

Dear Ram,

I am intrigued that you say that God will not always save me from what I want. Please explain as this sounds slightly threatening, as if I am in danger of wanting the wrong thing and then suffering for it! Is God out there after all - on a fluffy cloud about to send out a bolt of thunder down because Marsha wanted the wrong thing?

Ram: Oh, yes, definitely 😊 No, it just means that things change in samsara and something you want at one time may not be what you want at another.

Marsha: Do you know what I want I wonder? Ah yes, I forgot that you are indeed omnipotent! In my experience God has always given me what I need, but not necessarily what I want. Over the last 15 years or so, however, I have asked God for very little other than to discover what God/existence means, and to serve. This has indeed been given and I am full of gratitude for the life I have and hope that I serve in some way doing what I do. So I try to not want anything other than what is good for my spiritual growth.

Ram: That's the only thing worth wanting. It is something you can get at anytime because it is you. Anything else you might want will take time to acquire.

Marsha: I hope this doesn't sound too boring or virtuous! Again, it is not always true, but then I am a work in progress. I discuss this a lot with Kay. You do know that she realized the self too under your guidance this year? Another notch for your spiritual belt! So what do you mean then about being careful and God not always saving me from what I want? My understanding is that I have absolutely no control over what God gives. So therefore, what I want would be irrelevant to what will be given, so saving would not be come into it - other than understanding it as karma I would have to accept. Isn't that right?

Ram: You do have a certain effect on what you receive in so far as the things that God gives you, It does not give someone else. It distributes the results based on the nature of your actions. If I pump iron I will get big muscles but I will not become an accomplished violin player. If I play the violin I make music but I will not get red hair. If I go to a yoga class I will get flexible but I will not get knowledge of nematodes, etc. But if I want to be worshipped because I have big

muscles, it is anybody's guess whether or not that will happen. So the doer does have limited control over certain things, almost none over some things and nearly absolute control over others. If I take potassium cyanide hoping to die, I will die. But not always. One regularly reads of sky divers whose chutes don't open surviving the fall from ten thousand feet. The point being that what is coming to you on a daily basis is related to your past actions. It is coming to you for a good reason. So if you are not happy with what is happening to you it may mean that you wanted something that was not what you really wanted and you did the actions that manifested it. This is how God...which is just the law of karma...teaches you about your desires. The obvious conclusion is to want God and only do actions to get an understanding of God.

Marsha: You also mentioned the dissolution of everything. You called it pralaya. I thought the self was endless? Will the self still continue after pralaya and does this just relate to the material world; to prakriti? Will it start up again? Is this in the scriptures? Where please?

Ram: The self is endless and beginningless. It will not 'continue' because it is uncreated. It was before anything was and it remains when there is nothing. Only the creation, your body and mind and the material world, are born and die.

Marsha: And yes, I guess I am not sure yet about the 'I' being limitless, although I believe you of course and understand the concept intellectually. (You say that I would have to be *convinced* intellectually.) But I just haven't realized it yet.

Ram: Just close your eyes and investigate yourself. Can you find a starting point? Can you find an end point? It is not profound and mystical.

Marsha: I have a friend who had a transcendental experience of being the sea during one of her meditations. That experience should show someone like her that she is indeed limitless. But the frustrating thing is she is just not interested. She is caught up in the material world.

Ram: That is correct. The self is in everyone and available to everyone, but only those with a certain orientation are interested. She still believes that there is something in samsara that makes or will make her happy. Why should it be frustrating for you? It has nothing to do with you. You cannot make a silk purse

out of a sow's ear. Wanting someone else to be different is usually about wanting yourself to be different because she is only in your mind. If she is happy being what she is, encourage her not to change.

Marsha: Whereas I am indeed burning with desire for God but haven't had the epiphanies that she has had. Why would someone like her be nudged to remember the self in such a profound way when she has no desire in that direction to follow this up I wonder?

Ram: She needs them and you don't because you already have bhakti. Experiences of non-duality can be as much a hindrance as a blessing. You see, it meant nothing to her. It means a lot to you. But if you got them, you might waste a lot of energy chasing them and believe that you have to feel a certain way to be enlightened. Or that enlightenment is some kind of experience. And even for someone who is sincerely seeking the self, epiphanies do not permanently alter their basic orientation, their thinking patterns. Only karma yoga and the practice of knowledge do. The world is what you think it is, nothing more. Moksa is not mysticism. It is simply the removal of ignorance about your nature.

Love,

Ram