

Swami Omkarananda

The Structure of Spiritual Progress



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Perfection Right from This Second

Every hour begins with a second. Sixty seconds make a minute. Sixty minutes make an hour. Perfection begins with a good thought, a kind act, a noble feeling, a little of self-control, a little of patience, a little of the love for the Beautiful, the True, the Great, the Divine. The thousand-kilometre journey begins with the first step. Every step you take on the Path of Perfection, results in a threefold blessing:

one, it cuts short the journey to that extent;

two, it grants you the strength to take the next step;

three, it brings you the joy, the peace and the developed abilities that come from progress. Progress inspires further progress. Begin your journey to Perfection, with a simple little prayer, a smiling face, a brave heart, a temptation resisted, a weakness conquered, a strength expressed, a joy given, a realisable ideal pursued.



Fear Not the Future - Build It Now!

Spend not your precious time in speculation about, or fear of, your future. Your future is bound to be good if, in this minute, you are good. Your future is bound to be blessed if, in this minute, your thoughts and feelings are blessed. Your future will be full of prosperity if, today, you are very industrious, hard-working, conscientious and given over to untiring and profitable labour. Your future will be a Heaven, if your immediate present is packed with your prayers, the light of love and faith, the light of wisdom and goodness. Your intense action in the present hour, will crown your next hour with fulfilment. The nature of your future rests upon the nature of your immediate thought, aim, action.



Time is Progress

The time-process turns the bud into a flower, plant into a vast tree, child into a great man. Time is progress. Time is precious and valuable for the attainment of perfection. Time is to be utilized fully for growth and evolution. Spiritual aspirants and seekers of Truth should know that "time is progress". To the business world, time is money, to the spiritual

aspirants, time is progress on the path of divine perfection. Save all the time you can for inner growth, development and progress. Pack into each minute, each hour, several months of progress. Let not a second slip by, without enriching you in thought, in feeling, and in inner experience, and taking you a step further on the evolutionary path.



Stop Not, Keep Progressing!

They cannot be happy, who wish to be made happy. They are happy, who can make themselves happy, independent of outer objects, conditions, persons.

They cannot be peaceful, whose peace depends on anything other than themselves.

They cannot be progressing, who stop to measure their progress.

They reap no harvest, who constantly disturb the fields, in order to see if the seeds are sprouting.



Lights on the Path to Perfection

1. The world is a noisy and troublesome place, and not a pleasure-garden. Amidst the din and bustle of life, discover and stay in the Silence and Solitude of your inner heart! The outer world may be unpleasant to live in; the world within your mind can be made by you pleasant, and, to that extent, the outer world will be pleasant.

2. Instead of asking for easy circumstances and never getting them, let us try to manifest the brave spirit of the soldiers in the field of battle, work hard, master the difficult circumstances, and gain our successes.

3. You will be losing tremendous mental energy if you think over the past failures. It is an energy which could be best used for future success.



From Your Outer Conditions, Judge Not the Answers to Your Prayers

If there were any one who should have complained against God, and who should have lost trust in God, it should have been Jesus Christ; because, though He was said to be always praying to God, always in meditation, always in God-consciousness, yet He was, as it seems to the human eye,

most deserted by God. He was insulted, beaten, called names, abused, crucified. Is this the answer of God to the prayers of Jesus? Therefore, I beg you, don't judge the answer of God from the outer conditions.



Steps to Inner Development and Greatness

Keep a high goal. You will achieve at least half of it. 'Aim at a lion and miss it, rather than aim at a fox and shoot it', is an inspiring proverb.

Beauty fades. Youth-hood vanishes. Life is ebbing out, every minute. Let us, with utmost urgency, press our way forward to the experience of divine Perfection.

In our heart, let us raise the highest spiritual feelings. Let the mind assume the form of Beauty, Light and Love by contemplation upon the infinite Beauty, Light, Love that God is. Let us live in a grand God-vision.



Necessaries of Spiritual Development

Unfavourable conditions, a certain amount of mental restlessness, a little sense of frustration, a little of unhappiness in life, can never be avoided; for, they are an evolutionary necessity with every human being; they are the conditions of upward ascent and spiritual growth. Every spiritual aspirant must possess an almost inexhaustible power of endurance and great patience; he must make persistent and strenuous efforts at achieving divine Illumination, Peace, Joy and Glory.



All That You Do Returns to You Hundredfold

We can do nothing in the world which does not return to us, one way or the other. We can bless no one, without blessing ourselves. We can disturb no one, without disturbing ourselves. We cannot escape being scandalized ourselves, until we stop hearing scandals about others, or promoting them.

To wish welfare for others is to ensure welfare for ourselves. To enrich others is to enrich ourselves. To impoverish others is to impoverish ourselves. To make others peaceful is to gain peace for ourselves.

The laws of the world are inexorable, exact and unfailing in their workings. The wise see them; the unwise neither notice them, nor find it easy to believe in them.



