



ON SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

By Sophie Rose

In this age of technology and materialism, when many wonder what tomorrow will bring, the resurgence of spirituality is a normal phenomenon. For centuries, people have turned to religions or other belief systems for support and understanding. Yet it never resulted in a better world on a global level. An improved personal life perhaps, but not a better planet.

So one can wonder why, after centuries of religious or spiritual teachings on love, forgiveness, presence or service, the world situation has not improved spiritually; why acts of sharing and forgiveness are the exception, not the norm. We can guess that the big majority of people weren't ready for these teachings, that the failure to bring peace, love or the end of suffering on earth is the failure of humanity. After all, the spiritual realm did its job, didn't it? So why are people not listening?

The answer lies in each one of us. Our perception of the world is a very personal thing, it involves our mind and the infinite interpretations it can make about our experiences. This is how most of us lead our lives: We base our actions on what our minds are telling us. Yet many spiritual teachings tell us to go the other way: love, meditate, watch your mind, forgive, practice compassion, and open your heart. The discrepancy between the teachings and what we do with them is as wide as the gap between faith and belief.

Faith is the mysterious spiritual touch which brings a sacred dimension to our life. Faith doesn't abide by rules. Unlike belief, it has nothing to do with religion and everything to do with following one's heart. Faith is our personal affair with our spiritual Self. Are we in a relationship with our soul or are we cut off from it? We can tell by the quality of our life: A person who has faith acts from a place of trust and inner knowledge. A person who doesn't have faith acts from the mind, this person doesn't trust life and often second-guesses himself.

Faith is this indescribable feeling of knowing what's right for oneself and acting on it. That's what soul work is about: the inner knowledge of what one has to learn and do in this lifetime. Every soul has its purpose, every heart its calling. The work required to discover it is a spiritual

journey some feel drawn to take. As you embark on this path, the real adventure begins, a new perspective slowly arises, old attachments vanish to leave room for new experiences. Your outlook on life shifts to incorporate spiritual realities and your inner transformation is mirrored in the outer world.

Every spiritual journey leads to a better understanding of your place in the world. Spiritual practice helps you connect with your Self, which is a drop in the sea of consciousness. As you connect with consciousness, you slowly learn that there is an intelligent design underlining your life, and that the spiritual realm contains all you need to know. So why not pick up a spiritual practice?

How do we define spiritual practice? A spiritual practice is the very simple act of getting in touch with your Self. Not with your mind, your feelings or your body, but with this sense of presence or being behind them. How to go about it is a matter of personal preference.

A few things should guide your choice: Religion or tradition does not matter, except to your heart, so it is very important to follow your intuition, not your mind (or another's). Practice will make all the difference: Spirituality is an experience, not an intellectual pastime.

Discouragement is common; the best way to deal with it is not to expect anything from your practice. Flowers only bloom in the right season, provided they were well taken care of. Your spiritual practice also will bloom in the right season.

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