

# *Modern Living & the Spiritual Life – Understanding the Path of Service*

It has long been recognized by those who “seek” that the majority of religions and spiritual journeys hold certain themes in common – one of which is the continued task of offering a simple helping hand in day-to-day life – to be the “one” Good Samaritan at a point that somebody really needs you – to be the “one” person who will help whilst all others are busy turning away, and to do this with no expectation of reward...

## *Chasing the highs...*

In our modern western world it is increasingly tempting to chase the “highs” and that which we perceive to be “exciting”. The digital age adds to this – we are enslaved, through our own choosing, and ruled by technologies that compete for our attention and eat up every minute that we have. Like a dog following a scent to the horizon and getting lost along the way, we all follow digital trails and similarly become lost – be it answering messages, running businesses remotely, sorting through calendars, photographing and filming our lives, and ultimately communicating through electronic tethers that span the globe! With all this to grab our attention it becomes harder to see what is right in front us. We become lost in a virtual world before we really find the skills to connect with the “real” world. We are like Russian dolls at the best of times retreating beneath layers that take us away from the spontaneous connectivity of nature, and the digital age has simply created many more layers to get lost beneath.

It is said that modern technology connects us and unites us; but if used in a more obsessive way it only serves to separate. We have been brought up in a society governed by media and technology and our perception of the World is streamed through these filters – this distorts what is real and as we all retreat away from the “real” we find ourselves forever more distant from our fellow man. If we all stop to think about it just for one moment, in relation to our modern ethos, it becomes glaringly obvious that there is no, or little inspiration that could serve to bring us all together as one unit or to work together holistically – the self-serving system of materialism makes sure of this as we all grab for what we “think” we want instead of what we “actually” need and the problems increase exponentially when we bring this self-serving philosophy to the spiritual arena. And this is one of the main things that I really want to address in this article. From a less enlightened point of view, and when we are first starting out on the path, that which we “think we want” and that which we “actually need” are seldom the same.

## *The one thing that we can be sure of...*

*...the spiritual path flows with natural rhythms and is of the natural world and as such is all about connections – real empathic connections made from the heart, and we connect with those who vibrate to our frequency so that we can all help each other along the way...*

I’m sure many of us can agree that whether we live in high-rise flats or in small villages, we don’t really know our neighbours – certainly not well enough to ask for a favour- just a quick nod and smile as you pass by in the day (if you are lucky). I am convinced much of ‘New Age’ thought and spirituality has not done much to remedy this but has only served to confuse the situation and make it worse – the “self-help” remedy is terribly flawed from the off-set. How can the inward force of aiming to help oneself ever promote togetherness and brotherly/sisterly love. The real work within the human soul occurs when we shift our centre away from our own wants and needs and place somebody else’s needs first.

The real *selfless* act is rare in western society – it would seem there is always an angle – some sort of trade, or payoff – I’m not saying there is no such thing as the pure selfless act, I’m simply saying that it is hard to cut through the “me, me, me” programming that we are forced to download from birth. We may appear to be acting selflessly on the surface when we “do” something for someone, but deep, deep down and under several layers of denial we often find ourselves banking that “life-casino chip” in readiness for some future point when we might need a favour – and then we’re gonna cash it in! And all those chips mount up over time don’t they and no one really knows who’s winning and who’s ahead. Kind of funny really! So much for western logic.

### *Here’s the raw deal...*

When we are focusing so hard on ourselves and on not letting anyone else in to ‘affect our space’, we risk missing the key factor to any positively-driven spiritual path – to ‘help thy neighbour’. If we are not grounded in this Earth, in this world, and bound together to raise each other up and support each other, how can we hope to affect positive change throughout the planet? We can manifest and cosmic order as much as we please, but if we do not roll up our sleeves and do the groundwork then very little will ever change, as we effectively slam the doors shut on the many healing avenues available to us.

### *Due to bringing it up...*

*...and due to it being foundational to all spiritual practice, let us take a closer look at the “law of attraction”...*

It is a long-running misconception that the law of attraction and the power of manifestation stands alone as one precept for us to use in which ever way we choose. The law of attraction is a Buddhist term and comes at the

end of a list of many other laws – only when our lives are centered around other people through the understanding of the eightfold path will the full extent of the “Law of Attraction” be made open to us. The bottom line here is “the energies of the Divine cannot be used in a selfish way”. It is generally a given that all beings understand this. And so when the Law of Attraction is used in a selfish way the only thing a person really attracts is selfishness – it’s kind of obvious really, and so with this simple rule in place the misguided amongst us are simply shut off from the larger forces that govern manifested reality.

We have been given the tools that allow us to wrap “our will” into “Divine will” and when we use the gift of manifestation from this viewpoint – to connect us with the Universe in a sincere and honest way and in a way that has us shouting up at the heavens in a fit of exclamation “*let me help!*” ...this is when the real magic begins – and this is when we enter into real service.

## *Personal sacrifice whilst walking the path...*

And then comes the need for sacrifice – there is the real need for us to sacrifice something of ourselves and of our lives whilst walking the spiritual path, especially in relation to our old lives – *the life we are leaving behind* – in order for us to move forward into Divine service. This holds true in modern times as it did in ancient times – nothing really changes about the path and the base rules cannot be cheated. It is only through being honest with ourselves and letting go of those things that hold us back do we begin to realise that *real* service and *real* spirituality has more to do with stripping ourselves of that which we thought we were in order to reveal that which we truly are. This is when the boundaries between “things” and “concepts” begin to move, wobble and dissolve, like lines drawn on a map that charts our perception of the World, and in the end there is no separation between anything – the illusions become the vapour that they truly are – the energy in nature is the energy within you – and this is a wonderful realization/sensation; and likewise, your

neighbour's woes are truly your own woes and this means that you can truly help...

## *To recap and to clarify...*

If, in the act of Divine service, we separate out that which we believe is “exciting” from that which could be deemed “mundane” we really miss the whole point of serving from the heart and if our hearts are not in it then we are not really serving at all – are we? The more mature outlook regarding walking the path and serving the Divine would be to see “all” acts of Light to be completely equal. In this sense, a Light-worker is anyone who puts others before themselves – *of course this is the truth* – and it has always been this simple.

It is so easy to bring the consumer-based mind-set to “spirituality” – it's *far* too easy in fact – you can see how someone pursuing spiritual things might attempt to “add” spiritual experience and wisdom “to” themselves in order to make themselves more impressive and more attractive to anyone looking in from the outside. But this is the second of the big “mistakes” that many early students on the path make – the first being the seeming separation between the so called “exciting” and the so called “mundane” and the wrong perception therein; and the second being the seeming separation between the “outside” world and the “inside” world which equally creates wrong perception. The answer and resolution to both of these mistakes surfaces from the very same wisdom –

It is a triumphant day for the Light when the student of Spirit makes the startling realization that the “mundane act” need not be separate from the “exciting act” and the “outside world” need not be left outside.

*All deep compassion surfaces from this one truth –  
and the journey continues...*