

# Maturity Is Acceptance of What Is

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Pete:** Dear Ram, has anyone mentioned getting physical problems once they contact Vedanta?

**Ram:** No. But your biology is your biography so once you start stirring up the ignorance soup, you may get some unpleasant physical symptoms.

**Pete:** Since returning from Germany I've contracted a frozen shoulder. Having always been healthy I admit I took it for granted. Anyway, I'm noticing that it's hard to be unattached to the outcome when what the body wants is to be free of pain. How to do the actions with the intent of purifying the mind when the body usually taken to be us is in crisis?

**Ram:** This is not a good sentence, Pete. I can't figure out what you mean. I would appreciate it if you reread your emails and cleaned up bad sentences.

Usually, I can figure out what you mean but not always.

**Pete:** I feel it's definitely "a war inside between the self under the spell of ignorance and the self destroying the ignorance with the help of the teachings."

So the joy is not in the objects, fair enough, but harder to realize that the joy isn't in the taking away of objects either.

**Ram:** Right. The joy is independent of the presence and absence of objects.

**Pete:** I took some mushrooms in desperation as I don't have insurance or income at the moment (but I do have a rent-free place to live, with food) and could see that *Isvara* has brought the battle to me. The enemy (ignorance) doesn't care if I can't swing my sword. I'll have to try to block the blow with my other arm or just take the hit. I've always struggled with the forced-to-act part of life. You know, the child crying to the parents that "I didn't ask to be brought here." Boy, do I know that one... maturity can be summed up in that one quality alone: acceptance of the way it is.

**Ram:** Yes, *tamas*, trying not to do what has to be done, is the enemy. It really is infantile because as long as awareness illumines *vasanas* you have *karma* to deal with. Might as well take a cheerful attitude.

**Pete:** I could see that I am indeed free, but the *jiva* isn't free of his *karma* and there is a feeling of being trapped in myself.

**Ram:** It is there when you identify with the *jiva*.

**Pete:** Even if I'm free the *jiva* is appearing before me and I have to be aware of it, no choice as to what to be aware of. But that is just likes and dislikes again, wishing that I was someone else.

**Ram:** It's really stupid wanting to be someone else. If you think it through you will conclude that what makes the Pete person unacceptable will make the someone else unacceptable if he ever became someone else, which he won't.

There is no escape in *samsara*. The limitation belongs to the idea "I am a people."

**Pete:** The teachings are helping with surrender. The irony is that *jivas* hate to be told what to do but in reality have no other choice. So when you speak of cultivating *sattva*, I guess *Isvara* would also be the one giving you the will to do actions to that end?

**Ram:** Yes. Pray for courage to do the right thing, to clean up your *rajas* and *tamas*. You are coming along, but your thinking still suffers from a bit of *tamas*. You're a forty-year-old SPRAT. That's an acronym for "spoiled brat."

**Pete:** Considering knowledge that one is the self, I assume knowledge means in the same sense that you "know" you exist?

**Ram:** Yes, but it is really knowing what it means to say "I exist." It means that everything is fine as it is – always.

**Pete:** I have faith in the teachings. I can see they are true and, of course, until knowledge dawns it's just imaginings from the land of experience.

**Ram:** The knowledge has dawned, Pete. You are just resisting it. Keep at it. You will prevail. Faith in the teachings is the number one qualification for *moksa*.

**Pete:** It is impossible to think about a non-experience since thinking is an experience.

**Ram:** I like this statement. Sometimes you come up with some good ones. There is no such thing as non-experience from the *maya* point of view. If you are a *jiva* you experience from womb to tomb.

**Pete:** *Sattva* is like a distant cloud on the horizon that is usually gone as quickly as it appeared. I guess this is the usefulness of prayer.

**Ram:** Yes. Prayer is very powerful.

**Pete:** I can't force *sattva*. *Isvara* is going to have to provide it if that's what it takes for the knowledge to appear.

**Ram:** That's a suspicious statement. Did you ever try to force it? You can probably do more to get *sattvic*.

**Pete:** All I can do for now is keep listening, keep reflecting. The body wants to be pain-free, that is the body's *dharma*. So what? Get over it.

**Ram:** The body is a counter across which *karma* transacts pleasure and pain. Pleasure and pain are the nature of the body. Pain comes from *rajas*. *Rajasic* people have a lot of *tamas* too but it is usually hidden from them. It shows up in a resistance to change. For example, a *rajasic* mind will evolve a habit that takes care of a problem and use said habit effectively over and over. It feels quite clever thereby. But when circumstances (*Isvara*) change – something becomes obsolete, for example, it will resist adapting, preferring instead to stick with the old one even though it causes agitation, because it is no longer appropriate. It is so attached to the way it has been doing things that it does not want to take the time, even if there is a very short learning curve, to adapt, preferring instead to get irritated, blame the object and waste even more energy instead of biting the bullet and adapting. It is ironic because *rajas* prides itself on its quick responses. The greater the *rajas* the stronger the *tamas*, resistance.

Anyway, I feel a long rant on *rajas* and *tamas* coming on and I haven't time to get into it. My mind is a bit *tamasic* – meaning a lot – right now. I missed a night's sleep and I have been in the transportation grid for over twenty-four hours. I'm nearing the end of my journey, speeding along over the plains of Spain on a 200-km-per-hour bullet train, dreaming of a quiet room in Malaga.

~ Love, Ram