



Spiritual Fulfillment in Modern Life

by Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj

People all over the world are searching for the solutions to the mysteries of life and death. They are trying to discover what lies beyond this physical world. Recently published books and magazine articles, as well as conferences organized to investigate these subjects, show that interest in spiritual pursuits is growing. More and more people are striving to achieve contentment and spiritual fulfillment.

The demands of modern life make it difficult for us to strike a harmonious balance in the development of our spiritual, intellectual, and physical aspects. The pressures of life force us to give more weight to our intellectual growth, for that is what counts in our school career and in finding a good job. Our physical side is considered to be important for good health. We value exercise and sports for our physical and mental well-being. Health experts today are pointing out how physical exercise also relieves stress.

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Society as a whole values intellectual and physical growth. Unfortunately, it does not place a high value in spiritual development. We are brought up to associate spirituality with the rites and rituals of religious institutions. If people tell us they have devoted their lives to searching for God, we equate them with monks in a monastery sitting on wooden benches and praying day and night. In the past, people would leave their homes and their families to search for God in the forests or deserts. But with the advent of the industrial age, and now the technological and information age, more and more demands are placed upon us with regard to our time and attention. Today, it is not practical for people to leave the world to pursue spirituality.

The challenge I would like to address is: How can we pursue our spiritual goals in a way that is socially acceptable and socially responsible. How can we attain spiritual heights without sacrificing our intellectual and physical growth? And how can we do so in a way that enhances our family and community relationships?

Many people are under the misconception that those who search for God must leave their homes and society and live in the jungles or on the mountaintops. Perhaps it was possible in the past, before we had such an interdependent economic system. But in today's world, who can support themselves, not to mention their families, without holding a job and contributing to society?

In this century, great mystics such as Sant Kirpal Singh Ji Maharaj and Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj showed us how we can attain self-knowledge and God-realization in the context of modern life. Their approach was so simple and so practical that it has enabled hundreds of thousands of people throughout the world to lead a productive, fulfilling life in the world while working towards spiritual ends. Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj called this approach "positive mysticism." By coining this term, he drew a clear distinction between this approach and negative mysticism which required one to give up the world in order to find God. The path of positive mysticism enables one to achieve the best of both worlds.

Spiritual development is a process by which we attain self-knowledge and God-realization. We have a physical body, a mind, and a soul. Spiritual growth involves the realization that our true self or being is the soul, not the body and the mind. Throughout our lives we have become so identified with our body and mind that on our own, we cannot distinguish our self from them. The great philosophers of ancient Greece exhorted us to do so with the words, "Man, Know Thyself." This expression is written on the entrance of the Delphic Oracle. Spiritual teachers who have mastered the art of knowing themselves can teach others how to achieve this goal. If we investigate the various methods used throughout history, we will find that the most effective way to realize our self is through the process of meditation. Saints, seers,

and mystics have told us that God is within us. They further explained that soul is a part of God. If we can turn our attention from the world outside to the spiritual realms within, we will discover that we are soul and we will realize that God is within us. Meditation is a process of inverting our attention from the physical body and world outside to experience these truths. The outer expression of the soul is the attention. In our day-to-day life our attention is spread out through the body. In order to enter the inner spiritual realms, we have to withdraw our attention from the world outside and from our physical body.

There are two primary forces or energy currents enlivening the physical body. They have been referred to by many spiritual adepts as the motor current and the sensory current. The motor current controls the involuntary bodily functions such as breathing, circulation of the blood, and growth of hair and nails. The sensory current responsible for making us aware of sensation and feeling. One can withdraw the sensory current from the body without disturbing the body's involuntary functions. This method is simpler, easier, and more natural than any other form of meditation. This is the method taught by teachers of the Science of Spirituality.

Normally, our attention is attracted to the world through the mind and the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. In order to realize our true self, we have to invert our attention and enter the inner realms. To do so, our attention must be collected at a point from where the soul can enter the regions beyond. This point is the seat of the soul in the body. It is located between and behind the two eyebrows and has been referred to by various names in different religions and philosophies around the world. It has been called the tenth door, the third eye, tisra til, shiv netra, daswan dwar, and the single eye. In the Bible we find: "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

In meditation, we withdraw our attention from the outside world and the physical body and focus it at the seat of the soul. When we concentrate at that point, will see Light within. We will also hear inner Celestial Music. This inner Sound is the Harmony of Harmonies referred to by the ancient Greek sages such as Plato. By concentrating fully on the inner Light and Sound, the soul rises above the limitations of mind and matter and ultimately experiences self-knowledge and God-realization. Nothing can compare with the bliss, joy, and peace, we gain from such an experience. We attain a state of lasting happiness and peace. This is the goal of meditation.

