

# Sex and Spirituality

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Vignesh:** *Namaskar*, sir. I recently opened your website by chance, looking for some knowledge for some of my personal life issues. It is assured that your blog and sincere teachings are seriously helping and sending God's divine message to the worldly beings. As you have offered to answer spiritual queries, I have a very important question. If it is not answered by God directly I will be convinced by those great beings like you who have realised Him actually. Below-mentioned is my query:

Sir, since long I am trying to focus on my spiritual upliftment but unfortunately I am mostly hampered by worldly attractions and eventually became more extroverted in the last two to years than ever before. I viewed and thoroughly read your Q&A columns and articles on Vedanta; that's why I am asking you for some guidance.

My major problem is that I am trying to focus on *brahmacharya* (celibacy) since childhood. I am not married till now and am 29 years of age. But I am not able to stop myself from opposite-gender attraction through my senses. Though I always consider these things as my biggest enemy and weakness in achieving that purity and divine heights, I am so much forcefully indulging in sex *VASANAS* that I am not able to think how to overcome this biggest enemy of the mind. Half of the mind enjoys lust and the remaining half hates it.

Now, the situation is so bad that I neither want to marry nor am I prepared to control my senses like an acute and perfect *brahmachari*. These opposite forces make my life worse day by day, and my mind is already a servant of these corrupt *vasanas* and thoughts. Hence I am unable to reach any right conclusions. I am in great illusion and pain.

I am also a *shishya* (follower) of a great Hindu saint but I never get an opportunity to get in touch or share my problem with him somehow. So when I see your site hope rises for me for some help. I will be very grateful to you if you can provide me some of the following:

- Any specific *mantra/chakra* meditation for elimination of lustful desires and thoughts.
- Some *yoga mudra*, which is helpful in control.
- Some practical habits to follow for improvement and detachment.

~ Thanks and regards, Tormented in India

**Ram:** Dear Vignesh, I am sorry to hear that you are suffering so. A special *mantra* or *mudra* or practical habits do not work when your thinking about the topic is confused. Obviously, you are suppressing your natural sexuality. It is actually going against *Isvara* because *Isvara*, not you, put this desire into you. Maybe you fed it but you can't blame yourself, because you are young and sex is very attractive to young people. I fell into that trap too when I was young.

If you are a normal *samsari* you will get married and have children, and that need will find a reasonable outlet and eventually you will outgrow it. If you are seeking

*moksa* you should sublimate the craving into more *sattvic* activities – which, obviously, you are not doing. The problem, as you so clearly state, is that you are conflicted: on the one hand you like sex and on the other you don't. That is typical of all objects in the apparent reality – upside/downside.

Your approach is not working because your spirituality does not provide you with enough pleasure. *Mantras*, etc. are for *sattvic* people but your mind is very *rajasic/tamasic* and your commitment to *moksa* is weak, so spiritual techniques do not work. The problem is that you cannot just get *sattvic* overnight. You have to live a *sattvic* life.

The solution I am going to offer is very difficult because you are Indian and you cannot really investigate your sexuality without the commitment of marriage or without visiting prostitutes, which is not wise. I think you should get married and live a normal life in the *karma yoga* spirit as Krishna suggested to Arjuna. It will slowly purify you and prepare you for *moksa*.

If you lived in the West there is another option: sin intelligently. In other words, stick with your spiritual practices – what actually are you doing spiritually, by the way? – and have a few relationships with women. This is called “the middle path,” not too much control, not too much indulgence. Eventually, you will discover the limitation in sex – it seems you still haven't seen how limited it is because you can't abandon it – and your mind will start to run to more elevating topics. Sex is only interesting for want of discrimination and for lack of something better.

There is no conflict between spiritual growth and sex. If you had the temperament of a *sanyassi* this would not be an issue but you have the temperament of a *samsari*, a worldly person, albeit one with a spiritual *vasana*.

So either you give up the spiritual idea and follow this *vasana* until it burns out on its own or you get married and work it out there. However, it is a bad reason for marriage. Wanting some kind of clever technique is useless. It will not work. The *vasana* is too strong.

