



## **Spiritual Lifestyle**

### **What is a spiritual lifestyle?**

As we like to put ideas and concept in to manageable definitions, it is easy to create stereotypes which can limit our perceptions. Spirituality is a concept that has fallen foul of stereotyping because very often a 'spiritual individual' is branded as being weird or flaky. Stereotype images of spiritual individuals can range from 'tree hugging hippies' to 'bible bashing zealots' intent on converting the whole world to their religion. But if the truth be told most people, if asked, would find it very difficult to define what a spiritual person is never mind what they look like.

So what does it really mean to be a spiritual individual? What if leading a spiritual life is simply a life style choice rather than a set of rigid precepts? What if we simply take away the word spiritual, we are therefore left with a more manageable and less abstract question, what does it mean to be an individual?

### **Identity**

Who are we, what is it that defines us? Is it gaining material wealth, social status, how well we can sing or how well we can play chess? Is it our intelligence and our ability to reason, is it our character or the way we bring up our children? There are so many options of how we choose to define who we are as well as how we define one another. We can simplify the direction of our questioning by recalling a popular saying "actions speak louder than words", because it is our action "What maketh a man/woman". It is what we do that makes the biggest difference to who we are.

We are also subjected to the influence from the outside world from a very young age, which influences the choices that we make and the actions that we take. How we define who we are and how we identify with ourselves is the sum total of our life experiences, for better or for worse.

But there is a problem that most people face due to a variety of difference problems. Most individuals have no idea who they are as their true sense of self is hidden away due to fear and rejection from the social or peer group. This could be best described as the sheep mentality as we join the heard and say what they say and do what they do. It is only through thinking and acting for ourselves that we can begin to flourish with our own true identity.

### **Attitude**

Attitude is also an essential factor when it comes to establishing our individuality. There is our attitude toward life, towards family and friend, towards work and leisure and towards money and God. Attitude is the driving force behind the quality of our existence and determines our success or failures in life.

Attitude is the strength of our will applied to the ups and downs to life, its can make us humble, determined, arrogant and egotistical or loving and sensitive. Attitude is also a choice; it can determine the direction of our emotions and our thoughts. When we make mistakes or celebrate success it is our attitude towards these life experiences that impacts on our spiritual growth.

### **Our freewill choice**

Each and every human being has the god given gift of freewill, this is the ability to make any choice at any given time and it is an ability that separates us from the animal kingdom. Despite having this gift we do not always make good choices because we seldom take the time to think and consider our choices. Leading a more spiritual lifestyle can be the catalyst that helps to bring our attention back to the choices we make and to consider our personal responsibility. This is not to say that just because one decides to walk a more spiritual path they will be devoid of making mistakes. This is not the case as we

all make mistakes, but what can happen is that by having an awareness of our personal responsibility any mistakes we make can be used to provide a valuable learning experience that will help us to grow and make better choices.

So how do we choose to live, do we choose to live with negativity, anger fear and hate, or do we live with compassion, peace and love at the heart of our choices? We can all be easily trapped in cycles of negative behaviour that can have a negative impact on our lives but lets never forget that we will always have the choice to bring about change. How do we choose to live and what do we choose to create, this is why freewill is considered a gift because it is a very powerful tool that allows us the potential to be creative or destructive.

### **The needs of the spirit**

The needs of the spirit are simple and that is to grow in light back towards its spiritual home. The souls purpose is to grow and it is love that lies at the heart of this growth. So the needs of the spirit is to love and by utilising our freewill we can take part in that universal constant that is evolution. This creative process also has the potential to extend beyond the boundaries of our simple lives and touch the lives of others. It has the capacity to change the attitudes of our societies and our nations. If we extend the hand of compassion toward one another and regard peace as a primary motivator in life we have the potential to end conflict and remove fear.

This is why living a more spiritual life is not just a principle, it is a way of life, it is a state of being and it is an attitude. It is a commitment to evolution by showing our gratitude for that which is most precious and that is life.

### **Hope and Faith**

To have hope is to have faith that change is possible. Looking at the world today it might seem like a real uphill struggle to believe that we have the ability create a more peaceful and evolved society. But the truth is humanity has always endured the tragedies of its own bloody history. The power of the human spirit to prevail during times of hardship is quite remarkable.

Faith in god and a belief that change is always possible provides a solid foundation in our lives that helps us to over come any obstacle. It is the knowing that we will never be alone and that what ever we experience in our lives, its purpose will ultimately lead us closer to growing in harmony with the living universe.

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