

A Guinea Pig for the Bliss-Body

Ram (James Swartz)

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Tom: Hi, James. My previous email diluted the problem, to put it mildly; it illustrated one of the better days, not a typical day. I don't seem to be able to focus on self-inquiry in a consistent way. Circumstances at work don't help, but that is not the reason. I have lost confidence in my ability to apply Vedanta.

James: Maybe you don't understand how to use Vedanta. You need to be taught Vedanta. You can't pick it up by reading or going to Neo *satsangs*.

Tom: Permanent freedom seems impossible, and I think the heart of the matter is I will no longer tolerate feeling like a puppet on a chain, up or down depending on how much or how little *sattva* seems to be operating.

James: The problem with this is that you don't have control of your experience. The *gunas* change according to the dictates of the macrocosmic mind and your *karma* – which is not under your control either. So whether or not you will “tolerate” it, this is still going to happen unless you live in such a way that you get control of your *karma* and your *gunas*. When you are *tamasic* and *rajasic* it is impossible to do, because you cannot connect the actions you do with the *gunas* they produce. You can only do it when your mind is *sattvic*. If it is *sattvic* you can connect cause and effect. You should cultivate a *sattvic* mind for knowledge, not for experience.

Tom: I am not interested in feeling pure, etc. These are just accretions. I don't want to be a guinea pig for the bliss-body. I refuse to be such, regardless of how subtle the bliss is. I would rather feel crappy in a *samsaric* way than a yo-yo, in and out of *sattva*. In a sense it is a question of self-respect. I will not serve something I know to be relative and arbitrary. If that is actually just standard egotism/wounded pride dressed up as personal integrity, so be it. It is my nature to rebel against anything I know in my heart to be insufficient, inadequate, unreal.

James: As I said above, that's all well and good, but the *gunas* don't care about what you think and feel. They are mechanical, unconscious. They just appear and disappear at will.

Tom: Self-knowledge is a different “thing” than *sattvic* experiences or *sattvic* attitudes.

James: Sure, but you can't assimilate it or apply it unless your mind is *sattvic*.

Tom: At the same time there is nothing to indicate that the knowledge is settling in my intellect. And I am tired, very, very tired of chasing *sattvic* rainbows masquerading as clear, simple

knowledge. When the bubble burst a few months ago and I got health problems at the same time, it showed with painful clarity how much I had deluded myself. But at least it was a kind of clarity and a kind of truth. Since then I have, consciously or not, said to hell with *sattva* the majority of the time. I had experienced *sattva* to be a lie. I let myself as a result become depressed and angry. That phase has to some extent passed and now I feel like I am a participant in a sick joke, one with no point and no end.

I don't know if the above is internally consistent, and in a way it contradicts my previous email. So be it. I frankly don't know what is going on. If there is a question it is, what do I do now?

James: I am starting to get an idea of your problem. You are fed up with changing states of mind. You think that you should have a steady, blissful *sattvic* state of mind. And you have realized it is impossible. That's progress. You have done this because you are identified with the experiencing entity, the reflected self, i.e. Tom. If you can turn your attention away from the state of mind that is appearing at any time to the one to whom the state is appearing, you will find yourself above the mind and free of its states. Give it a try.

If you think that self knowledge is experiential, i.e. bliss, you will definitely be disappointed time and again. You are confusing *sattva* with *satya*. *Sattva* is a state of mind suitable for self-knowledge with a particularly blissful signature. *Satya* is pure awareness, your essential, unchanging nature. It is only accessible through self-knowledge, not through experience, because you are already experiencing it. *Sattva* is a state of mind that allows you to recognize the reflection of *satya* in it and gain the knowledge of it.

~ Love, James