

Resistance to What Is

Ram (James Swartz)

2011-10-17

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/262>

James: Dear Sandra, I understand what you are going through. I can feel your suffering and I sympathize with you. I have been thinking a lot about it lately and this is what came to me. See if there is not truth in it. It may be the key to unlocking the *samskara* that is keeping Sandy from peace. Only you know if this feels right. It is not a judgment, but a suggestion only to aid your inquiry.

The most puzzling aspect of Sandy to me is the contrast between her brilliant spirituality and her resistance to life. I wonder if it is because you were robbed of a childhood owing to the fact that you had to look after your mother and your siblings. Did you develop a resistance to looking after other people, preferring instead to keep your own company and do only what suited you? I noticed when I stayed with you that you had a strong resistance to doing what was required by circumstances. I am thinking particularly of the incident where the dog chewed the security cable and it seemed there had been an attempted robbery and your husband was not there to sort it and you grumbled and complained about the inconvenience of it all. I wonder if this resistance, this resentment, did not begin a long time ago and become your ego's "natural" reaction to the demands of the world. One of the reasons I never tried to get you to talk about your issue was fear of alienating you because I sensed a strong resistance to unwanted intrusions to your inner world. I think your love of solitude bears that out; you keep your own counsel. I have another friend who is basically a misanthrope but who has wealth and can keep away from people and therefore has a quite enjoyable life – on her own terms. She too is a bookworm like you. I have a feeling that if it were financially possible you would hole up in a cozy, nice place and enjoy yourself reading till the cows come home. You like your own company and like the required company of others less. Unfortunately, life makes certain demands that have nothing to do with what we want.

There is actually no reason to dig into the past to look for reasons, but it does help to investigate the causes of suffering. One of the things that most appeals to me about Vedanta is the fact that it does not dig into the past to explain psychological issues. Instead it analyzes them in terms of the *gunas* – which are always present – and which can be corrected, again in the present, by *yoga*. Your resistance to my marriage is a good example. No need to psychoanalyze it. It was a fact presented to you by reality. It invoked a dislike, a *dvesha*, and the mind became disturbed. I remember one day we went out to a shop and you became irritated at the clerk and you made her feel bad because she was not helpful. Her behavior was not in harmony with what you expected in that situation. She did not intend to upset you. She behaved according to her nature – it could not have been otherwise – and it was just what God, reality, presented to you at the moment for the purification of your mind. But you resisted it. If you were a worldly person I would not have been surprised, but you have been on the spiritual path for a long time. I did not get married to upset the women who had feelings for me. God sent what I had wanted for a long time and I took it as *prasad*. I was innocent and trusting. It is never the object that is the problem. It is always resistance to the object, whatever it is.

So, what is the solution? It is so simple you will probably laugh – *karma yoga*. I do not think that you really worked out your self-realization in terms of your likes and

dislikes, which is the purpose of *karma yoga*. *Karma yoga* is the actualization of self-knowledge in one's life. In other words, when you realize you are the self, you have no choice but to take the *karma yoga* attitude – if self-knowledge has been properly assimilated. It is this knowledge operating in your attitude that removes the remaining likes and dislikes and destroys your resistance to what is. If the knowledge is not assimilated, your likes and dislikes continue to operate and unsettle the mind. We have our likes and dislikes, to be sure, and they can be very useful but they need to be managed by knowledge-based *karma yoga*. By “managed” I mean that they need to be seen in the light of who you actually are. If they are seen in this light they will not unsettle the mind. In this case they did unsettle your mind and you wrote me a very unkind email. The vulnerability you are now feeling is due to the unsettled nature of your mind. The condition of your body is another case in point. What you have suffered recently is certainly cause for alarm, but even then what can be done about it except find a state of mind that does not contribute to the suffering, that finds value in it? Everything here is a gift.

With this attitude, which is just the attitude the self would have if it was involved in life, which it apparently is, suffering is transformed into peace. If you find it difficult to assume it, it means that the logic behind it has not made a deep impression on your intellect. There is a good reason for it – because life itself is a great gift and the only reasonable response to it is gratitude. Everyone here wants to live and live a long time because life is beautiful with all its ups and downs. You want your suffering to end because you love life. You love life because it is lovable.

If you get self-knowledge before your likes and dislikes are neutralized, it will neutralize them, assuming it has been properly assimilated. I think you let your likes and dislikes interpret your self-knowledge rather than letting your self-knowledge interpret your likes and dislikes. Consequently life continues to be a problem because you resist what it is asking of you. So I ask you to think about why you prefer to have life dance to your tune rather than dancing to life's tune. One of the most important values touted by the *Bhagavad Gita* is accommodation. Accommodation means that it is more sensible to adjust your mind to the demands of reality than it is to expect reality to adjust to your demands. I found myself seated in a section of the plane with a bunch of unruly kids yesterday. It was a full flight and I had nowhere to go. My mind did not like it one bit. But within a few minutes I was able to find the upside – I just tuned in to the joy in the children and saw that it was my own joy – and my mind became peaceful in minutes.

So I urge you to think about this, Sandy, dear. Forget the past. Forget Vedanta. Forget your spiritual life. Forget everything and look around you now and see if life is not a beautiful, wonderful gift. And allow that feeling of gratitude that is in you to well up and wash away the bitterness, arrogance, the impatience, the resentments, the confusions and the disappointments. Forgive yourself for misunderstanding. It is up to you. I know you have it in you to be happy. It has nothing to do with your circumstances. They are just your *karma*. Even if your *karma* was to your liking it would not be worth a hill of beans without forgiveness. This giving is for you and you alone.

~ Much love, Ram