

Dear Ramji,

Here is another of the seemingly endless paradoxes that you seem fit to perplex me with. You say, "When you think you are the experiencing entity, you interfere with the natural action of the *gunas*, so you are always making adjustments and corrections, 'manipulations' to use a term that I am partial to." But then you are forever nattering on about manipulating them to become more *sattvic*! It's in your book! (Even though I am not the experiencing entity; I am the witness to Jasmine. But my guru would agree with your statement that they have a natural action which should be respected, rather than manipulated? (Although obviously, it is good to cultivate a healthy life-style, good food and sanga etc.) So...to manipulate or not manipulate, that is the question.

The Ramji: Aha, great! Ignorance rears its ugly head. Another opportunity to enlighten. Vedanta operates on two levels. If you think you are a *samsari* and you want *moksa*, you need a *sattvic* mind and to get it you had better get rid of your excess *rajas* and *tamas*. So manipulate it is. If you know you are the self you have the option to let them be and equilibrate on their own. Problem solved.

Jasmine: Next you say, "But karma does not know what you want. It impersonally delivers results on the basis of your gross and subtle actions which are in turn the result of other gross and subtle actions which are in turn the result... It goes on mindlessly ad infinitum." What you said about animals not being aware of karma makes sense. Things are neither good or bad - they just are. But I would like to ask - I didn't think it was mindless? Surely there is some kind of 'intelligence' to this, some reasoning. (This is a big question).

Ram: Good thinking, Jasmine. Yes. Perhaps my choice of words was misleading. It is not mindless in the sense of stupid, it is mindless in the sense of impersonal. You, the self, is not a person who calculates, although you can pretend that you are a person and apparently calculate. The power to forget (*Maya*) comes with awareness and when it operates, the whole creation...which is actually not there, so how can it be intelligent?...comes into being.

The creation does not cover the whole of awareness. It occurs in one tiny fly speck. It seems to be intelligent because of its proximity to awareness, but it isn't. There is a beautiful example in *Atma Bodh* where Shankara compares the relationship of the world to awareness to the relationship between an iron ball in a smithy's flame. Although the ball seems to be on fire, it is not. It 'borrows' the fire from the fire. Similarly, the creation...the body/mind...seems to be alive and intelligent, but it is not. It is just inert matter. All the processes and forces...karmas...operating in reality are kind of like a perpetual motion machine. Perhaps you have seen the marble that goes endlessly around the maze of wires by the force of its own inertia? It is like that. It seems so magical, but it isn't. Unless you are in ignorance. This is a

very subtle topic and if you are getting this teaching it means you are well on your way. The self does not create and the world is not creative. Creation is a happening...an appearance...when the two are viewed through the prism of the human mind. There is no creation, no intelligence, etc. for animals and plants or for the enlightened. There is just awareness apparently operating ignorance. Nothing ever happened.

Jasmine: And I thought prayer could deliver something, although prayer of course is an action? (If this is too much to answer it can wait until I see you.)

Ramji: Too much for the great Ramji to answer on a leisurely Saturday morning? Not at all, Fiona, my dear. Not at all. Profundities trip lightly off the silver tongue of the Sri Ramji at the drop of a hat. Yes, prayer is karma. And yes, it brings results. All actions have results aka 'side effects.' It can't deliver anything to you, but it can give the apparent you, Jasmine, apparent results, especially *bhakti*...which is essential for *moksa*.

Jasmine: Anyhow Ram, thanks again so very much. Am now off to Ikea with my mother. Ikea is the most horrible place on the planet - a giant furniture store where I shall buy a wardrobe for all the clothes I bought when I was an ignorant *samsari*, who thought I was incomplete and that clothes would fix me and make me loveable etc etc. But since things are neither good nor bad, they just are - well, then I shall have a wonderful time and be an ocean of peace.

Ramji: Ah yes, Ikea. I know it well. As the poet (Silvia Plath) said about Oakland, California, "There is no there there." It is a profound symbol of *samsara*, which I am sure you will not fail to appreciate being no longer an ignorant *samsari*. Shop till you drop, as we so cleverly say over here. And as you now know, being the *jnani* extraordinaire that is always the consequence of an ignorant person's association with the likes of the Sri Sri Ramji, you will never be loveable because? In case you are a bit tamasic I will help you with the answer...because YOU ARE LOVE. Think about it ☺

Love,

Ram