

Inner Conflict Dissolved

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Seeker: Hi, James. Thanks so much for your email, I really didn't expect to hear from you so soon as I know you must have a stack of emails to get through every day.

I really appreciated your words, more than I can say. It's actually had quite a shift on things. Something just clicked into place. A certain tension I'd been carrying has dropped away and I've been back to feeling *sattvic* and peaceful, finding it much easier to focus on inquiry once again. I tend to be quite independent and don't like asking for help. I hadn't intended to email you that day but I just suddenly had a strong urge to do so and the words poured out. I think I really needed to hear what you said, which I already knew deep down; I was just doubting myself, as I often tend to.

In some ways it might be easier assimilating the teaching if I was in an *ashram* (although in other ways it might not – I believe *ashrams* can be full of *ashram* politics and any number of such things). But I am where I am, and I can see now it's perfect. It's where I need to be. In the past few months I have inadvertently "disqualified" myself a bit and I only recently realised it. After four years of being single I found myself in a kind of pseudo-relationship with someone who in truth I knew wasn't right for me. I thought I'd worked out all my relationship stuff but it brought back a lot of old crap, probably all hinging on not feeling complete in myself. After months of being treated badly and ending up feeling hurt again and again, I realised it was not conducive to my purpose here. I took a stand a few days ago and ended it. I guess that was following *dharma*, because again I felt an immense liberation. I didn't realise just how much it had been agitating my mind and that had affected my body too.

But now, since I did that and since got your email, there's a kind of inner conflict dissolved. By age 27 I was one heck of a world-weary guy... I was tired of it all and didn't particularly want to be in the world. Now the world weariness has shifted into a renewed sense of wonder and I can see beauty all around... I was even taking photos of sunlight on concrete yesterday and the patterns of grease on my dinner plate. I'm certain there will be plenty other things come along that will upset *jiva*-Tony, whether it's health or relationships or life situations (or simply distractions that pull his mind away from the self again) but I kind of can see through it a bit more; the thoughts and emotions can get stirred up but have greater transparency. All the suffering I'd experienced before wasn't in the world but was in me, caused by being bound to things and trapped in my own little mind-created "reality bubble." Now I enjoy trying to pop these bubbles as they form!

Which reminds me of something I wrote recently – in fact it kind of wrote itself when I was in a fairly still, creative state. It's something that helped me get things into perspective. I haven't shown it to anyone because virtually no one would get it; they'd probably think I was utterly mad. I wasn't sure whether to share it but I'd be interested to hear whether you think it stacks up with the teaching of Vedanta. It's a little quirky; I have a weird sense of humour:

"I need nothing. I am the substratum – that which is and always has been beneath

and within every sensorial experience. Everything is within me yet I remain untouched, unsoiled, unchanged by any of it. It's just a movie projected onto a screen in awareness, animated by dancing *vasanas* and *karmas*. The glories and the greatness, the tragedies and the senselessness, the joys and the sorrows - all contained in the vast unmoving awareness, intransient and immutable.

"The *jiva* can surrender to this and need never be afraid again. There is nothing to fear when you realise that you are Eternity unbound. And nothing to add to yourself when you realise that you are Infinity in endless perfection and absolute fullness.

"Just sit. There's nothing to do, until the doing does itself. And there's no one to take ownership of this doing but a little phantom self with delusions of grandeur. And even he's all right, just nowhere near as important as he used to believe he was. And oh, what a strain that was and oh, how he suffered as a result! He can relax now, sit back and enjoy the ride. Why not enjoy the ride? There's nothing else for it and nothing else to do. The play is the thing... until it's no longer the thing.

"All the old fears were useless mental distortions, and all the suffering and feelings of lack and inadequacy were so pointless, so illusory and yet cut so deep because *jiva*-Tony believed them. Yet in a moment they can be stripped away. Until perhaps the echoes of old *vasanas* rise up, resurrected like comical cartoon mummies, risen from the causal grave to terrorise once again - if, that is, the *jiva* still fears them. Hopefully not. He can take a back seat and chuckle at the shenanigans of the mind, and breathe easy because he no longer has to seek and strive and control. He's been given permission to let go of the reins, because in truth there was nothing at the end of those reins anyway. Which perhaps explains why he never got anywhere fast.

"It's all a big *maya* farce - so comical, bleak, tragic and fun. Front row tickets for the ultimate 3D-immersion experience, amounting to nothing, ultimately. When you realise it's a dream, does the content of the dream even matter that much anymore? Seeking love and validation and fulfilment, success, health and happiness - isn't it all pretty futile? Even if attained, a dream is forever chopping and changing, and ultimately, must always end the same way: in waking, a bubble popped. Another "reality" supercedes and then that bubble pops and disappears. Consciousness is forever blowing bubbles, day after day, year after year, until it just settles in the blissful stillness, silence.

"Is there anything left to do but enjoy each bubble as much as possible and retain the knowledge of the bubble (bubble-knowledge)? And knowledge of the bubble-blower (bubble-blower-knowledge). And knowledge of the knower of the bubble-blower (bubble-blower-knower-knowledge)!"

"Why not just LET GO? Surrender all the *maya* stuff to *Isvara*. It's not my concern. I'm not the scriptwriter, director or even, technically, the actor of this movie. Just the Light in which it's being projected. How freeing! 'I am the light of the world.'"

Thanks again for your email. As I said, it was just the little nudge and shift I needed. I really appreciate your teaching so much, for the way you offer your time when you really don't have to. You're not only a gifted teacher with impeccable integrity but extremely kind to offer your time in such a way. Thank you!