



“Resistance  
to  
the  
unpleasant  
situation  
is  
the  
root  
of  
suffering.”

Ram Dass

Our mystic is very clear. The root of suffering rests in our response to what is unfolding. Remove your resistance to unpleasant situations and you can remove your suffering. But how do you stop resisting the arrival of unpleasant things? How do you stop resisting the demise of pleasant things? How do you stop retreating from the pain of unpleasant experience? How do you make yourself stay present and embrace the hurtful and disagreeable aspects of human reality?

Upon hearing the above guidance, your *unconscious* mind immediately decides resistance is bad, and the opposite – yielding or surrender – is good. So it’s now busy setting up surrender to unpleasant things as better than resistance. Thus it will now drive you *toward* surrender and *away from* resistance. Since your resistance is what needs to be accepted, this unconscious action only makes it harder to reach the root cause of your suffering – the resistance itself.

When you *consciously* accept your resistance, the suffering stops. You can’t get rid of the pain and unpleasantness in life. But you can get rid of the pain *because* of the pain – or, what is rightly named, emotional suffering. It is not the pain of unpleasant situations that is the problem. It is the extra

pain we *unconsciously* create when we refuse to accept what is already here – in the moment – unfolding before us.

Each of us is driven by a powerful biological edict. It relentlessly pulls us *toward* pleasure and *away from* pain - a smart strategy for biological survival. You know the power of sexual attraction. Its passion draws you like a moth to a flame – even though you know you might get burned, you're still oh-so-willing to jump into the fire. The strength of this drive is what guarantees the continuation of the species.

Likewise, unpleasantness and pain evoke deep and powerful waves of aversion, avoidance, fear, and even terror. Anything potentially risky or dangerous evokes a commanding desire to escape. This automatic opposition to unpleasantness and pain protects us from potential injury and death. Again, it guarantees the continuation of the species. Not the individual, but the species as a whole.

The key is to relax *into* your resistance. Don't try and get rid of it. Don't try to stop it. Don't be against it. It is your human nature in action. Understand it. Let it be exactly what it is. How? Just step to the side of the resistance. Then feel it in your body and investigate, with your awareness, exactly what unpleasantness you're avoiding.

Whatever you think *about* the unpleasantness, whatever story you create *about* the pain, what is disagreeable is already there. You have the power to release the suffering. You have no control over the unlikeable and distasteful that is already present. You can't stop that. It is here and now. The only way to stop the *suffering* is to embrace your resistance. Understand it. In that moment, you touch the wonder of being *both* human *and* divine.

The human experience is the story of pleasure versus. pain – in all its creative forms. The divine experience embraces this human struggle as *one harmonious whole* dancing in the flow *between* pleasure and pain. It showers the human experience with the healing power of divine compassion. This compassion is so strong it opens the human heart and liberates the divine love hidden within. When the human heart opens to divine love, avoiding unpleasantness is no longer a goal. Instead, the healing power of divine human compassion arises – and that changes everything.

Until next month when another Reflection will appear, may you be aware of resisting any unpleasant situations. May you relax *into* that resistance, embracing its presence, and feeling its power. As your suffering disappears, may your open heart soothe the pain. May you taste surprise and wonder as your wounds are touched by this new dimension of acceptance, love, and compassion – that rare and seamless embrace from *both* dimensions of your being – divine *and* human.

Ragini