

Depth in Spiritual Life

Based on a Talk Given by Swami Rudrananda on June 30, 1972 in New York City

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One vital factor in our lives is our connection to each other. We have a tendency to want to be a certain quantity for another human being. But we are not just one thing or another in relationship to another person. It's like finding a gold nugget and walking away. We have to be able to accept, and digest, and stay open, keeping this fresh flow of energy coming in over and over again. This is a very deep thing that a human being is for another human being.

It is not possible for a human being to stay constant. We are one growing person relating to another. The whole relationship should bring an expansion of consciousness and a deeper flow of energy. So we don't reach for what we think we see, but we surrender that so we can be surprised and find something new. It's in the depth of our surrender that we liberate a deeper chemistry and a deeper flow of energy.

Having a sterile, limited idea of what we are and what somebody has to offer becomes our limitation, because we don't have the courage to surrender deeply inside. We don't feel or understand the changing quantity; we only look at what we think we have.

The whole secret of spirituality is that this energy continuously changes. We are at one point looking to another point and moving towards it, not as an ultimate, but as a way of guiding ourselves, of using our spiritual radar. We need intelligence and sensitivity to see that it may be moving. Then, as we come toward it, we raise the level of our interaction and change the whole manifestation of the content as well as the energy.

Because we are getting deeper, it is getting higher. It has to look different. Our whole perspective changes. We are growing away from many things and patterns that we're attached to, and reaching towards something which is much wider. This is growing up. We really can see things in a different perspective.

We're free to change. We take in nourishment and surrender in depth so that the nourishment goes very deep inside. It allows us to open. In our opening we are free to change.

Fear and Surrender

In the Bible it says, "I shall walk through the valley of death and fear no evil." It means that I continually walk towards my spiritual objective, and because of my ability to surrender deeply and feel this unknown, I can really stay open to God.

When we get frightened, we can allow a greater force to come in. We call to God when we're afraid; we call to God when we're threatened. We open to creative energy when we're threatened.

On one level, allowing oneself to become consciously insecure is an essential part of growing-to be willing to completely surrender everything and be open and insecure, and then to keep moving towards a point which is a higher point of surrender and growth, while staying open to God. It is not to justify where I am, not to understand, not to know, but to surrender, because I am opening to an energy which will have to change everything for me.

On another level, I feel a deep security because of what I want. I want to attain my goal, and whatever falls away or dies on the way doesn't matter. I am willing to be consciously detached and open to the energy so I can continue to grow and connect to that energy. I can't afford to not be connected, because I would absolutely die if I didn't have this source of deeper creative force working in me. This is the thing that keeps me alive; this is the thing that keeps me moving - because I have abandoned all of my attachments in every single way at that particular moment.

It's like jumping off the side of a mountain and saying, "I really wish to grow," and then, instead of falling, we slowly start to rise. Our fear is overcome by our conscious effort to connect with the energy. Because we work, we slowly rise from that falling, and we end up in a new place. But the security of trying to hold on and trying to grow - this is impossible. It's absolutely impossible.

You breathe, and you feel a separation, you feel a flow. You're still in control, because you still can feel enough of yourself to keep expanding. You start feeling yourself in a void. There's nothing here; there's nothing underneath you; there's nothing on the side of you; you're completely detached and you're just taking in energy. You're one with the energy. And you really feel that you're in another world. You can feel yourself suspended in space, and you're not attached to anything. You can't stop, because if you stop, you'll fall. So you keep going on and on and on, reaching up, opening, and you feel things going in you. The only thing that keeps you with any sense of yourself is this connection between the energy in you and the flow of creation.

So there's nothing left of yourself. There is no security; there is no sense of "I am making a real effort." It's a sense of nothingness, and you really feel yourself suspended in space going in a direction. And you can, in a sense, guide yourself like a glider.

We work for that. We surrender for that, because our objective, our ultimate objective, is to be freed of all attachments, to be moving with a consciousness of the energy involved.

Going Into the Unknown

Sixteen or seventeen years ago I went to see this man who told me I should leave America. I thought I couldn't. I asked him again, and he said, "Go to New Zealand and buy a farm." Well, I went back to my place. I sat and asked for a sign. Hour after hour I

just voiced that need. It took me nine months to leave. I got rid of everything in America and I went to four or five countries where I had businesses and I got rid of everything.

I traveled a lot, and when I arrived in India, I met Swami Nityananda. Just being in his presence, I understood that I had been on the brink of a terrible calamity. I would have had a complete nervous breakdown. And I'm sure this man who told me to leave the States could see it. Any doctor would have said the same thing. Anybody with any development would have said it; but I had to find that in myself. I couldn't accept my condition. In fact, if he had said to me, "You're very crazy, leave," I would have left him, but I wouldn't have left this country.

