

Three *Prakriyas* a Day Keeps *Samsara* at Bay

Ram (James Swartz)

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Tom: Jiminy Cricket, it's your old pal from Tiruvannamalai just writing to say "what's up?" I know you're a busy guy, so if I don't hear back from you consider it no drama, Obama...

I'm working at a meditation centre in southwest France, folding tea towels and listening to Little Ramji babble Vedanta all the livelong day, plus some Rupert Spira. These are the only two flowers with which this little bee is "pressing out pure honey," to quote the *Middle-Length Discourses* of the Buddha.

Was living in London for the last year, banging my head against the Great Wall of Samsara. Just finished a year of training as a Gestalt therapist. Wasn't really planning on soldiering on with it but all it took was one choice line from a Montana redneck to put the final nail in the coffin of that modality and its concomitant exorbitant costs:

"Spirituality is intended for healthy, integrated minds that consciously relate their suffering to a lack of understanding about the nature of reality, not to ego problems picked up in childhood and compounded by various missteps along the way." ~ J. Swartz

...and the coloured girls go "doo, doo, doo, doo, doo..."

Was also doing my fair share of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll therapy, which you'll be astonished to hear doesn't work either! I'll tell you one thing though, mate, doing loads of cocaine really helps one to assimilate the "*rajas* and *tamas* are incestuous bedfellows" *prakriya*!

I was sorry to hear that you were having some health issues lately. I hope you are taking good care of yourself and that perhaps things have improved.

I trust you are enjoying life as a married man. I see at your website that you will be down in Spain in the autumn. I finish here at the beginning of October and was planning to visit friends in Valencia. Don't know what your schedule is like but if you are in the neighbourhood, it would be cool to meet up.

Actually, man, I would really like to thank you for helping me out. Perhaps you recall that the last time we met at that Starbucks in suburban Portland. I was in pretty rough shape. Tried to sort myself out with sex, drugs and rock 'n roll therapy coupled with a middling desire for liberation but as I'm sure you can imagine it wasn't exactly doing the trick.

Long story short: I got turned back onto Vedanta thanks to this website of one your students, Annette Nibley (who I knew from my days with the Navnath Sampradaya crew and to whom I'm CCing this email to cuz I'm guessing it'll put a smile on her face), and since then it has been full steam ahead, spiritually speaking. As Mother always said, "Three *prakriyas* a day keeps the *samsara* at bay." Seriously though, dude, this Vedanta has saved my bacon yet again. So maximum respect and gratitude to Sri Sri Jim Swartz of Butte, Montana.

Well, no email to Ramji is truly complete without a burning spiritual question and, wouldn't you

know, I've got one.

Y'all ready for this?

If the "v" in Sanskrit is pronounced as a "w," how come it's not pronounced "Adwaita Wedanta"?

Betcha never got that one before!

~ Big, big love, Tom

Ram: Hi, Tom. Lovely to hear from you! Appreciation is always appreciated. I got a heads-up from Annette that you were back in the Vedanta ballpark a few days ago. Nothing like failure at one's favorite therapy – sex, drugs and rock and roll – to enhance one's appreciation of the value of a valid means of knowledge. I figured you had a bit of growing up to do when we parted company in that Starbucks a couple of years back. *Ishvara* is such a pervert: gives us pesky *vasanas* AND desire for freedom. It ain't right. Now that you are about to enter the sacred portals of middle age it seems sensible to turn your back on that lifestyle. There are not enough exciting experiences out there in the big *samsara* to fill the void. *Sattva* is always available even for slow learners. Tea towels and the great Ramji sounds about right.

As for me, I am just fine. They put a stent in and I am good to go. I can probably eke another ten or fifteen years from this body, Lord willing. Yes, I am enjoying married life. My wife and I are very much in love with *Bhagavan* and each other. It is excellent. After the mid-October retreat I am basically taking it easy until mid-January. If you are in our neck of the woods, stop by for a chat. Much love, Tom.

~ Ram