



Contentment

The more positive the thoughts flowing through my mind, the more contented I will feel. It is easy to feel contented when we are praised and appreciated but to remain contented when we are being criticised and rejected is the mark of real spiritual strength. The way to develop this level of strength is to learn about God's way of loving. Only when I am in deep contemplation can I see God showing me the kind of love I need to express so that I myself never reject or criticise and always generate good wishes for others. Then I will feel satisfied no matter what life throws at me.

Taking Responsibility, Overcoming Guilt (Part 3)

There is a difference between when we have established our own code of values or beliefs in life, and when we feel obliged (forced) to obey an imposed code of beliefs. **It is important for us to accept on an inner level the code by which we think we should be guided and act.** When we act out of obligation (compulsion), by following a code of beliefs or behaviors that we feel have been imposed but aren't accepted as our own, we should ask ourselves why we act out of obligation (compulsion), basing ourselves on a code we have not accepted. Are we perhaps afraid that, if we don't do it, we will feel guilty?

When we violate the codes of belonging to a group, family, social class or community, generally we feel guilty. If this guilt leads us to question ourselves about what is right for our conscience, we progress in our personal growth and improve our clarity. **It is necessary to respect ourselves, being clear about what the beliefs are on which we base our life, think, feel and evaluate.** This will help us to avoid the gap between what we should and what we want to do. **Until the should and the want are joined, we leave an open space for guilt.**

When we act according to how we feel we **should**, we will feel guilt for not doing what we **want**. While we act according to what we **want**, we will feel guilt for not doing what we **should**. When guilt warns us that there is something to check and correct within us and we are willing to see it, have a dialogue with the self and clarify, we are on the right path. Sometimes guilt acts as an excuse for us to apologize without really taking on the responsibility for what happened; we pass on the responsibility to the established norms, norms that in this case we haven't accepted as our own. In any case, the solution to guilt is to take on self-responsibility.

Soul Sustenance

Temporary And Permanent Sources Of Peace

It's a common notion (idea) to think of peace as being closely related to the beauty of nature - the play of waves on a beach, the blowing of wind through a forest, the soaring and swooping of gulls; in short, anything away from the rush and hurry of the city. Alternatively we associate peace with some physical form of relaxation like headphones plugged into soothing music, a hot bath after a hard day, a brisk walk in the park, etc. In meditation we realize peace to be our very essence (nature); we realize very quickly, trying to extract peace from the world around us or even from some physical sensations in our own bodies gives us only a temporary experience of it.

Once we start meditating, we start to see physical relaxation as an escape from tension and not a solution for it; and the beautiful scenes of nature now no longer as sources radiating permanent peace. But in fact it is their mere absence of conflict, their harmony of colours, forms and sounds which appeal to us. There is something in each of us which cries out to be free from conflict. We discover that small voice or need is only our true nature demanding to be recognized. We realize that neither the body nor nature can give the peace that the soul was longing for, but it has to be tapped from within. Having found it, it remains constant, whether in the city or countryside, in comfort or discomfort. In the midst of noise and confusion, peace is really our own.

Message for the day

To know the fruit of efforts will surely come is to remain happy and healthy.

Expression: To know that the fruit of my effort will eventually come one day is to understand the importance of making effort. Once there is this understanding, it becomes easy to continue making effort, which is like nourishment that keeps one happy. So effort is never stopped till what has to be achieved is achieved.

Experience: Knowing that my effort will surely be fruitful makes me enjoy everything I do. It makes me remain happy, keeps me enthusiastic and free from tiredness, even when things are not going right for me. My mental happiness and well being thus keeps me healthy.

Real freedom

To the unenlightened, death comes but once a lifetime. To those who have chosen to become enlightened there are a thousand chosen deaths before it's time to leave the body and move on. This kind of death is the releasing off all our attachments, from false identity to opinions, from people to possessions. Cutting the subtle threads of attachment frees the spirit from fear, and when the time comes to move on, it's like 'shooting the breeze'. Dying alive is simply letting go of all you hold fast to in your mind. It doesn't actually mean losing anything, simply changing your relationship with the things in your life today. The greatest pleasure for every soul is the result of choosing the living death called detachment. Why? Because attachment is a form of slavery, and it all takes place in our own minds. And the result of detachment? Real freedom.