

Shit or Get Off the Pot

Ram (James Swartz)

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James: The person in this email has been writing for a long time, trying to make sense of his past. I finally got tired of listening to it, as it did not seem to bring understanding.

James: Hi, Jake.

You don't seem to be asking for feedback, and it is my policy not to offer advice unless it is solicited, but because you have been telling me your story for so long, I'm assuming you want feedback, so I made a few comments below. Think of it as tough love.

Jake: At this point I have only one goal: continue on Vedanta path.

James: Why is it a "goal"? What other option is there? It seems you are not properly committed to Vedanta.

Jake: Asking for and listening to *Isvara's* guidance on how to remove any binding *vasanas* I still have is my number-one objective.

James: What other objectives do you have? If you are inquirer, there is only one objective. As far as listening to *Isvara* on how to removing binding *vasanas*, it seems you haven't understood the basic teaching. *Karma yoga* and *jnana yoga* remove binding *vasanas*. Talking about your past does not remove binding *vasanas*. In fact it seems to be a binding *vasana*.

Jake: My looking-down-on-hard-work-on-land *vasana* might be coming to an end. This winter someone stole the battery and fuel from the truck I drive for work, what has never happened before. This may be a subtle message from *Isvara* that what starts and fuels this *vasana* began to disappear.

James: I doubt that it is a subtle message. I don't think it is a message at all. Or if it is, the message is that people steal things. The idea that you need a "sign" to change something is *tamasic*, magical thinking. If you want freedom and you have a tried-and-true method for gaining it, then you just do the work. Once you understand Vedanta, what you do is out of your hands. You just keep your head down, stop trying to dig special meaning out of your "story," roll up your sleeves and get to work. It is small-self indulgent to pick through the vomit of the past looking for meaning.

It's wise not to look down on anything. You are doing what you should be doing on that level. Now apply *karma yoga* to it and stop thinking about what might be or might have been. You have

the same binding *vasanas* that everyone has: security, love, virtue, etc.

Jake: It would be a true honour for me to meet you in person during a camp-out in summer. What an unbelievable grace that I live so close.

James: I'm nothing special, Jake. Honor yourself and stop fucking around. Take your life as a gift from God and do your *sadhana* every minute.

Jake: The subject of *gunas* is precisely where I have to keep my attention on. And I also have another *vasana* here to fry: I do not want to be one of those spiritual seekers, poor babies, weak, silly pussies, whining about everything. *Jivas* are not able to, but *Isvara* certainly loves multitasking.

James: You are a spiritual seeker, Jake. This whole business of digging around in the past is just spiritual masturbation. Drop it. I'm not sure what you mean when you say that *Isvara* loves multitasking – is it an ironical statement? – but multitasking is the bane of modern existence. The whole idea of *karma yoga* is to deliberately do one thing at a time.

Scripture is *Isvara's* words. There is no mystery about them. *Isvara* says do *karma yoga* and *jnana yoga*. Scripture does not say to dig around in the past looking for meaning.

If you are an inquirer, you are not a seeker. There is nothing to seek. You are what you're seeking. There is only the application of the knowledge "I am limitless existence/consciousness, and not Jake" to the mind until the mind rests in its true nature. Study the *karma yoga* section of *The Essence of Enlightenment* carefully. You are not doing *karma yoga* properly. I should be getting letters about the wonders of *karma yoga*.

Jake: Thank you so much again for being there for me to help me put all this stuff to rest. May *Isvara* bless you.

James: I'm not sure that you have put your stuff to rest, Jake. Maybe I'm misreading this email. In any case, you are right that it needs to be put to rest. I'm supplying the only rational conclusion that seems to be missing: picking though the dung hill of the past is useless. Bring your mind to the present, do right action in the right spirit, collect your money and come to Trout Lake in August so you can hear the teachings from the horse's mouth. In any case, appreciation is always appreciated. But if you want to make me happy, think about my statements in this letter and (hopefully) take them to heart. Or to put it in a little more direct way, shit or get off the pot.

~ Much love, James

Jake: I did not ask for any feedback, because you are busy teaching in India, but I appreciate this one very much. This is much more than I could expect. I will meditate on everything you wrote. And I will definitely bring my ass to Trout Lake this summer.