

The Power and Nature of Spirituality

Excerpted from Talks Given by Swami Rudrananda in 1971 and 1972

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There is a profound simplicity in our connection to God. It is so simple that we sometimes go into it and out of it without recognizing it. It defies definition. It is. I refer to it as a state of plus and minus one, a balance. It is like holding a child who is just a few weeks old and so is endowed by God with the state of being that we are trying to attain. Being close to that state brings tremendous bliss and contentment. It has the simple, rich taste of fresh lettuce or a ripe pear.

Your spiritual exercise allows you to take in energy of this state very much as you would take in food. You can feel the energy and you breathe deeply, drinking it in and digesting it. Growth occurs when we draw our life force in through the chakras and bring it up our spinal column. Unless we do that consciously in many different ways, we will never grow and have a spiritual life. This energy, brought in with consciousness, can change patterns, free us, enlighten us.

As it works through us, we begin to understand what the flow of energy has to do with creation. It is creation. When we begin to touch creation and see life come through us and bring life to other people, we understand that we cannot think of it as ours, any more than a parent has the right to feel that a child is theirs. It is our responsibility, not our creation. We are a vehicle. Even though on the physical level our instinct is to possess and control, love is the ability to free everything that we touch, not to limit it in any way or to make it less. We have only one thing to do every day, and that is to open, grow, expand and feel - *actually* feel - the stretching of the increased volume of energy coming through us. If we don't grow every day we begin to have illusions that we are doing something. When we attain something, we want to think of it as ours. If we are not working, not encompassing the energy that is there and was there, we are sitting back and taking credit for what happened yesterday.

We have to surrender in ourselves and not let this flow of energy through us be tainted by our senses or our instinct or our psychic capacity. Because we don't know. Either it comes from God or it doesn't come from God, and one has to finally make that decision. Only when you really feel something in your heart breaking, only when you are that grateful, can you really open and allow the energy to flow and really free you. Every time one of our senses touches this spiritual energy, it is diminished enormously. The more you touch it, the more you think about it, the less capability it has to really free you.

All you have to do is try to open and let this force come in purely, and just be responsible for bringing it through the chakras and up the spine. You don't have to know. You're freed from all that responsibility. Trying to know is only the way of destroying your creative energy because you're not strong enough to trust, you're not strong enough to

understand that you must leave it alone and really let it flow through you consciously. There has to be enough nourishment in you, enough reinforcement, enough consciousness, to leave it alone. And it's the simplest thing in the world, it is really the flowing of life, without us in any way, shape, or form being involved.

It is useless to try to build in your mind a rational understanding about an irrational situation, and that is exactly what a spiritual experience is. It's an irrational experience because your mind cannot understand something from another dimension, and this kind of energy is really a gift from a higher dimension. Only by absorbing it can you grow organically to the level on which you can understand it. It may take you six days, it may take you sixty years, but it's much healthier to finally get there completely, which is really what frees you from any sort of attachment and allows you to grow endlessly. To have an experience and spend your whole lifetime trying to analyze it and make it fit, even if you could succeed, would only become the limitation to further growth. The greatest test of spiritual experience is surrender - that it goes into you by God's will, is absorbed into you in the way that you can use it at the moment, and nourishes you so that you can raise your level. It's the simplicity of the approach, it really is the openness of the surrender, that allows us to take the maximum from these gifts.

You have to understand that it is meaningless for you to try to figure out where you are spiritually. Growth will not happen until you allow the force to work you. You do not work the force, because this energy by its very nature has to be an expression of God's will. It has nothing to do with your will and it certainly has nothing to do with my will.

We continually try to move around within ourselves to put ourselves in a better position. But that is like cutting a distance every day by fifty percent: if you are a thousand miles away today, tomorrow you are five hundred miles away, and so on. You will never get there. The distance will be cut into infinitesimally smaller parts, but it will never disappear. It will become a membrane that forever separates you from the needed spiritual force. You will be stuck in this membrane of your will and personality instead of allowing the force to work you from its own will. It is a very essential difference.

You don't appease this spiritual force, or God. You don't decide to change a little bit or a lot. You change as it is wanted. The only way to find out how it is wanted is to completely surrender from within yourself everything that you feel or think, good or bad or anything else. It has to do with the higher will working in you. Surrender everything - throw everything in you into the fire and let it melt. This will change you, not overnight, but over years. It is like a twisted tree that slowly straightens itself out and grows up. You are giving yourself a new alignment. It has to do with the higher will working in you. When you finally come to that point, then it will change things in you. It will change all the physical manifestations and you will understand it by the difference that takes place in your life. Instead of working spiritually you will be spiritually worked.

This is exactly what spirituality is about - this force that is not interested in words or concepts. It is interested in the connection, the rising energy that really begins this return flow of spirituality. When you work, you say, "I want to surrender." It doesn't matter what it sounds like, you have to work until the vibration coming out of you can

bring a corresponding energy down of a higher nature. You have to work and work and work and dig until you finally touch that little cosmic funny bone that opens you up to the force that can nourish you. You feel around until, like the tumblers on a safe, you hear the click, click, click, and this thing opens. You have to learn that.

You have to really break open your heart every single time, and in breaking it open you really make the necessary sacrifice - it is the depth and sincerity in you that calls to do something of a higher level and gets a return. Ask and you shall receive. Until you understand that, you will never understand the power and nature of spirituality.