

## Relating to *Isvara* as a *Jivanmukta*

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**Sarah:** And... awareness has no problem with ignorance, my dear Sundari!

Just checking in on you and Ram. I hope he is okay and you're okay. I'm hoping your *jiva* has recovered.

All is well here. What I'm finding is that I'm not interested in the things or people I used to be interested in before I found this inner freedom. I find it hard to relate to people's drama, and when I'm around lots of people I feel so drained. I long for peace and quiet. It's amazing how much people around me have to say and I have so little to say, so I just ask them a lot of questions so I don't have to talk and shake my head as if I'm agreeing with them or appearing to listen intently.

This is even affecting my friendship with my best friend Susan. She's so caught in her *rajas* that it's hard to talk to her anymore. I'm hoping this will pass.

I miss you and your wonderful smile and energy, and of course I miss Ram too. Please send him my love.

~ xxoo, Sarah

**Sundari:** Hello, dear Sarah. Ah yes, the downside of being a *jivanmukta* – how to relate to one's environment without dying of boredom!

I have been plagued by this dilemma most of my life and found no easy solutions to it. The people who stayed in my life are the ones that have some idea of who I am. Many have fallen away. I do not register much need of any kind so I seldom worry about having friends, but there are people other than the many Vedantins in whose lives I participate (such as your gorgeous self!) that I have gone out of my way to include in my life. Not because I see myself as different, of course – I see everyone as awareness – but because I love them for whom they are, ignorance or no ignorance. And so I simply see them as awareness and apply *karma yoga*. I had someone write to me recently who had this problem with her own mother. As much as she loved her, she could not stand being in her presence for long because of the *rajas* present in her mind.

You will have to find the balance in your life with the people you now associate; this is why Vedanta says that until self-knowledge is rock-solid it is important to stay away from very *rajasic/tamasic* minds because both energies are very contagious for the mind. Keeping company with minds caught up in ignorance is *kusanga* as opposed to *satsanga*. We avoid them whenever possible. Of course, for me living with the mind of the century, Ramji, has totally spoilt me! We have such sublime communication on all levels. He told me this was his evil plan so that I would not wander away – ha, ha, ha!

You will also find with time that as nothing disturbs you as awareness even though you do not have the need to speak and do not get drawn into the drama of life anymore; you will see it all as the play of the *gunas* and love everyone equally, regardless of the presence or absence of self-

knowledge. The more you cultivate *sattva*, the more you will find that the minds around you modify to the *sattva* instead of your mind being affected by the *rajas/tamas*. Recently I have experienced this as a big shift in my dealings with people. I can now tolerate most people without getting bored or agitated; the mind simply stays still, focused on the self, and I see the so-called “others” modify to me, awareness. There is nothing more powerful than self-knowledge, remember that.

**Sarah:** YES! You really understand me!! No one else gets it. I loved your first line, “...how to relate to one’s environment without dying of boredom...”! That’s exactly how I feel. The worst part is dealing with all the *rajasic* parents I have to deal with at my school. It’s so, so draining. I’m so glad that you are part of my life! And I too don’t worry about friends. My perfect evening is to have a cup of tea and watch Ramji on video. ☺

I can also relate to what you said about people wanting to be with you. It reminds me of the movie *Perfume* when they all crowded around the protagonist at the end and killed him.

People want to be in “my energy” but as they are benefiting I’m becoming depleted. I haven’t quite learned how to manage that.

It’s hard to avoid the *rajasic/tamasic* minds at work. I think I’ll try your line of thought, just keep seeing them as awareness. I tried this morning with a mom and she started crying. The next parent though was so *rajasic* that I developed a spasm in my neck. He was way out there, LOL.

Thanks for all of your wisdom and encouragement.

**Sundari:** Hello, Sarah. I do understand because adjusting to one’s environment is essential for everyone who has found *moksa*; it’s part of actualising the knowledge. This might entail making lifestyle changes; if you can live peacefully with your life situation and not get hooked by *rajas* and *tamas*, there’s no problem. We often have to remind seekers that not much changes “after” *moksa*; you are still the same person and your life is still probably not change much. The people around you are also not going to change and *Isvara srsti* continues as it always does. The major difference is that you no longer project your creation onto *Isvara* (meaning your environment) so you no longer expect anything from it, which means you are okay with it the way it is. It is just how you relate to objects that changes.

That said, *sattva* being the goal for the *jivanmukta* at all times, if you now find that you can no longer tolerate the high-level *rajas* in your work, you might need to consider changing it. Your work is not really a situation where *karma yoga* will be very effective because no matter how much you apply it the mind will constantly have to modify to the excessive *rajas*. This is not conducive to peace of mind. Again, just like in any other situation, there is no right or wrong, just what is *dharmic* for you. If you find that with practice you can remain focused on the self no matter how much *rajas* you have to contend with, well and good. The thing is you are making a difference in your profession; you have an opportunity to bring some sanity to people’s lives, especially the young people. So it is definitely worth persevering.

The only way to relate to anyone is as the self – how else would you now that you know who you are and that there is only you? It is really interesting to listen to and watch awareness expressing itself through *rajas* and *tamas*! Remember that awareness has no problem with ignorance; it is

not like it thinks that knowledge is better. Awareness is free of both ignorance and knowledge so however *Isvara* is expressing is fine with it. It is only for the *jiva* that *moksa* is so valuable because it is only the *jiva* that suffers when awareness is under the apparent spell of ignorance. Awareness does not suffer. So just laugh at it all, it is really funny after all to see what awareness under the spell of ignorance gets up to! It is all *Isvara*, all of it. Just *maya*, a play of the *gunas*; no one is doing anything. As I said in my last email, I don't get bothered by ignorance anymore, although Ramji and I do not have high tolerance for socialising or small talk. Maybe 15 minutes, tops. ☺

This is why Vedanta makes it clear that you do not have to get rid of ignorance when your personal ignorance has been removed. It is not possible to do so anyway because duality still apparently exists whether you are enlightened or not. Ignorance, or duality, is only a problem if you don't know what it is. *Moksa* is the ability to always discriminate yourself, awareness, from the objects that appear in you.

Thank you for your kind words, you are so sweet! The wisdom is self-knowledge and it does not belong to or come from me as the *jiva*. You, my dear, are just as wise. ☺

~ Much love to you, Sundari