

# **Svadharmā: The Sattva Shield**

Ram (James Swartz)

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**Seeker:** Dear James, I have fallen ill again and do not know if I can continue with my work. You know my story. The doctors can find nothing wrong. You know this too. I think it is psychological. What is your opinion? You once hinted that you knew the cause but I was not listening or I did not want to listen or something. Now I think I am ready to hear your opinion. I am so tired, not only of the weakness, but I am so tired of not knowing what I am doing to myself. Please reply. I am desperate.

**James:** If you don't use common sense, you run afoul the body's *dharma* and God will put you in bed and make you rest – as you can see. I think the lesson you need to learn is to balance your life. For you this means learning how to say NO to people. No. No. No. I know that this is very difficult because you are a loving and kind person and you want people to be healthy and happy. It may even be that there is a more unconscious motivation: that you want to be loved. In any case you think it is your duty to make others happy. But you have run yourself ragged taking care of others and now you are flat on your back. Remember what happened last time you let yourself run down? It was not pretty and took over a year to get back to normal.

You need to say STOP to yourself. You are out of control. Slow down and cancel all the gratuitous activities. The biggest danger comes when you start to feel better. You will think that you are okay to go back to the rat race. I saw this chronic fatigue website that had the motto: Get Your Life Back. It should be Get a New Life. *Rajas* dominates your psyche and *rajas* is very tricky. It can make you think you are aware of what you are doing when you are not.

You believe you have realized something spiritual and maybe you have, but this does not mean that your mind is suddenly brought under control. If anything, you should intensify your inquiry once you have realized or there is a big danger of being carried away with the euphoria of knowing that you are awareness. Therefore you need to watch your mind carefully because it is the playground of ignorance.

Here is a meditation to help you bring your monkey mind under control.

What is the first thought when you wake up? How do you eat? How do you lift things, fast and unconcentrated or careful and aware? What are you thinking when you take a shower? Are you only showering, seeing that showering is happening or is your mind already thinking about all the things which need to be done afterwards? What does your mind think when you are listening to a person? Are you really present or are you already thinking about the answer you want to give? If I may give you a suggestion: only do one thing at a time. NO MULTI-TASKING. Doing one thing at a time is the best *rajas* killer and the best *sattva* developer. When you are drinking tea, drink tea. No emails, no reading – nothing. Listen to the silence. Take a shower and observe how the shampoo feels on your head and how the touch of your hands massaging your head feels. Enjoy the feeling of each stroke of the toothbrush as it cleans your teeth. Isn't it a funny thing to do? Don't talk when you eat. Chew each morsel consciously. Think about what eating is. Get into the taste, the texture. When you walk in nature don't have a big plan to get to the top of the mountain or walk all the way around the lake. Be aware of each step, how your shoes crush the leaves on

the path. Listen to the sounds of the forest, the birds chirping. Feel the air caressing your skin. Listen to the silence.

You get the idea: be careful and conscious with every action. *Rajas* does not value the action in itself. It only values the result. It is trying to get somewhere, to accomplish something. Tell your mind there is nothing to accomplish. Believe it.

Be conscious, alert and still. If you develop a lifestyle like this you can handle your duties without burning out. Only spend one hour a day doing emails. If you can't do them all in one hour, figure out a way to make your email load lighter. Or make people wait. You are not the only person in the universe who can take care of their needs. Take a break between every email, take a few deep breaths, lie on the floor like a corpse for two minutes, bring your senses back to the self and then continue. If you keep up this kind of practice your routines will not suck your energy. You can be your best friend or your worst enemy. This life is about you. Care for yourself and love yourself until it hurts.

Develop a huge love bubble around your life. The source of this love comes from you and goes back to you. Drink the silent bliss that is with you all the time. You need an energetic protection shield. Build a *sattva* shield. It will reflect the *rajas*. Those busy frantic vibrations will just bounce off.

Enough for now. I wish I could be there to caress your stubborn head and bring you tea. Please take care of yourself. I hope you feel better soon.

~ Lots of love, Ramji