

Jnana Karma Sannyas

Sundari (Isabella Viglietti)

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Simon: Hi, Sundari, as always, it is terrific to hear from you.

I have always had difficulty sleeping and I can totally sympathise with anyone who has had that problem. In fact, it was one of the biggest sources of dissatisfaction in my life because I was tired all the time, which is just so unpleasant and it affects absolutely everything in your life. Gee, I envy Ramji being able to handle sleep so masterfully.

Vedanta has really helped here. The reduction in *rajas* and *tamas* and the associated mental agitation, which I have realised just consumes so much energy, has helped a lot. I also use some superb nutritional supplements which have also been a big help. I sleep much better now, at least when at home, and have more energy, and probably get about two hours more productive time per day than compared to a couple of years ago.

I also use a health technique called Earthing, which is brilliant. If you haven't come across it, the idea is that the natural surface of the earth contains healing electrical energy in the form of bio-available, negatively-charged free electrons. They are virtually infinite in quantity and generated by lightning and solar activity. The body, being comprised largely of water and minerals, conducts electricity extremely well. By walking barefoot or laying bare skin on the earth's natural surface, these electrons enter the body and heal and rebalance the electrical systems of the body which, in turn, assists many other systems and functions. It has proven useful in helping with sleep, stress and many illnesses. There are also very cleverly designed products that bring the healing power of the earth indoors, including sheets for sleeping. A few basic safety precautions need to be taken for this (*Earthing.com* is the official website). There is a wonderful and easy-to-read book as well which I highly recommend (sorry - I don't mean to add to your reading list!).

Despite having reasonable people skills, I have been incredibly anti-social since about age 20. Most people find it odd. There are a few different reasons for my anti-social stance but - long story short - people take away your freedom, and interacting with them is hard work. Most people, all they want to do is talk about themselves and their opinions, both of which I find mind-numbing in most cases, and few people out there are interested in the topics I am interested in. I know it probably sounds arrogant but I think most Vedantins could relate.

Yep, I am with you on the *Bhagavad Gita Home Study Course*. We'll see who gets to it first - you or me! I have a few other Vedanta books but other than a quick look, I've not read them and probably won't, at least for a while, as ShiningWorld is just peerless and has an unrivalled ability to make the journey understandable, practical, grounded and fast, without getting weighed down by too much Sanskrit or philosophy. I love everything about Vedanta and want to investigate more of the *Upanishads* and texts, but for the last 20 months my focus has just been on getting the job done, and you guys gave me everything I needed for that. A lot of the work has been done but I am not stopping.

That said, my *karma yoga* practice has largely reduced since I realise that offering

everything to *Isvara* is now redundant, as I know everything belongs to *Isvara* anyway, myself and my actions included, and I was never really offering my actions to *Isvara* because *Isvara* owns and controls them anyway. My practice did change to reflect that and I knew I was offering my actions to *Isvara* in knowledge only. Now I see *karma yoga* just as a statement of obvious truth and I don't feel the need to offer every thought and action to *Isvara* anymore in the way I used to, but I still do the gratitude component and thank *Isvara* for the action and its results. Any advice on whether this is correct would be welcome.

Though my knowledge is still developing, I am finding that the crux of self-knowledge really is the destruction of doership, authorship and ownership. For example, if I see a pretty woman and feel attracted to her, I instantly know that the attraction is happening automatically and unconsciously, and is just a piece of stimulus-response programming governed by *vasanas* operating in the causal and subtle body, and that I am not consciously generating those thoughts and feelings. Just knowing this and watching it happen eliminates or greatly reduces the associated suffering and anguish that comes from an unobtained desire. It really is amazing.

All the very best with your book. It will be a tremendous benefit to the Vedanta community. I will be buying my copy the first days its available. I've always thought it would be a massive task to write a book. I find editing and structuring my own writing particularly difficult because I kind of get too close to it and lose objectivity. My brother is writing a book at the moment and finding it a huge challenge, partially for that reason, which is where I guess an external editor becomes helpful.

Thank you - it would be fantastic to have a Skype chat with you - I really appreciate that.

