

# Man up and Fight!

Ram (James Swartz)

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**James:** Hi, Christine, I'm sorry you seem to be losing your way. Here are a few words that may help you get unstuck. These things happen and there is no cause for alarm. You can always get on the next bus – there is one every second!

**Christine:** It's been a while since I've written and I write to you now to give thanks again for the great offering you continue to make. Having the teachings (as you teach them) readily available is "the shade of the tree of Vedanta."

I write also for some counsel. I fear that I am falling back on the path, or my pursuit of the path. I am saddened as I observe myself mired in distraction, darting around the thick *maya* world – the race to nowhere – fulfilling obligations, doing my worldly work. I try to remember *karma yoga*, and devoting it all to *Isvara*, but it feels false... Am I just continuing all the doing and telling myself it's okay because I've dedicated it to God?

**James:** No, it feels false because you don't appreciate God's role in your life. There is an upside to these negative feelings. See if you can figure it out. God is telling you something.

**Christine:** I also understand that the sadness is only in the *jiva*, not the self. Yet my longing for realization of the self seems weakened as I go, not emboldened as I had hoped. Perhaps I will just stay on the bus, rest in the shade of the Tree and trust *Isvara* in this and all things.

**James:** While it seems that you have a rudimentary appreciation of the futility of worldly pursuits, it seems that some part of you still thinks it will find satisfaction in the world. I think the only solution is to keep chasing the things that you are chasing until you are 100% convinced that these activities are not capable of fulfilling you.

You can help yourself to attain more dispassion toward objects by figuring out WHY you believe there is something valuable in the *maya* world. Until you do sadness (*tamas*) and distraction (*rajas*) will disturb your mind. This problem is the result of lack of clarity concerning your ultimate goal which is, ostensibly, freedom.

I don't know what you are trying to gain from the world. Perhaps security, pleasure, power, recognition or maybe virtue? But once figure out your motivation(s) you will see that beneath them is the desire for freedom from insecurity, etc. and this should focus your mind on self-knowledge, the direct path to freedom from insecurity, etc.

**Christine:** I still have this needling thought that I should be doing more to pursue self-realization.

**James:** Then honor this thought. It is *Isvara* telling you to quit feeling sorry for yourself, re-dedicate and clean up your life. Distractions are only a problem if you don't know they are distractions. You know very well you are distracted and that it does not feel right. So do the right thing until that "needling thought" goes away. You must follow your true *svadharma* if you are going to be happy. As Krishna says to Arjuna, "Man-up and fight!"

**Christine:** Thank you for your reply; as always, it was very helpful. And thank you for prefacing your comments with "there's no cause for alarm." I realized in my reflection on your words that I am seeking validation from the world. How ironic to be seeking validation from something that's not real! So I will remind myself to the understanding, "I seek freedom from the need for validation, etc."

Also, as I pursue my worldly work (to pay bills, support my family, etc.) I will accept it as my *svadharma*, identifying when I am distracted and when I'm feeling sorry for myself. This can be hard when I see the *jiva* as a truly sorry creature. The other day I spilled some food in my freshly-cleaned car and a torrent of abuse was unleashed: "What an idiot!" Later I was able to laugh and see that, yes, there is idiocy but there is also much beauty here and in the world. What a dance this Vedanta is, James!

Thank you for your instruction and practical wisdom.