

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY: PRINCIPLES AND RULES

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When kids are asked what they want to become in life, each one answers or basically expresses interests of his or her aim. Parents and Teachers help the kids achieve their aim with short/long term objectives.

Like goals and objectives in professional life, spiritual life is bound by principles and rules by using which everyone needs to carve out their own journey.

Let us have an example to illustrate the above stated point. In principle, nobody wants an accident while driving on the road. So, rules are made to bring people closer to achieving this principle. These rules are made taking into account the perceivable reality of the individual nations. The reality is the sum of historical/ cultural/ scientific/ environmental aspects of those nations.

Bending a rule would be a mistake. But, bending a rule to break the principle would

be a blunder.

Like the example of the road journey, on a spiritual journey, one needs to distinguish between a principle and a rule. If this understanding is not clear, one ends up as either a confused devotee or a fundamentalist.

Rules need to be made by oneself based on the circumstances to get closer to principles, e.g.: I do not buy food with a credit card; I use either cash or debit card. This is just a rule I have made for myself to align with one of the spiritual belief system or principle. This rule might work with others or not, it is up to each one to decide.

This combination of rules and principles form the building blocks in the journey.

Let us take an example of the path mentioned below, 'Z' being the final destination.

X Y Z

There are two approaches to get to 'Z'.

First approach would be considering 'Z' directly as a principle and make 'X', 'Y' as rules. Second approach would be making 'X' as a principle and set x1, x2, x3 rules to achieve it. These x1, x2, x3 should be made according to your situation in life. These situations could be your family, work, physical strength, etc. After a certain period of practice, you will find that X has become a natural part of your life. Now move towards Y and make y1, y2, y3 rules. Next would be 'Z'.

From my current understanding, coupled with previous experiences and observations, I try to depict the overall spiritual journey using a simple flow-chart:

In the flow chart:

- ▶ 'Hexagon' represents 'Preparation process'
- ▶ 'Rectangle' represents 'Stage'
- ▶ 'Curved Rectangle' represents 'Way of Life'
- ▶ 'Rhombus' represents 'Decision Making' Explore Create Parallel Effort Parallel Effort Constant Yogi Conquer Ego Join Tremendous

Long-Term Effort leaves the body

THESE THREE STAGES HAPPEN WITHIN COUPLE OF SECONDS

Being Realistic: Look around at the physical aspects which affect the start of journey. These physical aspects could be food, timetable, cleanliness etc.

Mental Discipline: Spend a couple of minutes to sit in silence, watch your thoughts and practise self-introspection.

Fulfill responsibilities: Fulfill your day-to-day responsibilities. It does not make sense to leave everything.

Sense of Trusteeship: Whilst fulfilling day-to-day responsibilities, have a sense of trusteeship.

Yogic Lifestyle: With the above 4 preparation process, make the yogic lifestyle as a way of life.

Understand Mind and Intellect: Right food for the mind and stable work for the intellect ensures that the mind and intellect are in sync. The more they are in sync, the easier it is to understand the behaviour and vice-versa.

Rajyogi: 'Raja' means King. Once the mind and intellect are in sync, the day-

to-day psychological struggles are minimized. Interacting with them is as easy as borrowing a book from the library. Mind becomes the library, intellect the librarian and consciousness requesting the book.

Karma Yogi: This stage is achieved by rationalizing the actions with the above understanding of mind and intellect. This stage forms the first step towards practising soul-consciousness whilst performing actions. It is like breaking all the iron chains and freeing oneself from the bondage. At this stage, the soul exhibits a good amount of confidence, both in-terms of physical and mental strengths. Physical strength does not mean muscle power, but the translation of mental strength into determined behaviour. This combination allows the soul to reach a wider audience and quench their thirst. Most of the spiritual gurus/yogis are at this stage.

Nirantar (Constant) Yogi: Moving ahead on the *karma* yogi stage forms the most crucial part of the spiritual journey. It is most tedious as the soul needs to break itself from the name, fame and golden chains created by the

self after achieving the *karma* yogi stage. Complete physical and mental detachments are the most important practices, which are required at this stage. This is an important phase where physical body and metaphysical mind are almost in sync. The emotions, the nature of outside world has very less impact on the mind. The soul still uses physical language to communicate with physical world.

Detached Stage: Some schools of thought call this stage Angelic (*Farishta*) stage. At this stage, meta-physical qualities of the mind are visible on the physical body and physical environment. Scriptures describe these qualities in terms of light or energy around the person. The physical language or communication stops at this stage.

Seed Stage: The soul experiences itself in its totality and leaves the body with that experience and certainty.

Enlightenment: The physical world describes the above two states with the term en(light)enment as they have viewed the light or experienced energy.

– HAPPY JOURNEY–