

A Conforming Lifestyle

Ram (James Swartz)

2016-04-18

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2611>

Martyn: Hello, James. I have been working slowly on the book, and am just moving into Chapter IV after listening to the whole Vedanta lectures at YouTube. I have just realised on writing this email that this is about one chapter per month, although it has not been that methodical or exact a process.

One thing has been standing out for me all of this time, and that is creating the right conditions in lifestyle in order to develop the qualifications to assist listening, reflection and assimilation of the teachings.

I have, in the past, tended to go without money and live quite a frugal life in order to develop spiritually. By the other extreme, I have often then found myself in stressful jobs to earn enough money in order to meet basic financial costs of living.

I wonder if there is anywhere you could point me to that would assist with ironing out this lifestyle issue, through the teachings, as I am committed to unveiling what I already am but do not yet know.

I look forward to hearing from you.

~ Kind regards and best wishes, Martyn

James: Hi, Martyn. Christian forwarded your email to me. You are absolutely right that you can't properly assimilate the teachings if you have a non-conforming, i.e. *sattvic* lifestyle. It is excellent that you are committed to self-inquiry. The pull between the one's material desires and the desire to renounce the world in the name of spirituality causes a lot of conflict for many people. The problem stems from the belief that the world is real. Here is a paragraph from a person who just realized the mistake, although her situation was the opposite of yours – she had no money worries and a *sattvic* lifestyle. She says, "I used to be *sattvic* all the time, and I was able to maintain that because I had rejected the world as unreal (not realizing that rejecting it reinforced the misapprehension that it IS real – why would I reject something unreal?) and I was happily living in my peaceful inner world, supported by an outer existence that was very smooth and easy. You make a comment in one of your teachings: 'It's easy for a king to be dispassionate.' That was me. I had everything, nothing to worry about financially or any other way, and life was a breeze."

It is not easy to see that the world is not real, so in the meantime as you contemplate this you should do your job in the *karma yoga* spirit. In this way the job will become a part of your spiritual work, not something standing in the way of self-realization. At the same time, you should plot your escape from *rajasic* activities by cultivating *sattvic* activities and renouncing unnecessary habits so there is more energy for study of Vedanta. Do you have a meditation practice?

Both *karma yoga* and self-inquiry should be consistent, daily, methodical practices. Step up your reading of my book. Read the *satsangs* at the website. Search "*karma yoga*" in the *satsang*

section of the website.

~ Love, James