This form of meditation can be practiced in the comfort of our own home, while sitting in a train on the way to work, or at any time we can sit quietly without distractions. It does not involve difficult practices or rigorous postures. We can meditate when sitting in any pose that is most convenient and in which we can sit still for a

period of time. Meditation on the inner Light and Sound is so simple that it can be practiced by a young child or an elderly person, by those who are healthy and those who have physical disabilities.

After finding a comfortable position, we close our eyes, gaze within, and experience, with the help of a competent teacher, the divine Light and Sound. By engaging in meditation for an hour or two every day, we tap great rewards and numerous benefits on the physical, mental and spiritual levels.

Meditation results in our experiencing physical well-being. During meditation our body is relaxed and we are free from stress and tension. Over the course of many years medical doctors have documented the adverse effects of stress on our physical health. There are many diseases related to stress. Meditation helps us reduce stress and experience inner peace and joy. We are able to face the inevitable problems of life with a calmer, more tranquil attitude. We see our worldly difficulties from a new perspective. We gain so much inner support and strength that when we pass through the trials and tribulations of life we do not experience their pinching effects.

Our increased concentration and reduced stress and tension help us achieve success in our worldly activities. A natural by-product of our spiritual growth is that we become more efficient and productive in our places of work. We are able to produce more in less time than those who have not developed the art of concentration. Meditation also helps students excel in their studies because they are able to concentrate longer and retain more information.

There is a more sublime aspect of meditation which has untold benefits in our lives. We begin to see all living things, whether human, animal, or plant, as a part of God. We realize that a divine soul enlivens all creation. We see God's Light shining in all and we realize that all beings are children of the same universal Creator. This is a profound realization that brings about fundamental changes in the way we live. We develop love for all humanity, in fact, for every living creature. That is why Sant Darshan Singh Ji Maharaj proclaimed in one of his verses:

*“Embrace every man as your very own,
And shower your love freely wherever you go.”*

As a result of this transformation, we begin to love all people and consider everyone a part of our family. We gain tolerance and patience towards those around us. We develop compassion and understanding, and we seek to help those in need.

The more we perfect our meditations, the more we will come in contact with the source of divine love - and the more we will love and be loved. Peace and harmony will enter our hearts and homes

and will be reflected in every aspect of our life. Throughout the world people are praying for peace. But as the expression goes, charity begins at home. Spirituality is an active path that is life-fulfilling. As more and more people bring peace into their own hearts, and into their own spheres of influence, the effects will be cumulative and will contribute to world peace.

Sustained spiritual growth requires that we develop a firm foundation based upon ethical virtues. To progress spiritually we need to internalize those traits and qualities which will enhance concentration and lead to harmonious living. Some of these qualities include nonviolence or non-injury to living things, truthfulness, humility, purity, love for all, and service to humanity.

How can we clear our mind and concentrate fully if we are criticizing others or thinking ill of others, or if we are trying to deceive others, or if we have too much pride and think that we are better than others? Meditation requires us to still our mind and focus our attention completely on that which is divine. By developing ethical virtues, our lives and our thoughts will be more harmonious and peaceful and it will be easier for us to concentrate in meditation.

The peace, love, and joy that we gain by meditating radiate to all those we meet. Without any effort on our part, we spread a divine fragrance wherever we go. We are inspired to utilize our talents for the good of humanity. And in whatever sphere we are working, we become a source of help and comfort to those around us.

By pursuing spiritual development, we will be performing the greatest service to our own self and to others. We will become a positive force in the lives of our family, friends, and co-workers. In fact, we will contribute to the betterment of the world.

The challenge before us is to develop our soul along with our body and mind. If we accept this challenge and sincerely pursue its realization, we will achieve spiritual fulfillment in the context of modern life. In doing so, we will realize the highest and most sublime purpose of human existence.

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