

# Rage Born of *Rajas*

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**Helen:** Dear James, thank you very very much for your answer. It did put everything in place.

**James:** I do assume the role of teacher when there is an understanding between me and someone about the nature of the “teaching,” but I don’t feel that we have ever come such an understanding.

People say I am their teacher without ever consulting me. Then they expect me to behave like they think a teacher should behave, and if I say something that upsets them they say I’m not their teacher. The teacher has to accept the student and the student needs to understand and respect the tradition. You never asked me. I don’t need to teach anybody. I don’t charge money, although I accept donations. Nobody owns me. I do it because I like Vedanta and I do it as a service. Hearing Vedanta means that you may very well have to hear some things that you do not like. I understand that you will blame me, and don’t take it personally but if you can’t see that there is logic behind it, then I stop responding.

**Helen:** That is totally true because I always had this raging anger in me, like, “I am right and this cannot be true,” but at the same time I knew I had to let go of this rage, and I was too scared to express this because I wanted to be a “good student,” so everything was not about the teaching but about coming to rest, so I could accept to be taught. So no wonder that you had difficulty understanding me. And I am sorry for that, but I was all the time as honest as possible, as far as my sight reached. And it is this honesty that is opening up more and more, the less I care about “being a good student.”

But the totally strange and surprising thing is that the coming to rest IS in fact the teaching. Do you agree about that? Because then there is no difficulty at all. I see I am the all-seeing, the being is in me, and out of that comes naturally the right action, that is, not a frustrated action colored by anger, fear and so on.

So if there is no resistance to the teaching, it simply appears to be true. Do you agree on that?

**James:** And in fact the student is the last person who should think he or she is an expert on enlightenment or even what he or she thinks he or she is.

**Helen:** Yes, I know, and that is exactly the problem here. I can compare it with knowing the fact that I am pregnant. It is about the shift from a totally ignorant point of view, where I consider myself to be the child, subject to all strange influences and things that happen, without any understanding about structure, reason or purpose, to the perspective of the mother, who is knowing bearing the child in her, and every desire of the child is hers, but because she knows it is a child, she simply cares, and this knowing is intuitively performing the right action for the child, whether this child personally likes it or not, and this brings everything into place.

And the more I stay in the mother's perspective, the more the child comes to rest, and the more everything functions as whole and perfect. And as soon as I shift again to the complaining, victim-like (or heroic) perspective, manifestations occur that hit me like a stick, like a wall, like a barrier that is invisible, and so I have to go back to this only true perspective. And this is everything you taught me, and do you recognize this as your teaching?

And if this is true, how can you be more expert than me? And really, this is not an arrogant question, because in the relative, it is your incredible expertise in all the pitfalls, the enlightenment sickness, the ways of the little self to delude itself, that make you the teacher, the stick that hits the "person" to go back to the only true perspective. But... maybe it IS an arrogant question. And I DO pretend I know better. That is why I tell you the following.

I don't think you will understand it, because it is a very messed-up thing.

As soon as I had this enlightenment experience at the age of 24, I felt I had to teach people, but of course I could not; I could only say trust and love and everything will be fine, and of course they did not do that and said I was mystic or I did ignore Jesus or I was delusional or I was seduced by the Devil. And it made me feel very alone, so every moment in "my" life I tried to find the right words, the right ideas, the right teaching to be able to express reality as I had known it to be really. And all this searching was messing up my own trust, so at the end I had to say nothing anymore. So I thought I knew... I just had to find the right teaching. And I compared your teaching to what I thought I knew. But it was the other way around: the teaching did destroy what I thought I knew.

What you made me understand by your answer, however, that always my little self was checking the teaching itself on adequacy... like, if a teacher says, "You are arrogant," it cannot be true, because the only reality is love. So in other words, the little self was always evaluating the teaching and the teacher, ad nauseam, and I am very very sorry I did that because it makes things terribly complex and convoluted, when I was sitting in "your chair," so to say, without having the courage or self-confidence to say I did so, because then you would spit me out like an intruder, but I was dependent on you at the same time to break this habit and make me understand.

