

Only One Man and Only One Woman

Ram (James Swartz)

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Sam: James, I wanted to get back to you on this. It didn't blow me away. I told my wife you called me a big baby and she agreed - but she's been telling me that for years but has never had a qualified backup.

James: Great. Now it's two against one. This makes my job easier.

Sam: The earlier email was funny, but it was also speaking from a place of "personal" truth. The strength of it seems to have abated for now. I just did (a few minutes ago) a little thing from your book where I asked myself who is depressed (in my case, feels bad because no Sandy) and who wants depression (bad feeling) to go. Then with the help of knowledge, I watched the separation and felt a little release - so that was good.

James: That's good. There is no magic experiential bullet that will solve this problem all at once. It took years to develop this kind of thinking and it is going to take time to undo it, although you can break the tendency to think this way rather quickly if you are dedicated and vigilant.

Sam: I have taken your suggestion and have been pretending that my wife is Sandy, and that has been helpful. My wife likes it, even though she doesn't know I am doing it. She senses something is different. It helps me see where it doesn't really matter, just one woman standing in for another. (And then the voice comes in: "But still... it should have been different..." Oh, well.)

James: There really is only one woman (and one man), Sam. There are small superficial differences in the way the eternal man/woman behaves, but it all boils down to the same thing in the end. The grass is not always greener...

Sam: I think I probably am attached to my misery. I've managed to be miserable everywhere I've lived and in every life experience I've been in so far.

James: Yes, it becomes an identity because it solved some sort of problem when it began, probably in infancy. There is a perceived payoff, but as time passes it becomes an albatross.

Sam: I was reminded that when I was doing a little stock trading I read in a book that the market didn't know I existed and didn't care about me - that I did not "mean" anything to it. In the moment I read that, I felt a little deflation and realized that I had been projecting an egoic self onto the stock market rising and falling. I see that I have been doing the same thing with life and apparent experience. If you're

saying there is no purpose and no one who cares (aka a God who gives a shit), then I agree with that – this is all just happening and the mind comes in and tries to make “meaning” out of it. Actually, I believe it is true for everyone else but me.

James: It is interesting that human beings are the only conscious beings who project and who need to feel unique. If there is a “God” who “cares,” He/She/It cares about the total, not the individual units. Insofar as the total is healthy the units thrive. If not, not. So if everybody makes a contribution for the sake of the whole, life is good, both individually and collectively.

Sam: I am reading the book slowly and hating that it will end – too soon, I fear.

James: In our tradition when you get to the last sentence you go back and read the first sentence before you close the book. This means that the study never ends. Each time you go through it, something new comes to your attention and you keep growing.

Sam: There are openings along the way.

I’m not sure what the five sheaths (pages 236, 237) are:

(1) gross body, (2) feelings/emotions, (3) “I am the doer/enjoyer” or “I am the knower,” (4) blissful self, (5) “I am the source of bliss.” Is that correct? But I got the point and an opening occurred.

James: Close. (1) gross body, (2) vital airs: hunger, thirst, etc., (3) feelings and emotions, (4) the intellect: ideas and beliefs, (5) experiential bliss: the happiness that comes when you get what you want. The “source of bliss” is not a sheath. It is the self. It is the knowledge “I am whole and complete, ever-free (of the sheaths), non-dual, ordinary, actionless awareness.”

The “sheaths” are just erroneous notions that apparently conceal the self, like a sheath conceals a sword. In your case the big one is the *manomayakosa*, the emotional sheath, identification of the “I” with a feeling of loneliness or emotional lack. There is a problem at the level of the intellect too that boils down to the belief that some object – the love of the woman you desire – can solve the problem.

Sam: I finally understood the “snake and rope” analogy or metaphor or whatever it is. I understood it before, but not the application to me and the self. The conditional and unconditional superimposition was great.

James: It is a beautiful teaching. When you don’t see yourself as whole and complete (the rope), you identify with the feelings and thoughts that ignorance produces (the snake) and you suffer.

Sam: The “substrate” teaching was great.

James: You are the substrate. Without you there is nothing to project your ignorance on.

Sam: I know that I am meeting “myself” in the form of “clients” in a different way – so that is good.

Thanks and see you.

~ Love, Sam