

# When to Work on Something and When to Leave It to the Lord?

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**Hugh:** A lot has been happening for *jiva* over the past few weeks. Things are so *rajasik* that it is comical.

I did get the job that I was talking about earlier. Well, *jiva* got it, not me. As awareness I have no job. I've been keeping *Panchadas* talks by James as my companion. The past few days I've been going back to the basics, with James' *Gita* talks. *I/jiva* has been of course associating with Arjuna.

*Jiva* had some thoughts today. Thank you if you can address them.

How does *jiva* know when to work on something and when to leave it to God?

**Shams:** Even before reading your explanation, I can tell that your question is based on a total confusion that has to be addressed. Why?

1. For the *jiva* it is impossible to escape from action. Even avoiding doing something is doing something. The *jiva* is never free of action. Therefore the person must always work on what he or she has to work on. In this sense, the *jiva* cannot "leave things to God." Otherwise, what do you think that should happen when you stop trying for something because it's time to leave that to the Lord? The skies won't open to let appear a big hand with the solution for the person. The *jiva* who chooses to avoid action because it's leaving it to God didn't understand at all what God and what the *jiva* are, nor their particular relationship and levels. Although it is not the real doer but just the result of a complex web of actions and its results, the *jiva* is always doing.

2. Which actions can we leave to God? Every action should be offered to *Isvara*. No, not the actions that you decided to stop doing, but every action. Above all, the mind has to understand that when the individual is "doing," actually the real doer is the complex web of actions and results, i.e. the Creator-Creation. This requires a macrocosmic perspective because only then the individual can realize that it is just an event caused by an inconceivable chain of events, and that nothing belongs to the person, nor even the authorship of your next movement or your next thought. All of it is not only given by the Lord, but is the Lord itself. The act of leaving things to God is just understanding and recognition. Because it is just the way things are! The actions and results won't change because you're offering them to God, they're actually God, they are full of God, God is the author and the receiver. God won't give you a prize for doing what is already done. The only reward is the knowledge due to the elimination of false ideas of authorship that cause stress and other inconveniences.

So - when to work on something and when to leave it to God? The answer is: work on everything you have to work on and leave everything to God. Leaving something to God doesn't mean that it excuses you from doing it by yourself. That is a confusion of levels, as it's explained here. On the level of the *jiva* you can't avoid action, even if you happen to be the most spiritual and enlightened person. This

world is action/experience and that won't change. However, the mind is able to understand the macrocosmic level, which is clearly the place where the individual and all its actions and motivations are caused. When the individual analyzes this and truly understands its (little) place in the map, peace comes instantly to the mind because it's obvious that nothing belongs to him or her. The person is being moved, like a puppet, blinded by the illusion of free will. That happy illusion won't disappear (and the *jiva* will still be apparently acting) but it will be used in the most intelligent and powerful way: as service to the whole, as offering to the Creation. There is a beautiful tale from Islamic tradition that suits well this idea. One day prophet Muhammed noticed a Bedouin leaving his camel without tying it, and he asked the Bedouin, "Why don't you tie down your camel?" The Bedouin answered, "I put my trust in Allah." The prophet then said, "Tie your camel first, then put your trust in Allah."

**Hugh:** For example, when I was first in touch with you, you were backing up my idea to look for a new job. How would *jiva* really know if it's better to go ahead and fight, like Arjuna going to battle, or when it's best to know that God has it all under control and just sort of trust God?

**Shams:** Actually, "to know that God has it all under control" or not shouldn't be an option. As it was explained, that is the background of every action you do or you avoid. A more accurate question should be: "How would *jiva* really know if it's better to go ahead (and fight, like Arjuna going to battle) or when it's better not to go?" One answer is: the *jiva* never really knows. Never. Every action is different because the context is always changing, and even when you have a controlled scenario and are very confident about the results, everything depends on the millions of interlaced factors that we call *Isvara*. So forget it. You will never have any control or any certainty about the results.

