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How to Evaluate the Authenticity of Self- and God-Realization

The ultimate extent of spiritual awakening to which to aspire in your current incarnation is to be fully Self-and God-realized.

The awakening process is faster and easier when the stages of spiritual growth that we experience can be understood and the authenticity of our Self- and God-realization can be verified.

Among all earthly inhabitants, only human beings have the unique ability to be superior to instinctual inclinations and to transcend conditioned states of mind. While the structure of the human brain is similar to those of more primitive species, human brains have an unusually large area associated with language and consciousness.

Why Awakening to Self- and God-Realization Is Difficult for Many Truth Seekers

When the names of people who are presumed to have been (or are) spiritually enlightened are thought of, or mentioned, only a few are thus designated. Seldom currently incarnated, they are often viewed as icons (symbolic representations of the degree of spiritual enlightenment truth seekers aspire to experience).

Where are the fully Self- and God-realized men and women in the world today with whom we may directly communicate? Why, among the millions of people who profess to be sincerely intent on knowing the truth about their relationship with the Infinite, are so few of them spiritually enlightened?

It is difficult for many truth seekers to experience authentic spiritual growth. I have talked with hundreds of people in the United States and other countries who told me they did not experience satisfying spiritual growth even though they had read metaphysical literature for many years, endeavored to live a good life, meditated, prayed to be spiritually enlightened, used affirmations, attended self-actualization seminars, sought ad-

vice from reputable teachers, and sometimes experimented with various methods they hoped would be helpful.

Some obstacles to spiritual growth are:

- *Strong identification with a mistaken sense of self-identity.* Presuming that egocentric awareness and personality characteristics define what one is. This is the primary obstacle to overcome because it confines awareness, dulls the mind, and limits intellectual and intuitive capacities.
- *Satisfaction with ordinary mental outlook and states of consciousness* while hoping to become more spiritually conscious without having to change modes of thinking or have awareness clarified.
- *Debilitating psychological conditions* because of imbalanced body chemistry, unresolved subconscious conflicts, confused mental states, addictive tendencies or behaviors, inharmonious personal relationships, or oppressive environmental circumstances. Psychological well-being is a firm foundation for balanced living and progressive spiritual growth.
- *A disordered lifestyle* because of lack of clearly defined aims and purposes, inadequate planning, indecisiveness, allowing attention to be distracted from important matters, laziness, or procrastination.
- *Undeveloped powers of concentration.* Ability to concentrate can be improved by being attentive and intentional.
- *Undeveloped powers of intellectual discernment and intuition.* Powers of discriminative intelligence enable us to know the difference between what is true and what is not true. Intuition is the natural ability to directly know what cannot be fully known by sensory or intellectual means.
- *Undeveloped or unused brain capacities.* The brain does not produce our consciousness; it is the organ through which our states of consciousness are processed and regulates physiological functions. Brain capacities can be developed by maintaining physical and psychological health, good nutrition, wholesome lifestyle routines, stress management, improving mental and intellectual abilities, and regular superconscious meditation practice. The prefrontal lobes of the brain which are associated with alertness, focused attention, and ability

to make right choices and control personal behaviors, become more highly developed when thoughts and moods are wisely self-determined and superconscious meditation is skillfully practiced on a regular schedule.

- *Insufficient education about spiritual matters.* Lack of accurate knowledge of one's true nature and higher realities and of how to allow one's innate spiritual qualities and capacities to emerge and be actualized. Accurate knowledge can be obtained from someone who has it and from a variety of available learning resources until one's innate knowledge emerges, as it will in the course of time. When acquiring knowledge from external sources, use your own powers of discrimination to discern what is true and is of real value to you.

By making right choices and by right, concentrated endeavor, you will more easily overcome and rise above all obstacles to spiritual growth. Patiently resist and neutralize troublesome subconscious influences. When your awareness is clarified and you are permanently established in Self-knowing, mental and emotional conditions and circumstances which were formerly restrictive will no longer exist.

How to Allow the Spontaneous Unveiling and Emergence of Your Innate Spiritual Qualities and Capacities

When your innate spiritual qualities and capacities are allowed to be unveiled, they effortlessly emerge.

Endeavors to forcibly cause spiritual growth to occur cannot produce ideal results because Self-realization is not an effect of causative actions; it is immediately actualized when conditions which concealed it are absent.

At the core of your essence of Being, you are constantly Self-aware and have all knowledge of your eternal relationship with the Infinite. By knowing this, and by doing what is necessary to realize it, you can definitely experience the fulfillment of your spiritual destiny in your current incarnation.

The following intentional practices that are emphasized in all inspired religious teachings and spiritual enlightenment traditions that evolved during the past few thousand years are uni-

versally applicable. By adopting them, you will soon learn how to allow authentic spiritual growth to rapidly occur.

