

The Value of a Pure Mind

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2004-01-30

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1601>

Carl: Dear Ram, I want to thank you for your support, understanding and care. It is very helpful to know that you exist and that I can contact you. Today after our talk I am quite okay. It was a good day. I jogged, did exercises and worked in my friend's company. And no smoking today! Do you know anybody who knows "a great deal" about depression and who could be helpful? I wonder if I could get help with "my case" with nutrition or any other way (in addition to medication). Perhaps a radical change of food will do the trick. I would be willing to try anything to heal the body-mind. Please let me know if you can say something in regard to depression from the point of view of Vedanta in general and something that could be helpful to this body-mind on bases of daily life and living. Dear Ram, I am looking forward to hearing from you in the near future.

~ With a thankful hug, Carl

Ram: Dear Carl, this is a good attitude and because of it I will try to explain what needs to be done to get your mind clear. The first thing you need to look at is why you smoke marijuana or take any other mind-altering substances. The obvious answer is that these things change your state of mind and make you feel good. Vedanta would not argue with this fact except to say that the pleasure is temporary and that it has its price – you come down, not just back to baseline, but you actually dip into the negative side for a period until the chemical *karma* has been purified by your system. And then you bounce back to neutral until the dissatisfaction (*rajas*) comes up and starts the whole cycle again.

The real issue from the Vedantic perspective is: What leads you to take the drug in the first place? What is it about the world or yourself that is unsatisfactory? God made us without a joint sticking out of our mouths and a beer in our hands, and gave us a functioning body/mind/intellect, one capable of dealing with life. We experienced the world and ourselves to be quite fine when we were young and we did not have a lot of self-doubts. But at some point we began to feel uncomfortable. These negative feelings cry for attention and someone comes along and offers us a beer or a joint, and presto! they go away. I will assume that you agree that the problem lies in oneself, not in changing the world, because the world is nothing more than what is in our own minds. So the question is: "Why do I not feel okay as I am? Why do I experience negative feelings about myself?" And the answer is: "Because I do not know that I am whole and complete, that I am fine as I am." So before you take up any *sadhana* to purify yourself you have to have the *sadhana* of self-inquiry going on. And self-inquiry in your case would entail figuring out what self-views you have that are not in harmony with who you really are and what misunderstandings you have about the way the world works that makes you interpret what happens in a negative way.

In terms of Vedanta, mania is a state of uncontrollable *rajas* (which I witnessed when you were here) and depression is a state of complete *tamas*. When *rajas* collapses it turns to *tamas*. *Rajas* is the state of mind in which you are trying to get something from the world. I think in your case you are trying to make a success, to do something that will give you a sense of accomplishment and financial security. There is nothing wrong with wanting things from the world. The problem, however, is that what you get from the world has nothing whatsoever to do with the wanting.

What comes depends on appropriate and timely action in a certain field and then on all the factors in the field, which, if you are spiritually inclined you could say was the grace of God or up to the Universe. So when you do something – like try to promote this book – it is not appropriate to have your mind riding on the outcome. If caring about it helped, fine, worry and fuss day and night, but it doesn't, it just takes the joy out of life. In this case the prospective publisher just happened to marry a woman, she read something that upset her and there goes the contract. Now, the fact that he married her and that she had this particular conditioning has nothing to do with you at all. So is it appropriate to feel let down? *Tamas* is the state of disappointment at not having attained what one wanted or having attained something one didn't want. One feels bad. One thinks one is responsible in some way for things not going one's way. One blames oneself – "If I had only done things differently," etc. – and the mind loses its *shakti*.

The way to correct this situation is to practice *karma yoga*. *Karma yoga* is an understanding that you keep in your mind when you are doing what you do. It means you have realized that the results are not up to you and it means that when the results come you take them as *prasad*. If you take them as *prasad* it is not possible to get either elated when things go your way nor is it possible to get depressed when you don't get what you want. You take them as *prasad* because they are *prasad*, an offering from the Lord in the form of the results of your actions.

What you have not been going for in your spiritual life is a pure mind. You have been looking for other results. Nearly everyone makes this mistake. They make it because spiritual life is not about attaining anything that you don't already have. It is about understanding and appreciating what we do have. A pure mind is possible because the mind is just the three energies that make it up and these energies can be purified and transformed by intelligent living. We can do something about this part of the self. We have free will.