However - the other answer is related to the attitude of service or offering explained above. These road is very well established. It's *dharma*. When *dharma* is understood and followed, you will never be wrong, even when you're wrong. You can only follow *dharma* properly when you develop a pure mind because then the mind is peaceful and it's easier to not react automatically to *vasanas*, and to choose which option is better - for *dharma*. Which is the reward of *dharma*? Peace of mind, which means that it will be easier for the mind to manifest your light in the world.

**Hugh:** Ultimately it's all God anyway, but it does seem that sometimes it's best to apparently do things and sometimes not to.

**Shams:** Summarizing, you can never know if your concern is for results. But *dharma* is the best guide for action because it will always return peace of mind, even when the results are awful.

**Hugh:** There are often times in life when people just don't know what to do in a difficult situation.

**Shams:** Yes, that happens many times to every human being on Earth. Fortunately,

you are not a human being.

**Hugh:** I'm 44. When I was 30, I got married to my girlfriend. I was living in Japan at that time (as I am now). She was Korean-Japanese. I'm from Canada. Our first two years before being married went fairly well. Our first year of marriage was okay. After that things fell apart. In our last year, she basically hated me and eventually wanted to divorce. It was all very confusing to me. I didn't understand why our relationship was falling apart. (I still don't understand, but I don't think much of it now.) We eventually did get divorced, but it was not my choice. I was kind of like Arjuna, not knowing what to do or what not to do before the divorce. I was lucky in that I had a basic sense of discrimination, knowing that feelings and thoughts were just feelings and thoughts, not me, but Vedanta hadn't found me yet at that time. Anyway, this is just a big example of being in a situation where *jiva* didn't understand what was going on and did not know how to act or how not to act, but *jiva* wanted to do something. *Jiva* has always had a trust in "God," whether believed that way or not.

However, sometimes I'm wondering about this "smooth ride" that James sometimes talks about. Sometimes it seems like life is smooth, but often not. *Jiva* wants that smooth ride. *Jiva* wants to trust God more.

**Shams:** That is true. Sometimes the ride seems winding, due to lack of discrimination over what is real and what is not, as you suggested. The smooth ride is the result of correct knowledge, correct interpretation of reality. That includes the comprehension about who you really are and, as important as that, the right understanding (and therefore a change in attitude) of the place of the individual and the field of action, related to awareness.

**Hugh:** Speaking of rides, life is definitely a ride these days, as I mentioned, things are quite *rajasic*. I'm here and there, not knowing what's coming next, spending more money than I'm used to, spending more time with *rajasic* people, living in suburban Tokyo, working in Tokyo, and now I'm away in a different part of the country doing other work, soon to be back in the big city for a few days, then back out here where I am in a more countryside area.

**Shams:** Thank you for sharing your story. It gives me good information so I can make more accurate commentaries. By the way, I have to confess that the places and activities that you describe sound very cool and beautiful to me. But I also understand the feeling of trying to avoid *rajasic* environments. It's the story of almost every Vedantin in the West and, as I see now, in the East too.

I remember that the goals for these changes of activities were: (1) act according to the desire of your heart on what you love to do, i.e. your "calling" or your way of serving Life (*svadharma*) and (2) find an activity more conducive to a meditative state. The end of following *svadharma* for a seeker of knowledge is to discover, by living it, that even then you won't become adequate and total. The other goal is the peace that comes when the mind is happy with what it's doing. For now, you feel that you are not fulfilling any of this.

Clearly, I can only comment on your ideas in line with Vedanta. The first probable

conclusion could be that, if you are not achieving goals 1 and 2 yet, it would be reasonable to keep actively seeking, until you find the place and activity that you wanted. However, even now, when everything looks foggy, it could be a good idea to look inside – of course while you do what you have to do. Because it's clear that the problem is not only the *rajasic* people and situations (although they help to increase it, sure) but your ideas and feelings that happen to be *rajasic* and *tamasic*. That ideas and feelings are based on a whole interpretative structure of reality that, in my opinion, is described below by yourself.

**Hugh:** It's kind of fun seeing how God works. *Jiva* hopes God cuts down on the *rajas* and *tamas* and gets things basically *sattvic*.