Often we can't accept things as they are in life. But I was at least able to surrender deeply enough to find out that this inner thing in me meant for me to leave. Then with Nityananda, I found the energy which gave me my source and my connection. I began to surrender to him and his voice inside me told me to go back.

We have to develop that in ourselves. We have to open to such a nothingness that our deep inner soul force can connect with this God force, so we can hear and understand. We know it's right by the tremendous effort that it takes, an enormous effort of surrendering, breaking down our ego and feeling this force of consciousness, this force of God.

Unless you ask more and more deeply, until you feel this thing break in you and you find that your wish really can go into your inner core, you will never grow, because you'll only grow according to your will, which is what you can open to at a particular moment. You have to make this thing cut right into the middle of you. And when you have a moment when you feel the nothingness in you, just be open to that energy. Feel it connect with this force of creation, and then you at least have a guide.

The Teacher

You have to have in your life some kind of barometer. Every human being has to have inside of himself someplace where he can go in such depth that he can really feel God. He can feel the energy force go all the way through him. He can really connect and ask and everything opens. When you have a truth - a barometer of your potential - and you experience it more and more, and you really can have your connection with God.

There's nobody else walking on the earth who represents anything more than a point above where we are. We should use a teacher as a point above ourselves and then draw the arrow, and the arrow should go into the infinite.

If I have any value for you, it's that I can get you to move above yourself and keep moving. But I shouldn't be your objective, and I certainly shouldn't be your limitation, because I don't wish to be my own limitation. I don't wish to stay like this. I want to grow, and I want to grow above myself every day a little more.

And so when we pick someone as a teacher, that person should only be another point, which we keep drawing up higher. But the surrender has to be deep. You have to have a tremendous crying inner need to grow, or it will never take place.

It's like going camping. You take along a week's food, and at the end of eight days you've come down to the bottom of the tin can. You need more food. You need more supplies. Well, work! It's not going to appear by itself. So also, when you finish a level, you have to open to a deeper level and find more nourishment. You have to dig deeper in yourself and find it.

We won't exhaust in our relationship with each other this energy that we have. If you love somebody, you can't keep using that love for the next ten years. It has to keep growing.

You have to really reach deeper and have a deeper level of relationships with people. Then you can have a deeper relationship spiritually. It's your life trying to tell you that you have finished a particular level, and it shows on your face.

We're structured inside in layers, just like earth. There are times when we use up one layer, and we have to start digging again. Otherwise there is nothing to offer to anyone else. There's no joy; there's no happiness; there's no anything. There's nothing that we have that we can enjoy.

Anything you do takes more depth. It takes more devotion; it takes more development; it takes more expansion. It doesn't matter whether it's a piece of sculpture or a painting or a friend. You don't want to hear them repeat the same conversation that you had with them last week. If they do, it is like going into a bar, where you sit down and listen to two people talking. "How was work today, George?" "Oh, okay. What did you do?" You don't have to listen anymore, because there is no content in the conversation. It's dead, dull, and stupid. They're drinking beer and they can hardly see each other. "Well, I was out with my best friend last night..." What were they doing? They were wasting time. They couldn't afford to know how dull and empty it was.

Well, if you don't deepen inside - you don't open and find a way of loving somebody more or relating in a deeper way - you're doing the same thing. You're saying, "Gee, I had a great class yesterday," and it's the same thing as sitting in a bar drinking beer with somebody. You haven't made an effort to go deeper. There's no conscious effort in you, and your spiritual work is as dead as anything. It has no meaning; it has no spiritual basis.

If you don't reach, it doesn't cost you. And it has to cost you; you have to make an effort. You have to breathe inside, open inside. You have to feel pain. You have to feel the stretching. You have to feel the tensions that you're breaking down. You have to feel that you really are freeing energy, breaking through cells and structure to free your juice. If you are afraid to damage yourself, there's not going to be any juice. To find juice in you, to find life you have to cut, squeeze, extract until you feel a flow of life.

Spiritual Food

With every experience that you have, particularly if you're making a spiritual effort, you have to be drinking it in, opening to it, feeling it. Sometimes if you have not eaten for a day and then you eat some food, and you can feel your muscles grabbing the food. You have to feel that with spiritual energy, too.

I feel this thing coming and grabbing in my throat, in my heart, all the way down. These muscles are hungrily attacking this energy that comes in. My system is hungry for it. And if you don't feel your spiritual system hungrily eating and digesting and grabbing and biting this, you're not taking in that energy. You in no way honor the person who's making the effort. It's bouncing off you like water on a rock. It is not going inside; it's not being internalized.