I was able to make another donation today and it was my absolute pleasure to do so. I will shortly be sending something to Ted and Isaiah too (I hope they accept donations; I'd better check).

Lots of love and blessings and gratitude to you both.

~ Simon

Sundari: Hello, Simon. Great to hear from you too.

Thanks for the info on Earthing, or grounding, as I call it. I am very familiar with it and have been for a long time as innate knowledge or common sense. It is interesting to see that it has become one of the "latest ideas" and getting out there as something new. It is good though. Ramji and I instinctively walk barefoot whenever possible.

Sleep is an interesting topic, one that plagues many, it seems. Apart from diet, exercise and the right supplements which are vital. Self-knowledge is the only way to deal with it (as with everything else). Lack of sleep is a form of torture and so detrimental to psychological, emotional and physical well-being. We have several people write in about this issue; it is quite common among Vedantins. It can be one of the side effects of too much *sattva*, so we encourage people who have serious problems sleeping to avoid *rajasic* activities and food towards evening, to slow down and eat more *tamasic* food before bedtime as possible solutions. The typical lifestyle today is so *rajasic* and stressed. Ramji has a saying which I love: "Obey your

tamas!," which is good advice if one is too strung-out, or too *sattvic*.

The interesting thing about sleep is that you can't try to sleep because the very act of sleeping is surrendering the doer. The doer by definition never sleeps. Sleep, the causal body, can only be entered if the microcosmic causal body is subsumed into the macrocosmic causal body, *Isvara*.

My feeling is that many people unconsciously resist sleep because the ego does not want to let go, so it "tries" to sleep and can't. Or there are unconscious fears about death, or other deeply unconscious psychological content, lurking in the depths of the mind. Free-floating anxiety is a big one - and very common. It loves to surface at night, in the dark, when negative thoughts have a tendency to loom larger than life. Free-floating anxiety is a by-product of very deeply-rooted *samskaras* and they have their origin in fear, of course. This is macrocosmic *rajas* (projection) and it is part of the *dharma* field. Everyone who is identified with being a person is affected by it to some degree.

Usually the *vasanas* will exhaust themselves after a while but this one, this unnamed fear, is constantly "on." As the self, it doesn't bother you at all, of course, and for those who are self-realised but not self-actualised, this unnamed fear may still come and go. Very often, especially with people with low self-esteem (which I do not get is your problem), it is a fear (usually unconscious) of how "others" view the "me," meaning the person. In this case, just the thought of judgment from others brings up fear. It is manageable if one does not identify with it, but to be free of the person this fear needs to be purified through self-knowledge, as it causes great agitation for the mind and when it rears its head, peace of mind is not possible.

Your response to the sleep issue, as with everything it seems, is to apply self-knowledge, which is the optimal—and only sane - response. We have a good friend who has sleep apnea and has just gone through his first surgery to remove his tonsils which, as I suspected, has not helped much. He has tried the oxygen mask and the jaw brace, neither of which work. He gets through this with self-knowledge, but it is very tough going.

There is another issue which is rarely dealt with and it is the most likely cause of bad sleep and that is *karma*: anxiety over fruits of the action. If your lifestyle is too *rajasic*, you will always be worrying about what is happening/hasn't happened/going to happen/might/might not happen tomorrow. The anxiety goes into the unconscious. So it remains in the sleep state to disturb you, as a subtle *vritti* or thought. It builds up too, from day to day. If you can take one day at a time and see it as complete, no matter what has happened or not happened, good sleep is much more likely. Ramji's attitude, when the future creeps in creating anxiety about what has to be done - say, for an upcoming seminar or something - (excuse the French, but you know, it's Ramji) is, "F*** it!"

You just can't afford to let the mind push you around! You sound like you have a very busy and demanding life, so maybe you can take that on board!

