

The Five Basic Prerequisites of Spiritual Development

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THE science of spirituality, as expounded
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Maharaj, is essentially a science of *manmaking*, the realizing of the true nature of the human soul, and there are five basic prerequisites of spiritual development in the science of *man-making*:

1. The aspirant will be a true *ahimsa* (a non-violent person), and this is considered to be the highest of all laws of conduct.
2. The aspirant will live a life of truthfulness.
3. The aspirant will develop a high character.
4. The aspirant will have love for all, and hatred for none.
5. The aspirant will live a life of selfless service for the uplift of all humanity. These are

the five pillars on which the mansions of spirituality can be built. These five pillars are firmly cemented into their foundations by developing the inner spiritual contact. The aspirant looks to the whole world as a house of God and the various rooms of that house are the countries of the world. Human governments may control the bodies - and sometimes the minds - of men; but they cannot achieve *man-making*, and they cannot thwart the joyful flight of the aspiring soul on its upward journey to true freedom. Freedom stems from the inner self. If mankind is to become truly free, the hearts and minds of men must change, and that change must come from within. Out of the abundance of his heart a man speaks; his very words are charged with his inner thoughts and feelings. If he has love for all humanity, his words will be charged with love; whatever radiates from his heart, that will go into the hearts of those who listen to his words. The aspiring seeker, initiated into the kingdom of the soul, realizes that he is yet a part of the entire human family, and that his newfound consciousness is also a gift to all mankind. At the same time as he progresses spiritually, he cannot but help the rest of humanity, for this is the spiritual law. He forgets any pretensions to worldly acclaim or wealth or power, for he does all things as an agent of the mystic adept, who himself is an agent of the Supreme Being, a conscious co-worker in the Divine plan. The five pillars of spiritual training are **not** impractical principles, even as far as this materialistic and transient world is concerned. Contrary to a large body of opinion, the mystic adepts of this planet were not - and are not - impractical dreamers as far as human transactions are concerned. They realize that the lower creation - the planes of mind and matter - come under immutable laws of cause and effect. For every human action, no matter how minute, a scientific cosmic law is brought into operation; and complete compensation is rendered for all acts, whether good or bad. Gautama the Buddha gave voice to this cosmic law:

Everything in the Universe is the fruit of a Just Law, the Law of Causality, the Law of Cause and Effect, the Law of Karma¹

The same universal law is referred to in the Christian scriptures :

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Galatians 6 : 7

The fruit of man's actions can be a barrier to his progress on the spiritual path, and although a competent mystic adept absolves the aspirant of much of his past sins, the five basic requirements must become an integral part of his requisite for spiritual progress. He should be aware that the eternal Presence, from whom no falsehoods are hidden, is always with him. As the psalmist David expounded:

*Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy
presence? If I ascend up into heaven,
thou art there: If I make my bed in
hell, behold thou art there. If I take
the wings of the morning, and dwell
in the uttermost parts of the sea;
even there shall thy hand lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me.*

Psalm 139:7-10

Falsehoods to oneself to others sites, *ahimsa* or non-violence, not only are rooted in past failures and future means the desist fears, and these things have no place on from killing, violence, and injury to other the spiritual path. Falsehoods, fears, and living things, but also means abstention failures produce emotional disturbances from evil thoughts and ill-chosen words that completely negate inner progress; about others. The law of "nature red in these unfortunate are due to tooth and "law" may sway in the emotional imbalance, and it is a sobering Jungle, but in the truly CivPzed man the thought that over half the patients lying practice of *ahimsa* is the greatest virtue in hospital beds in our civilized society of all. The practitioner of *ahimsa* would are from illnesses of emotional assist others to live harmoniously and origin The sincere aspirant must free with joy⁷ rendering both quality and himself from such negative qualities. He quantity in his needed service to human- must learn to live squarely and honestly ity. It is one of the tragedies of our in the eternal Present, which is city that a great percentage Of its which bath foundations," "ought for by peoples are living lives of hard- the patriarch Abraham. The unbalance ship and dire poverty; yet a true *ahimsa* manifested in society and the individual spirit among nations would assure every- is a reflection of the web of falsehoods body of reasonable shelter, adequate woven into international, national, and food, and healthful resources- *Ahimsa* personal life; it is also a basic symptom properly practiced throughout this planet of man's ignorance of the basic unity of would afford all people vaster facilities life. The community - whether regional, for cultural, mental, and spiritual growth. national or international - is a collec- The aspirant must be prepared to live tive, social organism; its living cells are a life of truthfulness as the second pre- the individuals who comprise it. When

manifestation of local, national or global schizophrenia. The individual aspirant must rise above the maladies of modern society, being "in the world but not of it." He must face the truth, both about himself and about the world at large. -- The aspirant wiU develop a high character as the third prerequisite on the spiritual path. High character is the mantle of the self-dsciplined person. The bounties of Nature are for legitimate use, but when a human being ravenously indulges in sensual pleasures for their own sake, he becomes that much less than

