

# Me or the Greater Good?

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Jackie:** Dear Ramji, I'm very happy. It feels great to put the "knots" aside and move on with the friendship I mentioned before that seemed to be over. I see that there's a purpose for relationships that is much higher than any preferences or needs this *jiva* might think it has. And in the process of relating, I'm learning how to let personal preferences go for the sake of a quieter and clearer mind, but also watching what happens instead, when I fail to apply the logic, while the binding *vasanas* rule and I fall for the strong temptations to go for what is known – and in most cases, damaging. Even then, all the dramas seem less important, so I guess, yes, it is progressively starting to work again. ☺

**James:** Good for you, Jackie. All relationships not only have a personal purpose – to satisfy the *jiva's* cravings and pander to its fears – but they have a "higher purpose" as well. It depends on how you see the world. So choice is always involved: Is this about me or is this about the greater good? Vedanta is totally practical. If you see your relationships as fulfilling *Ishvara's* purpose, you feel good and conflict is impossible. If you see them as about Jackie, conflict (*rajas*) and depression (*tamas*) is inevitable.

**Jackie:** I'm reading your book and finally connecting the dots between dual and non-dual love/devotion. It still amazes me how effective are *Ishvara's* ways of providing what is necessary (i.e. the next steps) for whatever cycle *jivas* are going through (and you are certainly one of His most pristine instruments of delivery, Ramji!).

So at the moment, I'm in phase one: carefully reading, receiving and savoring the teachings, and so far your words are quite clear to me. As soon as I have any questions, I'll surely turn to you.

Thank you once again!

**James:** Good. A lot of intelligent people like yourself think they can get the whole idea all at once and run with it, so they are content with bits and pieces, not knowing that they only have bits and pieces. So you have to go through the complete teaching over and over and over until the teachings sink in. You should be able to completely reproduce the basic logic of *The Essence of Enlightenment* by memory before you relax in your study of Vedanta.

**Jackie:** Before reading *The Yoga of Love* my biggest doubt was how to put together the apparent incongruence between the dualistic and ritualistic *bhakti* practices included in the *karma yoga sadhana* and the non-dual approach of self-inquiry and self-knowledge. But that is exactly the main theme that's beautifully covered in your book.

**James:** There is no contradiction between duality and non-duality. They are in different orders of the one reality. My *jiva* still worships *Ishvara* as an object, yet I know that there is no fundamental

difference between me and *Isvara*.

~ Much love, James