

Middle Age and Relationships

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When I was in my early forties I realized that most of the decent women that I dated wanted a deep commitment of some sort – like marriage – and that it was really dishonest to pretend that I was interested in that kind of relationship, just for sex and a good time. It wasn't really a big deal, because I was very happy and lived out in nature away from the society, so there were not the usual triggers in the environment to invoke that *vasana* but I used to wish that *Bhagavan* would take it away. There is a verse in the *Gita* that speaks about the problem. It says that desire “hides” the self like smoke hides fire, dust covers a mirror and a womb hides a fetus, which symbolizes the strength of the desire. Some desires just go away on their own, like wind blows away smoke. Some you have to scrub with self-inquiry – “dust on a mirror” – and some you just have to wait until they are ready to leave the womb of ignorance. It is a tricky problem because some of it is just *Isvara* – biological – and some of it is a spiritual problem, not facing the empty feeling that comes from seeing oneself as incomplete, which of course is *Isvara* too.

Of course there is nothing wrong with a relationship or marriage from a spiritual point of view, only the danger of going against your own *dharma* by living a life that someone else with a different *dharma* wants. I solved the problem by telling the women who were attracted to me out front in a very clear way that I was not interested in marriage, etc. but that I was into a “relationless relationship,” meaning a here-and-now love without the attachment. It sort of worked because some women, particularly those past the childbearing years, are happy with the idea of companionship, but it didn't work for very long because they would develop attachment to what they thought I was, and then I would have to move on.

Although it was non-binding, the desire for pure love with a woman never left me until recently when I met Sundari. It was like the “fetus in the womb.” It worked out when the time was right. It never obstructed my knowledge or compromised the endless joy that bubbled up within since my *moksa*. I was very happy in all circumstances, even when the desire surfaced, because desire never really “hides” the self. It is always present, irrespective of what the mind feels at any moment. So just the thought of it takes the mind to it – to the fact that you are fine anyway – and it dies.