such an addictive feeling, that the mind will try any means possible to try and justify this desire. Especially when, as you say, people start getting drawn to you. This has especially been a problem for me - when you start getting a bit of attention, the old mental chatter starts up again.

James: The question is: why it is attractive? If you are satisfied in yourself as you are, it is not attractive. It is not unattractive either. It is just an idea like the chair you mentioned. It is only the idea that you are going to get what you want that makes it attractive. And if it delivers bliss, you just get a *vasana* for that kind of bliss. At least with Heavy Metal you can turn off the stereo. Once you are tangled up with another human being, it is rather difficult to extricate yourself when the romance wears off. You're a weird one, Randy. You are the first spiritual type I've met in forty years who liked heavy metal. Bhagavan sure has a sense of humor.

It is my experience that the reason people seek that kind of love is because they don't know what love is. You keep being fascinated by relationships until you figure it out. So in that sense it is good to go into them. But there is no guarantee that you will figure it out. You may just end up with a *vasana* for relationships. Which is not the kiss of death. However, I would not want the epithet on my tombstone to read. "Here lies Guru Jim. He was an expert at relationships."

Randy: I have been studying spirituality for about 20+ years now(I started pretty young), and for the past 4 years I have been a quite serious practitioner of Vipassana meditation. I used to be able to control my mental chatter quite effectively through just constant deep breathing and observing my breath. Then when I started reading Nisargadatta's "I Am THAT" last year I became drawn to his teaching of staying with the I AM, which I then proceeded to turn into a daily and constant mantra! This hasn't been working for me too well this year, since I have gotten more involved with the Advaita teachings and reading the likes of Bob and yourself. I have also now let go of Vipassana to great

extent.

James: Well, meditation works if you have the karma yoga attitude in your every day life because it burns your vasanas and allow you to meditate easily. But unless you lock your mind on the self and contemplate, about all it can do is calm you down a bit.

Randy: I now realize though, that trying to control anything is dualistic and presupposes that one thing is better than another, when really it is all just the oneness.

James: This is not necessarily true, Randy. I wonder if you are not superimposing the knowledge of the self on the apparent self. The self and the apparent self are one but they are not the same. The apparent self depends on the real self. The real self is free of the apparent self. If you take yourself to be the apparent self... which it seem you do...then you need to exercise a certain control of your mind, not by will power...that is impossible...but by observation and analysis. In Vedanta is it called sama. This superimposition is typical of the Neo-Advaita types. They make no distinction between *satya* and *mithya*. I think you should get my book. If it is not the best spiritual book you have ever read, I will eat my hat. And lest you worry that I am getting rich off it, you should know that I get about fifty cents a copy.

It's not a matter of just "accepting" either - because accepting presupposes an acceptor and something to be accepted! It all just is - sexuality just is, desire just is, fear just is, joy just is - movements arising and passing in consciousness.

James: This sounds fairly suspicious, Randy, for the reasons stated in the paragraph above. If it 'just is' then why are you so concerned about romantic relationships. "They are." What's the big deal?

Randy: Anyway thank you for reading this and thank you once again for taking the time to write your helpful response. I would greatly appreciate any comments you have about what I have written here, as I often still get sucked in by the mind and emotions. The book you recommended I get was "How to Attain Enlightenment" right? You may still get some business out of me yet!(especially now that the Aussie and US are about equal).

James: You are welcome, Randy. Yes, that is the book. You are one cheap bastard J This is the wisdom of the ages and beats 'I am That' hands down. I guarantee it.

Love,

James