**Shams:** God will do it, but first *jiva* has to tie the camel. Otherwise nothing will change. Note that I'm not encouraging you to do any specific activity but to first understand that the *jiva* can't escape action.

**Hugh:** Sometimes *jiva* feels like Arjuna in those regards though. Am I just being Arjuna, wanting to leave the fight and go be a monk or something?

**Shams:** Only you know the answer. However, regardless of that, you are very clear about your goal, so that is your bigger strength because every action you take will be another step towards that direction. It is immensely difficult to become an informed seeker (which you are now), someone who knows that his or her seeking is for knowledge, not experience. Now, to your soul, that is more valuable than gold. It's not totally clear what is this all about, but that obstacle is smaller while the goal is becoming clearer.

**Hugh:** Regarding *svadharma*, I often wonder what I'm doing with my life work-wise. I just have to assume that my main *svadharma* is to be going after *moksa*. That helps *jiva* relax a little regarding work and everything, to think that the main thing is *moksa*, not anything else like a career, although that's important too.

**Shams:** Exactly. If that is your main *svadharma*, then you can set these points:

1. You want *moksa*.
2. You know that *moksa* is knowledge.
3. You know that you need to apply a means of knowledge to your mind.
4. You know that the means of knowledge only works in a peaceful mind.

So:

5. You are preparing your mind, in order to let the means of knowledge work.

What to do in this case?

Well, Vedanta alone does not work for this. As in your case, inquiry doesn't make sense when the mind is not ready. We've been repeating basically the same

teaching over and over again, and the mind seems not being able to get it. So maybe you can't understand clearly the teachings now, but it would be a great advantage to recognize:

A. Well, that you are not getting the teachings because the same doubts are always returning.

B. That you first have to complete a step in order to build a pure and discriminating mind, able to apply the teachings.

C. To complete the step, some teachings and the *yogas* are very effective but, as the extroverted *vasanas* are still very powerful, they have to be exhausted by acting upon them. That includes working on emotions and the unconscious, as much as for mundane goals.

**Hugh:** Another thing on *jiva's* mind: as I noted, I have been living in Asia. I have lived here many years. In that time, my family never visited me. In fact ever since I moved out of home way back in about 1990, nobody came. This is an issue that *jiva* has been bothered by.

**Shams:** I think that you are coming to the point, maybe the most important point, because our talking about Vedanta was conducive to a dead end. As in fact I don't know anything about you (except for who you really are: the Light that illumines it all), it's much better like this. I will answer in an objective and impersonal way the questions.

**Hugh:** So does *jiva* just say, "That's just how it is"?

**Shams:** Yes, "That's just how it is," would be the idea appearing on a quiet mind. But, "That's just how it is. I'm thankful for that and I wouldn't change anything about it," would be the idea appearing on a *sattvic* mind.

**Hugh:** It seems difficult. I see my sister and how she is more well-off than I am financially, and yet in many years, no desire to visit? The same with my mother and father. Before that, they had less money, they still would've been able to afford a trip to see their son. *Jiva* has trouble with this issue, just accepting that family aren't interested enough to visit.

**Shams:** Well, Hugh, in my opinion, the job situation passes to the background. Maybe this is what the mind was partially trying to solve or compensate for.

Certainly, the nature of this communication is only related to the teachings of Vedanta. But even from here it's clear that it would be a good idea to carefully analyze those *vasanas* from an emotional perspective, maybe using some external tool. After all, the *vasanas* are preventing your mind and emotions from working in an actualized way on determined situations. I should add that the attitude towards father and mother is not only the root of the peace of mind and devotion, but the key to a happy life. Swami Dayananda explains that you could only say that your mind is *sattvic* when you can picture the image of your father and mother in your mind and

don't feel any complaint or anger, but just gratitude and love. I don't know about your parents, but that is not important. The only important thing is your attitude, the thoughts that you entertain. And in this case (and any case) the right and healing thought is: "I take everything that my parents (as they are my first contact with *Isvara*) gave me when they passed me this life, I thank them deeply for all and I give up on my demands."