

# Life is Pain and Confusion - Until it Isn't

Ram (James Swartz)

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Dear James,

I send you and Sundari many blessings and deepest gratitude for sharing the Self and Vedanta. If you don't mind, I'd like to share something with you and see what you think.

While trying to relax in the bath after a very difficult day, it dawned that as the self, I simply am. Charles, the programmed *jiva*, that person who experienced the difficult day, was struggling to figure out what happened and how to avoid the unpleasantness that was still moving in the mind. Simultaneously, I was aware that I was not any of it, including the thrill of realizing that. The conditioning is to own my experience(s) and identify with "my" life but the Charles person is nothing but an infinitesimally small piece of an infinite kaleidoscope, the kind where the pieces tumble and change when the tube is turned, reflecting the light shining from behind. How humbling to contemplate that there is nothing here separate from the self and that "I" own nothing, not the crappy day's experiences or the insights I'm sharing with you now.

However, the struggle with the complexity of 'my life' overly busy with a business, property and family and the idea it should be different, causes confusion. From our previous conversations, my understanding is that I'm doing my *svadharma* and to 'take it easy' and that by listening to Vedanta every day the ignorance will slowly evaporate. This seems right but there are days like today where there is a lot of pain and confusion, until there isn't. Is there anything to be done I wonder, but then it's clear again that I'm not really in charge, just acting out the *vasanas* through the *gunas*. Your comments, James, are most welcome.

The bottom line is wanting to express my appreciation and gratitude to you for what you do. Listening to the Tiru Panchadasi tapes every day has been extremely helpful, and understanding how the Mithya/Satya puzzle is put together is mind-blowing.

James: Well, there is nothing more you can do, David. You are doing everything that is required. However, it is very helpful to keep in mind at all times the realization you expressed in the first paragraph. It is self knowledge, "I am not any of it." It is a thrilling realization because it is the way out of the *samsaric* state of mind. David is indeed just an infinitesimal reflective speck in the colorful kaliedescope of creation. We are little more than frothy bubbles produced by existence's limitless waves. We appear momentarily and then are gone. Our myriad likes and dislikes are even less real. Keep in mind your statement, "there are days like today where there is a lot of pain and confusion" and then the truth, "until there isn't." Until there isn't, forebear with a smile if possible. Likes change into dislikes and dislikes into likes. Nothing stays the same.

And then, make a long term plan to simplify your life. Chip away at gratuitous activities like a sculptor removing bits of unwanted stone. Less is always more.

Love,

James