

BLISSFUL LIFE

Focus on the self for spiritual growth



B.K. NIRVAIR

What is the way to progress on the spiritual path and become worthy of serving the world? Merely listening to or studying spiritual knowledge is not enough. It has been observed that unless one reflects deeply on each point of spiritual knowledge, it cannot be understood clearly. That understanding has to be then converted into experience, for which one needs to practise the knowledge in one's life. Experience shows us the reality of what we are aiming for in our spiritual effort.

God is known as the benefactor of the world, and His knowledge is likewise. Having faith and using that knowledge can only bring benefit, but in spite of having clear spiritual knowledge, the habit of being credulous

in spiritual matters crops up in some souls. Swayed by their feelings, they ignore simple spiritual truths and believe in things that appeal more to their emotional side. This leads them astray.

Some spiritual aspirants may not be very sophisticated, but their strong faith carries them forward on the spiritual path. They face few hurdles, and never become an obstacle for others by misleading them or creating conflict.

Some others, who have sharp intellects — particularly those who have studied philosophy or scriptures — can be conceited, and they argue over everything instead of trying to understand and experience what they have learnt. If we live by spiritual truths instead of debating them, it would greatly help improve the atmosphere in the world.

There is a lot of difference of opinion among people worldwide, which causes ill feeling and conflict. What is the solution to that? Focus on the self. Time is most valuable, and if spiritual aspirants stop wasting time and instead focus on having an elevated consciousness and serving others, it will be possible to create a climate



of peace. Our vibrations should be such that they inspire others to live a nobler life. If we pay attention to this, experiment with it, and see the results, we will realise its value. The first benefit will be that our time will not go to waste. Our state of mind will be so elevated that we

will experience bliss that is independent of the senses. Purity in our thoughts, words and behaviour brings such an experience. We can do this only when we are peaceful inside. If my mind is disturbed, how can I create any peace around me?

To remain focussed on one's effort, one needs to

have a high aim — of serving the world, including the elements of nature, through one's spiritual qualities. Constant remembrance of this aim and determination to achieve it will help us grow spiritually.

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DISCOURSE

MY TRANSFORMATION WILL CONVINCE MY KIN



DADI JANKI

If my friends and relations do not choose to accompany me on my spiritual path, why should I chase after them trying to get them to change? They will not listen to me anyway, no matter what I say. A better approach is to focus on my own change process. A river does not need to urge people to drink its water. People are naturally drawn to it, provided its waters are pure, free-flowing and sweet. In the

same way, become so attractive through your spiritual efforts that everyone will want to join you, naturally.

We are hindered in this by attachments, which tend to make us forget that our well-being is not dependent on others at all, that we each have the capacity to flow and sparkle in our own unique way. Having forgotten this, we developed the habit of turning to others to feel good about ourselves. Using other people in this way is a deceptive source of well-being, and this deception leads to a great deal of pain. We can change this habit by keeping an eye on our aim. If we do not, our spiritual powers will be destroyed again and again as we allow ourselves to come under the influence of limited emotions. Instead of losing out like this, we should pay more attention to what we are doing. We will only be able to make others free when we free ourselves first.

MESSAGE

Key to sustainable living: Inner contentment



SYLVIA ISMAIL

A spiritual life reduces neediness for wealth, material possessions and external validation. As inner contentment

grows, we move towards a simpler way of living. We discover fulfillment has nothing to do with what we have — it's all about who we are.

Consuming less, we waste less. It becomes a virtuous circle: As we begin to live more sustainably, cherishing the earth and respecting all forms of life, we harmonize with the world around us and stop hankering after external props.

A sort of personal environmental impact assessment reveals that, with thoughtfulness and planning, we can choose

a new way of living and start "walking the talk". Be assured that, cumulatively, lots of small steps add up to a major contribution to shifting the current prevalence of overconsumption and waste of resources: If many of us join in the effort, we reach critical mass.

Some practical steps: Adopt a vegetarian — or, even better, a vegan, diet. Enjoy the flavours, variety and richness of what the plant world has to offer, and be creative — it's a journey of discovery. If going vegan, beware the pitfalls, for example,

soya may have been produced unsustainably.

Buy locally produced, seasonal foods to reduce your carbon footprint. Look for organic to avoid the damaging impact of industrial agriculture. Choose fresh and unprocessed to limit the chemical additives in your diet, boost your health and get that glow!

Avoid waste as much as you can. Globally, up to a third of food is wasted through poor transport or storage, overzealous application of "best before" rules, and consumer carelessness.

Conserve water. The UN Environment Programme estimates that, by 2025, two out of three people in the world will live in water-stressed areas. Among our most precious resources, fresh water is under immense pressure from over-exploitation and pollution.

Buy sustainable clothing. The production of textiles and clothing has become increasingly unsustainable with the growth of "fast fashion." By informing yourself, buying mindfully, and re-/up-cycling the clothes you

already have, you can make a difference.