human. His personal standards are lowered to the degree where he becomes a miserable puppet of his own overwhelming lusts and desires. But the removal of such deficiencies of character is easier said than done. Theologians and educators alike admonish man not to sin. But these wise authorities do not teach mankind how to eliminate the conditioning of the mind which predisposes man to sin. Ceasing wrong conduct, although admirable in itself, is not the same as removing the *cause* of the human tendency to error. The elimination of the cause of sin is a prime necessity in the inner path. The individual aspirant must seek out the inner cause of a bad habit and then transform the misused thinking pattern into a blueprint for positive good. A great deal of the technique used in educational practice is comprised of pseudo methodology. Because of this, some time will usually elapse before the aspirant is completely free of the false patterns of thinking with which he has been conditioned by the forces of authoritarian, dogmatic "education." The inertia inherent in every individual human being enables these erroneous patterns of thought to continue functioning until they have been eliminated by corrective methods. Character-building is a gradual process, for the human mind opposes any change in the inner orientation of the human being. But the true spiritual teacher will show the aspirant the correct technique of reorientation, which is one of the natural, aesthetic transmutation of these false tendencies into higher qualities. The fourth pillar of behavior avers that the aspirant will have love for all, hatred for none. Love is the core of all human virtues, and it could be a panacea for most of the world's ills, **if** only mankind would recognize this fact. Shrivied of its divisive doctrines and dogmas, the central edifice of the Christian religion is built on the twin principles of love for God and love for fellowman: "Love thy God with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy might," and "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth guru of the Sikh faith, emphasized the basic need for love as a prime requisite on the path to God-realization: "Verily say unto you that God reveals Himself only to those who love." The great mystic adepts have always taught that God is love, and the human soul, being of the same essence as God, is also love. Detractors from this central truth about the soul ask how it could have become so separated from its innate consciousness of the Supreme Being; and this is a deeply pertinent question for all who aspire to the spiritual path. The soul is truly of the same essence as God; but as it descended into physical incarnation it separated itself from the original source, just as a running stream which is initially pure and cool becomes separated from the main flow of water. Some of the water becomes filtered through stones and marshlands, some through sand and mud, and so forth. The stream is still the same pure water, but the muddy pools are no longer part of the stream. Even though the water is basically the same, no sensible person would care to wash himself in these dirty pools. But if the water is returned to its original purity by the removal of the mud, it again partakes of the clarity and cleanliness of its original source, and once more it can be used to quench the thirst or bathe the body of a human being. So it is that the soul, being of the same essence of God, when separated through the dirt of mind and matter becomes different from the original source - God. When it is cleansed and purified by the living Waters, the "God into Expression Power," the soul once more partakes of the pristine nature of God. Throughout recorded history the cancer of hatred has plagued mankind. The hatred of man for man, class for class, race for race, has produced the most dangerous of human concepts, that of separativeness. This idea of "divide and rule" has chained humankind to a low level of existence. In the individual it blocks out any inner progress, for he who sees divisiveness around him cannot see the unity of the inner kingdom. To erase these false concepts of separativeness, it is necessary for the aspirant to start within himself by radiating love to all beings. Some advanced seekers recapitulate in their own consciousness the cosmic and planetary creative

process, and often discover in this way the precise historical reasons for mankind's regression from spiritual oneness. When the aspirant reaches the consciousness that all things are of the essence of love, he no longer sees any duality in creation, but beholds the one deity pervading everything and everywhere. He sees that he himself is intrinsically no different from that Being of love, and says with Christ: "I and my Father are One."

Finally, the fifth basic prerequisite of spiritual development states that the aspirant will live a life of selfless service for the uplift of all humanity. This does not mean that the seeker is given a mandate to know what is best for all and sundry. The path of outer service is strewn with the thorns of egotism, and the most sincere aspirant can get his feet pierced if he attempts to proffer service where it is not welcomed.

The aspirant should try to serve humanity in a spirit of detachment and humility. The fragrant flower which blossoms in a garden and fills the atmosphere with its perfume has no awareness of giving pleasure to this individual or that one; the aspirant should try to cultivate such detachment in his giving to others. The secret of selfless service is for the sincere aspirant to renounce any reward or recognition for what he has done; on the contrary he should consider himself as a lowly instrument in the divine love that sustains and protects all things. The true disciple, if inevitably confronted by recognition for good actions, will accept such recognition in the name of his own spiritual preceptor, the mystic adept, who is the true agent of God. When Kirpal Singh, one of the two supreme mystic adepts living in the twentieth century, was invested with a high Order of Chivalry, he accepted the honor on behalf of *his* spiritual preceptor with the following words :

The truth of the matter is-as stated in the Holy Guru Granth Sahib throw all honors of the world in the fire. The only thing worth having is that which helps us to find our Beloved-God. Desire of worldly greatness and honor takes us into the world. True greatness lies in following the path that would take us to our cherished goal. And what is that goal? Our soul, separated from its source-its Creator-revolves endlessly in the cycle of birth and rebirth. It must find its way back to God. I think that this honor is not for me, but for my Master, at whose holy feet I had the good fortune to sit and learn all that I learned, and who is with me even now. It is with his grace that these honors are coming to me, completely unsolicited. But, if you ask me, I would say from the very depth of my heart that I have no liking for these things. Selfless service is thus a great virtue and is the outer manifestation of love and goodness. Both mind and body become sanctified through the labor and sacrifice entailed in selfless service, so long as this is performed without egotism or vanity. The pinnacle of selfless service is to consider oneself the humble servant of the mystic adept, who is a conscious embodiment of God. This leads to the climactic annihilation of the lower ego, and the aspirant is dramatically faced with the illumined realization that he himself is truly God. Love knows constant service and sacrifice; this is the pearl of great price, the greatest treasure of all. The external life of the aspirant is not allow himself to become inflated by thoughts of pride and possessiveness. In the words of the *Bhagavad Gita*, the superb spiritual poem of Hinduism:

*He who does the task dictated by
duty,
Caring nothing for the fruit of the
action,
He is a yogi.*

1. *The term Karma means literally "actions," divided against itself the community is a "deeds;" it is used to denote the law of action and reaction in oriental terminology.*

2. *Hebrews 11: 10.*

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