

Inner Guidance

A common pitfall encountered among spiritual seekers is the premature reliance on inner guidance and the consequent neglect of self-development or readiness to follow an external teacher or Master. Of course, the other side of the coin is the total reliance on the external Guru and the neglect to call on the Inner Guide when it becomes appropriate.

Both types of behavior are common because the mind is conditioned towards either/or situations and take comfort in black and white responses. On the path towards Self-Realization, binary logic has to be discarded.

The rationale for following inner guidance is sound. After all, we all have the Divine spark within us. However, it is often the ego which makes us think that in our present confused mind-state that it is possible to distinguish inner guidance from our subconscious outpourings. It is the ego that fears the discipline of following an external Teacher, the bridge between the objective and subjective. It is comforting but dangerous to rely on the subjective, especially in the beginning stages of the path.

On the development before inner guidance, the sage Patanjali has authoritatively stated:

From the practice of the different parts of yoga, after the destruction of impurity, spiritual illumination arises that develops into awareness of reality.

Yoga Sutras 2.28

Therefore, only after the sincere practice of the techniques of yoga can one expect to tune into the true Inner Guide. Until then, one should humbly learn from whoever has been sent by the Divine to guide us externally.

In Light of Kriya Yoga

This does not mean that the practitioner should blindly follow his external guide, of whatever spiritual level he or she may be, and be fearful of following their own guidance. Yoga is not a religion - it is a science of Self-Realization. When the Inner Guide appears, then we must place ourselves in His grace. There is never any conflict between a Satguru or Master and the Inner Guide.

Again, Patanjali has described the Inner Guide as follows, “Being unconditioned by time, Ishvara is Teacher even of the ancient.” (Yoga Sutras 1.26)

Ishwar is the Lord who is the unseen guide residing in our hearts.

Another description is given by Upamanyu in the epic Mahabharata, “Mahadeva, You impart instruction in utter silence. You observe the vow of equanimity for you instruct in silence.”

Here, Lord Shiva is the Inner Guru who imparts liberation in silence. The form of Lord Shiva that is invoked as the Inner Guide is called Dakshinamurti. The following is a further description of this enigmatic Being:

How wonderful! Under a fig tree sits the youthful Teacher among aged disciples. The Teacher remains silent and yet the disciples are enlightened.

Dakshinamurti Upanishad

It is not possible to impart the truth of Absolute Knowledge through language, only through direct experience, in silence. Silence is the ultimate Divine Grace – it is what we all crave for in our souls.

Even those who have not sufficiently developed advanced states of consciousness where Dakshinamurti can lead them, have utilized external aids for connecting to some aspect of the inner guidance. Such

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techniques as the use of pendulums, muscle testing, tarot cards etc. serve as makeshift means to get connected to higher states of consciousness. However, there is always the danger that the ego or the sub-conscious desires may interfere with the guidance.

The yogic method is for direct intuition and the factors involved are:

- purification of the mind to develop the unimpeded pathways to direct intuition
- courage to follow guidance
- discrimination to separate true guidance from ego-mind play

A word of caution is in order for those who are still under the sway of their ego or subconscious programs (and after all, who isn't?) Under no circumstances would your inner guidance counsel violence against yourself or others. Truth (*satya*) and *ahimsa* (non-violence) are valuable yardsticks to guide our behavior, whether with external guides or the Inner Guide.