

First and Foremost, Love Yourself

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Iain: Hi, Arlindo. Just a quick question about the assimilation of values and how this relates to meditation and *karma yoga*.

I'm halfway through *Bhagavad Gita Tiru 2012* - I think I am on the right track, feeling some shifts with this, just wanted a clarification if possible: I'm meditating a lot at the moment, and noticed that there are internal conflicts happening which are the actual real cause of my suffering, and not the external world (which I thought was the case). It's nice to finally see this.

Arlindo: This is very important realization. The "external" world we experience outside is not the real cause of *jiva's* sense of disappointment, conflict and suffering. The world is what it is. If one with a clear state of mind wishes to say something about it, he/she would say the world is *Isvara's* beautiful gift for the human *jivas*.

Suffering is derived only from *jiva's vasanas* (one's subconscious likes and dislikes) and all conflicts accumulated over years and decades of wanting the world of physical objects (people, places, people, circumstances, etc.) to fit one's expectations. The world of objects is value-neutral. We give it meaning according to our desires and aversions - the real psychology behind conflict and suffering is that if I don't get what I want I get either depressed or pissed off; when sometimes I get what, I feel very happy, but only for a short while, which makes one even more frustrated and disappointed with *Isvara's* set-up for *samsara*.

Iain: With regards to practice, I guess I am meant to inquire into the internal conflict. I'll use an example from my previous *satsang* with you: the teacher who psychologically "beat" his students with his bluntness. This is obviously an experience I have not been able to assimilate, because I had a bad value for imposing "rightness" onto others - thus creating a duality between me and the experience.

Arlindo: I see, rightness is a recipe for suffering and it has its roots in wrongness. A person who is righteous usually feels very wrong - they feel insufficient, inadequate, guilty, and therefore develops a moral righteous attitude as a means to hide or compensate his/her feeling of wrongness. To look into that helps a bit to calm down the mind. The first thing is to acknowledge, second is not to deny and third is to stop blaming others. Everyone here is in the same boat - everyone here gets their share of a sense of guilt and inadequacy, hence love your *jiva* just as it is. You will let it go as you see clearly that this resentment has nothing to do with the abusing teacher. It has all to do with you, and you alone.

Iain: Take both the past experience AND my negative feelings that have been generated by my unconscious value as *prasad* and then allow awareness to erase (resolve) my stupid value that is not in harmony with reality and replace it with a spiritual value of no longer imposing my idea of virtue onto others?

Arlindo: Well said, my friend.

Iain: For me, this seems the sanest option; it would be *dharmic* because I am no longer holding aggressive values dressed up as “virtue,” and it is *swadharma* because I am doing what is right for me (cultivating peace of mind). In remaining vigilant like this I will eventually become aware of and uproot all values that are causing me and others harm and that stop me from assimilating experiences in the moment, which will prevent a future “backlog” of unassimilated “good/bad” experiences from conditioning my mind.

Am I on the right track?

Arlindo: Totally, Iain. All very clearly stated. Best wishes to you too. One more thing worth mentioning is that the root cause of all psychological human suffering is the ignorance of the nature of reality, and of course the real nature of the *jiva* as pure consciousness.

Only this self-knowledge frees the *jiva* from most of the collective psychological human suffering.

The work of clearing the mind of its personal subconscious conflicts serves the propose of making life happier (freer from conflicts), and therefore more calm and suitable for contemplation and self-inquiry. Some people think that their spiritual work ends at a “purer and happier mind,” but this purified mind is only the platform from which the inquiry may fructify as hard and fast self-knowledge.