Give "disposable" a wide berth. One estimate is that, by 2050, there could be more plastic than fish in the seas. Plastic particles have reached the deepest oceans, and they are inside our bodies. Take your own cloth or net bags to the shops and refuse plastic; buy a reusable cup for takeout drinks; use your purchasing power to push for change in product packaging. Glass can be recycled endlessly; many plastics are harder to recycle.

Feed the soul. The capacity to be true to our principles comes from regular meditation. Withdrawing to our inner space of silence and peace, we reconnect with God, gaining the wisdom and strength to face challenges and effect change.

And pass the message on: Educate children and encourage them to join in; reach out to family and friends; join local campaigns to make a difference. It all adds up.

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RIGHT BALANCE

LIVING LIFE AS AN ART



JUDY JOHNSON

"Any normal action that takes on a special degree of attention, expression, finesse and value is an art — a high standard of doing things."

—Purity magazine, April 2016

Living becomes art when every thought, word and action is an expression of spiritual fullness.

Artists spend years refining the small actions of their craft. Although a flawless performance appears effortless, mastery requires the consistent repetition of small efforts until they are refined to near-perfection.

Art requires mastery: Our lives are the same. The quality of a life is the result of small actions



consistently repeated day after day for years. This is how we learn to master the daily aspects of living in the world; in bodies and in relationships with others. We learn, we lead, we stay healthy, and we need to refresh ourselves in the physical world.

The expression of mastery is a reflection of 'perfectly balanced actions' that enable our life-energy to be used for the self and others at the right time in the right way. It is backstage, in the artist's studio, that we discover and refine the subtle

shifts of awareness and attitude that are required to generate the actions that make living an art. Our daily spiritual practice is the consistent repetition of these small energy refinements, these subtle shifts of awareness that infuse high-quality energy into every aspect of living, creating living art.

These subtle refinements are possible when we have God at the other end of a safety harness, holding us up above the turbulent, polarizing energies that swirl beneath us and within us

as we attempt to master living now. Then, like a spinning top, we maintain perfect balance with our focus on the point (soul) and the Point (Supreme Soul). When the energy is right, a balanced action follows.

In astrological terms, sixteen celestial degrees refers to the moon when it is at its fullest. Seen from earth, the moon brightens the night sky as the sun illuminates its entire surface. The aim of Rajyoga, as taught by the Brahma Kumaris, is to become full of virtues and positive energy. Pure spiritual energy fills every aspect of the 'being' when the darkness of the soul is released.

When the human soul is full, complete with all virtues, it shines like the full moon reflecting the light of the spiritual Sun (God) on its entire surface.

When every thought, word and action is filled with this highest spiritual energy, living becomes art.

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ELEVATED ATTITUDE

PURITY DETERMINES OUR QUALITY



B.K. ASHA

The deities worshipped in temples are greatly revered, so much so that kings bow down at their feet, and the rich and famous supplicate before them for a little prasad — the devotional offering handed out to the faithful. Why do they do that? What is it that the deities have and the devotees do not? It is purity.

On the path of spirituality, purity defines one's personality and nobility. The degree of one's purity can be discerned from one's character and behaviour.

What makes a spiritual aspirant noble? Such a soul is never attracted to material things or other people. Trivial matters do not draw the attention of those of high rank: They have no desire to accept anything that belongs to someone else; their



demeanour shows the assurance of being complete, and not wanting anything; their words are sweet and valuable, that is, they speak few but meaningful words, and those in contact with them cherish what they say. That is the nobility of worldly people; one with spiritual nobility is far more elevated.

Souls of such quality never look at the defects or weaknesses of others. They do not dwell on the flaws that another person is trying to be free of — shortcomings that have brought about the other person's downfall. Their thoughts will not go towards what belongs to others. Evil habits, traits, and

weaknesses are unknown to these elevated souls. If such a soul acquires any weakness from others, they cannot be called a royal soul.

The words of souls who are spiritual and royal cannot cause sorrow — nor are they like stones that would cause someone to fall. They are not even ordinary or wasteful words, but words that are powerful and loving. Another sign of such royal souls is that they are not verbose — instead of using fifty words to describe something in unnecessary detail, they use ten words to convey the essence.

Whoever comes in contact with such a soul experiences the qualities of a benefactor

in them. Others find peace and solace in their company and feel that they have come to an angel.

When one reaches this level of purity, one becomes a source of succour for distressed people. The spiritual and royal qualities of such a soul help others forget their sorrows.

In a world where suffering is increasing, we can serve others adequately and quickly only when we have spiritually enriched ourselves to the extent that purity and nobility shine through our face. In our forehead others should see a pure, noble soul, and our eyes should convey the feeling of brotherhood.

Our elevated attitude should transform the atmosphere of any place. If celebrities can make a big impression, how impressive should be the personality of purity? Can we empower weak souls through our pure consciousness? When we are merciful towards the self and others, we will become unconditionally loving and cooperative, and then others will see us stars sparkling on earth.

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