

A Successful Relationship Ban

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2018-04-18

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3541>

Sam: The relationship ban is going quite well. I'm noticing more energy for inquiry. The mind still wonders if there is something missing, but I know there is not, as I continue to reinstate my primary identity as awareness and watch that ingrained, needy, maternal *samskara* continually trying to suckle the senses with sweet lullabies of nights gone by. Needless to say, I will have to continue with the ban indefinitely, it's a powerful tool to firm up the knowledge.

Sundari: Well put, Sam! Not an easy one for a young man like yourself. In a way, I feel sorry for those who are ready for Vedanta so young. While it is great to live free for longer, it is also tricky to navigate through the normal stages of *jiva*-maturation without getting stuck there.

You could sin intelligently if you are certain it will not put the handcuffs of desire firmly back on – but it is risky unless those needy tendencies have been burned up by the knowledge. The point is, you have nothing to gain by being in a relationship; however, you could have a lot to lose, such as peace of mind and clarity with reference to your goal. At this stage, a relationship could seriously impact on self-inquiry. It is probably wise to keep the no-relationship ban going until the knowledge is firm and that *samskara* non-binding. And once it is, you may or you may no longer want a relationship. Either way is fine, as you will know perfect satisfaction as the Self. There is nothing wrong with having a relationship, as we discussed many times; it is those binding, needy *vasanas* that are the problem!

Here is a great *satsang* sent by one of our students:

“Two years ago, when Vedanta came to me. I listened to *satsangs*, from Ramji mostly, all the time. One day, he was talking about the *vasanas* and qualifications for Vedanta, and after checking myself I thought: ‘There is some little work to do, but all in all I have a light *vasana* package: I am financially independent, and my life is well-balanced, qualifications are there. I’m a lucky guy; after 15 years on the spiritual path I finally found this complete knowledge with this excellent teacher, so I’m good to go. They were some fine adjustments to do here and there (smiley).

“After some time listening to the *karma yoga* teaching, gratefulness for ‘my’ life appeared, especially for my family, but gratitude in general came with the understanding that every little thing in life is given to me. The relationship with my wife was highly passionate. We had a lot of issues, ups and downs, and she said that she didn’t feel connected and wanted more love/attention from me. So, since I was happy, I started to love her more and was happy, but evidently this ‘new’ attention/love wasn’t to her liking and she fell in love with another guy and into the same pattern with him: longing for love!

“My whole life was switched upside down. I felt very sad and lost. I had this soulmate idea, that she is the one and only perfect woman for me, that with nobody else could I have THIS intimacy; that we are just the perfect couple and the perfect family, and without her I could never be really happy.

"I recognized I still thought the joy is in the object, but I continued listening to the teachings. So there was this Ramji guy telling me that I'm okay, that I'm fine. He said the joy is (in) me, not in the object, and some part of me believed it. I felt so needy and dependent on the attention/love from this woman. This was a hard reality crash, and my love bubble collapsed.

"And I started to see me (*jivaji*) as I am: a needy, little, dependent person, useless without the love of a woman. And after almost one year, I got the proof that the scripture is right: without a woman - or anyone else - I'm really good, fine, okay.

"*Isvara* used some hard blows to shake off ignorance and organized my life around a different principle: freedom!

"This story proved that life is not at all about me and I accepted it. Without the relationship, I finally had space and time to sort out my stuff. I had to pay a high price, but it was absolutely worth it. Like James and Sundari say, what price freedom? To assimilate and contemplate the sweet truth (*atma-anatma-viveka*) we need a peaceful mind, a peaceful environment. *Isvara* took care of that.

"So even if I do not always understand immediately or like where God puts me down here, I have full confidence in his decisions and focus on the upside of every situation.

"*Pranams* to Ramji for being the candle in the dark for me.

"The light of knowledge is removing the darkness of ignorance: first covered, then flickering, then clear and luminous, I am. *Pranams* to *Isvara*, the great giver, to the scripture, the whole *sampradaya* back to Shankara and before. *Pranams* to ShiningWorld!"

Sam: *Mithya* often appears now as a flat screen, that is, from the point of view of awareness. I compare it to driving in the van looking out the windscreen except, with the *jiva*, the windscreen begins in the mind with each thought. Sometimes as an experiment in imagination, I take myself to be the mind and body once more, I see clearly how this gives dimension to *mithya*, then I turn around and try to touch this apparent windscreen of awareness, but of course there is none, only the light that makes it all possible.

Sundari: Beautifully put! And you are that light.

~ Much love, Sundari