Underneath it all is the desire for *moksa* and love but I don't think you can see that yet. Whatever the solution it is not an easy one because you are now under the power of *rajas* and *tamas* and getting free of these two energies is difficult. In any case, I wish you all the best and I hope this has been helpful.

**Vignesh:** I bow at your feet for your blessings. Sir, I am very grateful to you for listening and considering my query.

Your approach is very similar to my Guruji, and I am happy that we are sharing the divine knowledge at this level where there are no boundaries though there is no similarity in our religion and country. Still, you are a reservoir of pure consciousness and knowledge shining as Vedanta. Your eyes resemble those of a child full of innocence and bliss.

I am totally in agreement with all you suggested in my previous mail, from the perspective of a normal worldly person as well a *sannyasi/sadhak*.

To be more frank, I would say that I think of myself as a potential *sadhak*. Kindly allow me to tell you a short description of my life so that you have a better understanding of my current situation.

I am from a middle-class Hindu Brahmin family with five family members and I am the elder son of my parents. Since childhood I can recall that when I was 11 years of age I was in Haridwar with my parents and I asked suddenly to visit a *satsang* discourse. After that I gained personal liking for spiritual stories and books and *satsang* sessions. I used to visit *ashrams* and I learnt different *yogasanas* and *pranayam* techniques on my own without much supervision. As I grew older and joined college I took *mantra* from my Gurudev. *Kundalini*, *tantra* and topics on sacred information on psychic *siddhis* always took my attention. I performed seclusion *sadhanas* at my Guruji's *ashram*. I love to read and listen to *satsang* sessions to enhance my spiritual knowledge.

But I noticed that I was very innocent. I was not even able to identify culprit tendencies of people. People used to laugh and refer to me as the simplest person till I was 24! As life moved on I started doing job in MNC through which eventually more and more worldly interaction took place. I quit meditating and started to live and think more like an acutely extroverted person.

And as a result the subtle impressions of worldly beings entered into my mind and I am no longer spiritual like I was earlier. I got a chance to meet an enlightened saint in the *ashram* and talked with him a bit on general basis. After listening to me he said, "It seems that you have accumulated both good and bad *karmas* in your previous births. Now it's up to you which path you choose." He added that I should leave the materialistic environment as soon as possible because my *sadhana* is wasted when living with materialistic people. He said the material impressions will overpower you, so it's better to come to *ashram* and start living an introverted life to control senses and the mind.

Also, I can surely say that I am *sattvic* by nature, not *rajasic* and *tamasic*, although those energies are getting stronger. It makes a contradiction within me.

Concepts of self-realisation and enquiry of *atman* are topics which I began to understand after spiritual discussions with *sadhaks* in the *ashram*.

Though I conceptually understand that I am not this body, saints say that I am the great soul unaffected by death, time and situations. In actuality, I cannot live without God, and I believe I have to grow intense love for Him so that I can leave every pleasure for him. Sometimes I cry, sometimes I do self-enquiry and sometimes I observe what is happening with me as a person - it seems everything is passing - time, people, money, age, absolutely everything. It is strange that still *MAYA* has its strong clutches on me from every angle.

As you gave me one option to marry, I think it would not be appropriate because my soul is not giving the consent for doing so and these *vasanas* are making more and more pressure and making the situation worse. I think I have to destroy them and I feel that marriage will only make matters worse. I think I need to develop self-control.

So this is what all I think and know about me, sir. I am making a humble request to you to provide some more divine guidelines to follow to make my path towards self-knowledge more clear.

**Ram:** Can you walk away from your worldly life easily? What will your family say? If they depend on you, you will feel guilty for leaving them and your *sadhana* will not bear fruit. If your desire for liberation and your dispassion is very strong then you

can do it. I agree that a *samsaric* environment is not helpful spiritually and that an *ashram* environment might be helpful. Research Swami Dayananda's *ashram* near Coimbatore. It is called Arsha Vidya. I think you should stay away from *kundalini sadhanas*. Let me know what you decide. Be sure to get the blessing of your family.

~ *Om* and *prem*, Ram