Boy, do I hear you about how banal it is to have too much contact with *samsaris*. I have had that problem since I was 15 and even wrote poetry about it. I could not understand why it was that most people were so empty - and what volumes of absolute crap they spoke - all the time. It made me tired, depressed, just thinking about it. I found myself alone even

in my own family (no. 10 of 11), and had a tough time growing up. Par for the course

for those of us whose *karma* it is to go for *moksa* and nothing else will suffice. I have a very strong hermit *vasana* and in fact have had some of the best times in my life living alone in the wild. I was born in Tanzania, in the bush, 40 miles from the nearest neighbours, many more from the nearest town. We had lions and hyenas walking around our house at night. When my parents left East Africa for South Africa after the Communists took over, I became semi-autistic and sat under my desk at school for the whole of my first year. I never spoke to a soul! I have never lost that yearning to be away from people. Ramji jokes and says I am a misanthrope, but that is not really true. I see everyone as *Isvara*, talking either in self-awareness or self-ignorance, but I don't have to listen to them or spend time with them!

As for your attitude to *karma yoga*, you have it nailed. *Karma yoga* is just knowledge. As a practice it is designed to help people who think they are doers – *karmis*, as we call them – to purify the mind as well as to identify their conditioning. This is the most powerful way for a *karma yogi* to negate the doer. Once the mind is purified, one uses self-knowledge to discriminate the self from the not-self. At this stage, unless one really understands

the *gunas*, many highly-qualified enquirers get Simonck with the most subtle teaching of all: The relationship between pure awareness and *Isvara*, *jiva* and *jagat*. Remember, it does not work to superimpose *sattya* (pure awareness) on *mithya* (*Isvara*, *jiva* and *jagat*). If superimposition happens, even though the Self is known, it will remain indirect knowledge, i.e. the self will still appear as an object. And one will still think one has to “get” it. Or one will still wait to have that final experience that will prove he or she is awareness! Direct

knowledge and self-actualisation is the difficult part. Therefore, full understanding of the *Isvara-jiva-jagat* identity (*aikyam*) and the *guna* teaching is of paramount importance.

In the final stage of self-enquiry, *nididhysana* or self-actualization, self-knowledge fully removes the ignorance of your true nature, and you know without a doubt that you are beyond the *gunas*, *Isvara*. This means that “your” conditioning is fully understood in the light of self-knowledge, so the binding *vasanas* are rendered non-binding and the doer negated. Knowledge and ignorance are both “gone”; they are simply objects known to you. Only you, the self, remains. This is *moksha*. Sounds like you are pretty much there!

Karma yoga becomes *jnana karma sanyass*, renunciation of the notion of doership. As the self, of course, there is nothing to surrender because it is all you, including *Isvara*. Nonetheless, as the *jiva* who still lives in the apparent reality, this knowledge translates to deep devotion and gratitude for being able to experience objects in such freedom and to love it all as you, with total detachment. Following *dharma* is as natural as breathing. Way to go!

As with the observation of and reaction to a pretty girl, the automatic response to it is known to be *Isvara* and not you. It goes with the territory of being (apparently) human. The difference is self-knowledge kicks in straightaway, and any action you take or don't take in response is automatically *jnana karma sanyass*. This is *nididhysana*, the application of self-

knowledge to every aspect of your life. I have no doubt that self-actualization, if it has not already taken place, is imminent. Certainly you do not have a knowledge problem.

As for writing a book: Well, it's a bit like having a very demanding relative come and live with you for a long time. One that you don't particularly like and can't get rid of, ha, ha! As I know beyond a shadow of any doubt that I am not writing the book, I am taking the lead from *Isvara*. After many months of mind-numbing work, I had the book basically sewn down, only to have *Isvara* reveal a whole new direction. Drat. Which means the book has to be rewritten. So, said book is somewhat stalled at the moment. And, yes indeed, writing itself is a skill that has to be learned. For writing to be good it has to be simple, succinct, clear and unencumbered or too coloured by, well, you. However "simple and effortless" writing to be truly so requires enormous dedication and effort. Thank goodness for *karma yoga*! I always say that to be a good writer for *Isvara* one has to be a clean windowpane for the truth to be revealed.

Skype would be great; so sorry that this week does not work for you. You are so kind to make another donation, Simon. Thank you so much. And to donate to the boys too - I am sure they will be thrilled, even though none of us do what we do for the money. We are so grateful to *Isvara* in the form of you supporting ShiningWorld. Bless you.

~ Much love and chat soon, Sundari