

Consuming Passion and Loss of Discrimination

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Miranda: Dear Sundari, warmest greetings and hugs to you and Ramji!

It's taken me a while to come back to you on the last email you sent, as it felt quite powerful and like something I needed to sit with for a while. Ever since I read it though, I feel immense gratitude to you and for you. How great to have ignorance pointed out and to have that communication from someone who has that vantage point to be able to do so!

Your words seem straight from the sword of Kali and have all the power of razor-sharp discrimination. Wow. And thank you so much for sending your work on relationships from the forthcoming *guna* book. I was very touched by this and by the extensiveness of your reply to me. You are so generous with your time and energies, I'm always amazed by how much you put into ShiningWorld. The Beauty is indeed you, Sundari. The more I know of you, the more I rejoice in the Lord's grace that brought you and Ramji together. I'm so glad he has you!

Sundari: Thank you, I am so glad I could be of help to you, Miranda. This incredible and infallible knowledge blesses me every minute of every day. There is nothing in *mithya* that it is not able to deconstruct and dissolve with the razor-sharp blade of truth. It is very powerful! And well done to you for your openness to hearing the teachings with such trust and humility.

Miranda: There are probably a couple of questions I'd like to ask about what you said - where perhaps I could learn more...

Firstly, from the brilliant quotation from Ramji's words to about Ted's relationship *vasana* - I was wondering how "discrimination born of inquiry" works in a falling-in-love situation. It seems to me that falling in love itself cannot be born of discrimination and inquiry, right?

Sundari: Yes, correct. As I wrote in my article on non-dual love, Ramji and I did not "fall in love," because anything you fall into you fall out of. We consciously and deliberately acquiesced to the love that we recognized in each other as the truth of our own self - which is why we called it "rising in love," a very different platform from which to begin a relationship. We were not looking for the "other" and did not need someone to complete us or make us happy. We came together to experience the love we are, not to "be more." You cannot be more than the self.

Miranda: You don't reason over who to fall in love with, just like you don't choose which thoughts and emotions pop up in the mind at which time.

Sundari: If you are identified with the body-mind and bound by your likes and dislikes, yes, indeed you do not choose who you "fall in love with." The *vasanas* do

the choosing. Your mind will be controlled by the *gunas* – and the predictable thoughts that accompany all three of them. You will have zero discrimination or dispassion and blindly enter (or catapult) into the irresistible “urge to merge,” as the saying goes. It feels so good when this passionate love attraction happens because the barrier that prevents us from experiencing the self is temporarily removed by these strong emotions, and the love of the self rushes in, seemingly filling a void. The mind feels blissful, totally satisfied – and projects the fullness and satisfaction onto the object of its desire instead of onto the self, whereas with self-knowledge there is no barrier to you experiencing the self, because you are the self and you know that you are always only experiencing the self, so you cannot be swept away like a leaf on a turbulent river by powerful emotions. You are in control of “your” emotions and the thoughts that generate them because you unfailingly manage the *gunas* according to your *svadharma*. Discrimination and dispassion, if it is solid, makes you immune to the seduction of the mind and its binding *vasanas*.

Miranda: But is it that the freedom lies in remaining in charge of your life even when those kind of strong emotions and desires surface? So that the “discrimination born of inquiry” guides you as to what to do – if anything – about the feelings you may have for someone, whether getting involved with that person would be judicious, if so how best to proceed, etc?

Sundari: Absolutely! Especially in those situations when strong emotions take over the mind as a result of binding *vasanas*. See above. What use is self-knowledge if it is powerless to protect you from poor life choices? If ignorance still conditions the mind with binding desires and emotions are controlling the intellect, you are in trouble. Your likes and dislikes are bound to get you into situations that will bring suffering, that is almost guaranteed. I was told from a young age that I should think less and feel more – I never managed it. Thank goodness!

