

Rejoice In The Inner Voice

Could the barking of dogs have anything to do with our happiness in life? The Native Americans explain allegorically that all of us have two internal barking dogs - a good dog and a bad dog. The good dog inspires us towards beneficial activities, whereas the bad dog incites us towards destructive acts. The dog that barks louder prevails and we do its bidding. We are not just mute witnesses in this dog drama, though; we empower the dogs by our choice. The dog we listen to more is the dog that barks louder. So the Red Indians conclude their allegory, "Don't listen to the bad dog."



The Bhagavad-gita explains a similar concept; the good dog is called the higher self and the bad dog the lower self.

For most people, the higher self is nothing higher than their own intelligence. Intelligence is what guides an adult at a road crossing to look on both sides first, not just impulsively race across. On special occasions, however, the higher self becomes the conduit for an inner voice, thus paving the way for extraordinary artistic works or scientific discoveries. The classic example is Archimedes' discovery of the principle of specific gravity by inspiration in - of all places - a bathtub. All of us have, sometime or other, experienced the exhilaration and empowerment that accompanies inspiration. The nineteenth-century mathematician Karl Gauss identified the source of inspiration. After struggling for years to prove a certain theorem about numbers, when he suddenly "got" the solution, he recognized, "I've succeeded not on account of my painful effort, but by the grace of God. Like a sudden flash of lightning, the riddle happened to be solved." Thus the inner voice is the voice of the all-wise Supreme, who enriches us with wisdom from within.



These sudden flashes of illumination are exciting, but equally, if not more, important, is the reassuring guidance that the inner voice can offer us in our daily lives. The Gita (10.8) explains that divine love is the frequency tuner, which enables us to steadily hear the inner voice. By prayer, devotional meditation and chanting of the holy names, all of us can rejoice in the inner voice.

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