

The Lament of the Householder

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

2014-12-10

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1921>

Hello, Sundari,

I look forward to hearing about the birth of your grandbaby. I am sure it is an incredible experience for you. I am hoping you can provide me with some inspiring words of wisdom from the self as I lie in the swirling waters of the bathtub drain.

Of course, my experiential enlightenment has fallen away as the leaves disembarked on their journey back to the earth. I am exhausted and overrun by *karma*. My doer is on overdrive, and although I appreciate her futility and the necessity, my *vasana* for knowledge is so strong I want to throw in the towel and head for the hills. My kids are now age six and ten. However, of late my son who suffers with a leaky gut (another story and the reason for my passion for health and nutrition) has taken to behaving so that I may take notice in a negative way. I feel as though I have lost his respect and therefore I have been inclined to make the boundaries a little clearer with a little more force. This has introduced *tamas* into my realm which has been incredibly challenging to see through. I am so grateful for Vedanta because I know I would have "lost" it by now. I have been muscling through this parenting thing alone and it is taking its toll.

I am seeing the busy-ness, mostly in preparing food and being preoccupied with wellness, as I see most of the behavioral difficulties the result of poor digestion. However, I am caught between the pressure of needing to provide more structure for the kids or letting it all fall around me in chaos. My Type A personality is wearing down and perhaps this is *Isvara's* intent. *Maya* is playing some incredible tricks on me. This is now the fourth time I have set out to look for an item in my home and could not find it, only to discover that the item was there all along exactly where I thought it was supposed to be and in PLAIN sight!! Wow! What is going on?...

Help me see the forest through the trees, Sundari. You are a mom and know of the madness. Is my knowledge *vasana* too strong at this stage? A huge hug and a smile to a beautiful woman.

Thank you for you!

~ xo, Larissa

PS: I do appreciate your time and energy, Sundari... this is really just an oddity I thought was fitting to the "snake and rope" story.

Hello, dear Larissa,

No, your knowledge *vasana* is not too strong, in fact it is your salvation. You are just suffering from doer angst as an overworked mother!

I feel for you, the role of the householder is such a tough one! It is so easy to get lost in the dreariness and endless activity of life in *samsara* as a parent. It puts so much pressure on the mind to achieve results because we want to do our best for these beings in our care. I can well understand your desperation and the feeling of exhausted self-doubt. This is why so many Vedantins eschew the householder path,

and particularly the parenting path. It certainly means you have less time for your *sadhana* - unless you make responding to your *karma* as a parent in a *dharmic* way your *sadhana*. This is hard when all you want is peace and quiet and some time to yourself. It sounds like part of the problem is that you are shouldering the burden and responsibility of parenthood on your own, which is enough to wear anyone down, especially with health problems involved as well.

Never fear, even though the leaves must fall, as you say, and the whole magical experiential *kundalini* show inevitably comes to an end as it clearly has for you, the knowledge will pull you through because your commitment to it is so great. There is no escape from following *dharma*, and all we can do when faced with doer exhaustion is to just keep watching the mind. The nature of a mind like yours - predominantly *sattvic/rajasic*, intelligent, competent, capable and efficient - makes it that much harder to get a handle on *rajas* when faced with challenging conditions. This kind of mind does not enjoy *tamas*, although developing it is an advantage. It sees *tamas* as giving up, lowering its standards and its guard. James hates *rajas* and declared war on it in his youth, and he has a saying I love: "OBEY YOUR TAMAS!" 😊 He made it part of his *sadhana* to religiously and zealously monitor *rajas* and counter it whenever it appeared in the mind. It is such a destructive energy when out of balance, which it so easily can be. It is like working with highly dangerous explosives. It is easier said than done to get a handle on *rajas*, as this kind of mind can run with so many things, wearing itself out. When it does it gets confused and depressed, can't see the wood for the trees; *sattva* seems nowhere to be found.

Then we miss the most obvious things, make mistakes, lose things and feel generally incompetent, start second-guessing ourselves and our self-esteem plummets. Of course, *maya* plays tricks on the mind - that is what *mithya* is all about - a game, a *lila*. The only answer is always to keep practicing the knowledge and applying it every step of the way, especially *karma yoga* and *triguna yoga* - surrendering each thought, word and deed (especially our self-negating ones) to *Isvara*, trying to catch *rajas* by the tail before it has us in a barrel chasing our own tails! It can be done with practice when you fully understand the nature of the mind, how *Isvara* has constructed it. It has its particular nature and will always be that way. We just have to tame it with knowledge. There is no other way or magic pill.

This is where the rubber meets the road, to use James' famous term. This is the work in the trenches and it can be done; don't lose heart. As I said in my last short note to you, as long as you are observing the doer exhaustion and madness, you know it cannot be you. You are so strong, that is part of the problem. I relate. We are copers and tend to take things and ourselves too seriously. We need to remember that none of this is real. Not "your" son with his digestion problems, not being a mother, not any of your many household and schooling duties. Your children will grow up with the advantage of your wisdom. They are the self. It will all pass and all children go through a stage of challenging their parents. That does not mean they have lost respect for you, just establishing their boundaries - and yours. By all means do whatever it takes on the *mithya* level to help the situation, like setting up a clearer structure if you do not have one. Home schooling makes this harder as children have to work everything out with you instead in a situation with their peers. Expect them to challenge you.

Hang in there and know you are the self, nothing touches you. Larissa will have her troubles and challenges but she is just fine the way she is. She is a great mother, a true *jignasu*, a great soul. She is fabulous, in fact!!

We both have great admiration for you and know that you shine far too brightly to be down for long.

Thank you for your kind words to me, I feel the same about you. 😊

~ With much love from both of us, Sundari