

Rajas and Inquiry

Ram (James Swartz)

2015-08-06

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/2235>

Seeker: James, I just wanted to write and give you an update. I have been working on my inquiry as diligently as possible and am noticing some changes. I notice that every time I walk into a given situation my mind immediately begins to compare my ego/personality with everyone else: height, weight, social status, physical ability, etc., etc. I also notice that the undertone of that comparison is a feeling that if someone is “better” than me at a certain something my mind instantly moves to negate the value of it or to convince itself that it could achieve that state (whatever it is: physical beauty, musical ability, charisma) if it wanted to, and then proceeds to project a negative persona on the people around it to make itself feel better. Essentially, my mind is still a five-year-old brat constantly saying, “I could do that, mine is better than yours, blah, blah, blah,”

OR

if the desired object is something that I am attempting to obtain, then competition ensues, which results in negative thoughts toward myself for not being, doing, having the object of desire already, i.e. feeling less-than.

THEN,

if the envy-driven effort does not yield immediate results, the mind becomes despondent and begins to emote thoughts of self-pity and worthlessness, which is why I have a long list of projects that are never finished.

All of this happens within a fraction of a second and would normally cause a chain reaction of action and emotions that from what I can see is just stuck on “repeat.”

So... my *mantra* lately has been “there is nothing to get.” Every time I feel/hear my mind go into its song and dance about how much it wants the objects that are appearing in it, I try to remind it “there is nothing to get.” Every time I start feeling sentimental or nostalgic about a certain person or situation I am saying, “No, that won’t work either.” Then sometimes, if that doesn’t resolve the feeling, I play the situation forward in my mind. Usually, it goes something like the following.

Mind: “Oh, man, I want to screw her again.”

Me: “If you do that – AND you will want to do it again – then you will get attached and start worrying if she is fucking someone else. And she will get attached and start calling you all the time, complaining that you don’t spend enough time with her. Then she will get pregnant and you will be paying child support, then you will start arguing over money, then she will get old and her tits will sag, then you will both die and it will be so sad, and yada, yada, yada...”

Mind: “Oh, okay, well, maybe it’s not such a good idea.”

Me: “Yeah, maybe not...” ☺

Anyway, the effect of my inquiry seems to be that I have a lot more energy. And I feel more

positive and enjoy the things I am doing in the present more. I am still experiencing bouts of frustration here and there with the kids when they start arguing and the dog when he is being a needy jerk, but all in all much more time and energy seems to be the effect.

I'm really feeling like I'm on a better track than before. But I want to check in and see if I am on the right track and or if is there more to inquiry than the process I have just described.

Also, the last thing you emailed me was all about the *Gita*. So am I to understand that the war is between my ego and the objects appearing in me, meaning the daily process of deciding how to act, what habits to slay and facing my attachment to the objects, overcoming my unwillingness to accept that they must be destroyed?

James: Sorry, I'm a bit slow with the reply, but I enjoyed your letter very much. There is a bit more to Vedanta practice, but this is perfect for now. You are on the right track. Keep it up. It will take a while for the tendency to define yourself with reference to others to ameliorate, but you have a rudimentary notion of inquiry and the essence of *karma yoga*, apart from the gratitude aspect which will come in time. Keep me posted on your progress and keep reading the *Gita*, the website, the *satsangs*, etc. If you do ceremonies do them purely as worship and ignore all other considerations. If you do, the magic will come back.

~ Love, James