

# Integrity Is Not the *Jiva's* Thing

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Dick:** Dear James, thank you for this tremendous gift, and thank you, Sundari.

On reading, it was like “of course!” and then my mind went into a difficult process, like a ping-pong ball when it gets too close to the table, bouncing between table and bat. It’s okay though. As it was going on I knew it would pass like the ball eventually coming to a stop. The tricky part is that as soon as it does, the *jiva* tries yet again to claim even this relief for itself. This is truly as the scriptures say, “the subtlest of the subtlest.” I found myself in tears of irony – I have never cried before not knowing if I am happy or sad – but both at the same time.

Part of this is the liberating discovery that *jiva* has had its hands in everything, it seems, without exception: work, relationships, even things that were like “looking at the stars” or other special moments.

Yet the *jiva* is basically terrified most of its waking moments, as if in a war... yet there is no war... completely incapable, deluded that it can still control things. Worse, it is even scared that if it was, like a magician, maybe occasionally able to control life, that bad things might happen – and it would then be its fault! The poor *jiva*, really.

These demons still have the potential to scare but they also just dissolve like mist if I just focus quietly, face them. I have seen them enough to see what they are and this is now becoming a useful memory for when things are not clear. While they have terrified people, I am sure not just me, for millennia, it is the blessing of the teaching and teacher and ultimately the self which allows this to be observed for what it is. It is also clear that this knowledge cannot be forced onto another “person” if they are convinced they are the *jiva*.

It comes home to me now how important integrity is, as *dharma*. Regardless of how other *jivas* may be jumping around, I cannot solve others’ predicaments, even if what they do may appear to impact “me.” This is a clear alarm bell which I have been ignoring for too long; overstepping the mark from ego or fear to so-called “help” someone. *Jiva* is full of mixed motives, integrity is not really its thing, but it is required or the game will just continue and there will be no peace. This process will continue more, I am sure – it took two weeks just to be able to put pen to paper!

Thank you so much to both of you again.

**James:** Yes indeed, Dick, integrity is the essence of inquiry. It’s not the *jiva's* thing. I love your emails. You’re doing good work.

~ James