We really are cannibals. We draw and give life to each other. And we give life only if we consciously take this energy in and use it as food. If you don't feel yourself eating this spiritual energy, it will never be assimilated in your body as spiritual food. It will go through and relieve tensions in your brain, or it will take care of emotional problems, because the outside of you, your tensions, were touched by this force. But for your inner spiritual body to take it in, you have to really feel it much like physical food when you're hungry. You have to feel these muscles grabbing and sucking this force inside, and you have to feel it coming down into your stomach and going up your spinal column. It follows the same path all food follows.

How can you break through the deadness inside? If you were trying to plant a garden, what would you do? You clean away the dead grass, the stones. You plough it up and you put fertilizer in it. And you mix it with the lousy soil until you build up good soil. So you get beneath the deadness in yourself and the tensions in yourself.

You have to take a breath and feel your heart open and stick it into the core of the heart. It's an internal thing. You put fertilizer into the earth and you mix it in the earth; you put this energy inside yourself and absorb it there.

The reason things grow in one person and not in someone else is not because the soil is better in the first. It's because the person worked continually. And it doesn't matter whether you have rocks or fairly good soil. Some people have good soil and never get in the habit of fertilizing. So they lose the good soil.

It's a matter of longevity. When you consciously focus on anything, the harder it is at the beginning, the better it will be over time, because you've put so much effort into it that every springtime you'll remember to plough it and you'll put in what is needed.

If we don't get a result, it isn't because it can't be, it's because we haven't worked enough. And asking 1,000 times or 50,000 times doesn't matter. It matters that we ask until we open. We sit around wringing our hands and tearing our handkerchief and crying about how hard it is, but that is not where the energy should be. The energy should be going inside and digging and opening, and the whole of spiritual life is based

on the surrender, the asking. It's the lack of sincerity, the lack of consciousness, that makes it impossible to open.

It took me six years until I had a spiritual teacher say to me, "You ask like a businessman." I didn't know what the hell he was talking about. Then I had a girl in my class, and we would go to have tea or coffee after class, and she'd say, "You're not sincere enough. You're not deep enough." And it took me fifty million times of asking and talking until I heard myself one day say, "I wish to surrender," and it sounded like a girl in Woolworth's selling somebody something for ten cents. It was disgusting.

You have to keep talking until you hear yourself and can tell whether you're working in the five-and-dime, or you're handling a diamond necklace - that is, whether it's a superficial stupid thing or a precious jewel. That you're making as much effort as you can doesn't mean anything. Your effort doesn't mean a thing; it's the result that matters.

If you're drilling for water, and you go 50,000 feet down, it doesn't mean anything if the water is at 50,001 feet. If you're one foot above the water, you'll die of thirst. So you work and ask until you open. If you're not open, there is no conscious flow and you cannot have a spiritual experience. You're a superficial person working under a great deal of tension, and you have not gotten down to the very basic thing of being connected in depth. And if you don't have a connection in depth, it is of no value how hard you work.

Every level has to grow to threaten every other level. If you move up spiritually, you should expand physically. You expand physically, and have to grow spiritually, because you can't be threatened by being sucked into this physical thing. You drive yourself consciously, expanding one level, transcending it, expanding another level, transcending it. It's an endless amount of work.

It is not to retire because you think you've found something which satisfies you. You're not working for yourself; you're really working to feel this connection with God, and you have to expand to be more of an instrument, to be more of a servant. You serve more, you grow more. You are more responsible. Certainly as you do that, your life will become wonderful. There's no question about it.

You have to work above your fear. You have to grow. If you can't break it, then there's another solution. You work. You work a million times harder. You absorb that tension, and then you'll be able to break it. If you can't break a bond on you directly, at least you can absorb it by working ten times more: you start drawing the energy out of the tension to expand something on a physical level, you use that energy to expand, and then you weaken it, so you can crack it. In other words, if you have a neurotic pattern, and you try to work with it and you can't successfully break it, then you double your physical work, drawing the nourishment out of that tension to absorb it into the physical level. Then it gets weaker, and you'll be able to break it.

So you can attack it from above or below. Either you transcend it and draw the energy up, or you descend and you expand.

The opposite is also true. If you're stalled on a physical level and double your spiritual work, you draw the energy up and refine it, so you get out of this thickness.

There is more than one way to skin a cat spiritually and physically. It's always a question of whether you want to move or you don't want to move. And you have to be a little flexible. You have to be able to see. And you really have to work. It's always a question of working. So either you have to increase the work on the spiritual level or you have to increase the work on your physical level tremendously.