So when you talk about, in your previous letter, about an ugly wound, then this is certainly very ugly. And on basis of this ugliness, the dawning of the realization that the relative me does not have to sit in anybody's chair can rest from this evaluating and eternal interpreting and just be came out in a very pathos-like, theatrical and catharsis-like way.

So what I did, in the 28th October letter, is jump from a resting perspective... immediately to the old patterning that I did hold onto my whole life... like, okay, so now I found truth... in the right perspective... and now I am gonna tell which teaching is right and which is not! Isn't that incredible ridiculous?!!! And then me, the hero... am "righteously disillusioned" about the ignorance of the teacher! My God, I would really like to disappear in the dust under your feet if I thought that would be useful, but awareness in me is just laughing, and says it's maybe a better idea to start washing the dishes...

**James:** I suppose the best I can do – and excuse me if it sounds a bit too "spiritual" – is to ask, WHO feels disillusioned?

**Helen:** Yes, exactly. So your expertise consists in the fact that you “hit” me back, so to say, and the more I am stable in the real perspective, I do not experience this as a “hit” but as a very effective push because there was just conditioning at work that temporarily deluded me, and you can see that because of your expertise. And therefore my disillusion was based on the experience of the little self of your practicing of your expertise, as being “hit,” and the memory of the pain it brought unto the little self. And it was this memory that had to behold the light, so I could see the identification with this pain active, and by seeing it realizing it is not true. And secondly, the disillusion was based on a truly messed-up patterning, like a described above.

**James:** So accept my apologies if I have offended you or “disillusioned” you.

**Helen:** Yes, I do, because in reality there is nothing to apologize for. You were totally right, and I am very ashamed, and the more I am stable in the real perspective, the more I can see you did the right thing. And the fact that you apologized, just because you did not understand me, while you knew you were right, and so you acted in a very sweet human way in order not to be of hindrance, that is also a very very important teaching, and it makes me feel humble because, really, when it was about my little self, it would really sweep the whole cosmos into order without taking any complaint seriously (by passing the whole issue that it already is, just to act out). And that is exactly the opposite of what is meant, and being awareness is now working on making the little me human in a new and healthy and true way, and I guess that will keep me busy for some time, and it looks like learning true humility is the way.

And also, I will have a good look at this rage, this extreme energy in me, before I mistake it to be a prophetic and therefore legitimate urge to express...

Maybe it is just that I was concentrated so much in the search of enlightenment as something special... while it is not at all “special” but at the same time it is totally free... that I just don’t know anymore how to act or at least all the fighting fell away, but still the energy of the fight is very active in the relative me.

And yes, it is true that I do rest as awareness, but the relative me is subject to such an incredible urge, like a bull, a lion that is bound, but still trying to escape. Do you recognize this? Maybe that is quite common?

**James:** There is a very important verse in our most important scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*, where the student says, “What is that terrible force within me that causes me to act contrary to my higher nature?” The teacher replies, “It is rage, born of *rajoguna*.” The student then says, “The mind (owing to the rage) is an entrenched tyrant, impossible to control.” And the teacher replies, “Yes, it is difficult to control, but it can be brought under control by repeated practice and objectivity.”

The *guna* of *rajas* afflicts everyone in *samsara* to some degree and is very strong in others. It is an unconscious force that causes a person to work against his or her self. This unhealthy type of “relationship” you are attracted to is a manifestation of this force. You go to it over and over in your mind trying to find satisfaction in it and yet you reap only frustration, a symptom of *rajas*. *Rajas* not only causes desire and anger but it is the power of projection. It makes you think that

your lover is the problem or your mother is the problem, etc. or that I am the problem (because I don't tell you what you want to hear) or that you are the problem, but *rajas* is the problem. Well, *rajas* is not actually a problem, because it is just an energy, sometimes very helpful; however, it becomes a problem when you identify with it. So you become complicit. This is all going on unconsciously. Because you cannot understand it, you are frustrated and punish yourself with anger. Desire always leads to anger.

