

Blessed Seeds

Ram (James Swartz)

2014-04-09

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/226>

Ted: Hi, Ramji. I had a question or a request for you, hopefully it's not an imposition, and I can see it maybe seeming goofy, but I'd rather try to find any useful tool. Recently have been feeling stagnated and lost with the mind all cluttered and trapped, hoping for a way out, so an idea came to mind of using spirituality, a ritual, maybe not the best from a pure Vedantic point of view, but anything to get the mind slightly more tuned and confident. I thought it would be worth a try. I had been reading about some Tibetan *lama* giving Krishna Das a *bodhi* seed from the famous Bodh Gaya tree and telling him to eat it, the seed being auspicious, and then later his *guru* asking him to give him the seed. When Krishna Das said he had already eaten it, he responded, "Good, you'll get *moksa*."

So I've been wanting to pray, and remembered your story about going with a friend to Ramanashram and praying with him when you both received a vision a non-duality. Also, I know from your autobiography which I've been glancing at sometimes that not only have you been spiritually lucky but connected to *siddhas* like Abhedanandaji and still feel a connection. I was hoping if I send some seeds which I asked for maybe you could do a little prayer over them spiritually, perhaps interceding with your gifts to help me on my path, clear my stupidity and any negativity. Thanks.

Ram: Hi, Ted. Lovely to hear from you. I often wonder where you are and what you are doing. Of course, I will bless your seeds but I don't think it would help much. It may make you feel supported for a while but it will not clear your stupidity, stagnation and negativity. Luck is earned, Ted. You have to do the actions that cause it to happen – we call it *punya karma*. It seems to me that the problem is that you are not doing what you really love. Getting rid of negative thinking is not really a useful goal. You need something inspiring to do, something that excites you, turns you on. If you are clear about the nature of liberation, you will not have this problem. Things will take care of themselves and you will feel as if you are moving forward in life with a sense of purpose. Maybe there is something that you should be doing aside from seeking *moksa*. Maybe there are worldly *vasanas* that need to be fulfilled, things that you have repressed for the sake of your spiritual search. What are you doing these days? Why doesn't it turn you on? The idea of getting some kind of blessing from outside is magical thinking. I think your mind is just very *tamasic*. This kind of thought comes up when *tamas* is predominant. The words you use, "stupidity and negativity," are indications of strong *tamas*. Nobody other than you can clear this kind of thinking. I had good luck because I was always positively oriented toward some goal, money and pleasure first, then *moksa*, then spreading the word about Vedanta, etc. Even in a worldly sense I liked what I was doing: restoring furniture, traveling, teaching myself to write, etc.

When you have this kind of attitude good things come your way and encourage you. Plus, you can't go by my story. It is just a story after all, the highlights of a life. Ninety-eight percent of my days were very ordinary, but still they were filled with a sense of wonder at the beauty of life and the endless possibilities that life has to offer. I know that you cannot just get this attitude by wanting it or by doing some kind of ritual. I think you have to figure out why you are *tamasic* – what desires you are not fulfilling and why you are not fulfilling them. Self-inquiry doesn't just

mean thinking about the self, it means thinking about Ted in a dispassionate, critical way, trying to figure out what fears are driving him, what desires are not being met. It is through fulfilling Ted that you come to *moksa*. Maybe you are looking for a transcendental solution, waiting and wanting something miraculous to happen that will lift you out of Ted's life. A lot of young people use spirituality to escape from the world without having actually lived in it successfully. The world is there to provide you with a way to work out your *karma*. I wish I could wave my magic wand and make the problem go away, Ted, but there is no easy solution. The only ritual would be intense prayer. But it is difficult to hear what *Isvara* has to say in response to your prayers when you are *tamasic*. In any case, write to me and tell me what you have been doing since I saw you last – a detailed account of your movements and the thoughts that motivated you. Maybe I can get a better idea of the problem, although my intuition rarely fails. I always thought that you were avoiding something with your spiritual seeking, Ted. I think you should try to find out what it is. Blessed seeds are not the answer.

~ Much love, James

Note: Ted's reply which follows is a bit sad and you will probably get bored listening to it, but it is also remarkable for its objectivity. It looks like Ted is telling it but it is actually the self. If Ted is the person that he thinks he is, it would not have been possible to chronicle his illusions so carefully. He would have become lost in them. This document is a textbook case of *tamasic* thinking.

