

**II.15**

**The discerning person sees that all is suffering, because of changes due to the passage of time, to worries and conditioning, and to inappropriate manifestations of the constituent qualities of nature.**

*Seeing that my thoughts, words, and actions can cause suffering, am I watchful enough?*

*Am I most vulnerable to time-related changes (parināmas), to worries and conditioning, (saṃskāras), or to dependency on desires (tāpas) such as tobacco and alcohol?*

*Am I dominated by inertia or overactivity, or do I alternate between the two?*

*How do I simultaneously develop discernment (in order to become aware that all is potential suffering), and serenity (I.36)?*

*Is awareness of the possible deep suffering of each being dangerous, progressive, or advantageous?*

*Is this aphorism optimistic, pessimistic, or realistic?*

This aphorism asserts that as we become more discerning we see suffering everywhere. Though we may see this as negative and pessimistic, the discerning person acknowledges suffering. He or she perceives that immediate pleasure can also be a source of suffering.

There are two possible sources of suffering. One is the interplay between the human psyche and its surroundings, examples of which are:

- changes brought about by time and old age
- ills, pangs, and unrealizable, inappropriate desires and whims
- rigidity created by one's own mental and cultural constructions

All of these factors lead to suffering, either separately or because they come into conflict, especially in the form of conflicting habits (*saṃskāra*) and because of the inevitable passage of time (*parināma*). Certain personalities adapt better to change, whereas others need habits and routine (see *Āyurveda* typology in aphorism I.22).

The second source of suffering comes from the different colorations in the psyche created by the incessant changes in the constituent qualities of nature—equilibrium (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*), and inertia (*tamas*) (*guṇas*, see commentary in aphorism I.16). These qualities do not always show themselves appropriately. For example, instead of being flooded with inertia when dropping off to sleep, we

might experience overactivity, then, in the morning when this overactivity would be welcome, we are tired, and inertia predominates.

Once we recognize this, we can see it in others, though we may not always be able to alleviate this suffering. Discernment allows us to become aware of the mechanism and avoid its return, as the next aphorism tells us. In fact, everything can cause suffering for someone who lacks vigilance.

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*pariṇāmatāpasāṃskāraduḥkhaирguṇavṛttivirodhācca duḥkhameva  
sarvam vivekinaḥ pariṇāma-tāpa-  
saṃskāra duḥkhaiḥ-guṇa-vṛtti-virodhāt-ca duḥkham-  
eva sarvam vivekinaḥ*

*Pariṇāma*: transformation, or change due to time, lapse of time, motivation. *Tāpa*: burn, grief, worry. *Saṃskāra*: impregnation of the mind, conditioning, habit. *Duḥkhaiḥ*: ache, pain, sadness. *Guṇa*: constituent qualities of nature, attributes. *Vṛtti*: activity, fluctuation, movement. *Virodhāt*: contradictory character, incompatibility, conflict, hostility. *Ca*: and. *Duḥkham*: suffering. *Eva*: assuredly, for sure. *Sarvam*: all. *Vivekinaḥ*: for the person of discernment, the sage.