Control mental states and emotions. Maintain a positive, cheerful, optimistic mental attitude and emotional stability. You will be constantly inspired, and highly motivated to live with clearly defined, constructive purposes.

Control your behaviors. Willingly do what should be done for your highest good. Do that which will enhance your life and nurture your spiritual growth. Avoid all actions, relationships, and situations which may complicate your life, distract your attention from important matters, or dissipate mental powers and physical energies.

Be ethical, honest, and truthful. Inwardly honor the divine nature of every person and respectfully relate to them.

Nurture wholesome, supportive personal relationships.

Conserve your vital forces; use them wisely.

Perform work and duties skillfully without attachment to your actions or their results.

Speak calmly and appropriately with specific intention.

Adhere to holistic physical self-care routines.

Cultivate soul contentment in all circumstances.

Improve your intellectual and intuitive abilities.

Continue to acquire accurate knowledge of your true nature and of higher realities until your understanding is flawless.

Meditate superconsciously every day.

Radiate thoughts and feelings of good will to everyone in this world and beyond.

Sustain your aspiration to be Self- and God-realized.

Faithfully persist until you are fully Self- and God-realized.

Indications of Authentic Spiritual Growth

How to know when your spiritual growth is authentic:

- *Mental, intellectual, and intuitive powers improve* because of diligent endeavors to use them and the purifying influences of superconscious states that are elicited.
- *Powers of perception are enhanced* because awareness more accurately reflects what is viewed or experienced to the mind

and consciousness of the observer.

- *Intellectual and intuitively discerned knowledge* of your true nature and of God steadily improves.
- *Functional abilities are improved* because of your ability to think rationally, act effectively, and cooperate with physical, mental, and spiritual laws of cause and effect.
- *Personal circumstances are more harmonious and satisfying.* What is needed for your well-being can be easily acquired or attracted. Unplanned fortunate events frequently occur.

When you are able to always be superconscious, you will effortlessly awaken through these final stages of spiritual growth:

- Cosmic consciousness: vivid awareness that the wholeness of life includes the transcendental field of existence-being; its radiant field; primordial nature (a vibration of cosmic power, Om, the origin of space, time, and fine cosmic forces); the field of cosmic mind; the causal electric-magnetic realms; the astral realms of life forces; the physical universe.
- Self-realization: conscious experience along with knowledge of your pure essence of being.
- God-realization: conscious experience along with knowledge of the one Reality of which you are an individualized unit.
- Liberation of consciousness: the ultimate stage of spiritual awakening. False ideas cannot be in the mind which is continuously illumined by the radiant purity of the essence of your Being. Flawless realization of your true nature in eternal relationship with the Infinite will prevail.

Integrate Spiritual Practices With Your Everyday Life

Asceticism (a secluded hermit-like existence) is not necessary for a person who sincerely aspires to be spiritually enlightened. To progressively awaken to Self- and God-realization, adhere to intensive (concentrated) spiritual practices while attending to duties, nurturing family and other supportive personal relationships, and fulfilling purposes that are of value.

Begin each day with an interlude of meditation practice to anchor your life in the Infinite. At all other times, remember that you abide in the wholeness of an all-pervading Reality; let it sup-

port you and express through and as you. Aspire to demonstrate excellence in everything that you do. Constructive thinking and right, concentrated endeavors will bring forth the potential that is within you to have exceptional powers of perception and extraordinary capacities to do what you are inspired to do. You will discover that conscious, purposeful, intentional living is spiritual practice that is as important as meditation practice.

Audibly Affirm (Forthrightly Declare) With Conviction

Firmly resolved to be completely Self- and God-realized in my current incarnation, I always think and live in accord with my resolute decision.

Answers To Your Questions About the Spiritual Path

If I could meet a Self- and God-realized person, it would help me to have faith that I, too, could be spiritually enlightened. How can I meet such a person?

Be receptive to the possibility of meeting a Self- and God-realized person without anxiously looking for one. Be devoted to right living and right spiritual practice to bring forth your own knowledge of your true Self and the reality of God.

I haven't had much success in my attempts to meditate. What can I do to have positive results?

Learn to detach your attention from external circumstances and from emotions and thought processes. Contemplate your essence of being as pure consciousness. As your awareness becomes clarified, you will effortlessly perceive the larger Reality in which you abide and of which you are a unit.

Use a meditation technique to relax the body and calm the mind, then sit in the deep silence and let your innate urge to have your awareness restored to its original, pure wholeness determine the meditation experience. As you become more Self-aware, accurate knowledge of your true nature and the wholeness of life will emerge from within you, as a revelation rather than as acquired knowledge.

As we become more conscious, is it possible for us to have, or to develop, clairvoyant abilities?