(Editor's note: *Tamasic* thinking is quite unclear, but for the sake of the reader the writing below has been highly edited to make it easier to read. Apologies to Ted if his meaning was slightly skewed in the process.)

Ted: Yes, of course you are right, I thought as much but I think part of my "problem" is that I keep on thinking, "Hmm, well maybe, just in case" – part of that magical thinking, I guess, which I didn't really pay attention to until more recently, funnily enough. It's hard to kind of share because the *tamas*, I understand, is self-induced and one should take responsibility though it never was a problem until maybe four years back, or three, and so I've connected it to a whole situational blaming thing, feeling that my personal bubble that I always knew would be perfect got turned upside down, now fearing every fork in the road which I feel is always in front of me – though I know it's really one straight-ahead path, no lefts and rights. I guess I wanted that smart move to make up for lost time and to get out of what I feel is a trap. Anyway, for a while I felt good with my basic Vedantic understanding and thought I was good on my life path with or without *moksa* – though a lot of daydreaming was going on and I didn't mind. I had that happy-go-lucky attitude and could always turn around my thinking. Now, I guess, getting older, I see that situation-wise things now have a bigger effect on how life is lived, or so psychologically, one feels anyway. I've been moving back and forth lost since pretty much four years back. I kind of became what I felt was homeless. I'll interject some autobiography here to give you my viewpoint though, like you said, it's a story. I intellectually get that and always laughed at such things, but now I "feel" that my head has gotten cluttered with the past. My mom, when I was about age 21, left for Texas, so I had to be living with my father which kind of was a problem because he's always had issues with alcoholism, and though having an okay relationship, seemingly anyway, I always felt it was an unfair one. But I kind of did my own thing, feeling free and dreaming great things. Being younger and feeling happy-go-lucky, I could always deal.

Anyway, I thought I was going away to college, already having completed almost two years, but things got screwed up thinking my parents were going to help me out, which my mom did at first then said no, I didn't need it and she left, like I said, which has a bunch of other strange stuff attached to it. When that didn't work I was planning and figuring stuff out, but quickly things were getting bad at home, tension pretty much for a couple of months. Dad was lost in drink. Mom, whom I'd always considered a good, even if a crazy (in a funny way) mom, came along and got the house sold to an aunt who I also loved, or made a contract non-binding, and it made it seem that she would rent the house to pay off some bills while renting out another house and a room to make money – while my father would keep the house in name only and if it ever sold would get the money minus whatever the aunt put in to pay off the mortgage, which was minimal. All seemed innocent and I was promised a stay in my house without bother and so was convinced to convince my father to accept the terms, which was unfair because he was drunk, though it made sense. Mom packed up with Dad and left for Texas. My aunt quickly moved in and started making demands which I didn't listen to because I had become what I felt was my own man, not listening to anyone.

Soon problems started. I tried being nice, thinking, “Hey, she puts in money, why not make it easier and less awkward for my folks?” But then I was quickly told, “Whoops, no, that house is actually your aunt's, you have no say, you are stupid for not planning.” Anyway, I ended up being kicked out which I now regret because the fake contract had no power, and if I had spoken up my father would have taken back the house and I would have stayed. The house was quickly put on the market, real contracts were signed and I felt betrayed. So for while I crashed with friends, though always trying to make it only a day or two, then with cousins to not be a burden. Soon I felt powerless: no room or bed to recuperate in, or have silence and be my own boss. Quickly I became, not a loner, but a leech. Before had I believed I had charm, but now people saw me as a loser, so self-esteem went down. I practiced *karma yoga* for a while, then went to Texas to live with parents but Texas was a trap, with inappropriate rules imposed. I felt people were aggressive so I became a bit aggressive too. Soon *sattvic* thoughts were out and *tamasic* thoughts were in. I tried to better myself and look for different spiritual routes, thinking I was missing something, but then I kind of got jumbled. At first I still had the dream of somehow doing something and moved back to Virginia to get a job to feel free again but that didn't work, being homeless and without support. Not much schooling or job history was a bitch. The money I made was to sustain going to work and eating. Then I started thinking, “Hey, maybe I'm some kind of loser.”