But if you are going to be happy, the only way you will actually achieve happiness is through a pure mind. After you get the pure mind you can then think about enlightenment if you wish. A pure mind is gained by *sadhana*. And *sadhana* is defined as the removal of the relative proportions of *rajas* and *tamas* and the subsequent increase of *sattva* in the mind. Ramana had a pure mind. He did years of intense *sadhana*. None of your *gurus* did *sadhana* as I have defined it above. We know Rajneesh didn't. His mind went to pieces and he died a broken man in a completely *tamasic* state. We know Papaji did what he thought was *sadhana*, but in fact he was greedy, vain, cynical, manipulative and hypocritical, so what *sadhana* did he do? He had *shakti* because he was a self-confident, vigorous, energetic, shrewd man who figured out how to make his way in life, but he didn't have a pure mind. These fellows knew that you do not get disciples by telling people that they need to change the way they think about action and the results of action. You do not teach them the downside of desire; they will all go away. So you convince them that some kind of desire-prompted action will liberate you even if it's some kind of clever Vedantic non-action: stop the mind, call off the search, be a non-doer, etc. This kind of teaching only gives you another desire, which in turn sets you up for more disappointment. If you hold the *karma yoga* notion in your mind all the time it is not possible to get depressed and you will not need to get high to get rid of a bad feeling.

So that's the subtle side of *sadhana*. The other side is very practical. If you want the movie playing on the screen of consciousness that is your life to be a happy one, you need to change the film and polish the lens. Changing the film and polishing the lens means taking up different habits. It is quite simple. The habits you've developed over the years are *tamasic* and *rajasic*, so they will just reinforce the feelings of passion and depression that you experience. You must

change your diet. Eat *sattvic*. Change your sleeping habits. Get to bed by 10:30 pm to get in harmony with the cosmic cycles of day and night. Give up alcohol and drugs. Exercise reasonably. And only associate with *sattvic* people.

Here is a practical thing you can do when you find yourself depressed. Instead of focusing on the depression you can look for the self. The self is right there in the very middle of every emotional state, is in fact the essence of every emotional/mental state. And when you find it, the depression or the passion dissolves. This is what is actually meant by *tantra*: looking for the self in every situation. Or you can become one with the depression. What makes it unbearable is the fact that you don't want it to be there. This is *rajas*. You are dissatisfied with it. So you can just ease into it until – presto! you discover you are not in it at all – it is in you.

The fear of financial insecurity comes because you do not feel secure in yourself. Will enough money make you secure if you are not already secure? This is something to think about, There must be many people where you are that are into radical cleanses. I would imagine that your body is quite toxic. It is possible in a few months to clean out ninety-five percent of the toxins. Look into it. Spend the money you spend on dope on *sattvic* food and herbal cleanses. It is possible that your colon is coated with many layers of post-putrafactive mucoid. Read Robert Gray's *Colon Health Handbook* and see if maybe it applies to you.

As I suggested on the phone I think you should look for simple work where you can see concrete results every day. When I was doing *sadhana* I refinished furniture. It was very rewarding to take an old, broken-down item and transform it into something beautiful in a few days. This will build up your self-confidence. When you are self-confident you know you can overcome negative emotions and you don't fall into them – or if you do you quickly work your way out of them. I'd say give up the grand plans of making it big, taking care of financial security in your old age. It creates much anxiety and one never feels satisfied, because one never knows what the future will bring and how much will be enough.

There are many practical things you can do and they will just come to you in the course of your *sadhana*, but the most important thing is to understand the value of a pure mind. The mind is the instrument of experience and when it is pure life is intensely vibrant and beautiful. When you understand this the next thing to do is to vow to achieve it. But don't rush into it in a *rajasic* way – hasten slowly. Go about it patiently and consistently, make a little progress every day. These negative states, *rajas* and *tamas*, are not going to go away overnight. You've cultivated them unconsciously for your whole life – so it is going to be a battle. But it is a good fight. And I have the sense that you are ready, that you have hit bottom and do not want to stay there. This time you are not going back.

Okay, that's enough for now. I hope this helps. I've copied in some *satsangs* on the subject of a pure mind and *rajas* and *tamas* that may help you.

~ Much love, Ram