

Can an Avatar Violate Dharma?

Ram (James Swartz)

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Mary: Hello, Ram. I have reread your autobiography and can better understand my draw to your vibration. It is like a very common-sense purpose, the spiritual path, the truth at whatever cost, the longing to “know the truth” regardless of the hills to be climbed, the people to be left behind or the lack of physical comforts... even though that part for me has been pretty minimal.

It was interesting to me your sharing about your parents. I had similar experiences with my parents. After about ten years with Sai Baba my mother said to me, “Mary, I do not understand at all your connection to Sai Baba, but I can see it has been very good for you.” At a later time... several days before leaving on one of my trips to India, my father said to me... very sincerely, “Say hello to Sai Baba for me.” This path has certainly been... as a Westerner... marching to the beat of a different drum.

It has been quite an alone path... not to be confused with lonely. There has been an awareness and comfort of God all along... just not many people with which to share at a deep level of recognition... the power or the understanding of truth. As Sai Baba says, “I am God and you are God... the difference is I know it and you do not.” There are very few people I could share a knowing like that and still continue the conversation.

At the end of your story you made references to false teachers/*gurus/avatars* who may also be pedophiles. I am very aware of the negative allegations around the PERCEPTION that Sai Baba is a pedophile. Because of my personal connection with Baba I have an understanding of who He is based on personal experience. Sometime when we have an opportunity for a chat I would be interested in your perception and ideas around that or if you have formed any one way or the other.

So, Ram, I too am delighted to have a friend I feel I can sit down and have a chat with about the joy of this perceptual trip into form. It is simple but also amazing.

As you can see... the word “perception” has jumped out from your talks and it is very clear and useful in describing reality. Thank you!!!

~ Much love, Mary

Ram: Hi, Mary. Yes, I immediately recognized your single-pointed intention for truth. It is one of the four main qualifications for *moksa*. You had previous lives in India and practiced *yoga* and that good *karma* resulted in a meritorious birth in this life – good parentage. The path is always alone because there is only one being. Swamiji used to say that the spiritual path was “alone, all alone to the alone.” You are right. It has nothing to do with lonely.

I don't know if it would be wise for us to discuss the Sai Baba pedophile issue. I value your friendship and respect your spirituality as it is, apart from where you think you got it. So this is a dangerous issue to discuss with a Sai Baba devotee. Devotees are almost never objective about the object of their devotion. You cannot count on their personal experience. In Vedanta we call

this personal conviction the *pratibhasika* level of reality. It is certainly true for you. It is your personal conviction. But it is equally the personal conviction of others that Sai Baba is other than what he appears to be. Who are we to believe? Is your experience true to the object or is it true to you?

In reality there is no objective truth for individuals, because there is no objective truth in *samsara*. Life is never the same from one moment to the next and what happens and what it means is only relative to the point of view of the one who experiences it. And no individual has the same experience as another individual. Individuals only see the world the way they see it – according to their beliefs and opinions. It is all personal for them. When the impersonal non-dual vision is perfect, nothing stands out, nothing stands above or beyond anything else. The apparent Sai Baba and his apparent devotees and his putatively apparent victims have only a conditional dependent existence. They are not real. They appear and then they disappear in into the awareness from which they are born.

The truth is that you do not know and I do not know, because we were not there in his life on a daily basis to see who he is behind the God-man image – if anyone. And there is no objective way to determine his spiritual status – or anyone else's, for that matter – because there is only one self and all the individual's are apparent entities, including me and you. I do know, however, that nobody with a body in this life is *vasana*-free. Every apparent being that has a body has desires and/or fears in one way or another. And I do not in any way believe in the deification of human beings. In fact, as powerful in a worldly sense as Sai Baba is, he is not *Isvara*. When he is gone the world will continue with all its good and all its evil. He is just the self masquerading as as another individual to me. If he was *Isvara* he would never change, never die. But he will die soon.

I personally – not that I see myself as person – do not put much importance on spiritual stuff, *gurus*, *avatars*, etc. I think that when evaluating people in *maya*, the only valid standard is *dharma*. To what degree does the person follow *dharma*? Sai Baba has certainly generated much good *karma* by his actions. Whether he generated any bad *karma* we do not know. Did he use the vast good *karma* to cover the bad *karma*? Quite a few people perceive that he did. Are they honest people? How can we tell? I have a very objective mind. I keep things simple. I know what happens in my life and that is enough for me. If Jesus or Buddha came to visit I would show them no more courtesy than the man who serves my latte at Starbucks. And if they started acting big I would cut them down to size. Whether Sai Baba helped you or whether you helped you or *Isvara* helped you, what does it matter? You know who you are. This is all that matters.

~ Love, Ram

Mary: Hello, Ram. Thank you for your thoughtful reply.

The last few sentences in your reply reflect precisely my view regarding my experience with Sai Baba. My connection with Baba has certainly been a wonderful resource in the recognition that there is only one... we are all God... and that we should not judge, because we have no way of literally understanding someone else's *vasanas*. I believe that my experience with Him is a reflection of my individual openness and readiness in this field of form to recognize truth. My current understanding is that in the field of reality... as it is perceived... there are many, many experiences, judgements, etc., they are all a part of the game/dream/drama of *maya* and they have no significance in the big picture. Sai Baba... from my experience... has been a wonderful

teacher, friend and support system. He is no different from myself, while in form He may or may not do things that people would judge unworthy of His particular role. How a teacher/*guru/avatar* deals with another student/devotee/disciple is no reflection on my path. I must make choices based on my own business rather than someone else's. If I was less "aware" I might have been one of those who dropped away... perhaps even gotten angry/disappointed, etc. My relationship is based on my experience and understanding of the big picture. From the experiences I have had... the majority of stories I have heard... Sai Baba's presence in form has been a gift to me and to the world. For that I am grateful.

If I had the opportunity I would sit down with Him, have an informal chat and end the session with a hug... exactly like our time together. I realize that is not the usual protocol, but that is how I view and appreciate Baba. The role He has played in my life has allowed and encouraged me to love myself... as God, as self, there is nothing but God. The repetition, many trips to India, Baba's teachings... new ideas to an open mind and an open heart can bring life-changing results.

Again, Ram, thank you for your reply and an opportunity to discuss experiences and issues with interest and respect.

~ Much love, Mary

Ram: Hi, Mary. This is a very mature and beautiful understanding. I salute you for it. The *guru* is never really a person. It is the self operating through a person. You need discrimination to keep the message and the messenger separate.

~ Much love, Ram

Mary: Dear Ram, like you have said so many times... we cannot get this understanding by ourselves. My relationship with Baba has evolved... over time... from one of being on a pedestal... higher and better than me... to an awareness... as He teaches... that I am God and you are God, the only difference being the knowing. We are no different. The concept of our being God is a real stretch from traditional Christian teaching... with the exception of a few quotes from Jesus: "My Father and I are one, all that I do you can do also," etc. So it has needed continual focus/repetition and longing to break free of religion. Baba has brought me from a place of honoring Him as God to a place of honoring Him as myself. From that understanding there is no difference... only joy and love... separation/difference is all *maya*.

I want to mention also that you are a very good storyteller. In the past I have not taken much interest in the symbology of the Hindu/Indian culture. It seemed there were just too many deities/temples and festivals to digest. Your stories truly bring out the beauty and depth of the heart and mind of India.

For now...

~ Much love, Mary