At the bottom of it all is the simple fact that you do not love yourself properly. If you loved yourself properly you would know what true love is and you would not try to find it in a relationship with someone else, particularly with a person who is completely confused about his real nature. You would not make romantic statements about the profound insights that this painful and stupid relationship supposedly brings. Even if the insights are profound, the rage remains. If you loved yourself properly you would have good discrimination and be non-attached to the idea of relationships and you would choose a partner who was worthy of a relationship with a psychologically-healthy person with decent values. This man is as dysfunctional in the love department as you are. You don't love yourself, because you don't know who you really are. You have an intellectual appreciation of it, but you do not know why you are lovable and why this love frees you from the need for relationships and the rage of *rajas*.

The solution to *rajas* is "repeated practice and objectivity." This means that you have to know that you are awareness and what it means to be awareness and you have to stand as awareness when Helen's craving for love pushes her to seek it outside. This is very difficult, almost impossible, when there is such strong rage. There is another verse in the same chapter talking about the power of *rajas*, desire, in this case the desire for love. It says that the love that you are is hidden by desire and it gives three examples: just as fire is hidden by smoke, a mirror is covered by dust and a fetus is hidden in the womb. Some desires are like smoke, they blow away with the first winds of clarity (*sattva*). Others are more difficult to remove, like dust on a mirror. One needs to get out some cleanser and a rag and apply elbow grease before they yield. This is "repeated practice and objectivity." We call it the practice of self-knowledge. The third kind is so deep within that it needs to work out naturally in the course of your life, just as a fetus needs to come out naturally on its own. You cannot reach inside the womb and pull it out before the right time or it will not survive.

Your need for love from a man is an example of the third kind of desire. I believe you told me that you had been without a man for ten or eleven years, which should have been long enough for the desire to die. But it did not die. This desire for outside love is really a desire for wholeness, i.e. self-love, masquerading as a desire for a relationship. If you were actually my student you would have understood the value of following *dharma* in your life and you would have understood my words in that light. But you do not understand the value of *dharma*, because the power of desire has put your life in the hands of that wounded, rebellious little girl that rages within you. She knows there is something wrong with her, but she cannot fix herself. That is why I said that you, speaking of her, are the last person to be an expert about either who you really are or who you think you are. Before you can really heal this part of yourself you definitely have to admit your helplessness and surrender, not to me, but to God. Surrender to God is a lot more than just knowing there is God. God appears as the *dharma* field, an intelligently-designed matrix of physical, psychological and spiritual laws. Furthermore, you need to know that Helen does not surrender. You surrender Helen. But you cannot surrender her if you think you are her, which you do. This is the situation you find yourself in.

When you come to this understanding in life, you are ready for Vedanta and you may very well be blessed with a proper teacher. But if you have not come to that understanding, you will leave the power for your life in the hands of that damaged little girl and you will seek external solutions. I cannot teach anyone who is still looking for an external solution to life. And I cannot teach anyone who does not follow *dharma*, because following *dharma* is the way out of one's personal hell. As a teacher I am part of a tradition, one that is guided by certain *dharma*s, rules. My students understand the rules. If they don't, I don't teach them. There is nothing personal about it at all. It is just my duty as a lineage holder in the tradition. So I don't argue with them. I just don't communicate, because my words are wasted. There are many out there who value my words and who understand that there is a deep logic behind them, so when they are upset by them they don't blame me, they look for the deeper logic and surrender the anger and disappointment to the logic. I am never anybody's problem. You have to make me into a problem. Many people come to me and inevitably a few fall by the wayside because they are not ready to listen. Vedanta is for mature people who can listen because they know that they are not objective about themselves. We do not tell you what to think. We show you who you are and teach you to think from who you are, not from who you think you are.

