

Avoiding a Comfort Level

Gurudev said that the human being is a comfort-loving animal, which means that we want not to be disturbed, we want to feel comfortable. We want to find a comfort level whether it be physical, mental, or spiritual, some place where we no longer have to struggle.

Comfort is quite different from contentment, which is an essential spiritual quality. Contentment infers that we are relating ourselves to the Divine; we see our place in the universe. We are content with where God has placed us, and if He demands more than that from us, we are content with that too as being part of His will. On the other hand, comfort-loving is related to the ego.

In the secular world there are those who constantly try to disturb our comfort level even if we find one. Sometimes that is good for us. If we are settling for less than our potential, then it is good to be disturbed, to be inspired, to be roused up to move on. But if someone is trying to disturb our comfort level by making us greedy for more, by disturbing our relationship with our neighbors—not because we're suffering an injustice, but to stir up hatred for their own ends—then it is not good. It comes from evil.

Spiritual teachers too try to disturb our comfort level. Some do so for their own ends. They want something from us, perhaps they want us to follow them. On the other hand, it is the task of a true *guru* to constantly disturb us if we have drifted into a spiritual comfort level. This can happen no matter what reason we came into the spiritual life. If we came into the spiritual life suffering pain, we may find a solution, either quickly or after a period of time. At that point, perhaps not knowing any better, we settle into a comfort level when actually we are meant to be continuously evolving.

However, even if we understand this and we have entered into the spiritual life to evolve—we don't want to stop until the goal is reached—the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. There is always the temptation to settle for what we have already accomplished. Thus Gurudev is constantly urging us to do more. Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī will frequently find ways of disturbing us, trying to get us out of our comfort level and to keep us striving.

In any case, it is important for us to clearly distinguish between the spiritual virtue of contentment and the spiritual vice of a comfort level. We are meant to discriminate, to be content with what we are meant to be content with, but to avoid—at all costs—a comfort level.