

# Life Is Great, but It Isn't

Ram (James Swartz)

2010-06-10

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1588>

**Cathy:** Dear Ram, it has been ages and ages since I last wrote to you. John said things went very well in India and that you are now in England for a while. Also, he said that your book is doing really well. I'm very pleased. John also said that you had the intention of printing the autobiography yourself. I strongly agree, as it is not only entertaining but also a great introduction to Vedanta.

As far as I am concerned, there are two things happening at the same time, quite contrary to each other. The first one is that on the everyday level, "life" is good. John and I are getting on extremely well with our new arrangement. Good friends have come into my life (by the way, that needy girl that I told you about overdosed. I did give her your *Introduction to Vedanta* CD but it did not seem to help her). Anyway, work is good, I have lots of work, good clients, and am getting on really well with my son. I'm off my medication altogether and feeling a lot better. My moods are stable and my anger levels have decreased dramatically. In fact, John just said that "my quality of sweetness is becoming more evident," so all in all, "life is great."

But it is not, not really. And this is the contradiction I want to talk to you about. Even though on one level everything is "great," I can't help but notice that I seem to be anxious (inside) all the time. It is quite a contradiction. The only times that I feel peace inside is during my sittings in the mornings, and that is only sometimes, not always. Maybe I have always been anxious but now I am becoming aware of this fact, I don't know. But it does puzzle me. Yesterday after *yoga* two girls and I went for a bite to eat, and I felt really shaken up afterwards, like stirred up. I don't get it really. On Friday night we went to our first Vedanta class of the year and I did not feel anxious there or afterwards, for that matter.

**Ram:** Hi, Cathy. Very nice to hear from you. Let me cut to the chase on this problem that is troubling you. You are doing everything right. This is why the outer thing cleared up and is "great." You didn't really notice the inner dis-ease last year, because you were too distracted by the *karma* that you had created. Now that there is nothing negative to distract you, you are becoming aware of the inner world, the source of your suffering. This is good. Now you can figure out what ideas are underlying this agitation. As you say, "maybe I have always been anxious." That's right. Now you have to see if the "I" is actually you. Or if the "I" is anxious. This is where self-inquiry begins.

**Cathy:** Another thing too that worries me is that I seem to be so busy all the time. Work is putting me through "Certificate III in Home Care" even though the requirements are that one should be with them for 12 months (I have only been with them eight). Besides that, I have my choir once a week. I dropped to one class a week of *yoga*. Friday night Vedanta and from next week also Sunday afternoons (*Upanishads*). Besides that work and spending time in the weekend with John, and as you can see, my weeks are full. But I have an inkling that being busy has nothing to do with being peaceful and this is where I need your guidance, as I do not feel peaceful inside, on the contrary.

**Ram:** You hit the nail on the head, Cathy. This is the *rajas*. It is causing all the doing. Behind it is an insecure person, someone who thinks that the results of her actions will somehow remove the feeling of insecurity. The question is: Who is this person? Is that you? Try to give up some doings just to see how this person reacts. It is best to give up the idea that you are this person, but first try to see if she can survive without all the doings. Let me know how it goes.

~ Love, Ram

**Cathy:** Hello, Ram. Thank you for your quick reply. I have been sitting on your email for a few days pondering your words and enquiring into my anxiousness. The ideas underlying this agitation are mainly to do with worries and self-reproach (surprise, surprise!!). All I have to do is sit quietly and they are all there in all their glory! But when I enquire into “who is anxious” my attention goes to the “self,” and the anxious person (and the anxiousness) disappears. Needless to say, it comes back, which is great really because it reminds me to (when I am aware of it) ask again “who is anxious” or “who is sitting,” etc.

**Ram:** Good. Keep at it. Keep your life as simple as possible so you can monitor your mind.

**Cathy:** As to the *rajas*, yes, I seem to keep myself quite busy all the time, even in my “spare” time I find something to do. I see this constant wish in me to sit down and “be” (I do in the mornings). During the day sometimes closing my eyes for a couple of seconds is a blessing, one which I see I run away from constantly. Of course the “I” that sees is not the same “I” that runs away, and this is where the great confusion arises, thinking it is all one “I” and this is where self-enquiry is so helpful because it is helping me to see this difference. Thank you for reminding me, Ram, it is so easy to forget and to get caught up in the game of life.

**Ram:** You are welcome.

**Cathy:** To be quite honest with you, it is one thing to read about being an “insecure” person, but I see I take great offence when you direct this fact to “me” (of course I am referring to the ego here, just in case you did not know!! Ha, ha, ha). Yes, scratch the surface and there it is!

**Ram:** One can’t get anywhere spiritually unless one is brutally honest. Denial doesn’t further. Sorry to be the one to bring the “bad” news, which is actually the “good” news because now the cat is out of the bag. It’s good to have a name for it. Now you can figure out why the ego is insecure. It shouldn’t be too unsettling, however, because all egos are insecure.

**Cathy:** I asked the teacher tonight if “*moksa*” meant freedom from the ego, and what he said was very interesting. He said that not only that, but also to understand one’s real nature; very good answer, I thought.

**Ram:** That's right. One is the negative way of defining it, the other the positive way. You need both.

**Cathy:** I get so caught up in my little likes and dislikes, they mean so much to me at the time, they seem to be so serious and important. And then I go to class and it becomes evident how pathetic, petty and useless my little likes and dislikes are. It makes me want to go away and hide in shame, and before a know it there I am again!! It's like a dance, forever going round and round and sometimes miraculously I get a rest before I get caught up in it again.

**Ram:** The good thing is that you are aware of what is happening. It means you are the self, the one who sees the silly dance of *maya*.