Clairvoyance is the ability to perceive things beyond the natural range of human senses or to have acute intuitive insights. It, along with other exceptional powers of perception, improves as we become more Self-knowing. We may then be able to know the thoughts and intentions of others, be aware of distant circumstances, accurately anticipate future events, and discern the difference between truth and untruth. These, and other abilities, are described in the third chapter of Patanjali's yoga-sutras as siddhis (Sanskrit *siddha*, accomplishment), indications of authentic spiritual awakening. While they can be used to enhance one's everyday life, egotistic motives should be avoided. When constructively used, they can enable a person to more quickly awaken to Self- and God-realization.

Note: My commentary on Patanjali's yoga-sutras is in my book, *The Science of Self-Realization* (CSA Press). It is also available in India at www.indiabookscentre.com and in Italy at www.marcovalerio.com

I yearn to be spiritually awake. Memories of past unpleasant experiences and negative comments that others have made to me cause me mental and emotional unrest. How can I avoid being influenced by such memories?

Cultivate Self-knowing and Self-reliance. Live effectively in present-time while looking forward with optimism and attending to your duties and meaningful projects. By living effectively and enjoyably, troublesome subconscious impressions will be weakened and neutralized. When you remember past events, you will be able to view them objectively without having any unpleasant reactions to them.

I am usually highly motivated to adhere to wholesome lifestyle regimens and spiritual practices. At times, however, I am somewhat lethargic and allow myself to aimlessly drift through life. How can I always be energetically purposeful?

When you are not highly motivated, use your will power to do what you know is best for you to do. You can discipline and choose your mental attitudes, feelings, and behaviors when you are intentionally goal-oriented. Always do what will be for your highest good. Consistent adherence to wholesome lifestyle regimens, metaphysical studies, and meditation routines will produce gratifying results. Your confidence will increase as you experience the positive benefits of your resolve. Avoid thoughts, feelings, and situations that might distract you from your chosen life-path. You are in this world for only a little while; make the most of your opportunities to grow to emotional and spiritual maturity while you are inclined to do it. As you move through the stages of human life, you will be thankful that you persisted in the right ways.

Now in the sixth decade of my current incarnation, I sometimes think of my eventual transition and wonder if I will succeed in being Self- and God-realized before it occurs. How can I be sure that I can do it?

Because you want be fully Self- and God-realized, by your own right endeavors and God's grace have conviction that you will be. Remember that, at the innermost level of your essence of being, you are now pure and whole. Learn to let your innate pure consciousness emerge.

Can our sincere endeavors to be spiritually enlightened actually have the desired results—or is our spiritual growth also determined by our karma or other influences of which we may not be aware?

Right endeavors to be spiritually enlightened are superior to subconscious and external influences. What is of greatest value is to support your desire to be spiritually enlightened with right endeavors. Outgrow or rise above modified states of mind and

consciousness and do what you can do to remove mental, emotional, and behavioral obstacles to your spiritual growth.

I have well-intentioned friends whose philosophical ideas and opinions are not the same as mine. Occasionally, what they say causes me to be somewhat mentally confused. How can I avoid being unduly influenced?

The words of others cannot confuse you unless you react to them. Be so inwardly strong and self-knowing that you cannot be unduly influenced by any outer event or circumstance. Self-mastery is essential. Control your own thoughts and feelings and how you respond to situations. When possible, avoid idle or meaningless conversations with others who are inclined to express their invalid or speculative opinions.

Some philosophers say “only absolute consciousness is real; the world is an illusion.” Is the realm of nature really an illusion?

This world is real because it is produced by interactions of cosmic forces emanated from one, permanent Reality.

When perceptions of what we examine are not accurate—when we mistakenly presume that we know but do not really know—our erroneous conclusions are illusions.

Supreme Consciousness is said to be alone real because it forever, changelessly exists. Manifestations of cosmic forces are sometimes said not to be real because they cannot exist apart from that which produces and regulates them.

Strong attachments to things that do not permanently exist confines awareness and interferes with attempts to intellectually comprehend or intuitively discern higher realities.

A commonly expressed recommendation for truth seekers is to “wear the world as a loose [comfortable] garment.” Similar views are expressed as “be in the world but not of it” and “keep your feet on the ground and your head [consciousness] in heaven [a pure realm].”

Some people say that we can pray to God for what we want or need. Others say that we do not have to pray for these things; we only have to acknowledge and claim them. Which view is true?

Both views are applicable according to degree of knowledge one has. A person who thinks that the one Reality is a cosmic being or a separate entity can pray to it with faith and have positive results that correspond with their belief or conviction. Such prayer can also produce a vivid sense of communion with the one Reality. When one is fully aware of being a unit of that Reality, and knows that what is wanted or needed is available, acceptance alone is sufficient.

It is best to pray in the manner which elicits the results one desires to have. Forms of prayer will change as understanding is improved and authentic spiritual growth is experienced.

Ask, and it shall be given to you ... – *Matthew 7:7*