

# Many Great Arrows

Ram (James Swartz)

2014-02-04

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/549>

**Pat:** Hey, Ram, I hope this email finds you well. Pat has been under the effects of heavy *tamas* forever. This has manifested in not doing things that are in Pat's duty to be done and generally feeling like a little loser, a feeling which was compounded after every instance of forsaking myself for *tamas*. Being submissive toward "others," secretly desiring love and approval, not speaking up for myself when the situation called for it.

There have been instances where this heavy burden has lifted and I found myself to be non-different from everything before promptly coming right back. I have secretly wished for this to happen my whole life, even if I could not have expressed it so clearly before Vedanta came along. Now I am coming to terms with the fact that this heavy cloud may never lift, that the mind will never unclench. Whether this is true or not is irrelevant because Pat still needs to operate and be functional in this world, regardless of what may be playing out. This is resulting in an almighty battle with *tamas*. It feels like a wrestling match within me, like I am literally having to strangle my opponent to be myself to be functional. Vedanta says that if the thought is found and seen clearly it will be subsumed back into impersonal awareness. I do not see this happening until there is total and utter dispassion. What do you think?

**Ram:** I think your analysis of the situation is correct. I am happy to see that your self-inquiry is progressing. It has been several years now since we starting communicating, and you are growing. I think, however, that your narrative is a bit dramatic, like the *Bhagavad Gita*. It is a story that is easy to misunderstand. I think the presupposition is that freedom (from *tamas*, i.e. ignorance) is an all-at-once understanding that destroys the ignorance once and for all. It may seem like it but actually you chip away at the ignorance bit by bit, like a sculptor revealing the form within or a mason builds a house brick by brick. Take one issue at a time, work on it and lay it to rest. Start with small things. You build self-esteem by winning skirmishes, not by destroying Duryodhana's whole army with a nuclear weapon. Maturity comes in time. Utter dispassion comes through the battles you fight with yourself. Take the *karma yoga* attitude - leave the dispassion to *Isvara* and soldier cheerfully on. Enjoy the war. Life is beautiful. You have many great arrows in your Vedanta quiver. Don't despair. You will succeed!

**Pat:** I laughed out loud at the nuclear weapon bit. Coincidentally, I am reading the *Bhagavad Gita* now. Awesome read, keeps the mind firmly fixed on me. And the war is beautiful, and sometimes I get dramatic like in that email. Thanks for being there, Ram, you're the best charioteer a *jiva* could have.