

Not Proud of Enlightenment

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Jeffrey: Ramji, I'm still struggling with the *vasanas*. Food, sex and recognition seem to be my addictions. It feels very reminiscent of the days when I stopped drinking and drugging: there were waves of self-pity and heightened emotion realizing how much I have let ego run my life, always wanting something, always up to something. I can hear him planning to be a great *mahatma* even during my meditations. It's fucking relentless. As I look at my life I feel more and more demoralized, as if none of it really means anything. Its all been one long pointless ego trip of desire and pleasure, seeking, half-ass identities stacked on top of self-induced denial while plotting to get my way. It's hard not to start feeling like a total piece of shit. Every time I fail to exercise self-control over my *vasanas* I feel weak and pathetic. You're right: enlightenment isn't something to be proud of. It's just the realization that I've been an ignorant jerk my whole life. I've had better days.

James: You will hate it when I say that we had a chuckle at your tale of hardship and woe. Look on the bright side, Jeffery. You are not your life. Right now it is just a bunch of negative ideas and once you have gained a bit of self-mastery, it will be a happier story, but it will still not be you. I went through this – I could have written the same words – when I was twenty-five. We all go through it sooner or later. The fancy words are “dark night of the soul.” Don't let it get you down. Stand up and fight, O Mighty Arjuna!!! It takes time to burn down the house that ego built.

Jeffery: Ha, ha, well, at least it was worth a laugh or two. And it does feel good to know you went through the same thing. It's like when you come home and the dog has shit all over the house and chewed everything up and you feel like an idiot for letting him have the run of the house for so long, if that makes any sense. Anyway, I'm soldiering on and hope you guys are enjoying yourselves wherever and whatever you're up to. Tell Sundari I said hi.

James: I love your honesty and the artistic way your mind works – the dog shit, etc. is a good metaphor. The thing is that you can't really justify the negative emotions, because you didn't set out to make a mess in the first place. The environment only shapes you when you are unable to discriminate. And of course *maya* makes everything interesting, novel and exciting and sees to it that your mind is properly deluded. You work your way out thought by thought, action by action. At some point the *tamas* starts to dissolve and you don't feel so heavy and hopeless. *Maya* is supposed to ruin your plans. There is only *Isvara's* plan, sad to say.

Jeffery: I'm glad it's ruining my (ego) plans. They sucked anyway. Ha, ha.