

Protecting the *Jiva* Shame Identity

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2018-09-16

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/3684>

Sundari: Dear Aliya, I am not your teacher and you have not asked for teaching from me, though recently you have stated you wanted to *satsang* with me on a few occasions. It is difficult to say all this over a phone call, so take this as coming from friendship and love, if nothing else.

Ramji and I have both told you many times how much we love Aliya, how we admire and like her. She's beautiful, a shining light. It's a pity that we cannot make you love and like her too, even though you have all the teachings and know that you need to apply them. We can't do it for you.

Neither can we help you baby the lost and wounded persona that emerges and that you have protected, for a very long time, like a shameful secret. In fact shame is the operative word. It's created a schizophrenic-type psychological split which sucks in the teachings, leaving you unravelled, reeling in confusion and uncertainty about everything, doubting your own sanity.

Your inner compass loses all bearings and you are lost again in the great ocean of *samsara*, even though you have the map of Self-knowledge in your hands, you cannot make sense of it. The toxic shame *samskara* stands firmly in the way of any access to the Self and you remain firmly shackled to the false persona.

Shame about anything and its handmaiden, guilt, is *tamas* at its worst. There are many reasons why we feel ashamed and all of them are destructive to peace of mind, originating from and building on the lie that we are "flawed" and unworthy. Even if we were never indoctrinated by religion, shame finds its way into the psyche of most people; it seems to be part of the human condition. Many parents use shame and blame to control their children - I am quite certain yours did. It causes an ugly, dark and thoroughly negative psychological condition, attaching itself like a parasite to everything good about life or about who we think we are.

Unknown to us it becomes the filter through which we experience life. It whispers constantly in our ear with the "voices of diminishment," sucking us dry of confidence, of trust in ourselves and life, of goodness, of joy, gorging itself like a leech on our blood. It so often goes undetected because it is very good at masking itself, either through self-aggrandizement or its opposite, self-debasement.

It can also be seen in the wildly fluctuating euphoria you experience when you are present with the teachings/Ramji, and the sudden crash and burn, the fall from grace when not. It is why you so desperately want to be with Ramji - to flee from your pain and feel protected by him/the teachings. He cannot give you succour, even as your *guru*. Nobody can. It is his job to make you stand free of fear, on your own feet. Independent of him or anyone, free at last, of Aliya, while loving and accepting her unconditionally.

Though shame is always a lie no matter what caused it, when it is the root cause of a *samskara* it is very difficult to eradicate by transforming it into devotion for the Self, but it can be done when we have the courage to face it and so allow Self-knowledge to expunge it. Because shame is such an ugly hidden secret, Self-knowledge will not

work until we do and love ourselves anyway.

Shame will play out in feelings of intense vulnerability, resentment, moodiness, depression, anger, lack of trust, defensiveness, to name a few. Shame creates a mind that is always suspicious that others are judging it and fears criticism, but is also seeks criticism because it believes it deserves punishment while defending its fear of “being discovered” as unworthy, useless, having no value to anyone. Shame and guilt always hurry towards its complement, punishment. Only there does its satisfaction lie.

When shame is hidden in the unconscious, the mind often overcompensates by creating an identity as the “coper,” the righteous one who fixes everything and takes care of everyone, the efficient one, the one who never gets looked after but looks after and carries everyone else, secretly resenting it, crying inside with loneliness.

What are you protecting and why? I suspect it has to do with your family.

Yet why do you skirt away from this truth when we allude to it? You instantly defend them. I know you love them, of course you do. They are not to blame for who they are and how they are made. This is not about making them wrong or bad either. It’s about pulling out that shame/need *samskara* by the roots. Not even with Ramji, your teacher, will you open up about this very deep wound. It won’t heal until you do, Aliya. It may not be real, but unless you are happy to live with the pain for the rest of your life, being pulled apart by the pressure, then be done with it. Pull out that festering pus-filled splinter.

When that strong shame/need *samskara* arises, if you get hooked by the turbulent thoughts and emotional patterns inherent in being the small, limited, needy *jiva*, even in seemingly small day-to-day issues, you will never be free of it. The ever-changing and limited idea of who you are trying to keep alive as the person is just a memory, a guilt/shame-inspired thought. For the most part, it is a toxic program. Get rid of it; pay it no heed!

The first step is to see the program for what it is, where it originates from (beginningless ignorance/the *gunas/Maya*), and not your parents or anyone else. Everyone is a product of their *karma* and *vasanas* until and unless Self-knowledge obtains. There is no blame. The next step is to say NO! to the VODs. Just do it. There is no law against this, because they do not speak the truth about who you are. Be vigilant and keep doing it, no matter how long it takes. One thought at a time, Aliya. Never give up. What price freedom?

Satya and *mithya* is duality if you think the *jiva* is as real as the Self. Taking a stand as the Self means the *jiva* is as good as non-existent. You are Self. You are not The Self and the *jiva*, although the *jiva* is you. So when *jiva* appears dismiss it through understanding. It does not require you to change your relationship with your mother/siblings/children – all who, I am sure, have abused you and used you with your consent. All it requires is changing your attitude to the attachment to them – to the idea of who you are to them and they to you. It’s about standing up for Aliya and embracing the power of no. No more self-abuse. Don’t you think it’s time?

We feel for you in your vulnerability, Aliya, and wish there was more we could do or say. Vedanta is for grown-ups who have dealt with their childhood issues or at least are willing to. See them for what they are – paper dragons.

We love you, but if you want to remain a wounded bird, we cannot help you, though we will always be here in love.

~ With much love, Sundari