

# I Am Not Unworthy

Ram (James Swartz)

2017-03-13

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3169>

**Student:** Greetings, James.

Applying the knowledge “I am awareness” to every situation has been most helpful and is working. It’s affirming to see the neutralizing effect this simple thought has on those states of mind I was referring to in my email below. Your response was very reassuring after being “lost” in confusion for some time. In retrospect I wrote that email at the beginning of what turned out to be quite a difficult period that lasted until recently. The clouds have since parted but as I read your email and as I look back over this time I’m left with a few questions.

Understanding and managing the *gunas* is a fascinating part of my practice. I know that low self-esteem is a strong *samskara* for me and is what was manifesting during this challenging time. The idea there’s something wrong is never far away and manifests whenever it can, at times sticking around for quite a while. Is this enduring pattern simply a longer “sine wave” of *tamasic* energy?

Seeing the rising and falling of the *gunas* during the course of one day has been freeing, and I’m wondering if this established *samskara*, which can seem so real, so close and personal, is just another manifestation of totally impersonal *tamasic* energy? Is it helpful to see it this way in light of understanding and managing the *gunas*? The reason I ask is because the idea that something is wrong with me has plagued my entire life and continues to “ride along” as I pursue my studies of Vedanta. I want to be free of it once and for all, and yet at the same time I already know I am...

Maybe I already know the answer, but asking the question seems to be part of the process of removing the ignorance; however, if you have a moment, I would love to hear what you think.

**James:** Yes, indeed, low self-esteem is just *tamas*. Perhaps the most important aspect of the *guna* teaching is depersonalization of suffering. “I am not worthy” is a *tamasic* thought, nothing more. You are not *tamasic*. You are the one who observes this thought. The way out is to ascribe the thought to *tamas*, not to the “I.” The “I” is always free of what it witnesses. When you feel the unworthiness thought, you should turn your attention to the teachings. Prayer, affirmation of your divinity, applying the opposite thought, which is *sattvic*, is recommended. Why should *tamas* be more “you” than *sattva*? There is no logic to it. Well, there is logic; your parents were probably critical, judgmental. Or you were somehow neglected, which is a prime example of *tamas*. Parents need not abuse you, they need only neglect you. It will cause you to infer unworthiness. In any case, it is good that you are fed up with it. It’s time to root it out and be done with it. It is not the truth.

~ Love, James