When James and I met, we both carefully considered the *karma* involved in us being together. I have not always applied self-knowledge to my relationships in the distant past, which is why I suffered, like most people do in that arena of life. But luckily, by the time I met James years ago, sufficient self-knowledge and dispassion had obtained for me to act in accordance with my *svadharma*. Since then, *moksa* has made a non-dual relationship possible for us.

For James, he has been free much longer than I have. Since *moksa* obtained in his late twenties he has not had a bad relationship. None of them prior to me were non-dual, but he entered each one (not that he had many) after very careful consideration of the *karma* of the other person and how it would impact on his life. It sounds cold and calculating, but only because we have been indoctrinated by ignorance to fall for the “romance” BS. And it causes so much suffering!

Miranda: When I heard that Ted had “fallen madly in love” – I wondered how that could be anything other than a binding *vasana*, coming from someone who I believed to be a free person and therefore through with binding *vasanas*. If you don’t have any more binding *vasanas* left, I would imagine that emotions in general are gentler and less frenzied, including falling in love. But that even if *prarabdha* brings up strong stuff, you would be able to hold your own and respond appropriately?

Sundari: You bet. We had the same thought when we heard about the relationship, and given the way the way it progressed, we suspected that a deeply buried *samskara* would emerge, which it did.

Also, you must remember that very few people are completely 100% free of the *jiva*. The only one I know is Ramji. Perhaps you were under the illusion that just because someone claims to be free, they really are completely free. Well, they may be and they may not be. All is soon revealed though, *Isvara* makes sure of it, sooner or later, usually sooner. *Nididhysana* – which is transforming all binding emotional/mental *samskaras* and *pratibandikas* into devotion to the self, is ongoing even “after” *moksa*. But once self-knowledge is fully actualized, *nididhysana* is no longer a practice, it is just knowledge because there is no longer a *jiva* to negate.

Miranda: And the other thing I wanted to ask about was the very high *dharma* code that you referred to for lineage-holders/teachers. It’s a bizarre question, I feel, but why exactly is kissing, etc. with your lover during the breaks of your Vedanta seminar a violation of that code in a country and culture like the USA where that’s normal behaviour? I feel that Vedanta would never advocate mere blind adherence to social norms and that there must be more to it. But I’m not sure what it is. Is it to do with being in a *sattvic* frame of mind to do justice to the teachings and students, being totally available for your students, and also exemplifying freedom from thralldom to sense pleasures, etc? I feel like there’s something really obvious I’m missing here – but that’s ignorance for you. 😊

Sundari: It is obvious, Miranda. Teaching Vedanta is the highest *dharma* there is. The lineage is a sacred tradition, and everyone who claims to be part of it needs to be very clear that it is an institution that is independent of individuals and their “stuff.” Behaving like Ted did was disgraceful, not because there is anything inherently wrong with it from the *mithya* perspective, but it is not behaviour that is indicative of discrimination, dispassion and respect for the tradition. Do what you like in private, there is nothing wrong with sex and passion; it is beautiful if it is an expression of love. But if you are an emissary for the self and a teacher, your behaviour must be above reproach and the baser needs of the body-mind. And yes, of course, how can you be in the right frame of mind to teach if your thoughts are consumed with sexual desire?

Miranda: I’m so glad that the *sangha* is supporting you both through the smear campaign and I hope that progress is being made on holding the perpetrator to account so you both can be rid of this.

I also really wish that you both come back to India one day too. 😊

Sundari: Thanks, Miranda, it was not a pleasant experience, but it did not touch us as the self. It’s over now. We are updating everyone in the next newsletter to be released in the next few days. India is off the cards for the foreseeable future, but who knows?

Miranda: I’m planning to see you both in Germany, which I am so looking forward

to.

Thank you so much once again for everything.

Sundari: You are so welcome, Miranda, but sadly I will not see you in Germany, as I am in South Africa and will be joining James in Bend, Oregon, in May.

~ With great love and affection, Sundari