

## A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO SPIRITUALITY

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In times past, the definition and expression of spirituality was limited exclusively to religious ideology and philosophical concepts; thus spiritual expression began and ended with the relationship of the devotee to the devoted, separating inner causes from outer effects.

Moving to the present, as our knowledge and world experience grow, we recognize that events in one nation affect all nations, changing our view of relationships from personal to international. Our participation in the world expands, broadening our vision, from which evolves the need for engagement and for response to current events in a principled and ethical way.

This need for engagement coupled with our expanding worldview leads to the development of a spiritual attitude based on inclusiveness, involvement and investigation. Strengthened by this attitude we begin to understand that all lives are related, inseparable and holistic – one humanity, one planet, One Life.

We are then led to consider how we express the life that links us to all other lives, how our thoughts and feelings influence our relationships, families and communities. This consideration prompts the wise and skillful use of our talents so that we may contribute our best effort to the growth and development of humanity. In this way we consciously express the kinship of Life and strengthen the “familyhood” of humanity.

Spiritual involvement urges us to walk lightly on the planet, to investigate all aspects of nature, inclusive of humanity, to realize that regardless of how we use our resources we are responsible for the results. Our actions – no matter how minimal – resonate and touch everything in our surroundings and beyond.

Such resourceful and mindful living develops those principles and values that inspire us to measure our lives by what we perceive as good, beautiful and true. Through our search for spiritual development and expression we discover the inner Voice of those principles and values urging us toward a life filled with thought and heart. We hear the call to service.

This call sets us on the road to an expression combined of inner and outer communion. Gone, for the most part, are the days in which an inner calling is answered by retreating to a cloistered environment in preparation for individual development. In this age of rapid communication and change, spirituality begins and continues wherever we are, wherever we travel, whatever our experiences. Unlimited in expression and mode of discovery, it embraces every aspect of our life, for spirituality involves us in a series of expanding wholes – the whole person, the whole group, the whole community, the whole world. Spirituality deals with our ability to relate to and work for the well-being of the *perceived* whole. No area of life is untouched by the opportunity for spiritual expression. If there is love for humanity and the strong desire for its improvement and upliftment, there is the spiritual person actively engaged in the investigation of the good, the beautiful, the true. We begin to recognize spiritual expression in the midst of corporate business meetings, high finance, politics, scientific research, parenting, creative activity, healing activity.

Dynamic and flowing is the life of spirit, stimulating change, transition and adaptation, and encouraging a quest that is constant and ongoing, moving us ceaselessly to our greatest potential. Because of the nature of spiritual involvement, our persistence and perseverance increase. We persist because we grow in spirit and expression; we grow in spirit because we persist, recognizing that the effort is as important as the accomplishments that our experience brings.

Humanity's greatest achievements are based on inspiration and persistence, on the realization that the road to perfection is often littered with imperfection, on the faith that sees us through our struggles, failures and setbacks. Indeed, it is through our struggles and failures that we truly earn our legacy of spirit. We assume the gift of this legacy when we answer the inner call of spiritual involvement, when our attitude is focused on doing and being right for the right reasons, when we dare to investigate the unseen and the unknown, when we determine to walk through the fires of transition and change to emerge on the other side as our best selves.

Seeking our way, we reach back and extend a hand to those who follow as we grasp the hand of those who lead; thus truly involved and evolving we give as we receive, joining the ever-increasing group of pioneers of the light, love and power of the human spirit.