Everyone thinks they are great and somehow I get derailed. Others seeing me as less made me feel less and act out. I tried confiding, thinking I could make my mom understand, but she seemed to use that stuff against me, find fault and blame me for not preparing in life better. I tried explaining. How could I prepare if I was told one thing and I was doing what I had to like going to school and such, so soon I lost faith in her and started seeing things as schemes. Sadly, she's put herself in a bad situation where she's always on edge and has become negative which I never felt she was, so I tried to be nice but that soon came back to bite me. So I became a miser with niceness, deciding for too long had I taken on a false sense of niceness and had let people walk all over me, though I think I took to a vicious attitude, thinking maybe I had to learn to be what I felt others were like to not lose out. I see I've fought my nature and tried to become more mature, to force the world to make things better, but it was all foolish thinking. When younger I had my interests that gave me confidence but I always wanted to be like some kind of movie character or someone from a book which, of course, now I know is dumb. I want to go backward and cling to memories but I see that doesn't help. Soon other family members started talking

about me and reporting back to the folks, and I felt my privacy gone having to answer to people that liked to gossip, so I cut off ties slowly. Then problems with parents started coming up and the past stuff that didn't faze me I started seeing as problems and I blamed endlessly and hated myself for blaming, then actually lived in the street but that, of course, made things worse.

So I'm back in Texas and now feel meek having to pretend to laugh things off, living a small room with my parents which is strange and loserish beyond what I would like, and see no way out, feeling drained and paranoid from all the experiences. Now everything feels infected in my thoughts, I feel bombarded by the negativity of others. I feel that living and moving from place to place without rest has made me pick up bad habits without a bubble to clear it out. I see that I have to do something but now with the time that has passed at an age where the brain was formulating and not having the rites of passages that most of my peers I associated with went through, I've stagnated. I actually feel dumber. I don't read or have any pastimes. Looking for work is more than a job in itself as I have no actual skills or optimism to lie which I don't like doing at interviews so, of course, nothing works. I feel like I'm in a trap that worsens. I know now people see me as different, my relationship with my parents is completely negative with everyone faulting everyone else. I do not confide in anyone, having no friends and not wanting to bother people anymore. I see nothing, I guess; that's why all the magical thinking. I also know that with a little mental push and mustering up some balls I can probably make things better. Some of the stuff, like not being the doer, accepting what is and loving, has lost some meaning for me because I guess I know if I continue on my path later on there might be more bad things building up, having already at times felt violent. Putting myself under the lens felt kind of fake and like I was imposing interpretations that others make up; even that can be the mind tricking itself.

Ha, sorry for the rant, I wanted to be thorough. Reading your letter and starting writing made me see the silliness of believing one's crap. I ended up reading a lot more Vedanta though I kept on trying to understand too quickly, and now I think my way of attacking it wasn't really doing much but adding concepts while just not letting go of my clutter. I also started getting obsessed because I couldn't understand the whole *bhakti* of the New Agers connected to Neem Karoli Baba, but I see that stuff just put in a bunch of mishmash concepts, though I still cling to it because the mystery of the magical thinking makes me think I'm missing something, some higher "special" knowledge that will make me special. It seems I should really let go of this. It has made me fake and ashamed because I feel it's impossible to be perfect, though the self is already whole, so I took too much on. So now I've collected a bit of money and am hoping to make it back to Virginia somehow, making a leap because that's all I got.

Anyway, I don't know, so I should forget about the seeds then. I didn't want to explain, thinking you'd say, "Wow, this kid isn't close to being a person with the characteristics to get *moksa*." I didn't want to lose confidence, I guess. Well, it was good to hear from you, a good, sobering letter, so thanks.

James: Hi, Ted. Thanks for that. It was a bit of a sad read, but it was honest and it shows that you aren't Ted and his troubles. You are the awareness of Ted. However, insofar as you do identify with Ted and his story, you need to cut the umbilical cord with your dysfunctional parents. Then you need to get some kind of steady job. Your self-esteem is pretty low and you will like yourself a lot more if you do these two things. I think you jumped the gun on the spiritual thing. It is good insofar as some seeds were planted but self-inquiry only works when you have your worldly shit together. Sorry for the bad news, but you can't just get by in this life. You have to face it and look

after yourself. Keep in touch and let me know how things are going.

~ Love, James