

# The Fun in Fear

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Mary:** Dear Ram, *namaste*. Thank you so much for sending me the *satsangs* over the past few months. I have found them very clear and insightful.

I have two questions. Firstly, I understand what you say intellectually and I have a great love of truth, but why is there still so much fear and resistance in me?

**Ram:** One way to dismiss one's fears is to investigate yourself and see if you are the fear and resistance. If your fears are in you as you say, they are not you. Discover who it is in whom the fears are occurring and you will see that you are always free of fear. The problem is that for some reason you identify with these fears. Why do you identify with them? Try to figure out the ego payoff for being fearful.

Another way to deal with them is to think them through. See if they are legitimate. You might ask if there is anything in your immediate environment that is a threat to your life. If there isn't, then what is the cause of these fears? See if there is a reasonable cause. If you think it is reasonable that you be fearful when there are no physical threats in your environment, then why not see that it is reasonable to be fearless? Why choose to think of yourself as a fearful person when you can just as well think of yourself as fearless? Scripture says you are non-dual awareness, free of fear. Your epiphanies also tell you this. So why are you choosing to see yourself in the opposite way?

Isn't it true that in reality nothing ever happens? You go on day after day, waking up, going to work, eating and sleeping. The mind keeps thinking, the emotions keep feeling, the body keeps acting day in and day out. You have been living like this for a long time, perhaps thirty years. You don't get beaten or raped or robbed every month or two, do you? Have you ever been without clothing, a roof over your head, food to eat? You've been to Asia, you have seen how most of the world lives. Why are you not overcome with gratitude for the life you have?

This fear is a habit of the mind and it is now an identity. What is causing it? Vedanta says that the cause of existential fear is the incorrect conclusion you have come to about who you are. Don't you intellectually believe that you are limited and inadequate and vulnerable (to fear), etc? The answer is probably yes. But are you? Ask yourself who you would be without this identity you have concocted.

If none of this works, if it is just too subtle and confusing, then there is another way you can deal with your fears. Accept them as a gift from God. Thank God for them. Know that in a non-dual reality everything here serves the self, see that you have been blessed with fears and that these fears are just exactly what you need to realize who you really are. Welcome them, embrace them, honor them to the fullest. Find the fun in fear and enjoy it completely.

**Mary:** How to deal with this? I have heard conflicting ideas that "the mind enjoys its own cremation" and "the mind will never be ready to give up itself to freedom." If so, where does the desire for freedom come from? The self?

**Ram:** There is only the self. Freedom is the nature of the self. When you experience anything other than freedom it feels unnatural. This is why you want to be free of your fears. But you cannot be free of your fears. Why? Because you are already free of them. You must look to see if this is true.

The mind is not something that is going to enjoy anything. It is just a bunch of feelings, emotions and ideas. It is already dead. I say leave the mind out of it. Take responsibility yourself. You choose to think of yourself as incomplete, inadequate and separate, and then you are not happy with the dualistic emotions that this choice produces. I'm sure this whole fearful self idea is carefully supported with all sorts of reasons from the past. Analyze each of these reasons and find out why they are not a good basis for your view of yourself.

If you are not going to attack fear head-on and refuse to let your mind go into this state, nothing is going to change. There is no clever spiritual or psychological practice that is going to get rid of the fears.

If you want to get rid of them you have to change the way you see yourself. When you find your mind going into this negative way of thinking correct it. Put it to work thinking the right thoughts. It is not easy. It will take a lot of work. But it is worth it. Ask the self to help you monitor your mind and correct it. Keep at it day in and day out. Slowly you will notice a change. But be prepared to work long and hard.

**Mary:** Also, there is much talk about bliss in spiritual circles – bliss is your nature, the bliss of freedom. If bliss is an experience, then doesn't it come from the mind too? I am a little confused.

**Ram:** The self is bliss. Bliss means "whole and complete, limitless and full." When the mind is still, the fullness of the self, the light that it is, pours into the mind and floods it with good feelings. This is the experiential side of bliss. If you want to experience a lot of bliss you need to get your mind very *sattvic*. If you have a lot of *rajas* and *tamas*, desire and fear, you will not experience much bliss. The bliss gets deflected by the *rajasic* waves or absorbed by the *tamasic* clouds, and you feel either frustrated or depressed. So the whole secret to bliss is in how you live.