

Sin Intelligently

Ram (James Swartz)

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Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/748>

Josh: Hey, James, how are you? I hope the side effects from your medication haven't been giving you too much trouble.

James: I think I finally have the medication thing sorted. I'm feeling a lot better.

Josh: I've been thinking about you a lot and have been meaning to write. Correspondence has never been a strength of mine. I more than anything just wanted to say thank you for introducing me to Vedanta and for being the great teacher you are. I have been watching the videos and reading several *satsangs* a day. The knowledge just keeps coming, slowly and (almost) effortlessly integrating itself into my life. I have complete faith in this teaching and in you as my teacher. The confidence that this feeling of faith instills in me is both a comfort and a blessing. Once again, thank you, James, from the bottom of my heart.

~ Love, Josh

James: I am so happy that the knowledge is working, Josh. It is due to your diligence. Keep it up. You won't regret it.

Josh: PS: In the ongoing battle between my *vasanas* and me, the television has proven to be a most formidable opponent. I have seemingly beaten him several times but... he keeps coming back for more. Should I keep fighting him or just throw the damn thing away. I guess the real question is, can I burn a *vasana* by hiding from it?

James: The first thing to consider is the nature of the *vasana*. What is it about? Are you bored? Lonely? What kind of TV do you watch? Specific programs or just anything? What need is it fulfilling? Distractions like TV are always stand-ins, a deeper issue that should be addressed by self-inquiry. Seeking pleasure is usually connected to the love *vasana*.

Second, there is nothing wrong with it unless it is obsessive. If you could be doing something more uplifting and constructive you should probably should do so. Find something else that is more satisfying. There is no need, however, to go cold turkey unless you really are fed up with it. My *guru's* advice was to sin intelligently, meaning to neither indulge it like a pig or deny it completely. I watch a bit of *Netflix* just to get away from my Vedanta *vasana*, but not too much.

I hope this helps, Josh.

~ Much love, James