Many are the Ways to Blessedness

Aspiration reaches the objects it aspires after. The greater the knowledge, the love, the purity, - the greater the demand for growth, peace, real joy and perfection. God is known and experienced when there is a demand for Him, His Light, His Grace, His Perfection. Where there is a will, there is the way.

Where there is the light, there the path is visible. Every need has its fulfilment, closely. The supply comes, when the demand rises. The brave seeker finds a Heaven; the drowsy soul reviles the seeker until the floods come and compel him to shout to the seeker for help.

The lover of God knows Him in many ways, and knows many other things besides; for, God is everything, and infinitely more than the world. The lover of the world knows only the world, and nothing apart and above; for, the world is but only one among many things, and nothing else.



From Compassion to Illumination

A heart of compassion and universal love will unfold from within you, the divine Kingdom of illumination. Love is light, and light is illumination.



The road to Enlightenment lies through acts of universal love.

A life of humility and unconditioned love born of purity of nature, God-knowledge, and communion with God through prayer and meditation, fills you with divine Grace and Light, which in turn will so fully illuminate your inner being, that you begin to behold the Splendour of God everywhere.

It is then, that all the riddles of life are resolved, and the darkness of limited life's confusing and difficult circumstances completely dispelled.



Principal Practices for Inner Evolution

1. Give more than you promise.
2. Do more than you aim at.
3. For all good, great or divine purposes give more than you can afford.
4. Place before yourself an Ideal of Perfection greater than the one you can immediately attain to.
5. Talk only if you have something good to say.
6. Attribute best motives to others.
7. Be critical of no one, except your own motives, thoughts, feelings, character and conduct.
8. Self-examination and self-criticism is good, but not to a morbid extent. Use them only to improve yourself, and not to depress yourself and thus weaken your effort at joyous growth.
9. Feed the mind, the heart, the soul, more than you feed the physical body. The diet of the mind, the heart and the soul are: great thoughts, great feelings, great actions, great achievements.
10. God's living Image in you is full of endless Powers. Unfold them, yet more.
11. Life is for growth and evolution. Accept it fully.
12. The strong smile, the weak cry. You are strongest when you relate yourself to the infinite Power of God within and around you.
13. Assert that you are a child of God. And show it in your daily conduct, activity and life.
14. Bright are your eyes. Keep them brighter with the beauty-lotion of Love, and the light of positive and divine thoughts.



Spiritual Guidance

I

Though slowly, Love wins. Though not quickly, Truth always triumphs.

Without noise, without announcement, and unseen, the Goodness overcomes the evil. Though the illusory death seeks to shock life, the Life rises triumphant into its status in Immortality.

II

The heart of Life longs for divine Perfection; the divine Voice within it says, "All time is mine; the perfections of the Infinite, of the Father in Heaven, the treasures of the realms of divine Consciousness, are mine!"

Let all your life be composed of Love, Truth, Goodness, Aspiration, divine Consciousness. You shall then live in unbroken joy, peace, perfection, fearlessness; all your works on earth will bear hundredfold fruit.

Victory is to Love, to Truth, to Goodness, to earnest and sincere labour. Victory is not to the nations, the communities, the sects, the races, but to the Love in the heart of man, the truthfulness in the life of man, the honesty in the works of man, to the aspirations and strivings of the soul of man.

III

Go on being in God and doing good. All else in life will right itself; all problems will resolve themselves; all difficulties will disappear; prosperity, happiness, peace will come seeking you.

IV

The effects of nothing that we think, feel, or do, are ever lost. The fruits of even a short prayer that we uttered in the past, and of all that we ever practised at any time, are preserved, and will be given us in due time.



On the Way to Truth

Blessed Seekers of Truth!

Every day your blessed lives are blossoming more and more in divine Love, Light, Power and Grace.

Without words and with the force and impact of your examples, your gracious and grand new life of higher values, nobler feelings, greater works, you have the Grace to impart silently to others the beautiful wisdom of life enshrined in this Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

"Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace!

Where there is hatred,

let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there are shadows, light;

where there is sadness, joy;

where there is discord,

harmony;

where there is error, truth.

O divine Master, grant that I may not seek to be consoled, but to console; not to be understood, but to understand; not to be loved, but to love!

For, it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is only by doing Thy Will that we are worthy of Eternal Life."

Peace, Love, Pardon, Faith, Hope, Light, Joy, Harmony, Truth, - these your blessed lives embody. May you express these every day more fully, more powerfully.

To console, to love, to give, - these are your privileges, these are natural to your divine hearts, your spirit, your sweet and generous minds, your blessed lives.



From Human Imperfections to Divine Perfection

"My Lord and my God, take everything from me that hinders me from coming to you!

My Lord and my God, give everything to me that furthers my progress to you!

My Lord and my God, take me away from myself and give me entirely to Thyself!"

St. Brother Klaus

What hinders us from God-experience? The egoistic modes of consciousness, the inferior human nature, the thirst for never-satiating sense-pleasures, the irrational attachment to earthly things, the manysided spiritual ignorance.