If you have to work out a deep desire like this you need to work it out. You cannot just declare any kind of relationship a non-dual relationship and expect it to work. It will only work when you are free of the need for a relationship. There are very few people who are free. This does not mean, however, that there is not a viable alternative. The alternative is to do the relationship as *karma yoga*. In this way the relationship becomes a spiritual practice that prepares you for freedom – from Helen. But you cannot do a relationship as *karma yoga* unless you understand what *karma yoga* is and what *dharma* is and what liberation is. You do not understand. You think you understand, but you do not understand. This is your intellectual vanity. If you understood, you would not choose to have a relationship with a sexually greedy person and justify it even when you know it is wrong, returning to it like a moth to a flame. This is a psychological problem, not a spiritual problem. Yes, it has a spiritual root, which you vaguely, but don't really, understand.

Many people, particularly intelligent, rebellious people, are too proud to seek help. They have great faith in their own intelligence, but it takes more than brains and a rebellious attitude to live intelligently in this complex apparent reality. The "therapeutic" branch of Vedanta is called *yoga* and it is about removing desires and fears – *vasanas* – that disturb the mind, particularly *rajas* and *tamas*. It is "scientific" in that it is not ego-based. You do not treat yourself, except by living a certain way and thinking a certain way. When the *rajas* and the *tamas* have been reduced to manageable proportions, then you are ready for Vedanta.

If a person comes to me and does not have a proper foundation for self-inquiry, I can help them get one if they understand the value of such a foundation. And once they start reaping the rewards, I find that the vision of non-duality becomes established in their minds and hearts. When you told me about this stupid love affair, I told you it was stupid and I told you why. I will not teach someone who lives this way. It shows lack of self-esteem. If you valued yourself properly, you would not give such people the time of day. But because you don't value yourself properly, you imagine that this relationship is some kind of teaching and you make a big romantic story about it. What it should teach is that this kind of relationship is self-defeating. A successful person is a self-confident person, someone who knows his or her value, and will not compromise his or her spiritual integrity for a cheap and tawdry love.

If you don't read the *satsangs* at the website, I suggest you do, starting with the New Satsangs at

the bottom of the list. Then work back through the archives. This will give you an idea of the kind of people that I teach and how they approach me and what questions they ask. You need to understand that when you seek help, you need to appreciate the fact that I am doing all this as a service. If I was a psychologist – and yours is a psychological problem with a spiritual root – I should be compensated financially. I am not out to save people from themselves. I teach people who are already saved. When somebody does you a favor, it is not right to complain about their advice when you seek it. When you told me about your love affair, I told you what I thought. I was waiting for you to say that you saw the wisdom of my words and share your realization with me. Instead you said you had gone back to that relationship. So what am I to think? I can only think that you take what you want and ignore what you don't. That's perfectly fine if you are a worldly person and I am a worldly person. But I am not a worldly person. So on that level there is no room for a relationship. I left the world a long time ago because I realized there was no solution in it. You have not realized that there is no solution. This is why you went for this relationship. Let me repeat – it is quite fine, Helen, for you to have your love affairs and carry on as you see fit in the world; it has nothing to do with me. But you need to discuss it with someone who thinks there is a solution to suffering in the world. I cannot be bothered by your feelings and ideas. I manage my own mind, not the minds of others. If you are prepared, I can give you wisdom.

When you said my answer was disillusioning, you should have been happy. Before I can teach you, you need to be disillusioned. You need to hit bottom and to have given up thinking you are so clever and that you are some kind of expert on yourself and life. Have you really hit bottom or are you still trying to cope, to make life work according to your idea of how it should work for you? This is the real question.

It is good that you apologize, and I accept it, but from now on please don't put yourself in a position where you have to apologize.

~ Much love, James