

Dear Ram,

Thank you for your e-mail. As you say, I do need help to get the right attitude and the right mind to accept all the difficulties without reaction. You once told me I had a pain Karma, and that must be right since I feel pain and fear all the time. I do inquiry all the time and meditate as well but I do feel on my own, you are so far away. All the energy and clarity I had when I was in India seems mostly gone. The understanding is there but clouded by all the negative things that seem to keep happening.

Ram: Where are the negative things happening? Do you mean external events? Or are you talking about your interpretation of things that happen in your relationships with people?

Sandy: You say I am rejecting myself, yes, that is true but I can only accept the fact that this is what is happening. I don't know what else to do. I feel as if I had no means to do otherwise.

Ram: Yes, you can accept it. At the same time it might be helpful to figure out what is causing these unwanted happenings. If they are occasional, then the cause probably lies with the world. But if there is a consistent pattern, then it probably has to do with some lack of dispassion on your part.

Sandy: You tell me that I have a too high opinion of myself? I really can't understand that statement. What are you basing that on?

Ram: It often sounds to me like you think there is something wrong with the world, that it is responsible for your suffering. If this is your thinking then I would say that it means that you think that the world should be different. This is 'narcissistic' thinking because 'the world' doesn't even know that you exist. It just goes on according to its own program irrespective of the individuals in it. If you can't see that 'the world' is your interpretation of events then you have to figure out how the world works and be smart in the way you relate to people. By 'be smart' I mean to keep your own agenda hidden until you have figured out how it will play in any given situation. If it seems unlikely that you will get what you want, you need to drop your agenda until the circumstances are conducive. This requires patience. Narcissistic

thinking is childlike thinking. A child doesn't realize that other people have their own agendas; he or she thinks that everyone is there to give it what it wants.

The 'world' is just how you interpret things that happen to you, unless you have discrimination can separate yourself from what happens. How you interpret things depends on your likes and dislikes, what you want and what you don't want. The solution in this case is 'spiritual' in the sense that some adjustment is necessary in the way you relate to your own mind. This is the adult approach. I'm not saying that you are one way or the other; probably a bit of both. You can't get rid of the vasanas overnight...it's a long drawn-out process...so these negative feelings are going to continue for some time. On the other hand if you can change your attitude...gladly accept unwanted karma as it happens...you can manage the problem in the present and speed up the exhaustion of the vasanas.

Sandy: I feel my heart is getting dry, I have no illusions, no nothing, I agree with you when you say I wish things to be different. It is true because it is too much. But I guess it will continue to be too much until I accept what is completely.

Ram: Yes. At some point you are going to have to give up the expectation that something outside is going to happen to make you happy. You're thirty seven at the peak of your powers and your life. If you haven't figured out that there is nothing out there by now how will some more years solve the problem?

Sandy: I want to get this right Ram. I need to know who I am in the heart, in a way that lasts forever. I need your help on that. There is nothing else I want and you know it. I am so fed up with everything, including myself!!!!

Ram: Good. This is what I'm talking about; accepting that you are the problem. Now it remains for me to understand what you mean when you say 'who I am in the heart.' Vedanta would answer this question with the statement that you are whole and complete. This is all that you need to accept to get free. There is not some mystical or experiential solution. You've had all the epiphanies you need. You do 'get it.' But the confidence in your wholeness is lacking. So each

time you have this negative feeling you need to sit down and see the real cause. Which is that you 'feel' something is missing either in yourself or the world. Accepting this feeling as reality causes the pain because there is nothing wrong with you or the world. It is very difficult to dismiss one's feelings because they seem so 'real' but this is what needs to happen. There is nothing wrong with feelings but they need to be subordinated to the truth; which is that you are always complete, no matter how you feel.

Sandy: When I see you, please challenge me, help me to get through. If it is hard, it is hard, but I want to get through it.

Ram: OK. That's the right attitude.

Sandy: Love (if there is any left in my heart!!!)

Ram: Don't be silly. You are love. You have so much love...why are you so anxious to get rid of this anger? It is because you love yourself.

Much love,

Ram