

Non-Dual Self in Cultural Contexts: Is Awareness Same Wherever We Go?

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Rationale: This paper is based on field research of the cultural contexts of non-dual teachings in Russia, India, Turkey and US. Frequently taken as a universal teachings, the message of non-duality develops in cultural contexts, informed by interactions between the culture-specific configurations of character (self), ritual, language, myth, upbringing, family system, various life styles and other components of culture. While deep mystics of different cultures mutually understand non-dual insight, the paths to non-dual consciousness are culture specific.

Research Data: I review satsang and sohbet (non-dual dialog in Sufi tradition) in India and Turkey as interactive, dialogical happenings where non-duality is recognized as communal and interrelational field. Similarly, clinical data on the use of spiritual practices of Samadhi and Nididhyasana (various types of contemplation of the non-dual consciousness) of traditional Vedanta, shows that the requirements of characterological maturity are paramount for the use of these practices in the western setting. Clinical effects are discussed.

Conclusions: Therapeutic practice, being specifically western healing device, requires careful explorations of the western contexts of non-duality as the ultimate medicine. Presentation suggests the developmental approach to non-dual therapy, based on longitudinal research of westerners in the process of spiritual awakening (Hridayam® method).