

## You are the Ball

As always, thank you Ram.

I wish I had more questions for you; I suppose I am noticing my patterns more and more, and seeing the amplitude of unhappiness and *vasanas* decrease, so everything really is good. I have listened to probably a hundred hours of discourses by Paramarthananda and Dayanamda (*Atma Bodha, Tattva Bodha*, chapter 2 of the *Gita*, and now *Vivekachudamani*), in addition to all the reading. It maybe has had an effect on my mind, maybe like leather being tanned by being pounded. I don't think I have a problem exactly; I like my outer life and my circumstances, the *karma yoga* seems to be going well and doing its thing, so to speak.

Ram: Nice analogy...tanning leather. It is important to keep steadily thinking in the direction of the self. Thoughts are invocations. The self responds, not necessarily to every thought but in a global way. A feeling of well being, satisfaction, arises. You know you are doing your best for yourself. You like yourself for it. Inquiry is satisfying in itself. You don't worry about the long term result. You do it because you like it and it is right.

Sandra: I get glimpses that let me know that much of the time (or some of the time; I can't quantify or compare it really) I am really out of it, in the sense that there are moments and durations when the Obvious Knowledge is clearer, and times when it is not. When it (the Knowledge that I am not the body, that the world comes from me, that I am not a miserable speck and object among all the objects that I see..) is dull, I occasionally can notice the dullness (barely). Usually it is only in retrospect that I notice; "The Knowledge is clearer now; it wasn't so clear in the last couple days." It's as if I find myself asking myself, "Was I gone long.?" What does "gone" even mean? There's no place to go.

I am not beating myself up about this, just maybe seeing the magnitude of the dullness. On the one hand I want to say that I am doing what I can, on the other I am not sure that a "doing" exactly is what is called for. It seems more like I notice to catch the ball that is being thrown to me, and I am only just beginning to notice that a lot more balls are being thrown to me that I am not catching; in fact I am not even seeing them go by. (I have the image of happening to glance behind me and being surprised to see hundreds of baseballs rolling around on the ground, all the ones I have missed, while I am proudly holding the one I caught).

Ram: You definitely have the right idea when you formulate things in terms of knowledge. When the mind is *sattvic* the knowledge is obvious and clear. When it is *tamasic*, it is less clear, as if you weren't 'there.' As the *vasanas* purify the mind gets more and more *sattvic* and the knowledge is more or less constant. At some point there is complete confidence in it and it is there irrespective of the state of mind. It is 'there' because you are always 'there.' Eventually you will understand that you are the ball.

Sandra: The one detail to take care of is the videos of yours to get; I am ordering them tomorrow. I think I have hesitated getting them because once I have them there won't be a

future thing to have (maybe sort of). I am good at accumulating things that I want (like the 40 gigabytes of *advaita* audio discourses on my hard drive in the last month) but I am a little jaded maybe from all the times I have done that in the past.

Ram: I see it as a sign of a strong desire for liberation. It is good. There is always an obsessive quality when the seeking is genuine. I was the same. Still am in a way even though I am not seeking. I have several hard drives full of Vedanta...and I don't need it.

Sandra: Again, I am not beating myself up about this; I am wanting to approach the catching of these balls more systematically, without getting crazy anal retentive and denying myself desserts or meditating on a strict 2 hour a day schedule, or something like that. I can lead myself into actions like that, but forcing myself does not work, on a lot of levels. It doesn't last, for one, and it is not clear that it helps anything anyway.

Ram: My guru is famous for a number of one-liners. One that I particularly like is 'hasten slowly.'

Sandra: I like what you say about hanging out with Mahatmas, that things are just easier. I would like to hang out with Mahatmas, and right now you are them. I do have faith, and I feel like I really 'get' some of this stuff, it is solid and obvious to me. So what's my problem, why am I writing (you might ask)?

Ram: It is just good satsanging. It doesn't have to 'mean' anything.

Sandra: It is a little disturbing that even though I get what I get, there seem to be a LOT of balls flying by that I don't even see, or a lot of time spent not even knowing about flying balls to catch at all. I suppose I can depend that grace will keep supplying the balls coming in my direction. Is there anything you could tell me that could help, despite the fact that I have not formulated a crisp question?

Ram: You are the ball.

Love

Ram