What quickens our God-experience? Wisdom that puts God above every value in life, Faith that knows God to be omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, Devotion that dissolves the heart in the great Love of God, Purity that delights in the joys of growth in self-control, self-transformation, self-surrender to the infinite Perfection and all-sustaining Beauty of God.

When, by the Grace of God that expresses itself as our resort to spiritual disciplines, as our striving for divine Perfection, - the ego in us, our selfhood, our limitations, are dissolved, God's Light floods us, His Consciousness takes full possession of us, and all in us is given over to, and becomes the Kingdom of Heaven. In this exalted inner spiritual condition and experience alone, our self is completely taken away from us, and the divine Grace offers us entirely the Hands of the infinite Love of the omnipresent God.

This is the blessedness towards which Brother Klaus strove, by years of rigorous self-discipline and ardent prayer. This profound spiritual prayer of the much loved Swiss Saint Brother Klaus, is a universal prayer. It is

the ultimate prayer of every human heart.



Disciplines for the Highly Advanced Aspirants

When once we are on the path of infinite perfection, and are candidates for the experience of the endless joy, peace and consciousness of the supreme Being, we must be extremely vigilant, cautious, and put away, or transform, every experience or image other than that of the Divine. Even if our own beloved mother visits us, while we are on the path, we should be hesitant to receive her, and address ourselves to God to come to us, not as this mother, but as He is in Himself. If ever we turn our mind towards this beloved person, or anyone else dear to us, we must at once, in our consciousness, transfigure that person into the image of the Divine. Our mind and consciousness should be kept completely pure and free of all images and experiences, other than those of the Divine.



Our Eternal Life is the Kingdom of Heaven Within Us

Going to the Father means contacting the Kingdom within and experiencing its Love, Light, Peace, Joy, Power, Perfection in daily life.

There is no greater darkness than the ignorance about our relation to the Father. All our problems, sufferings, sorrows, rise from a lack of knowledge as to the almighty Godhead. All our limitations and our misfortune have their source in our great ignorance about the timeless and all-peaceful consciousness of the Godhead within us. We should not allow ourselves to be governed by ignorance, and to be submitted to pains, sorrows, sufferings and limitations. With utmost faith and zeal, we should advance towards the experience of God. Our destiny, our privilege, our glory, consist in living, already on this earth, in the unlimited and endless peace of the Godhead, to be one with the Godhead in our whole nature, to rule nature from the heart of it. Therein consists our privilege and our blessing from God.

The Bible speaks of the Kingdom of God in us. If this Kingdom is in us, what happens to it, when we, physically, die? Will it disappear, or will it itself be destroyed? But how can it be the Kingdom of God if it is prone to destruction? The Kingdom of God is Eternal, Imperishable, and All-perfect. How can it fall into the hands of death if it is really perfect? Therefore, we get from all sides to the strong conviction that there is a divine Principle and Consciousness in us that remains imperishable and indestructible.



Man Has No Home on Earth Only in the Heaven Within His Own Heart and Everywhere

A stone picked up from the ground and hit at the sky, must fall back on the ground. The waters of the ocean, gathered up into clouds, by the heat of the sun, must come back to the ocean through rains and through rivers. Every prodigal son must return to his father's house. Every man born on earth can have no rest, no real peace, joy, power, knowledge, life, until he returns to God.

The Infinite, that has become the finite in man, must rise up and reclaim its infinitude. The condition of man's return journey is depicted differently by different great souls. The psalmist says, "Like the hart that pants after water-brooks, my soul panteth after Thee, O Lord."

St. Augustine says, the soul of man has no rest anywhere until it reaches God. Thomas á Kempis asks us, in his book Imitation of Jesus Christ, to look upon ourselves as pilgrims with no staying-place on earth.



No Man Can Escape the Need for the Nourishing Bread and Peace of God

The inexorable logic of life will grant no man a moment of real happiness, the spell of even a temporary peace, unless he reposes the centre of his soul upon the bosom of the Infinite called Christ, manifest in the life of Jesus, felt by the mystic poets in all nature, touched by emotion in the being of every great devotee, comprehended by the gnostic beings, and popularly known as God.

The sceptic, the God-denier, the unbeliever, the rake, the riotous soul, the sinful, the rationalist who would feel uncomfortable unless he answers the Sphinx of Existence, the artist who pursues the inaccessible Ideal in Beauty, the saint who aims at giving an absoluteness to his purity, - all, all have need of God, of inspiration from Christ, and would, one day or the other, find themselves surprised by the rise in their heart of an emotion of love for something felt, something vaguely apprehended, as a Presence, a Power that casts upon one an irresistible charm.

All, all have need of God if existence has to hold a meaning, if joy is to be found in life, if a lasting inner richness is to be added to oneself.

Despite the deviation into spurious pleasures, that evil, wrong, and a hundred other forms of error and ignorance permit, the heart of man shall find no satisfaction, no satiation, no ease, until it is what it is in the law of his own inner being, the Godhead, the Divinity.

